

Press Release

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Raising awareness of mental health support

The North East's largest council is highlighting the importance of mental health support and services ahead of World Mental Health Day this coming weekend.

To mark World Mental Health Day on Sunday 10 October, Durham County Council is supporting its commissioned service, the Stamp It Out Partnership Hub, to focus on inequality with the theme 'Mental Health in an Unequal World'. The World Health Organisation recognises World Mental Health Day each year, with the theme set by the World Federation for Mental Health.

This year's theme underlines the pressing need to focus sufficiently on health beyond the physical in a sustained way in a world still struggling to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Cllr Paul Sexton, the council's Cabinet member for adult and health services and its Mental Health Champion, said: "As a council we are committed to helping people improve their wellbeing, both physically and mentally.

"World Mental Health Day is a timely reminder for us all to look after our mental wellbeing, particularly following the uncertain times we have all experienced since early 2020 when the coronavirus pandemic hit.

"If you feel that you are struggling with mental health issues, please take the time to make yourself aware of the various help and support that is on offer. Don't suffer in silence because it really is okay to not feel okay."

To coincide with World Mental Health Day, the Stamp It Out Partnership Hub has launched a new website where teachers, young people and families, workplaces and community groups can access a range of free resources, find out about the partnership's campaigns and events and sign up to become Anti-Stigma Ambassadors. The partnership hub is led by Anti-Stigma Ambassadors who are people of all ages with personal lived experience of mental health issues and conditions and who have a passion for challenging mental health stigma and discrimination.

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Stamp It Out is inviting the public to take part in training to become Anti-Stigma Ambassadors, so they can help create change for the benefit of all living in County Durham.

On Tuesday 12 October, from 3pm to 5pm, members of the public can attend the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Network, which works to improve outcomes for children, young people and families. Places for the online event can be booked at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-emotional-wellbeing-tickets-171260002277

Daniel Gent, lead Anti-Stigma Ambassador for young people, said: "As an Anti-Stigma Ambassador, I have been able to leave a mark on the area that I live in and use my own experiences to make a change in how mental health is viewed in the community, as well as raise awareness of the impact that mental health has on people.

"I have been given the opportunity to focus on young people and give them more of a voice in these trying times and ensure that the help they reach out for is tailored for them and for what they need, as well as giving them someone who is always there to listen."

Depending on skills and interests there are many ways for people to get involved and have a voice in helping to change attitudes towards those living with a mental health condition or experiencing mental health issues.

Chris Affleck, Stamp It Out co-ordinator and Mental Health Lead with Investing in Children said: "Mental health affects all of us in some way as one in four people will experience a mental health problem each year in England, and this figure may rise given the challenges people have experienced during the coronavirus pandemic.

"The Stamp It Out Partnership Hub works to promote and protect the health of the public, particularly those living with mental health conditions, in County Durham and the surrounding areas. This is done by educating the public in all areas relating to mental health conditions to reduce stigma and discrimination towards people who experience mental health problems and to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of poor mental health."

Ahead of World Mental Health Day, Stamp It Out will also be producing a What's On Guide with a list of activities, events and training available for individuals and groups, as well as a Top Tips Guide on how people can support World Mental Health Day.

Those interested in becoming an Anti-Stigma Ambassador, signing up to be a member of the hub, or who would like to find out more information about Stamp It Out can go to www.stampitoutcountydurham.co.uk

For local mental health care and support services in County Durham visit www.durham.gov.uk/adultmentalhealthsupport

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Notes to editors

Please see attached images.

Image one, from left, Chris Affleck, Stamp It Out co-ordinator, and Daniel Gent, lead Anti-Stigma Ambassador.

Image two, the World Mental Health Day logo.