



# Support Session Welcome Pack



**“It's changed my life for the better”**

## **Where and what are the support sessions?**

Our support sessions are based at the Zion Community Centre. A few kind staff and volunteers offer a small group of people a listening ear, a warm meal, wellbeing activities and a safe space. We can support you to explore options to support your mental health.

The address is: **The Zion Centre, 339 Stretford Road, Hulme M15 4ZY**

## **How do I get there?**

You can reach the sessions by public transport. The bus stop you need is Hulme Library. Any bus going along Stretford Road is the one you need. We can meet you at the door and we can help you plan your journey. If you are really struggling to attend for the first time, we may in some circumstances be able to provide a taxi.

## **Can I leave my car or bicycle somewhere safe?**

Yes, you are able to park your car around the neighbouring streets for 3 hours at no cost and there are usually lots of spaces. There is a safe place in the garden to leave your bike.



## Who will I see there?

Our supportive staff are all very good listeners and will take care of you.



**Dionne (she/her)** Can help you to find opportunities to volunteer or take part in activities to support your mental health.



**Verity (she/her)** is a Support Worker. She also runs other activity sessions. She will help you to access the support you need.



**Tara (she/her)** is our Manager. She is there to listen and make sure that the sessions are safe, helpful and supportive.



**Darren (he/him)** is our Administrator and he helps us all to stay organised. You might speak with him on the phone before your session.



**Eddie (he/him)** is a Support Worker. He used to be a volunteer and now he works for Manchester Mind.



**Nima (he/him)** is our chef and Support Worker. He will usually cook your meal but he is also there to help.



You can also speak with an Advice Worker in our session about your benefits, housing and debt.

Volunteers help out too. They have their own lived experience of poor mental health and are there to provide some peer support.



## What do I do when I get to the Zion Centre?

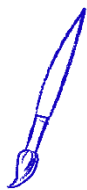
When you first come in to the building, there is a reception. This reception is not run by Manchester Mind, but by the Big Life Group who manage the building. You will be asked your name and who you are visiting. You can just give your initials or your first name if you like. Tell them you are coming to the Manchester Mind Support Session. They will direct you to the room, which is on the ground floor. If you would prefer, Darren can arrange to meet you at the front door or you can call Darren before you enter the building.



Darren's number is: **07759 832 955**

## What is the room like?

We have a large room with a communal table and large windows which look out into the garden area. There are also a couple of smaller tables you can sit at if you prefer not to sit at the large table and a table to sit more privately to talk if you need that. We can also use the lovely garden if you need a moment to speak outside of the group. Tea, coffee and snacks are available and you will be offered a meal.



On the tables there are colouring pages, items and activities to help you relax. We play gentle music on a large TV unit very quietly. We try to keep the room at a nice temperature, but we also have blankets if you need them for comfort.

The chairs are plastic without arms. If you require a larger, softer or sturdier chair for any reason, please let us know in advance and we can organise this for you. The room is accessible for wheelchair users. We have natural lighting from the window. We can open the window if you like.



## Do I have to do the activities?



No. This is your session, and you can decide what you want to do. We are there to listen and help you, and also just to spend time with you if you are in need of company. The activities are there as an option to help manage any anxiety you may experience, for enjoyment and to support your wellbeing or to aid relaxation.

## Will there be lots of people there?

No. There will be 2 or 3 staff and usually 1 or 2 volunteers and we invite a few people to the sessions. No more than 8 people will come and you will be given a time slot. Most people say it is a calm and helpful place to be and that coming helped them to feel less isolated and access support.

## Will I be safe there?

Yes, we will keep you safe. All staff and volunteers have a DBS check – this is a document charities are required to check to keep activities safe. Staff are trained in physical and mental first aid and will help if you are hurt or struggling.

Our volunteers have lived experience of poor mental health and have also been trained to support you if you need them.

Please let us know if you are feeling anxious or need help. There are quiet spaces, and private spaces for you if you need.



At your first session we will look through our **safe space agreement**. It is a set of guidelines where we agree to treating each other with respect and keeping ourselves and others safe whilst in the session.



## Is it confidential?

As it is a small group setting, the discussions in the room are not always confidential. We do ask all people attending to respect privacy if people share things about their lives. A big part of what is helpful about the session, is that it is an opportunity to find peer support. It's normal to find it difficult to open up, and you may feel nervous about sharing your experiences with others, but it can be helpful to remember, they are also attending for support and probably feel or have felt the same, or similar ways to you.



However, **everything is a choice** and you can choose how much to share with the group. If you wish to share something you want to keep private with only our staff or volunteers we can support this.

Anything you tell Manchester Mind **will be kept confidential** unless we are concerned you may be unsafe, at which point we may need to speak with someone else and share information to support your safety. If this happens we will tell you and speak honestly with you about it.

## How much do I have to tell you?

You can tell us as much or as little as you need and want to. When you or the person who supports you complete the referral for the session, the details you share then will be passed to us confidentially. This means, that we may already know some of the reasons you need help, so you don't have to tell your story again if that is difficult for you. Staff and volunteers will give you opportunities to reflect on your experiences and look at support options without having to share upsetting details.

### **When are the sessions and how long do I have to stay?**

The sessions are on Mondays and start at 10am and finish at 1pm. Some lunch is served at midday. You are welcome to come at any time and stay for as long or as little as you want. If you want to speak with our Housing Welfare Rights Worker, you will be given an appointment time in advance by Darren.

### **How many sessions can I attend?**

Usually people attend the session once or twice, but you can attend until you feel we have been able to support you with your mental health, or personal situation. We can help you to access other services if that is helpful either with Manchester Mind or another organisation.

## **Is there food at the session?**



Yes, we always provide a balanced meal at no cost. This usually includes vegetables that we grow ourselves at our Allotment Project, which are organic and full of nutrients. We can cater for any dietary requirements you have. Lunch is served at midday. You can choose whether or not you eat. You can also opt to take your meal home with you.

If you are struggling to access the food you need or want, this is something we can help you with in the session. We have some options to help you including emergency food, meal kits and cooking sessions. We can also help to check your income is maximised and offer advice and support around finding and affording food.



### **Did you know?**

Over half of adults in the UK feel their mental health has been affected by the cost of living crisis

### **What can the Housing Welfare Rights Worker help me with?**



We know that managing benefits, work, housing and debt can be a great source of anxiety. Our workers can check you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to, or to make applications. There are many options they can explore with you to help you to overcome some of the pressures you may be experiencing.

### **What type of mental health support can you offer?**

We will help you with any mental health issues. We can simply listen, or we can provide information and resources, which may help you to understand your mental health better. We can let you know about the activities and groups we have at Manchester Mind to support you and also the activities other organisations have available, and we can help you to access those.

If you are struggling to communicate with your care team, we can sometimes help with that too.

### **Can I come if I am in crisis?**

Yes, please come to a support session if you feel you are experiencing a crisis. We will do our best to make sure you can keep yourself safe and help you to explore options to improve things.



## What if I can't make it because I am struggling with my mental or physical health?



We want to let you know that there is **no shame** in not being able to attend. It is common to find attending any kind of activity difficult when you are struggling with your health.

We also want to tell you that **it is ok, not to be ok** at the sessions. We have staff and volunteers to support you.

It is also fine to take time out of a session or to leave early if you need.

## How will I let you know if I am not coming?

A few days before the session, Darren will either call or text to check if you are able to attend. If at any point you realise you will not be coming we would be grateful if you could let us know. You can also do this the morning of your session.

You do not need to explain why. You can simply send a  or  emoji or a **yes** or **no** answer. If we receive these replies we will not ask you for any further explanation. Knowing about attendance helps us to plan better sessions and to use our resources more efficiently. We will invite you to try again another time.

If you are unable to make a session a few times, we will attempt to contact you via telephone to see how we can help. If there is something you are worried about, we may be able to make adaptations and/or make a plan with you to help you feel more able to attend.

If you change your mind about attending, that is fine, we may be able to suggest another service within Manchester Mind or the local community that suits you better.

## Can someone come with me?

Yes, if it would help you to bring a friend, carer or support worker with you that is fine.

## Where can I smoke or vape?

You can't smoke or vape in the room, but there is a large communal garden area where you can.

## Are there toilets?

Yes, there are gender neutral toilets in the building on the ground floor. Each toilet is in an individual cubicle with a wash basin and a hand dryer. There is also an accessible toilet for people with additional needs and you do not need a special key.



If you have any other questions please call us on

0161 769 5732

We will try and answer them for you

