

SHEFFIELD CIRCUIT MENTAL HEALTH GROUP

Stage One Application: Report for District Leading Team

July 2022

I. Our vision, journey, team and understanding of what fruitfulness will look like

Our vision is for every Church within our Circuit to be a place where people's Mental Health, both within their Church community and their wider community, to be taken seriously; with the Church trained, equipped and empowered to support those communities in their Mental Health, providing safe places for people to worship and explore the Christian faith.

As a Circuit, we have been on a journey with this Mental Health work over the past 4-5 years. It started with Tim Jansen, then youth worker at Wesley Hall, running sessions for parents of young people he was working with on supporting their children in their Mental Health. It's grown from there, firstly by enabling Tim to undertake the MHFA Training so he could deliver the MHFA Adult – and then Youth – course; then by commissioning Tim to undertake a Consultancy Report on Mental Health within the Circuit which was completed in April 2020. Tim has been in post since as a external consultant up to the current point where, at the March 2022 Circuit Meeting, they asked the Mental Health Group to focus on the development of a role for a “Wellbeing Officer plus Crisis Expertise”. The group was asked to bring a proposal, job description, person specification and funding options to the CLT in time for the June 2022 Circuit Meeting. That has been done, with both CLT and Circuit Meeting approving our proposals.

The Circuit have agreed to put £8,000 / year for 3 years for the role (Person Spec and Job Descriptions attached), with permission to apply to yourselves and other funders for the remainder of the funding. The Mental Health Sub-Group is made up of: Louise Etherington, Jenny Bywaters, Neil Harland, Jonathan Buckley, Helen Reah and Jill Pullan.

Fruitfulness

The majority of our Circuit Staff, Lay and Ordained, have undertaken the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Courses over the past two years with Tim Jansen. A number have been able to share examples of the difference that the training has made in their Ministry, as well as benefitting from the on-going support offered by Tim in times of crisis.

Tim has also been able to support local Churches in developing Mental Health related projects in their local communities. Two examples of this include:

- Working with Greenhill Methodist Church to develop a Male Suicide Prevention Group, providing the men who attended the group to process the

Mental Health related challenges that they were facing in ways which were relevant to them.

- Providing the MHFA Training to volunteers at Parson Cross Initiative, enabling them to support members of the local community who access their community activities.

Building upon this work, we are seeking to train Church Members and key volunteers across the Circuit in Mental Health First Aid, as well as new staff (Lay and Ordained) as they join the Circuit. We would like to see at least 2 people per Church who have completed the training so that Churches across the Circuit are better equipped to support people, both within their Church Community *and* their wider community, in their Mental Health.

Once people have completed the training, this role would seek to work with local Churches to develop local community projects around Mental Health Wellbeing. As a result, we believe this post could be part of the wider Methodist New Places for New People, helping Churches to provide safe worshipping communities for those struggling with their Mental Health.

From the contexts that the group know between them, which is by no means all of the circuit, we feel that this role could be an important step forward in setting a positive mentally healthy culture across the circuit and have a transformative impact on the communities we serve. Once the nature and purpose of training and support is pro-actively introduced to local members we believe it will be recognised as an opportunity and a blessing.

II. Practically testing of vision

The process that our Circuit Meeting asked us to undertake in March has really helped to test and shape our vision. We have intentionally invited three new people to join the group since then – Neil Harland, Jenny Bywaters and Louise Etherington – who have been able to share their expertise and wisdom to the group. The discussions at the CLT and Circuit Meeting in June has further helped that. We would see this Stage One and Stage Two application to the District as a key part of that testing process over the next 4-5 months; alongside conversations with other Circuits within the District.

III. Further exploration before Stage 2

We would want to have conversations with other Circuits within the District to see whether there this was a piece of work which other Circuits would like to partner with on; we are open to the possibility of the role being a full-time one spread over multiple circuits. Tim Jansen has indicated that he has done some work within the Rotherham Circuit around Mental Health, and other Circuits will have done work as well.

We would be interested if DLT were aware of any individuals, Churches or Circuits who would be interested in such conversations.

We would like to apply for £20,000 over three years from the District Transforming Mission fund.