



OPT-in

Newsletter

**Spring
2015**

Keep active Take notice

Give Connect

Learn something new

Spring into action!

Spring is just about here now and as it gradually starts to get warmer people often start to think about how they get more active or go out more. There are lots of opportunities to get involved in the many groups at **Opt-in**, but there are also lots of things to do and get involved with across Tameside with a whole range of different organisations.

One way to be doing more and helping others is by offering your time as a volunteer. You can sometimes just ask at the place you want to help out at or you can go to the Volunteer Centre

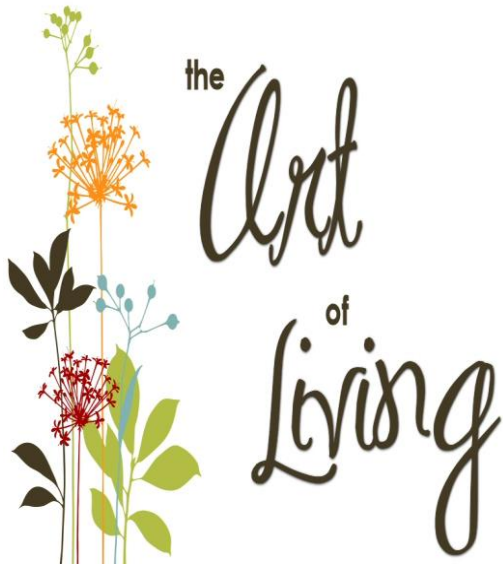
**Volunteer Centre, 95-97 Penny Meadow, Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 6EP**

0161 339 2345 volunteercentre@cvat.org.uk

Another way of doing more is through Time Banking This is a skills exchange project where 1 hour = 1 point in your local Time Bank.

“Local people get to give their skills and get back skills that they need e.g.an hours gardening could be exchanged for baking a cake!”

They are based at Penny Meadow so same address and same phone number, or email at: julie.cunliffe@cvat.org.uk



Keith on Art, Wellbeing and Education

Nearly 3 years ago Keith had just finished his counselling and was introduced to Opt-in at West Villa (our base at the time). His love of art took him to the Monday Art Group, here his talents were spotted by Karen who encouraged Keith to join the Friday Art Group at Tameside College where he flourished.

Keith was able to enrol on to the Colleges level 2 BTEC Art and Design course where he was described by one of the course tutors as “by far the best at drawing in his year”. Nearing the end of the course Keith is set to progress to the Foundation Course next year.

“Joining Opt-in is a way into education for people who never would have believed that they could do it. Art is important for people’s wellbeing and creativity. It can be an important escape from day to day problems and worries and a good way to meet like-minded people and make new friends. Joining Opt-in has helped me to move on and progress further and further in education. Who knows what the future might bring now!”

Many thanks to Keith for volunteering to help out at the Friday art course despite being kept busy with his own BTEC course work.

Wellbeing Recovery Learning College

This month work starts to gather together a partnership of different organisations to look at a wide range of learning groups and sessions. We want as much involvement of our members as possible in what goes on in the college so we will be asking people to get involved in looking at what courses you might want, how they should be run and where possible help running and designing them. So watch this space!

For the second year now Opt-in has been part of Greater Manchester Police's Community Projects Placements as part of police officer training.



It has been a great opportunity for trainee police officers to find out about the work we do and listen to some of the views of our members.

Here some of the members of the green group are sharing their day out to The Brushes at Stalybridge with Pc Paul Buckley and Pc Martin Jones pictured at the back. Both really enjoyed the day and especially meeting the people in the group and said that they will come along when they have a Wednesday off (but might wait till the weather improves).

Paul and Martin said that their time at Opt-in had been a learning experience and fun." Usually we just deal with the situation in front of us but now we have got to know all of these people and their stories we have a bit more understanding".



New card making group

Come along to St Marks at Dukinfield to take part in card making sessions 1.00 – 2.30. With all the materials provided to make your own creative designs- you can make really unique and personal cards. "I find it so relaxing that the time just flies by" – Ellen.

Yes I Can Read! - James' story

“When I was at school teachers stopped teaching me how to read. I had always found reading difficult and had fallen behind and no matter how hard I tried I couldn't catch up. The teachers said I didn't try hard enough. They gave up on me and I gave up on myself. I felt embarrassed, humiliated and thick.

I have spent my life trying to hide the fact that I can't read and have always tried to get myself out of or avoid social situations just in case someone asks me to read something. All of this has had a terrible effect on my mental health and over the past 20 years I have become more and more socially isolated.

About a year ago I started the **Opt-in 2 to Read** reading scheme with Wendy. We meet every week for about an hour and I go through the Yes We Can Read book at my own pace. Everything is calm and there is no pressure. Slowly but surely I have worked my way through the book and I have found I can read more and more. When I was a child I didn't read any books and now I'm catching up and am half way through Treasure Island! It's amazing how you can get lost in a book- and something else I've just found out is that reading helps to keep my voices away. I don't know how, but somehow it seems to drown them out.

I know my social isolation won't be changed overnight but I'm working on it. I'd always believed that I would never be able to read properly and now, for the first time, I know I can.”

If you know of someone who would benefit from the 2 to Read scheme please pass the information on to them. Likewise, if you feel you would like to be a 1 to 1 reading coach, then please contact the OPT-in team.

GARY AT THE GREEN GROUP

Gary has just started going to the green group and gives his views of the benefits for him as well as a description of their day at Dovestones

The bus journey was around 30 minutes taking us to Dove Stones Countryside & Reservoir. After a short trek up the hill there were toilet blocks in case any wanted to go, then a greater trek took us on winding paths and a small hill incline to a seated area where we had our packed lunch and drinks.

Andy & Karen had taken with them binoculars and a small movie camera. That was put to use taking in the wildlife birds, squirrel and most of the time handed out to the group.

Being there on this trek and taking in the views was much better than seeing on television or looking at a magazine. It was a real experience and with the weather being cool with some exercise warmth with breaks at intervals for seating made the day go well.

The health benefits that the Green Walking Group provides could be helping someone who is becoming agoraphobic or has lost a loved one with bereavement or has a low mood because of possible life problems. It could be a door to the living countryside atmosphere and provide some exercise releasing endorphins in the body to boost a cheerful attitude to life.

**I've got 99
problems and
86 of them are
completely
made up
scenarios in
my head that
I'm stressing
about for
absolutely no
logical reason.**

kushandwisdom.tumblr.com

A number of people came along to our Understanding Anxiety sessions on Fridays at the Denton Social.

The group looked at what stress is and how we need some stress in our lives to motivate us to do things but too much stress leads to the body going into Fight or Flight mode.

Brenda described how she found it useful to look at how her anxiety was often made worse by how she thought about things.



Ceramics course

The first Opt-in/Tameside College NCFE Level 1 Award in Creative Craft Ceramics collaboration is completing soon with all of the students set to get the qualification. People found it both challenging and rewarding. “I was really chilled doing the pottery though the written work was a bit difficult at times. We all struggled together, including Karen (the course tutor), but we all helped each other out as well.” John – course student.

All the students made their own portfolios of work which included research from art galleries and the internet. Their finished pieces of work are being displayed in the art department of Tameside College. We are hoping to run the course again in the future at a time to be arranged later.

OPT-IN

Name of Group	Information	Where	Cost	When
Women to Women	Drop in and support network for women	Wilshaw House Wilshaw Lane Ashton-u-Lyne	£1.00 Unlimited drinks	Monday 10.00 – 12.00
English for Adults	For Adults who want to brush up on their English Please ring for further details	Wilshaw House Wilshaw Lane Ashton-u-Lyne	£0.50 Including drinks	Monday 11.00 - 12.30
Depression Support	Self-help group for people who have experienced depression	Wilshaw House Wilshaw Lane Ashton-u-Lyne	£0.50 Including drinks	Monday 1.30 – 3.00
Art and Craft Group	General art group All welcome – but please ring first to check we have spaces	New Charter Hub Wellington Parade Dukinfield	£2.00 Unlimited drinks	Monday 12.30 – 3.30
St Georges Social Group	All welcome – just drop in	St Georges Church Hyde	£1.50 Unlimited drinks	Tuesday 12.00 – 4.00
2 to Read	A new adult peer mentoring reading programme Please contact Wendy from OPT-in for further details	Various locations within Tameside	No cost	Various days and times
Basic Computer Skills	Please ring for details	Wilshaw House Wilshaw Lane Ashton-u-Lyne	50p Unlimited drinks	Tuesday 1.00 – 3.00
Craft Recycling Group	All welcome – but please ring first to check we have spaces	St Georges Church Hyde	50p Unlimited drinks	Tuesday 1.00 – 3.30
The Green Group is a walking & environmental group	All welcome – but please ring for further information	Meet up at various locations Please ring	No cost	Wednesday 9.30 – 3.00
Craft Ceramics Course	A 12 week course – make your own ceramic piece and gain a qualification	Tameside College Beaufort Road Ashton-under-Lyne	No cost	2 courses per year. Ring to confirm.
Dukinfield Social Group	All welcome Just drop in	St Marks Church Church Square Dukinfield	£1.00 Unlimited drinks	Thursday 12.30 – 4.00
Card making	Everyone is welcome	St Marks Church Church Street Dukinfield	1.00p For tea / biscuits	Thursday 1.00 – 2:30
Digital Camera Group	All welcome Please ring for details	St Marks Church Church Square Dukinfield	£1.00	Thursday 10.30 -12.30
Guide Bridge Theatre Group	All welcome Please ring for further information	Guide Bridge Theatre Audenshaw Rd Audenshaw	50p Unlimited drinks	Thursday 12.30 – 2.30
Music Group	All welcome Just drop in	The Station Hotel 2 Warrington St Ashton-u-Lyne	No cost	Thursday 7.00pm -9.00
Denton Social Group	All welcome Just drop in	Denton Methodist Church Hyde Road Denton	£1.50 Unlimited drinks	Friday 11.30 - 3.30
Tameside College Art Group	Art group leading to BTEC course Please ring for further information	Tameside College Beaufort Road Ashton-u-Lyne	No cost	Friday 9.30 – 4.00

Info on the go:

Thanks to Gary for his work on the Vox Tameside Mobi information web site and mobile phone app. All of the information about Opt-in groups and more can be found there.

<http://www.vox-tameside.mobi/optinproject.html>



Like our new Facebook page? Check out the page for info about our groups, what's going on locally and links to sites that may be useful. People can't post yet so for now let us know what you would like to see on the page.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Opt-in/325431360956843>



Contact the team at:

Wilshaw House

Wilshaw Lane

Ashton

OL7 9QG

mentalhealthinfo@tameside.gov.uk

0161 342 4383



Sadly missed
are:

Andrew
Amanda
& Ernie

OPT-in Staff team

Phil Greaves

Wendy Gough.

Karen McPartland

Andy Potts

Janet Northend

Executive Officers:

Martyn Heelam

James Flynn

Dorothy Ward

Anne K

Brian Jackson

Rachael McLellan

Colin Sale

Volunteers

Paul Heaton

Ken Dower

Johnny Barlow

Ray Knowles

Anne K

Keith Waites