

# Write Mind

## Mental Health Awareness Week edition

### Supporters Step-Up for Bradford!

Thirty supporters climbed the same height as a Yorkshire Peak at Bradford City's football ground, raising more than £3,000 for Mind in Bradford.

Fundraisers chose between two challenges at the University of Bradford stadium; climbing up the steps 56 times, equivalent to the height of the Chevin, or 147 times, the same height as Whernside. Some took on the challenge as a relay team and others took it on solo.

Teams from local businesses Mitton Group, TL Dallas and Brontel took part in this new fundraising challenge alongside supporters from the local community. The event raised a grand total of £3,015. This money can support 104 people in mental health distress.

Lydia Ngwenya, Fundraising and Business Development Manager at Mind in Bradford, said: "Thank you so much to everyone who came along to Step Up for Bradford. What a day we had - I am so impressed by the enthusiasm and energy everyone showed, even on their 146th time climbing up those steps!"

Paula Watson, Director of Operations at Bradford City AFC, said: "Mental health is important to all of us here at Bradford City AFC, and we were delighted to host Mind in Bradford's 'Step Up for Bradford' challenge on March 26.

"The work we have done and provisions we have put in place over the past 18 months have shown huge progression for us as we continue to spread the right messages and support as many people as possible.



Supporters celebrating their Chevin Climb.

"We believe no one should have to suffer in silence, and through partnerships with the likes of Mind in Bradford and Andy's Man Club – as well as our own in-house Mental Health Supporters' Group – we are committed to making a positive change across the district."

Our Summer Fundraising calendar is online if you'd like to get involved by volunteering or raising money: [www.mindinbradford.org.uk/support-us](http://www.mindinbradford.org.uk/support-us)



# Finding help in the Cost of Living Crisis

As people in the district struggle with making ends meet due to inflation and the steep rises in energy bills, our client volunteer Ian Lamb spoke to Ian Brewer, Financial Inclusion Development Manager at Bradford's Credit Union to find out what they are seeing on the ground.

## With the Cost of Living crisis, how has this affected people within Bradford?

It's extraordinary and we share the concerns of many people. Here, at Credit Union in Bradford, in 2016 we looked after around 3,000 people but now, we have nearly 10,000 members and these are a range of people. People who may be viewed as being 'well to do' and financially stable to people on various benefits or struggling to pay off their loans: people from across the board have found themselves stuck in a cycle of credit scores. Even people with relatively good incomes are missing payments and their credit score begins to suffer.

## How does Credit Union in Bradford help people with the Cost of Living crisis?

Banks always look to someone's credit score before loans and credit cards are issued. Where Credit Unions differ is that they are able to take risks and we have lent to people despite a poor credit score. A Consolidation Loan is there to help people pay off their loans, so it becomes more manageable by having one lump sum to pay out each month.

There are over 300 Credit Unions across the country and this year will mark 30 years since we began. Credit Unions also build up a relationship with our customers. We are a co-operative and therefore we cooperate with people, our customers, where we can set our own rates that are affordable, unlike the various banks and most certainly, the loan sharks out there. We are a lot more ethical in our dealings, including being a faith-friendly organisation.

Credit Union in Bradford has two major projects: Uniform Savers launched in January 2023 and helps nearly 300 single-parent families to fund school uniforms. It's funded by Public Health but is co-produced between us and Bradford Council. The second project is FoodSavers and again, nearly 300 people are utilising the 16 pantries we have across Bradford.

We also run this with Bradford Council and many of the leading supermarkets donate their food for people who are struggling. £6 will get you a bag of food with £1 of that going to the Credit Union. Have a look at our website [BDCU.co.uk](http://BDCU.co.uk) for further details.



## Have you seen for yourself the rise in mental health struggles, especially anxiety?

Yes, we have been more concerned as more people are struggling, such as those unable to break free from constantly being in overdraft. I'm passionate about building fences to stop people from falling over the edge of that financial cliff. Providing Money SOS courses, we can reach out and teach people to manage their finances better. Things like this could help that anxiety, help people to understand how to budget better and become more resilient.

## What is the best advice you could give to people that are struggling with finances and debts?

Don't bury your head in the sand but instead, sit down and look at your budget. There are places to help such as Christians Against Poverty (CAP), Citizens' Advice Bureau as well as us. Get some good advice instead of being tempted with dodgy loan sharks and payday lenders. And be mindful of contactless payments because this does not communicate with your bank and it is much easier to lose track of your spending.

## What is a credit union?

Credit unions are similar to banks but are not run for profit and often based in the community. Members have a common bond, such as living in a geographical area, and pool their resources to offer financial services such as savings accounts and loans. Any income made is invested back into projects that serve the community and credit union members.

Credit unions can also give you tips on how to manage money, encouraging you to save and only borrow what you can afford to pay back. There is usually a limit on the amount you can save but this is protected in the same way as normal savings accounts.



## Creative corner

Our Creative Writing group this month led by Roger has been busy writing about anxiety which is the theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week (15 - 21 May).

### Anxiety by Luke S

I walk down the street today without much thought for what dangers lurk around the next corner. A contrast to years gone by when I would have frozen in fear over the things I had no control over.

The only way to guarantee nothing bad could happen was to do nothing. So, I created my own prison; whilst the bars kept dangers out, they kept me inside and robbed me of my best years.

What I was looking for was someone who could tell me how to make sure nothing bad would ever happen to me again.

My fears were infinite and I was just one person. I never found my answer, but in facing my fears I did find friendships, laughter, the beauty of nature and the good things that are worth the risk of trying.



It turned out these people had the same fears and anxieties as me, all be it in their own ways, and nobody really knows what they are doing.

I take solace in the fact that if I'm doing something new and scary, it means I'm living and growing as a person. It could all end tomorrow but it's still better than the safety of that prison.

**Creative Writing runs every Monday 1pm - 3pm at Mind in Bradford, contact us to join.**

### Anxiety by Richard Walker

I wake up every day with my anxiety telling me how terrible today will go because I have long forgotten the last time I felt truly happy and content with my life.

I leave my house with my anxiety telling me to put on a mask to protect myself and to push others away from me because I have grown weary of being betrayed by those whom I thought I could trust. I go on my day with my anxiety telling me to lock away my emotions, to appear strong and confident because any sign of vulnerability, hesitance, and weakness is taboo.

But it shouldn't have to be this way. My anxiety shouldn't be imprisoning my mind by telling me to be scared of others, to be resentful of my progress, or to feel hopeless about my future.

I want my anxiety to lower my guard and let me learn to trust again.

I want my anxiety to understand that failures and mistakes can be fixed.

I want my anxiety to stop expecting me to hate myself and help me accept who I am, so I can learn to live life with happiness and pride, not with shame and regrets.

### Three ways to help when you're feeling anxious.

#### 1. Talk to someone you trust

This could be a friend, family member, colleague or a telephone support worker from Guide-Line. Open every day from 8am until midnight - call 08001 884 884

#### 2. Try a breathing exercise

Breathing exercises can help you cope and feel more in control.

#### 3. Try peer support

Peer support brings together people who've had similar experiences to support each other.





# Tea 'n' Talk groups take off in Bradford, Keighley and Skipton!

Mind in Bradford has launched several new Tea 'n' Talk groups for anyone who might be feeling lonely, isolated or alone.

Four new groups launched in April and further ones are launching in May across Bradford, Keighley and Skipton.

New locations include the Thornbury Centre, Manningham Mills, City Hub, Morrisons Café Keighley, Keighley Library, Menston Library, Morrisons Café Skipton, the Soroptimist Rooms, Broughton Community Centre, IQRA Centre, Fisher Medical Practice, Grange Interlink Community Centre and Greatwood and Horse Community Centre.

These come in addition to groups already running at The Canteen, Cake'ole Bradford, Idle Lounge Coffee House and The Bothy.

Donna Hudson, Volunteer Coordinator at Mind in Bradford said: "Whether you're on your own, with a friend, a parent with your baby, young or old, all are welcome and there's no need to book."

"Do come along and pull up a seat, get a drink, a biscuit, and have a chat with others!"



To find out where your nearest group is visit our Facebook page or website:

[www.mindinbradford.org.uk/tea-n-talk-groups/](http://www.mindinbradford.org.uk/tea-n-talk-groups/)

If you'd like to volunteer to run a group near you then visit our website to find out about becoming a Tea 'n' Talk Facilitator:

[www.mindinbradford.org.uk/volunteer/](http://www.mindinbradford.org.uk/volunteer/)

## Help us hear your voice!

Help us to hear your voice by reviewing our draft Client Involvement and Engagement Policy. This draft policy is now published on the Mind in Bradford website and we want to know what you think.

Client Involvement and Engagement is the most important policy we produce as it's all about how you can engage with us, how you can tell us what you think we need to know, and how your opinion can help with the decisions that we make.

It explains how gathering, using and learning from your feedback is vital to the improvement and sustainability of the services we provide. It also explains how you can get more involved in what we do as a staff member or volunteer if you wish.

We'd love to hear your thoughts on this draft policy. Let us know your feedback online using the webpage below or in-person at our next Cuppa and Catch-up with clients on Thursday 25th May at 4pm.

[www.mindinbradford.org.uk/client-policy](http://www.mindinbradford.org.uk/client-policy)



Scan to read our client policy

This is Hollie's last edition of Write Mind as she moves to a new role, all the best Hollie and thanks for your hard work!