

North of England Mental Health Development Unit

Director Biographies

Dave Belshaw spent the early years of his working life as an Outdoor Activities Instructor, taking groups climbing, canoeing and orienteering before moving on to train as a psychiatric nurse in the late 80's and then working in a variety of statutory and voluntary sector settings before eventually settling in community nursing.

Dave spent a number of years working in primary care as a CPN before moving into management, covering primary care, crisis and deliberate self harm services.

A brief spell in project management followed before Dave moved to the Northern Centre for Mental Health, which quickly became the National Institute for Mental Health in England (NIMHE) and then the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP). One of only eight in the country Dave became the service improvement lead for the regional NIMHE development centre and established a service improvement team covering the North East, Yorkshire and Humber.

More recently Dave, for two years, was the national programme lead for Mental Health First Aid, playing a key role in establishing it as a successful national social enterprise, before becoming Head of the former NHS-hosted NEMHDU in September of 2009 and developing a strong network amongst the statutory agencies providing and commissioning health and social care.

Dave has a demonstrated record of commitment to the development of high quality services and systems and has a track record of delivering complex high-level projects.



Paul Johnson has worked for over 33 years within mental health in NHS, social care and third sector settings.

During his career Paul has focused a lot of his work on supporting and assisting service user and carer involvement and the development of service user led organisations.

He has also had experience as lead officer for a Local Authority on the regional disaster planning team and developing the Local Authority and community responses to major disasters within the region.



After spending 5 year working within the voluntary sector as Regional Director of a national charity he then moved back to the statutory sector in 2000. It was then he focused on involving people and communities within the development of services and care pathways with an emphasis on recovery.

This saw him working with Community Health Councils, Patient Forums, and establishing Patient Advice and Liaison Services and service user and carer monitoring of services. During this part of his career Paul was also a member of the executive board overseeing the amalgamation of Gateshead, South Tyneside and Sunderland's mental health services into the then South of Tyne and Wear Mental Health Trust.

Since 2004 he has worked with NIMHE, CSIP and the former North East Mental Health Development Unit, where part of his portfolio was also the Department of Health regional lead for coordination of Local Involvement Networks (LINKs).

Paul has developed strong working relationships amongst the voluntary and independent sector as well as local, regional and national service user and carer led organisations and networks and has resulted in Paul having the contacts and ability to deliver complex projects to very tight deadlines across diverse groups of organisations.

Paul has experienced mental health issues personally since the mid 1990s and has a demonstrated record of commitment to the development of high quality services and systems, with a track record of delivering high level projects with service user and carer focused outcomes.

Margaret Adams had a 45 year career in health, social care and education, working in the Middle East, Europe and most areas of the UK, inclusive of Northern Ireland.

Margaret worked closely with unpaid family carers to promote inclusion and partnership at all levels on a local, regional and national basis. She has been responsible for the development of South Tyneside Carers Centre, from the research or carer needs in the early 1990's, remaining as an active Trustee today.

Margaret is Chair of Healthnet Public Health Forum in South Tyneside – which has been used as a model of good practice by the Department of Health in relation to public involvement. She also chair of Bliss-Ability, working in partnership with the Local Authority, NHS South of Tyne and Wear NHS Trust and Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust.

Margaret remains a key link actively working for change through the Models of Care Board, regional networks for mental health and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers – where she is Regional Policy Representative influencing national policy for carers through research, campaigning and lobbying to ensure Carers remain part of the government agenda, developing policy which will improve the lives of unpaid family carers.

Margaret has a track record in strategic thinking, leadership and public speaking, with the inclusion of carers as a mantra.



Dr Hugh Griffiths has been a consultant psychiatrist in the North East of England since 1988 and for 8 years (until December 2002) was an NHS Trust Medical Director. In 2000 he also became Medical Director of the Northern Centre for Mental Health where he undertook a variety of work including the development of changing roles for consultants, support for medical managers and clinical leadership of the Mental Health Collaborative.

He was Director of Policy and Knowledge Management for the NHS Clinical Governance Support Team from 2003 until April 2004 and from then until April 2010 was Deputy National Clinical Director for Mental Health (England). Since then he has been the National Clinical Director for Mental Health (England). He continues in part-time clinical practice.



Julie Kilgour joined the NHS in 1979 after leaving school- initially working as a receptionist in various out-patient clinics before finding her niche in human resources (HR, or Personnel as it was known then!). Having worked in various hospitals across the North East, she then spent 15 years in Sunderland, 10 of these as HR Director at City Hospitals Sunderland. As a member of the Executive Board she was responsible for the HR and Organisational Development functions, as well as leading the Trusts approach to modernisation and service improvement, and a general management role including capital planning and project management. During this time she gained her Masters in HR Strategy.



Julie joined the newly formed NHS University (NHSU) in January 2003 as Regional Director for the North East, establishing its presence across the region through the development of partnerships and alliances with health and education, as well as leading on the development of a number of national programmes. During this time she was closely involved in the start-up phase of the organization, and although the project was relatively short lived she gained valuable skills in strategic and business planning, programme management and facilitation.

Joining the Care Services Improvement Partnership (CSIP) in early 2006 gave another change of direction and some different challenges, providing leadership and support for a number of service improvement teams, including mental health, learning disabilities, prison health and social care. The role also involved working closely with regional stakeholders in health, social care wider local government, independent and voluntary sectors.

Julie took early retirement in 2009, and since then has pursued her love of riding, walking, gardening, reading, and cooking. She currently works as a volunteer for the British Horse Society.



Oliver Wood has been a mental health service user for many years and has been part of the disabled people's movement for over 10 years. Oliver started out in 2003 as an elected member of the NUS Disabled Students Campaign committee, a position he held for 5 years and during which time he worked closely with the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) campaign. During this time Oliver was also a governor of both Newcastle College and Tyne Metropolitan College.

Between 2007 and 2009 Oliver was a member of the National Learner Panel, a further education reference group set up to advise government and key stakeholders on further education policy; Oliver chaired the panel in 2008/09.

From July 2008 to March 2010 when its powers were transferred to its successor bodies Oliver was a member of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) North East Regional Council, sitting on its audit committee. The LSC was a non-departmental government body responsible for planning and funding further education in England.

In late 2009 Oliver was elected as a governor of Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust, a mental health and learning disability trust. Oliver sits on the governor's audit, quality and membership sub groups and is vice chair of a group set up to improve the patient experience of care.

In early 2011 Oliver was appointed as a trustee of Mind in Gateshead, which became Tyneside Mind in March 2011. He is presently vice chair of Tyneside Mind and active in both quality and strategic planning sub groups.

Oliver has been an active member of the Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Service User and Carer forum for since 2010 and firmly believes in service users making decisions about the issues that affect their lives.

In August 2011 Oliver was appointed as an Ambassador for the Disabled Peoples User Led Organisations (DPOLO) programme run by the Office for Disability Issues. The programme aims to increase the capacity and sustainability of user led organisations.