

GAMBLING - EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAMME

The 4 year programme went live in April 2020, with the first obvious challenge being the Covid-19 lockdowns. All resources had been developed for the face to face delivery that we had undertaken prior to the new contract, however, now we had to quickly change our ways of working to look at deliveries over a virtual platform. The initial resources had to be quickly changed for the new delivery style and work was undertaken to identify the best virtual platform for training delivery, over the first year we trialled Zoom, Teams, WebEx, Google Meets to mention just a few with the main ones coming out for use being Zoom and Teams.



Once the best platforms for delivery and the resources were identified, we then met the further challenge of trying to encourage organisations to go down the virtual route for the deliveries. This was a much easier process initially for the professional side of the training but more challenging trying to get young people on board. It took a lot of work to build up relationships with organisations enabling us to successfully deliver to young people, but the hard work paid off, from April 2020 to March 2021 we delivered 46 virtual sessions to 330 professionals and 32 sessions to 364 young people, exceeding all targets, so overall a challenging but productive 1st year.

% target Young People
182.0%

% target Professionals
110.0%



GAMBLING - ADULT SERVICES

NECA Gambling services have continued to operate through the Covid-19 lockdowns, with staff remote working from home it was necessary to adapt ways of working; moving to online/telephone based services to enable the continued support of our clients throughout this time.

Telephone based 1-1 support was the primary service offered, alongside our groups; Peer Support, Affected Others and Relapse Prevention, which were offered online via the web based platform Zoom, enabling the full range of support mechanisms to be in place at all times as previously. GamCare also offer a large range of online self-support options and as a GamCare partner we were able to benefit from access to these services.

With gambling issues now more prevalent than ever, it was important that we were able to deliver the same quality service we have always done during the pandemic. The fact we have achieved this has been reflected in feedback from clients;

"I would like to thank the organisation and Maria. They were very understanding and very helpful. I understand more now what my family is going through." - Sept20

"This process has been very helpful in dealing with my sons gambling problems. I feel clear as to what measures to put in place." - Apr20

"Feeling very positive and on the straight and narrow. The service was a great help." - Jun20



SOUTH SHIELDS COMMUNITY GARDEN

In March 2021 we were invited to present at the Froebel Trust Biennial Conference: Growing Through Play. We produced a 30 minute presentation outlining our Mini Muddy Fingers project (funded by the Trust 2020-2021) and providing a general overview of the Garden facilities, the activities that take place and the volunteers that are so important to the running of the Garden.



Mini Muddy Fingers is a play and stay session for pre-school. With a combination of indoor and outdoor spaces, our project aims to harness children's eagerness and natural curiosity. Our facilities, incorporating planting zones, wildlife zones, woodwork zones and play zones, encapsulate Froebelian principles and promote learning through play in a natural environment.

The objectives of our Mini Muddy Fingers scheme include:

- Providing opportunities for local children and families to take part in enriching activities that they may otherwise not have had opportunity to be involved in.
- Nurturing learning in nature; encouraging learning and education through outdoor play and adventure fostering natural curiosities of pre-school age children helping them to realise social, intellectual, physical & emotional development potential.
- Encouraging sensory exploration to stimulate senses: touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing.
- Inspiring children to try new things; to test their abilities; to experience challenges; to "have a go".
- Utilising and expanding existing onsite resources to support / encourage independent active learning.
- Create a welcoming, caring and stimulating environment where children and their families/ carers feel safe and happy.
- Valuing, nurturing, and being inclusive to all children, recognising each individual as a unique, important and appreciated member of the local community.
- Fostering a culture of acceptance, embracing diversity and promoting equality, inclusion and respect.



Over 2000 people attended the conference on the day with an average of 1400-1700 people logging in for each speaker. The Garden received some extremely beneficial publicity and feedback from our presentation was extremely positive;

"This is a wonderful resource for the community – inspirational!"

"A wonderful project which clearly has a hugely positive impact for all involved"

"Absolutely amazing project. Well done"

"What an amazing learning environment and great community spirit. Well done to all involved".

"An amazing and wonderful project".

"What an amazing resource for the community. Every community should have one"

"Absolutely inspiring what an amazing space for the children and families"

DARLINGTON

Our Recovery Centre, and CQC Outstanding Service, in Darlington continued to operate an on site service during the Covid-19 Lockdown periods in 2020.



The centre was considered a frontline essential service (dictated via Government and CQC guidance), and all staff were classified as key workers. Supporting both staff and the vulnerable clients we continued to work together during these difficult times, to ensure that we delivered our much-needed services safely for everyone concerned.

Clients that could be, were supported via other communication methods, meaning a lower footfall, but the most vulnerable clients still needed to be seen and supported face to face on site. The larger building at The Gate, and the reduction in clients attending allowed for social distancing and alongside other measures put in place, meant those attending were kept as safe as possible.

NECA VOLUNTEERS

NECA relies heavily on our Volunteers contribution throughout the organisation, but never more so at the Community Garden in South Shields, where we have 10 Volunteers alongside just 2 members of staff. With a mix of Male/Female volunteers aged between 35 -66; all local to South Tyneside; most of which have been part of the Garden from the start. Each takes a lead on different projects e.g. gardening, woodwork, facilitating playgroups. One staff member was previously a volunteer before being offered employment.

The Garden's location is amongst the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. Volunteers are invaluable in the aim to address this deprivation;

- They have woodwork and gardening activities for people with mental health issues. People attending the Garden learn new skills, develop new friendships and become more aware of their own health/wellbeing. The Garden gives them confidence to get back on the work ladder. Work placements for the unemployed are provided (via jobcentre).
- The work with Nursery/pre-school groups helps children develop in a natural environment; giving them experiences that they may never have. They learn where food comes from through planting and growing their own fruit/vegetables which they then take home.
- School holiday activities with children and families (national Feeding Britain campaign) ensures that children from some of the most deprived families in South Tyneside have food and learning activities to do when schools are closed. As well as providing families with lunch (which they may not have had otherwise) activities such as arts/crafts, sports, woodwork, gardening (planting/harvesting fruit/veg) and creative play are made available. All activities are put together and delivered by volunteers.
- Food parcels made from produce grown onsite are given out to local residents.

Due to the commitment and achievements of our volunteers at the Garden, in early 2021 we were nominated (and later awarded), by members of the local community, for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

Created in 2002 for the Queen's Golden Jubilee, QAVS awards have been shining a light on the fantastic work of voluntary groups for many years. Equivalent to an MBE, QAVS are the highest awards given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and they are awarded for life.



The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups



MATRIX YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICE

In partnership with The MATRIX, NECA works with young people under 18 in South Tyneside, their families and carers. This free and confidential service provides help, support and advice to those whose lives have been affected by drugs and alcohol misuses, or those who are at risk of developing drug and alcohol problems.

The MATRIX Young People's service also continued to fully operate throughout the lockdown periods utilising innovative ways of working in keeping people safe. The most vulnerable young people have continued to be seen via outreach garden visits or on site.

They offer advice and information on a wide range of issues including substance education, minimising harm, reduction plans, treatment, counselling, and are able to contact and work with other services where appropriate. The team has a nurse to help with any health related needs and we are a C2 Card outlet for young people to access free contraception. We also provide support to families and carers.

MATRIX continues to work in partnership and continues to provide a holistic approach in meeting young people's needs. They were also able to welcome visits from both the new chief executive of South Tyneside Council Jonathan Tew and the lead member for Children Young People Counsellor Adam Ellison. The visits were a huge success with extremely positive and complimentary feedback regarding the offer to young people and the dedication and commitment of staff.



NECA HQ FUNCTION

2020-2021 was of course a very challenging year for all, and within NECA HQ function we had to find new ways of working together as a tight team to ensure we provided the same functions as we have always done for the whole of NECA.

From 24th March 2020 all HQ staff were working remotely from home, and available for full support to services. We had to find new ways of working, new ways of communication amongst the ever changing landscape of the pandemic and the lockdown that followed. Supporting both services which were also working remotely to those essential services which remained open.

Aside from being contactable for any queries/concerns staff may have had, HR also sent regular weekly updates to all staff via email, providing the most up-to-date information we had from the government and local authorities. Providing advice on self-isolation, advice to staff who were clinically vulnerable, advising on how to stay safe (both at home and in the workplace), and new government mandates as and when they were implemented.

