

Hillingdon Mind Group Activities

Hearing Voices
Online Group

Online
Social Group

Creative Art
Online

Job Hub

Wellbeing Walk

Carers Support
Online Group

Wednesday Art Group

Wednesday Evening
Social Group

Women's Group

Online Creative Writing

Online Social and Quiz

Men's Group

Allotment/Gardening

Welcome to your latest SUN- our Service Users Newsletter, for Spring 2026. We can say with confidence that the SUN is truly up and running now and it's time for more of you- the service users of Hillingdon Mind- to contribute and help co-produce it.

And so we invite and welcome all contributions! Have you any pictures, poems, articles, ideas, experiences, tips, links, stories, hopes or questions that you would like to see here in the newsletter?

If so, send them to us at newsletter@hillingdonmind.org.uk and make the S.U.N. your own!

Hillingdon Community Awards 2026 Winners

Out of 21 local heroes who were announced winners of the 2026 Hillingdon Community Awards, three are service users / volunteers of Hillingdon Mind! Congratulations go to:

Alicia Horne who won a Helping Communities bronze award for her unwavering commitment to supporting local charities, including Hillingdon Vision and empowering others with disabilities through her kindness, courage, and dedication.

Linda Roberts who won the Helping Vulnerable People gold award, as for more than 25 years, Linda has supported hundreds of individuals facing mental health challenges through her work with Hillingdon Mind.

Kelli McBride who won a Promoting Health and Wellbeing bronze award for her unwavering commitment to uplifting people across the borough through her volunteer work with Hillingdon Mind.



Well done, Alicia, Linda and Kelli,
we're so proud and grateful to you!

Mind Memorial Bench



Thanks to the kind generosity of both our Mind Group members and Katrina Pilton's Family we are pleased to let you know that a Memorial Bench has now been installed at the Mind Allotment at Fasnidge Park.

The bench remembers our three Tinas.

Tina Shaik 1966 – 2022

Tina Clare 1972 – 2025

Tina (Katrina) Pilton 1957 – 2025

However, the Bench is a fitting memorial to the memory of all the Mind Service User friends we have lost over the years.

Take a moment to remember them.





2026 CHARLIE BROOKFIELD CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH #2

**SATURDAY
30TH MAY**

**1:30PM
KICK-OFF**

**DONATION
UPON ENTRY**

RAFFLE | GAMES | AFTER PARTY | FOOD VENDORS

BAKE SALE | TOMBOLA | AUCTION | AND MORE...

JOIN CHARLIE'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS AT THE BROOKHOUSE FC FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL CHARLIE BROOKFIELD CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH. ALL PROCEEDS RAISED WILL BE DONATED DIRECTLY TO MIND HILLINGDON. GATES OPEN AT 12PM



**MAKE
A
DONATION**

**BROOKHOUSE FC,
FARM PARK, KINGSHILL AVE,
KINGSHILL CLOSE, HAYES, UB4
8DD**

In aid of
 **mind**
in Hillingdon

Creative Contributions



Haiku

Sacred patina,
Ribbed by potter's soft hands,
Earthenware goblet.



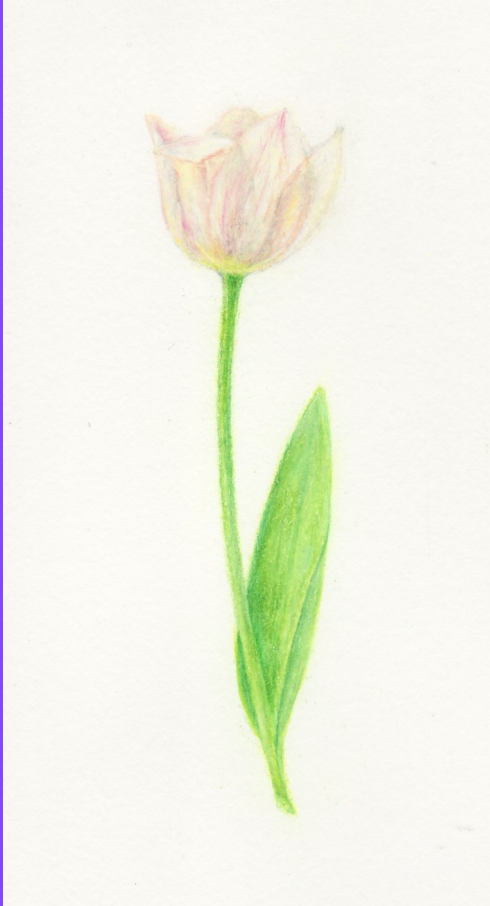
Poem contributed by
Patrick



Photos contributed
by Martin & Vishal



Creative Contributions



Art contributed by
Harriet



Poem contributed by
Lyn



Photo contributed
by Vishal

Try not to let things get you down
Although it's often said
Don't let the blues get hold of you,
Don't waste your time in bed.

There's lots of things to look at
To take your mind off things
There's lots of things to do and say,
There's lots that living brings.

So go out and talk to someone,
Give in and have a chat.
It's really great out there you know,
It isn't all like that.

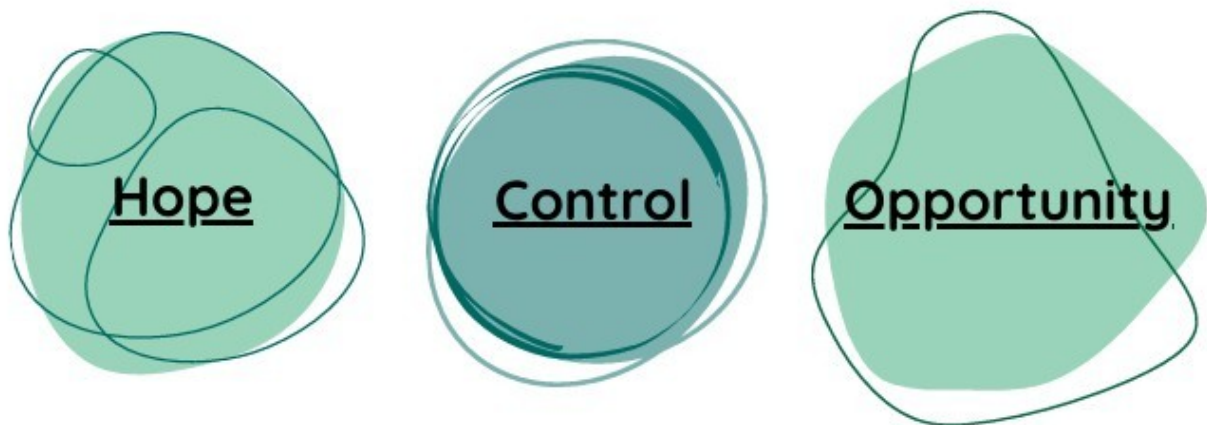
Believe me when I say to you,
Believe me when all's done,
You really should get out much more,
Get out and have some fun!

And soon you'll find you realise
(And I'll give you some good news)
That by now you may have noticed
That'll you have banished all your blues





CNWL RECOVERY & WELLBEING COLLEGE



The Recovery College Summer timetable is now out, including a really interesting variety of courses, with workshops co-hosted by Hillingdon Mind at St Andrews on Mindfulness, Assertiveness and Understanding Autism.

Please click this link for the Summer Timetable: [Summer timetable 2026](#)

And this link to register: [CNWL Recovery College Student Enrolment](#)



Being nurtured by nature

- How nature can encourage positive mental health

Sometimes, being told to “get outside for some fresh air” can feel like silly advice when you're not feeling your best. But spending time in and around nature can actually help improve your mental and physical wellbeing.

When outdoors, our autonomic nervous system switches from sympathetic to parasympathetic, meaning we move from a fight-flight response (which evolved to alert us to danger) to a rest-digest response (where our heart rate, blood pressure, and stress levels are lower). In this relaxed state, we are able to do our best thinking and creating.

In addition to this, exposure to sunlight allows us to make vitamin D, which not only aids bone health and strengthens the immune system, but also helps mood regulation. Spending time in the daylight has a positive effect on the Circadian rhythm (your internal body clock), which in turn helps you to sleep better.

There are lots of ways to connect with nature, both from inside and by going outside. Here are a few ideas to get you started.



Open your windows and curtains to get a view of the outdoors. Breathing in fresh air and seeing natural light are simple ways to feel connected to the outside world from inside.

- ▶ Watch nature documentaries or nature based videos online.
- ▶ Have plants inside your house. You could buy a bunch of flowers from the supermarket, get some potted houseplants or even grow plants from seeds. You could create a windowsill herb garden so you can watch your plants grow then enjoy them in your cooking.
- ▶ Do some physical activity outside. This could be running, jogging, or walking, or something gentle like yoga or stretches. This can be paired with social interaction, by meeting up with friends or joining some kind of exercise group. For example, Hillingdon Mind has a walking group!
- ▶ When outside, take notice of what you can see, feel, hear, and smell in your surroundings. Engaging your senses can help to ground you.

Positive Mental Health



Reclaiming Your Mind: Why Screen Time Matters for Your Mental Health

We reach for our phones the moment we wake up — scrolling while we eat, while we wait, sometimes late into the night. For many of us, this has become so habitual it barely registers. But the relationship between excessive mobile use and our mental wellbeing deserves our honest attention.

The Invisible Toll

A growing body of evidence links heavy smartphone use to higher rates of anxiety, depression, loneliness, and disrupted sleep. It's not that your phone is the enemy — it's the way we use it that matters. Social media platforms are engineered to keep you engaged as long as possible. Every notification and infinite scroll is intentional. Recognising that you're up against a deliberately addictive system is not weakness — it's the first step toward taking back control. The effects are often quiet and creeping: a background hum of anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and a persistent tiredness that passive scrolling only deepens.

Small Changes, Real Difference

The goal is a healthier relationship with your phone — one where you're in charge. Here are some practical steps:

- **Set a morning buffer**

Avoid your phone for the first 30 minutes after waking.
Stretch, have a drink of water, or simply sit with your thoughts.

- **Turn off non-essential notifications**

Each ping hijacks your attention.
Ask yourself: does this app truly need to interrupt my day?

- **Create phone-free zones**

The bedroom and dinner table are good places to start.
Small boundaries make a real difference to sleep and relationships.

- **Replace, don't just restrict**

A walk, a book, a call with a friend — real connection nourishes in ways that scrolling cannot.

Be patient with yourself. These habits won't dissolve overnight, and slipping back is entirely normal. What matters is returning, gently, to the intention. Your attention is precious — and you are more capable of reclaiming it than you might think.

If you're struggling with your mental health, please reach out. You don't have to face it alone.



Delete Worry, Install Peace of Mind

Staying safe online plays a key role in protecting your mental well-being. When your personal information and devices are secure, it can reduce stress, prevent worry, and help you feel more in control of your digital life. With so much of our daily lives spent online, understanding how to protect yourself is more important than ever.

On the following pages, you'll find simple, practical steps and easy-to-follow advice to help you stay safe, protect your information, and feel more confident using technology.

Protecting your email with a strong password

Learn how creating strong, unique passwords can protect your email and personal accounts from unauthorised access.



Two-step verification

Discover how adding an extra layer of security can keep your accounts safe, even if your password is compromised.



Protecting your devices from viruses and malware

Explore ways to keep your devices secure from harmful software and protect your personal information online.



Backing up your data

Find out why backing up your data is important and how it helps you recover important files if something goes wrong.



Online Safety –

Protecting your email with a strong password

Your email is the gateway to almost everything — your appointments, support networks, and most personal conversations. Protecting it with a strong password is one of the simplest and most effective things you can do for your digital safety and peace of mind.

How criminals get passwords

Knowing how accounts are compromised helps you understand why weak passwords are a genuine risk. Phishing uses fake emails or websites to trick you into handing over your details. Data breaches occur when sites you use are hacked and passwords are leaked online. Brute force attacks use software to guess millions of common passwords in seconds. And simple guessing uses personal details — birthdays, pet names — found on social media.

Protecting your email account

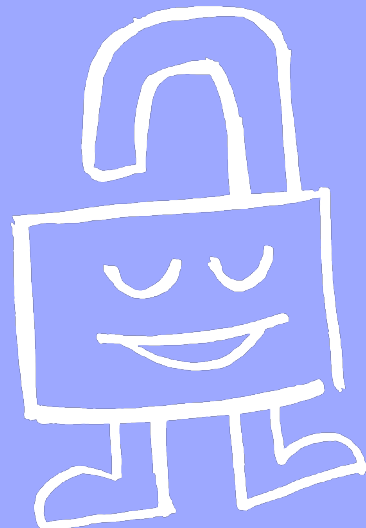
A strong password is the first layer of defence, but it shouldn't be the only one. Enable two-factor authentication (2FA) so that even if someone gets your password, they still can't access your account without a second code sent to your phone — find it under Settings → Security. Keep your recovery email and backup phone number current. And never click login links in emails; always go directly to the website yourself, as legitimate providers will never ask for your password by email.

Creating a strong password

Aim for at least 12 characters, mixing upper and lower case letters, numbers, and symbols. Avoid anything personal and never reuse a password across accounts — if one site is breached, all your others become vulnerable too. A great approach is a passphrase: four random words joined with a number or symbol. It's long, strong, and far easier to remember than a random string: `sunrise!blanket7river.oak`

Managing passwords

Using a different strong password for every account can feel daunting, but a password manager does the hard work for you — storing everything securely so you only need to remember one master password. Trusted options include Bitwarden (free and open source), 1Password, or the built-in manager already on your iPhone, Chrome, or Safari. Avoid keeping passwords in a notes app or written down near your device.



What to do if your password is stolen

Having your account compromised can feel deeply unsettling — almost like an intrusion into your personal space. That reaction is completely valid. Take a breath, follow the steps above, and remember that acting quickly puts you back in control. Act quickly — the sooner you respond, the less damage can be done.

Change it now - Switch to a brand new, strong password you haven't used before.

Check activity - Look for sent emails or account settings you don't recognise.

Update linked accounts - Change your password anywhere else you used the same one.

Enable 2FA - If you haven't already, this is the moment to turn it on.

Check breaches - Visit this website, haveibeenpwned.com to see if your email has been leaked.

Online Safety –

Two-step verification: 2nd line of defence

Even the strongest password can be stolen. Two-step verification — also called two-factor authentication or 2FA — adds a second lock to your accounts, so that a stolen password alone is never enough to get in. It is one of the most powerful steps you can take to protect your digital life.

Why one password is not enough

Passwords are stolen more often than most people realise — through data breaches, phishing scams, or malware running quietly in the background. Once a criminal has your password, nothing stops them walking straight into your account. Two-step verification means that even if your password is completely compromised, an attacker still cannot get in without that second piece of information — which only you have access to in that moment.

Setting it up on your accounts

On most services — Gmail, Outlook, Apple ID, Facebook — you will find the option under Settings → Security → Two-factor authentication. You will be asked to verify your phone number or link an authenticator app. The setup takes around five minutes and you will only need to repeat the second step on new or unfamiliar devices, so it rarely adds friction to your daily routine.

How two-step verification works

When you log in, you enter your password as usual — then you are asked for a second piece of proof. This is typically a short code that changes every 30 seconds, sent to your phone by text or generated by an app. Because the code expires so quickly and is tied to your device, it is extremely difficult for anyone else to use it. Think of it like a bank card: the card is your password, and your PIN is the second step.

Choosing your second step

The most common option is a text message code — easy to set up and good for most people. A more secure option is an authenticator app such as Google Authenticator or Microsoft Authenticator, which generates codes even without signal. Some services also offer email codes or push notifications. Any of these is far better than no second step at all.



What to do if you lose access to your second step

Setting up two-step verification can feel like an extra task, but it takes only a few minutes and gives lasting peace of mind. Once it is on, you can feel confident that your accounts — and everything inside them — are far better protected. Losing your phone or changing your number can lock you out of your own account — so it is worth preparing now while everything is working.

Save backup codes - Most services give you one-time backup codes — store them somewhere safe offline

Add a recovery email - Set a backup email address you can always access to verify your identity

Update your number - If you change your phone number, update it in your account settings straight away

Use account recovery - Most providers have an identity verification process to restore access if you're locked out

Act quickly - Report a lost device to your provider as soon as possible to protect your accounts

Online Safety –

Protecting your devices from viruses and malware

Malware — malicious software designed to damage, steal from, or take control of your device — is one of the most common threats online. Understanding how it works and how to defend against it means you can use your phone and computer with far greater confidence and calm.

How malware gets onto your device

Malware rarely announces itself. Phishing emails trick you into clicking a link or opening an attachment that silently installs something harmful. Fake downloads disguise malware as a legitimate app, game, or software update. Malicious websites can infect a device just by being visited. Infected USB drives can carry malware directly onto a computer the moment they are plugged in. Awareness of these routes is your first layer of defence.

Protecting your devices day to day

Small habits make a significant difference. Keep automatic updates turned on for your operating system and apps — these often contain critical security fixes. Be cautious on public Wi-Fi, which can be monitored by others; avoid logging into sensitive accounts unless you are using a trusted network or a VPN. Lock your devices with a PIN, fingerprint, or face recognition so that physical access does not automatically mean access to your data.

Creating strong device protection

Good protection starts with keeping your software up to date — updates often patch security weaknesses that malware exploits. Only download apps from official stores such as the App Store or Google Play. Use reputable antivirus software on your computer — Windows Defender is built into Windows and works well, while Malwarebytes is a trusted free option for both Mac and PC. Avoid clicking links or downloading files from sources you do not fully trust.

Managing your device security

Security is not a one-time task but an ongoing habit. Run a full antivirus scan on your computer every month or so, even if nothing seems wrong. Review the apps installed on your phone periodically and remove anything you no longer use or do not recognise. Check that your firewall is enabled — on Windows, find it under Settings → Privacy & Security; on Mac, under System Settings → Network → Firewall. A few minutes of routine care keeps your devices significantly safer.



What to do if your device is infected

Signs of infection include unusual slowness, unexpected pop-ups, programmes opening by themselves, or unexplained data usage. If you suspect something is wrong, act promptly. Discovering your device has been compromised can feel alarming and intrusive. Those feelings are understandable. The steps above will help you regain control — and the good news is that building protective habits now means you are far less likely to face this situation in the first place.

Disconnect from the internet - This stops malware sending your data or spreading to other devices on your network

Run a full scan - Use your antivirus software to scan and remove any threats it finds

Change your passwords - Do this from a different, clean device in case your passwords were captured

Restore from backup - If the infection is serious, restoring a clean backup may be the safest option

Get professional support - A local repair shop or IT professional can help if you are unsure what to do.

Online Safety –

Backing up your data: preventing loss

Our phones and computers hold things we can never replace — photographs, journal entries, important documents, messages from loved ones. A backup is simply a copy of all that, kept somewhere safe. If something goes wrong, a backup means you can recover everything rather than losing it for good.

Why data gets lost in the first place

Data loss happens more often than most people expect, and rarely with any warning. Accidental deletion is the most common cause — a file gone before you realise it mattered. Device failure can happen to any phone or laptop without notice. Theft or loss takes everything stored only on that device. Ransomware — a type of malware — can lock you out of your own files entirely. In each of these situations, a backup is the difference between a stressful hour and a devastating loss.

Protecting your data with backups

The most reliable backups happen automatically, without you having to remember. On iPhone, iCloud Backup runs overnight when your phone is charging and on Wi-Fi. On Android, Google One offers similar automatic protection. For computers, Time Machine on Mac and File History on Windows both run quietly in the background once set up. Turn these on and they work without any further effort from you.

Creating a strong backup

The gold standard is called the 3-2-1 rule: keep three copies of your data, on two different types of storage, with one copy stored off-site. In practice this might mean your original files, an external hard drive at home, and a cloud backup online. Having copies in more than one place means no single event — a house fire, a stolen laptop, a failed drive — can wipe everything out at once.

Managing your backups

Setting up a backup is only half the job — it is worth checking now and then that it is actually working. A backup that stopped running six months ago may not have your most recent files. Once a month, glance at your backup settings to confirm the last successful backup date. Also think about what you are backing up: photos, documents, contacts, and app data are the priorities. Cloud services like Google Drive, OneDrive, and iCloud all offer free storage to get started.



What to do if your data is lost

Losing personal files — especially photographs or meaningful messages — can feel genuinely distressing. The good news is that setting up a backup takes less than ten minutes and, once done, works silently in the background. It is a small investment of time that can save something irreplaceable. Stay calm and work through these steps — acting methodically gives you the best chance of recovery.

Check your backup - Look in iCloud, Google One, or your external drive first — files may already be safe

Check the recycle bin - Deleted files often sit in the bin or a recently deleted folder for up to 30 days

Try recovery software - Tools like Recuva can sometimes retrieve files even after deletion

Stop using the device - If a drive has failed, continued use can overwrite files and make recovery harder

Seek help - For critical files, a data recovery specialist may be able to retrieve what software cannot

Current Group Activity Details

Hearing Voices Online Group - Monday 10.15 am – 11.15 am

Hearing Voices Groups are people with shared experiences coming together to support one another. They offer a safe haven where people who hear, see or sense things that other people don't can feel accepted, valued and understood.

Online Social Group - Monday 5.30 pm – 7 pm

We run online and face to face groups to help you meet new people and enjoy a range of social activities. The group offers light refreshments and the opportunity to talk with others. The group provides various activities to get involved in or you can just sit and spend time with others, there are no expectations.

Creative Art Online - Tuesday 2.30 pm – 4 pm

Our weekly Creative Art group aims to improve mental health and reduce social isolation through creativity and conversation. You don't need to have any skills or experience in art to join the group. People of all abilities are welcome.

Job Hub - Wednesday 11 am – 1 pm

Employment Support is a service designed to assist anyone with mental health problems to find work and live independently in the community. Through the service people can access support in many areas to help increase your independence and work related skills.

Wellbeing Walk - Wednesday 2 pm – 3 pm

The Walking Group meets weekly, it's a mixed group of all ages, and walks take around an hour to an hour and half, taking place in local parks. Both walking and being in nature hold many benefits for your mental health. So, combining the two is a fantastic way to support your wellbeing.

Carers Support Online Group - Wed pm

This support is offered by the Mental Health Recovery team at Hillingdon Mind; they offer practical and emotional support and can assist you in supporting both you and the person you are caring for. Our weekly peer support group is known as Coffee and Chat on-line.

Wednesday Art Group - Wednesday 5.15 pm – 6.15 pm

Our weekly Creative Art group aims to improve mental health and reduce social isolation through creativity and conversation. You don't need to have any skills or experience in art to join the group. People of all abilities are welcome.

Current Group Activity Details

Wednesday Evening Social Group - Wednesday 5 pm – 7 pm

We run online and face to face groups to help you meet new people and enjoy a range of social activities. The group offers light refreshments and the opportunity to talk with others. The group provides various activities to get involved in or you can just sit and spend time with others, there are no expectations.

Women's Group - Thursday 2 pm – 4 pm

Our weekly support group is for women experiencing mental health issues, feelings of isolation, loneliness, lack of confidence or low self-esteem. The session offers a safe, informal and non-judgemental space to have a chat, share experiences and learn new coping strategies.

Online Creative Writing - Friday 10.30 am – 12 pm

Creative Writing can be a form of self-expression and therapy that can offer many benefits for your mental health. Our weekly Creative Writing group provides a relaxed, informal get-together for people experiencing mental health issues who are interested in writing and want to improve their wellbeing. The group is suitable for people of all abilities. You don't need to have any writing skills or experience.

Online Social and Quiz - Friday 5.30 pm – 7.30 pm

Our weekly social groups run online as well as face to face.

Men's Group - Saturday 12 pm - 1 pm

Our weekly support group is for men experiencing mental health issues, feelings of isolation, loneliness, lack of confidence or low self-esteem. The session offers a safe, informal and non-judgemental space to have a chat, share experiences and learn new coping strategies. Activities and Workshops will be offered and the sessions will be supported by peer support volunteers and staff.

Allotment/Gardening - Saturday 1.00 pm – 2.15 pm

The Gardening group meets weekly and is a chance to get together to grow and nurture plants, develop your gardening skills, get some exercise and socialise. No gardening knowledge is necessary just a willingness to get involved and help where you can.

If you would like to know more about any of these please contact a member of Hillingdon Mind staff on 01895 271559.

Resources

**Hillingdon Cove Café operate a drop-in/no appointment crisis service
between 2pm to 10pm 365 days a year.**

Contact them on: 07827 535271 or visit:

Apple Blossom Cottage, Rear of Apple Blossom Lodge,
64 Ickenham Road, Ruislip, HA4 7DQ.

in a crisis and wish to speak to someone, contact:

Single Point of Access (SPA)

Urgent Advice Line: 0800 0234 650

Hillingdon Samaritans: 116123

Your GP/ and or 999

Contact us at Hillingdon Mind

www.mindinhillingdon.org.uk

In person (by appointment only)

40 New Windsor St, Uxbridge, UB8 2TU

Phone: 01895 271559

Please keep your contributions flowing in for our new regular newsletters by email to:
newsletter@hillingtonmind.org.uk

“As always, a big thank you to all the service users and volunteers who have worked on putting this newsletter together” – Hillingdon Mind