

Proposal for the North Devon Link Service

Report of the Director of Integrated Adult Social Care

Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by the Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.

1) Recommendation

The Council and Devon Partnership NHS Trust together have conducted a public consultation on proposals to close the North Devon Link Service. The recommendation to Cabinet takes into account the feedback from the consultation and is as follows:

1. To close the North Devon Link Service Drop-in services that run from the Link Centres in Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe.
2. To note that the closure would include ceasing the short-term enabling support to those service users in receipt of Care Act 2014 eligible services. The Council and Devon Partnership Trust will assist those people to access alternative equivalent support.
3. To work with Devon Partnership NHS Trust and the Devon Mental Health Alliance to support all service users in their transition to alternative community support over a period of 3 months minimum.

2) Background

2.1 The North Devon Link Service was originally established in 1992 to provide a range of social, leisure, support, guidance and educational opportunities for adults with mental health issues that do not require specialist NHS care. Proposals are not based on service user numbers, but we know that 130 people have attended the centres in the last 18 months.

2.2 The service is delivered in three towns across North Devon (Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe), based in buildings owned by Devon County Council. The Council does not commission any equivalent services elsewhere in Devon; the Link Service is inconsistent with service delivery across the county.

2.3 The service is funded by the Council and managed by Devon Partnership NHS Trust (DPT) under a Section 75 agreement. The service costs £485k per year to run (mostly staff costs). The Council also owns the buildings, but it is the service and not the buildings which is subject to consultation.

- 2.4 The Council is committed to supporting adults with mental health and wellbeing needs in the best way that it can. To do this well we must constantly review everything we do to make sure people are getting the best possible outcomes from the resources we have available, and that access is as equitable as possible for everyone across the county.
- 2.5 The recommendation within this report means that people with [eligible needs as defined within the Care Act](#) will continue to have their eligible needs met.

3) Main Body

- 3.1 In 2022, national Community Mental Health Framework funding was used to establish the Devon Mental Health Alliance which has been working with local partners to develop services for local people, both directly and through wider community development. As a result, local people in North Devon can now access mental health support services in ways they could not previously. These new services are accessed through GP practices and the wider primary care team, and they are developing in reach and number.
- 3.2 During the consultation in February 2023, service users described themselves as having severe mental health needs or that their mental health needs are too complex to be managed in [primary care, but not severe enough for secondary care](#). They reported that they felt the drop-ins were the only support available to them.
- 3.3 While the Council acknowledges the strength of feeling on this matter, the service is commissioned to meet social care needs, it is not commissioned to provide support for mental health needs that are too complex to be managed in primary care.
- 3.4 In recent years, there has been a national focus and national investment to improve and develop the way community mental health services are delivered, and to address the gap between primary and secondary care. This means improved accessibility to mental health services and an increased range of support with the introduction of the Devon Mental Health Alliance (DHMA): a partnership between six voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations dedicated to providing support for people experiencing challenges in their mental health. The Alliance works in partnership with Devon Partnership NHS Trust to develop good connectivity across voluntary and community organisations, Multi-Agency Teams and urgent care services as part of the community mental health framework.
- 3.5 Devon Mental Health Alliance provides support to 1500 people each year across Devon, and staff are visiting the Link Centres to listen to service users about what they need in order to help inform their offer in North Devon. The Alliance is not expecting to replicate the Link Service, but it can provide drop-in group sessions and one to one support. They can also support people to access other mental health services offered in the local area, using a process referred to as a “warm handover” where they accompany people to help

them settle in. They also provide advice and training for people who run their own formal and informal peer support networks, and have recently offered that to a Link Centre Service user who has set up their own peer support group. (See appx 1 for examples of alternative services).

- 3.6 Each GP surgery, as part of a Primary Care Network, has a Mental Health Multi Agency Team (MAT) which can offer support in the first instance and refer people to Devon Mental Health Alliance or other community-based services. This new Multi-Agency Team approach in mental health establishes a shared approach to meeting population mental health needs. By establishing a virtual team across service boundaries, the MAT approach seeks to understand the needs of the whole person in the context of their support networks and communities and enable a single person-centred plan to be developed. The Mental Health MAT will also collectively ensure that available resources are meeting needs, developing future services and strengthening community assets in addressing any gaps in provision.
- 3.7 These services were not available at the time the Link Service started, and that forms an important part of the rationale for proposing the Link Service closure. With specific national funding provided to the NHS to develop community health and wellbeing support, and the new model of multi-agency teams and links with primary care, it is reasonable to question whether Council funding should be used to fund very similar services.
- 3.8 The successful transfer of the Holsworthy Link service to Holsworthy Youth and Community Hub, a community-led centre which offers a wide range of community support, also helped inform this proposal. It is a community-led centre which works with other organisations in the town and offers a wide range of community support sessions.
- 3.9 We have received interest from some organisations who would like to run various community groups from the Link Centre buildings, and we have also advised the DMHA that they can use the buildings to run sessions. This would be the case whatever the decision on the future of the Link Service as the buildings are not used all of the time. (The youth service run by SPACE will soon be co-located in the Barnstaple Link Centre for example).
- 3.10 The recommendation does not affect peoples' right to support under the Care Act 2014. Where it is identified that people have eligible care and support needs that require a Care Act 2014 assessment, we will ensure that one is carried out. In addition, all service users are entitled to request a care needs assessment.

4) Options

The tables below set out the analysis of options for the future of the North Devon Link Service. Option 1 is the original proposal set out in the public consultation. Following feedback from the public consultation alternative options have been developed. All options have been assessed against the same criteria and scored according to arrive at the recommended approach.

Option 1: the initial consultation. Score 22		
Close the North Devon Link Service drop-in service in Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe and work with current service users to confirm their needs and agree alternative support, including those in receipt of outreach support. Cease the short-term enabling support to those service users in receipt of Care Act 2014 eligible services, including assessments, and provide this support in different ways. Enable opportunities to think differently about the future use of the buildings. Targeted investment in the voluntary and community sector may be considered to support the development of alternative services if not readily accessible. A transition plan will be developed with staff and service users around the closure.		
Assessment		
Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	People currently using the service with Care Act 2014 eligibility will receive support in a different way.	5
Accessible local services delivered by CVS	The consultation period has seen increasing interest from the community and voluntary sector and several offers to host drop-in sessions and / or follow the Holsworthy model	4
Effective use of resource	Council Adult Social Care funding can instead be targeted to those with Care Act eligible needs, meeting our statutory duties. Best use of Community and Voluntary sector support that is already in place.	5
Promoting Independence	Reviews will indicate whether other support in the community is required. Information about other services will be made available.	5
Listening to consultation feedback	Drop-in sessions and one to one support will be offered by the DMHA, but it will not be a replica of the NDLS and will not be multiple times a week.	3

Option 2: Request from consultation response. Score 6		
Expand the services – open for more hours with open access. NDLS staff continue to provide support with more classes and groups.		
Assessment		
Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	This will continue to be a service for people without Care Act 2014 eligibility	0
Accessible local services delivered by CVS	No engagement with CVS	0
Effective use of resource	This option would cost more than the current service, with no budget identified to do this.	0
Promoting Independence	No evidence this would support people to independence	1
Listening to consultation feedback	Most of the feedback has been to keep the services as they are or return to pre-pandemic model.	5

Option 3: Request from consultation response. Score 11		
Create Specialist Hubs. Keep drop ins run by current staff. Maintain the buildings in each town. Allow voluntary/community organisations to use the building for groups and classes. Allow local business to use the buildings to reduce stigma and improve trust. Charge for the use of the buildings to generate income.		
Assessment		
Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	This will still be a service for people without Care Act 2014 eligibility	0
Accessible local services delivered by CVS	Groups delivered by the CVS will be more accessible.	3
Effective use of resource	Staff would not be delivering a statutory service and savings would not be delivered. Good use of voluntary and community sector	1
Promoting Independence	More services will be accessible.	3
Listening to consultation feedback	The service will remain open, run by the same staff with access to other services in the same place. But service users would not be able to leave their art projects and jigsaws out in between drop-in sessions as the rooms would need to be available for others to use.	4

Option 4: Request from consultation response. Score 4

Centralise the drop-in sessions in one building in one town with the current staff
An implementation plan will be developed with staff and service users around the closure of the remaining centres.

Assessment

Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	This will still be a service for people without Care Act 2014 eligibility	0
Accessible local services delivered by CVS	No engagement with community and voluntary sector	0
Effective use of resource	Staff would not be delivering a statutory service. Potentially some savings to be made.	2
Promoting Independence	People in areas without the service will be disadvantaged unless VCSE offer in other areas. Inequity of offer across North Devon	0
Listening to consultation feedback	This feedback was received from far fewer people than feedback to keep the whole service open.	2

Option 5: Request from consultation response. Score 9

Use existing NHS mental health funding to maintain the Link centres

Assessment

Service provision for people with Care Act 2014 eligibility	NHS funding is not based on Care Act eligibility but instead based on clinical need. That may mean an assessment of need for current service users	0
Accessible local services delivered by CVS	No engagement with community and voluntary sector	0
Effective use of resource	not the most cost-effective model compared to the Devon Mental Health Alliance and VCSE offers	2
Promoting Independence	Would not promote independence or recovery any more than the current model	2
Listening to consultation feedback	No change to anything	5

5) Consultation

- 5.1 The Council ran a consultation from 22nd February to 9th May 2023, publishing the consultation proposal and questionnaire on the Council Have Your Say webpage and posting the documents with a prepaid return envelope to the 130 people who had used the service since it re-opened in July 2022.
- 5.2 Following feedback from service users and their representatives, a further consultation ran from 6th November to 6th December 2023 to provide people with more information and expand on the consultation already undertaken. The second consultation proposal and questionnaire were published on the Have Your Say webpage and posted with a prepaid reply envelope to all people on the caseload (206), not just those who had been using the service.
- 5.3 All the responses received from the two consultations and the seven in-person visits have been taken into consideration in producing the impact assessment and the proposal.
- 5.4 We heard from some people accessing the service that due to their social anxiety, a large public meeting would not be appropriate for them. Meetings for service users were held at each of the centres in November 2023 including the Cabinet member for Adult Care and Health, and officers from the Council and Devon Partnership NHS Trust.
- 5.5 The Cabinet member for Adult Care and Health, Cllr McInnes and the Deputy Director of Adult Social Care joined Selaine Saxby MP to meet with services users in Ilfracombe in August 2023.
- 5.6 Further visits to the three centres took place with the inclusion of DCC North Devon members and representatives from the Mental Health Alliance in January and February 2024. These subsequent visits allowed service users and members to hear in more detail about the services offered by the Alliance and how they can help shape the further developments of the service.
- 5.7 Link Centre staff were issued with details of the proposal and given the opportunity to complete a questionnaire. There were two staff meetings, one was face to face and one via MS Teams. At these meetings staff were able to raise any questions about the proposal and put forward any ideas. A set of Frequently Asked Questions with answers, to reflect questions asked throughout the consultation, were circulated to staff. The subject has also been discussed at the Joint Consultative Committee where the unions were engaged.
- 5.8 A number of key stakeholders were also briefed through the consultation including:
- North Devon and Torridge District Councillors (via their Committee Services teams)
 - Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe Town Councillors
 - NHS, Community and Voluntary Sector organisations that had been involved with the previous consultation
 - Meetings have been held with local MPs, once for each consultation
 - Meetings were held for County Councillors from North Devon, one in person in February 2023 and two via Teams in March and October 2023.

- A frequently asked questions document with answers has been developed and displayed in the Link Centres.
- Briefings were sent to the local media and regular posts placed on the Council's social media pages.

5.8 Throughout this public consultation the Council sought views on a set of initial proposals. Having done that and listened to the feedback, proposals are now recommended to DCC Cabinet.

5.9 A total of 257 responses were received over the two consultations.

Consultation period	Postal	Online	e-mail or letter
22 nd Feb – 9 th May 2023	49	126	18
6 th Nov – 6 th Dec 2023	44	20	
Total	93	146	18

Due to the anonymous nature of the form, it is not possible to tell how many individual responses were received.

5.10 The main themes gathered from the responses were:

- That the Link Centres should remain open, they offer activities that are beneficial to support people's mental health, and a safe place to go.
- That if the Link Centres close then alternative services need to be offered with trained and skilled staff and help to access them.
- Increased pressure will be placed on other existing services that were felt to be lacking.
- That there are opportunities to be more creative with the buildings or consolidate into a single Link Centre.
- Concern about increased risk of suicide or crisis were expressed, but the North Devon Link Service is not a crisis service and is not commissioned to provide that support. DPT has a dedicated 24/7 urgent mental health service, which is the gateway for families and professional to access appropriate crisis support and intervention if someone is experiencing mental health distress, or for people worried about someone else's emotional state.
- That further training could be provided to staff, and the services could increase the reach they are having.

- An observation that one-to-one support is beneficial, particularly face-to-face, and in people's homes.
- There are other services that are more recovery focussed.
- Staff feedback was focused on understanding the implication of the proposals on their on-going employment and how it might impact the terms, conditions and entitlements of their employment.
- Staff wanted to understand what the process of closing the Link Centres would look like if the proposal went ahead.

6) Strategic Plan

6.1 Our ['Promoting Independence' vision](#) describes what we are trying to achieve for people who need adult social care services in Devon now or may do in the future.

6.2 It seeks to align to the [government's vision for adult social care](#), One [Devon health and care system strategy](#), and the [Devon County Council strategic plan](#) whilst articulating the distinctive role and objectives of adult social care.

6.3 Our ['Promoting Independence' policy](#) sets the policy framework by which we operate including how we apply statutory guidance in Devon and the ['Commitment to Carers'](#) underpins our approach to unpaid carers.

6.4 Our ['Living Well'](#), ['Ageing Well'](#) and ['Caring Well'](#) strategies describe how we apply this vision and policy to people aged 18-64, people aged 65+, and unpaid carers.

6.5 Our ['Annual Report'](#) or 'Local Account' assesses our delivery against our vision, strategies and plans each year, using national surveys, performance information, and activity/cost/spend data to compare with others.

7) Financial Considerations

7.1 The service costs £485,000 per year to run. Should the recommended option be agreed, allowing for notice periods approx. £323,000 would be saved in the remaining 8 months of the financial year, should 3 months notice to staff be served at the end of April.

7.2 There is no funding provision in the 2024-25 budget to continue the service, it would become an additional unbudgeted pressure should it continue in its current form

8) Legal Considerations

- 8.1 The lawful implications of the proposal have been considered and taken into account in the preparation of this report on the proposal set out above.
- 8.2 Legal challenges will always form part of any consultation that seeks views on proposals for change, this has been the case during the course of the public consultation. The recommendations within this report mean that people with [eligible needs as defined within the Care Act](#) will continue to have their eligible needs met.

9) Environmental Impact Considerations

- 9.1 This report has no specific environmental impact implications that are not already covered by or subsumed within the detailed policies or actions referred to therein

10) Equality Considerations

- 10.1 Where relevant, in coming to a decision the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
 - advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
 - foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding in relation to the protected characteristics (age, physical and mental disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership (for employment), pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation).
- 10.2 A decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.
- 10.3 In progressing this particular proposal, an [Impact Assessment](#) has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the [Council's website](#)

Members will need to consider the Impact Assessment for the purposes of this item.

11) Risk Management Considerations

- 11.1 This policy/proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken / included to safeguard the Council's position.
- 11.2 Devon's proposal to close the North Devon Link Service was accompanied by an [Impact Assessment](#), published at the start of the consultation. The impact has been updated to take account the consultation responses, including risks and mitigations.

12) Summary

- 12.1 Since 2022, there has been a national focus and national investment to improve and develop the way community mental health services are delivered, and to address the gap between primary and secondary mental health care. This means improved accessibility to mental health services and an increased range of support with the introduction of the Devon Mental Health Alliance.
- 12.2 Each GP surgery, as part of a Primary Care Network, has a Mental Health Multi Agency Team (MAT) which can offer support in the first instance and refer people to Devon Mental Health Alliance or other community-based services. This new Multi-Agency Team approach in mental health establishes a shared approach to meeting population mental health needs.
- 12.3 These services were not available at the time the Link Service started, and that forms an important part of the rationale for proposing the Link Service closure. With specific national funding provided to the NHS to develop community health and wellbeing support, it is reasonable to question whether Council funding should be used to fund very similar services.
- 12.4 The financial challenge facing the Council mean difficult decisions to cease services and funding must be considered. The starting point is to protect services that contribute to meeting our statutory duties. Although DCC Integrated Adult Social Care has funded the Link service for over 30 years, the vast majority of people who attend do not have eligible needs under the Care Act 2014.
- 12.5 The recommendation therefore is to close the Link Services in Barnstaple, Bideford and Ilfracombe, and to assist those Care Act eligible service users in receipt of outreach enabling support to access alternative equivalent services.
- 12.6 Should the decision be made to close the service, then service users will be supported in the transition to alternative community support and members of the Alliance will support that process.

Name

Director of Integrated Adult Social Care: Tandra Forster

Electoral Divisions: All North Devon Divisions

Cabinet Member for Integrated Adult Social Care and Health: Councillor James McInnes

Local Government Act 1972: List of background papers

Nil

Contact for enquiries:

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APPENDIX 1



North Devon Support

The Devon Mental Health Alliance is a group of six charities funded by Devon Partnership Trust to support people in Devon to improve their mental health. As well as running some services, the Alliance helps connect people to local organisations who can help them live happier lives.

The Alliance is completely separate from Devon County Council, and we have no involvement in any decision around the future of the North Devon Link Centres. We would like to offer our support to people using the centres, irrespective of any future decision, to help you to think about and potentially attend other activity taking place near to you. There is no pressure in making this offer – its completely up to you as to whether you take it up. We also know that you're likely well connected into opportunities available in your area - we can't guarantee that we'll find something that fits your needs, but we'll try our best.

Having a chat

Our Community Development Lead for North Devon, Phil Harris, can provide a one to one meeting to talk help connect you to other services or send you through some further information if you email him with some ideas about what you'd like to get involved with. Phil can also come to group sessions to talk to people together.

Phil is available at philip.harris@devonmind.com.

Other resources that are available

This isn't an exhaustive list of other services that are available, but hopefully it does provide an example of some of the other opportunities that take place in your area.

Drop-In Sessions

Devon Recovery Learning Community Drop-In Session – Bideford, Burton Art Gallery, every Monday, 10am to 3pm. In their own words 'you do not need to book, just turn up, sit quietly or chat with folks over a cup of tea and a biscuit; there is no pressure for you to do anything. There will be resources, creative activities and information that can help you keep well and have hope'. More information is available at: <https://devonrlc.co.uk/courses/north-devon-weekly-drop-in-and-recovery-library-2024-02-12/>

Devon Mental Health Alliance Drop-In Session – Gig Club, Barnstaple, from 13.30 to 15.30 on the 2nd Wednesday of the month. A welcoming space to come and get help for any challenges you might be facing, or if you just want a chat. You don't need to book, just turn up. More information is available by contacting karen.bloomfield@devonmind.com.

The Moorings at Barnstaple. Open from 6pm to 11pm Thursday to Monday. The Voice Meeting Rooms, Belle Meadow Court, Albert Lane.

The Moorings offer mental health support in a welcoming, safe, comfortable, non-judgmental, and non-clinical environment. Our experienced staff team is available to provide emotional, social and practical support if you are in crisis or feel you are heading toward a crisis situation. We offer support in person, over the phone, or via video call. You can come just for a chat, or to access one-to-one support from trained professionals. We also offer help in creating staying well and crisis plans, and support visitors to access other organisations that may be useful to them.

People using The Mooring will also be supported by our 24/7 helpline, which offers access to emotional support and information even when The Mooring is closed. There's no need to be referred and no need for an appointment.

Libraries Unlimited deliver services at libraries in Barnstaple, Ilfracombe and Bideford including deliver free drop in sessions and creative activities. More information is available here: <https://www.devonlibraries.org.uk/web/arena/ourlibraries>. These include:

- Barnstaple Board Game Café. Every Wednesday from 2pm to 4pm
- Barnstaple Come in and Colour. Every Friday 9am to 6pm
- Barnstaple Knit and Mix. Every Thursday 2pm to 4pm
- Barnstaple Wednesday Wanderers (55+). Every Wednesday 2pm to 3.30pm
- Barnstaple Wellbeing Wednesday. Every Wednesday 10am to 12noon
- Ilfracombe Creativity for Wellbeing. From 17th March, every Friday 11am to 1pm
- Ilfracombe Depression and Anxiety Group. Every Monday 11am to 1pm. (on short break to illness)
- Bideford Knit and Natter. Every Monday 2pm to 4pm

Step One provide online peer support and drop-in sessions to enable people to connect with others and access support. More information is available at <https://steponecharity.co.uk/courses-workshops/>

Libraries Unlimited provide digital access support. Alternatively, the Devon Mental Health Alliance is running a project to promote digital inclusion, and may be able to help you if you'd like to access on-line opportunities. Contact karen.bloomfield@devonmind.com for more information.

Standing Together provide a range of opportunities to connect with others looking to improve their mental wellbeing. Their facebook page is <https://m.facebook.com/p/Standing-Together-100077571435411/>

Physical Activity

Vista Wellbeing run a range of classes in North Devon, including free wellbeing walks which aim to improve your health and meet new people. They also provide fitness classes that require a £6 payment to access. More information is available at their website vistawellbeing.org.uk/ or email info@vistawellbeing.org.uk.

Biosphere North Devon also provide free wellbeing walks, focusing on the Braunton area at the moment. More information is available at <https://www.northdevonbiosphere.org.uk/events-calendar.html>.

The Ramblers charity co-ordinate short, accessible walks across North Devon. In their own words 'Everyone's welcome at Ramblers Wellbeing Walks: we're a friendly bunch and you're guaranteed a warm welcome'. Information is available at <https://www.ramblers.org.uk/go-walking/wellbeing-walks>. A detailed list of walks is available here <http://torridgewalkandtalk.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Torr-WT-Prog-Jan-Jun-2024.pdf>

Wander Women offer dedicated walking groups for women https://www.meetup.com/wander-women-north-devon/?fbclid=IwAR28Oa_Xv3qbaJdWgMPkkVhoZyQcDfeLsvP5-HY6JvBjLJdyDulDrc2QA2g

If you haven't had a physical health check recently and would like support to access one, contact karen.bloomfield@devonmind.com who can arrange to see if you're eligible for support from a member of our team.

Befriending

Age Concern provide face to face and telephone befriending services for people aged 60+, giving you the chance to speak to someone

<https://ageconcernnorthdevon.org.uk/befriending-service/>

Torridge CVS Befriending Service <https://www.torridgecvs.org.uk/aiming-reduce-isolation-and-loneliness-through-befriending>

Social Activity

Shuffleup – run board game sessions, focusing on providing an inclusive space for people looking to connect <https://www.facebook.com/shuffleupcic>

Ilfracombe Men's Shed. <https://www.facebook.com/ilfracombemensshed>

Bideford Men's Shed <https://discoverbideford.co.uk/bideford-directory/community-support-social-or-wellbeing-club/bideford-mens-shed>

Ilfracombe Mental Health Swims <https://www.facebook.com/mentalhealthswims.ilfracombe>

Bideford Harbour drop in 10am to 12noon <https://www.facebook.com/HarbourBideford>

Bideford Round Table Men's Group <https://www.facebook.com/BidefordRoundTable/>

Learning Opportunities

Devon Mind run a range of online learning opportunities, some of which are online <https://www.devonmind.com/find-help/courses>. Devon Mind can run dedicated courses in North Devon if we know there is a large enough group looking to access them. If this is the case, please contact Carolyn.sansom@devonmind.com.

Devon Mind can also support partner organisations to help them work with people facing mental health challenges through a free training offer. Again, contact Carolyn for an initial discussion – this includes mental health first aid and similar courses.

South Devon College offers free online learning opportunities around mental wellbeing, including accredited courses <https://www.southdevon.ac.uk/adult-learning>.

Step One organises online learning opportunities to support self-management around mental wellbeing. A list of courses is available at <https://steponecharity.co.uk/courses-workshops/>

The HOPE programme delivers a range of learning opportunities to support a broad range of different needs, including anxiety and depression. Information on their courses is available at <https://myhealth-devon.nhs.uk/local-services/hope-programme/hope-programme-courses/face-to-face-hope>

General Support

Talkworks provide open access, free talking therapy services (i.e. one to one support to help manage challenges you might be facing). It is possible to self-refer <https://www.talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk/>

Qwell are funded by Devon County Council, and provide free counselling services online. Sign up for support here <https://www.qwell.io/>

Online directories

There are online resources that point to other activity taking place in North Devon

- Joy marketplace – search in your local area for opportunities to connect <https://services.thejoyapp.com/>
- Devon Connect – provides a further directory of activity taking place in North Devon <https://devonconnect.org/north-devon-and-torridge>