

Quest

AMH New Horizons Foyle
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Meet people
facing the same
challenges as you
are, together you
can shape Quest

Finding your Future



Quest is Action Mental Health's BIG Lottery Funded WRAPP programme, delivered by AMH New Horizons Foyle



Action Mental Health

Finding your Future



Quest will not only provide support but enable you to reduce harm by giving you opportunities to get involved in practical activities which promote a healthier lifestyle.

Has alcohol impacted on your mental health?



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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following:

WRAPP (Western Regional Alcohol Prevention Programme) and The Big Lottery—who have funded the project and given us their continued support.

All participants, clients, groups: statutory, community & political, without you, our project would not be as successful as it is.

Thank you

Finding your Future





"I feel that this special partnership helps to reduce the fear and stigma attached to people with mental health and alcohol issues"

Other Partnerships

Maureen Slater from Foyle Valley House

Foyle Valley House has long established links with Quest and other programmes developed by AMH, to access educational activities, recreational and social events, health and well-being events and promoting 'fun' alternatives to alcohol. Our residents return from their days with Albert and the team, with confidence, and beaming smiles eager to show of the fruits of their labour.

I feel that this special partnership helps to reduce the fear and stigma attached to people with mental health and alcohol issues. The referral process is straightforward and user friendly. We have accessed varying programmes over the years and have always found communications easy and welcomed.

We would be unable to provide the wealth of knowledge, skill and expertise that is clearly delivered at AMH and particularly the QUEST programme and hope to retain our strong links for many years to come.

Rosemary Bradley from FHASS

I have found your service progressive and inclusive to a wide range of people in need of further support around alcohol issues.

Carmel Donnelly from Alcohol & Drug Service, WHSCT

As a Mental Health Nurse working in the Community Addiction Service I would like to highlight the importance that QUEST as a Service has offered clients with addiction problems, the opportunity to work towards a Recovery Journey and enhance structure to their daily routine. Often clients find themselves isolated at home and within society through the impact of addiction problems. The QUEST Programme has offered activities, skills and learning opportunities which have helped to rebuild individuals self esteem and self worth within a non judgemental supportive environment.

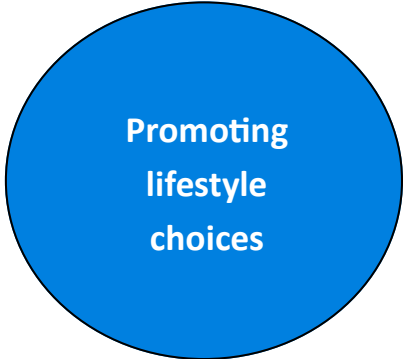
The transparency between referring clients from the Addiction Services to QUEST as part of a joint care plan has enabled positive change for many individuals recovering from addiction. It also offers a Harm Reduction approach for those individuals reducing their alcohol use and helping to ensure structure and routine to their daily routine.

It is a privilege to be able to recommend this valuable Service to our clients and I will continue to promote the dedicated work of the staff at QUEST who provide support to our Service Users.

QUEST

Contents

Page 4	WRAPP
Page 5	QUEST to Success
Page 6	What we offer
Page 7	Personal Stories
Pages 8 to 9	QUEST in pictures
Page 10 to 13	Personal Stories
Page 14	Other Partnerships
Page 15	Acknowledgements



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Western Trust and Community Working Together to Tackle Alcohol Misuse

Alcohol misuse has a widespread impact on our society, effecting individuals, families and the wider community as a whole. The Western Health and Social Care Trust has welcomed Big Lottery Funding of £1,198 million for projects in the Western area that have been set up to address alcoholism and help those with alcohol related problems.

This allocation of this significant funding to the Western Regional Alcohol Prevention Programme (WRAPP) will enable community and voluntary based projects included in the portfolio to address the harm caused by alcohol misuse. It will also allow organisations with the skills and expertise to tackle this problem locally.

Health Minister Edwin Poots said;

“Alcohol misuse is one of the biggest public health challenges we face. It increases the risk of cancer, cardiovascular disease and liver disease and can also lead to poor mental health and self-harm. Every year, there are over 12,000 hospital admissions with an alcohol-related diagnosis and it causes additional pressures on our emergency departments, with eight out of ten attendances due to alcohol-related injuries or problems.

Alcohol misuse has a devastating impact on our society – first and foremost to the individuals directly affected and their families and communities. But it also has a major impact on the health service, on social care, on the economy and on the criminal justice sector. In fact, a report commissioned by my Department highlighted that alcohol misuse alone costs us up to £900 million every year and almost £250 million of these costs are borne by the Health and Social Care Sector.”

WRAPP incorporates six Community and Voluntary sector projects (including 2 in AMH) and one Trust project as follows:-

- Catalyst Project – Solace, Arch Healthy Living Centre, Irvinestown
- Community Mobilisation Project, Derry Healthy Cities, Strabane
- Alcohol Support Project (Time Out) – AMH New Horizons Fermanagh
- Alcohol Outreach Project (Quest) – AMH New Horizons Foyle
- Supporting Families Supporting Communities Project – Action for Children
- The Fasten Programme – North West Counselling & Divert



Health Minister Edwin Poots pictured with members from Quest, Yvonne McWhirter and Nuala Campbell from WHSCT

“We are delighted that the Impact of Alcohol programme is supporting community based projects that are playing a key role in tackling alcohol misuse in Northern Ireland. “By working with the Western Trust we are building on existing experience and expertise in this area and using this funding to tackle the range of issues affecting people, families and the wider community that have resulted from alcohol misuse.”

Frank Hewitt, Big Lottery Fund NI Chair



“I settled in well and enjoyed getting up each day

Personal Stories

New Beginnings by Rachel

I was a lone drinker isolating myself from everyone to drink. I attended Quest for over a year and it changed my life in many ways. At the start I kept to myself and as my confidence grew I found it easier to get involved in all the activities and enjoyed the company of my colleagues. I settled in well and enjoyed getting up each day to attend, my colleagues were even coming to me for advice, this was new to me as I had spent so much time alone.

I am able to use my new skills in my daily life which keeps me very busy, I found new interests such as gardening and DIY, ‘I haven’t looked back’. Having left Quest, I am a much stronger person able to make positive changes in my life. I am so grateful to Quest for giving me the strength and the confidence to get my life back.

Looking to the future by Melanie

Having almost been on the streets with alcohol, I would like to emphasise the importance that Quest has played in my recovery. I am now volunteering and supporting people who themselves are having difficulties in their lives. I am now in a good place, where I can look to the future and like myself again.

The Other Side by Celine

I don’t know where it all went wrong, where it all changed, life I suppose, family flying the nest, mum and dad’s deaths, isolation, moved away from all my friends to come home....then I found it, my new friend.

Vodka.....made me feel good, made me relax, made me sleep better; who am I kidding!!! Me – only me.

Getting drunk every night as soon as my daughter and children went home, going to bed in oblivion, staying in bed for days, not getting showered not getting dressed. Every day the same, every night the same, drowning in a sea of vodka, depression and loneliness.

I realised I needed help.....finally.....went to the doctor and got referred to a mental health team, the suggestion was that I try Quest, but I had other ideas, I’m going to the off licence, I’m not going to admit I have a problem, so off I go.

Feeling rock bottom the next day because of my choice, I sat card in hand with Quest’s number, will I....won’t I? Eventually I called and spoke to Albert, he didn’t say come now, come tomorrow or be here at this or that time, he said “*come when you are ready, give me a wee buzz sure, I’ll show you around, if you like what you see, come back, start when it suits you, do what suits you*”.

That is what I love about Quest it showed me we are not all put in boxes, we don’t have to do what we don’t want to and the most important lesson of all from Quest is, look after number one. It took me some time to get here but I have never looked back, each and every person is fighting a battle, never judge anyone until you walk in their shoes. The people who walk with me every day don’t judge me because we are all together in this.....



“Quest opened a door to me where I could express myself and feel good both physically and mentally”

Personal Stories

One day at a time by Eamonn

My name is Eamonn, I am 59 years old and for as long as I can remember I have been struggling with alcohol addiction with its companions – depression and loneliness to name but a few. On January of this year, I was referred to Woodlea House which is a Drug & Alcohol Addiction Centre, I went through a detox programme after which I continued with one to one counselling. During this period I was introduced to Quest which is part of AMH New Horizons based in Springtown. I was apprehensive at first, but went to see what was on offer there and was surprised to find the activities that where there, gardening, wood-work, outdoor pursuits etc etc. I was accepted into the programme and started in March. After a few visits I settled in and enjoyed going there, I increased my time from one day per week to three days. I was made very welcome from both the staff and the clients to whom I could relate with even though we were at different stages of our journeys to recovery.

Quest opened a door to me where I could express myself and feel good both physically and mentally, so a big thank you to all at Quest. If you can relate to any of the above and you are given the opportunity to avail of the services on offer at Quest please do. I am glad to say I did and have remained alcohol free since doing so with their help.



Construction of the water feature at Foyle New Horizons

My Soulmate

My life used to be brilliant
I had met my soulmate xxx
He cheated on me and stole my soul ☹️
I self destructed tried to take my life
Locked myself away with my suicidal mind
And the bottle
The bottle was my new soulmate
It cheated on me also
It turned me into someone I hated
Someone I couldn't look in the mirror at
Then I found Quest, made brilliant friends
Who brought me back into life, with their laughter
Watering the garden, planting seeds that bloom
I feel like those seeds growing all the time
With the help and support that Quest has given me.

Thank You
Anonymous

“this isn’t like any other programme I have ever been on” or “this has saved my life”

Reducing the impact of misusing alcohol on individuals, families and communities.

QUEST to Success

The project has successfully engaged, supported and reintegrated clients into the heart of families, society and education; it has also created real opportunities for individuals to access economic activities. The project to date has received a total of 125 referrals from a range of sources including self referral, family supported referral, community groups, GP's and statutory bodies.

QUEST from its inception has remained focussed on keeping the programmed activity decisions within the client group, comments like “**I have never been asked for my opinion before**” or “**this isn’t like any other programme I have ever been on**” or “**this has saved my life**” vindicate all that has been achieved by clients, WRAPP, BIG Lottery and QUEST working in partnership with each other.

The evidence associated with the QUEST programme activities provides an insight to how many individuals have been enabled to dramatically reduce harmful levels of alcohol consumption and begin to identify how this was impacting negatively on their mental health.: One of many personal journeys identifies that his mental health and alcohol consumption where intertwined, and that only when he decided to reach out for help was that going to change. QUEST has established credibility and is recognised as a key provider of innovative programmes and flexible approaches, we network with many local groups, we share practices & knowledge and welcome learning opportunities .QUEST has gained recognition for its work through many local and regional sources , including professional bodies , Councillors', MLA's and MEP's . It has been reported on in press, talked about on air but more importantly recommended by service users.



Initial group activity to design the Quest Banner.

I didn't know the difference between a weed and a flower, I now know there is no such thing as a weed, it's just a flower growing where you don't want it to grow. It's nice to look at blank flower beds in November and come June and July see everything bloom and burst out full of colour

~Tony~.



What we offer

QUEST is an interactive way of addressing the complex issues associated with misusing alcohol and the associated impact on the individuals mental health , their families, carers and wider community. The project works collaboratively with the individual to identify triggers or patterns of behaviours which lead to periods of alcohol misuse or lifestyle decisions which are continually impacting negatively on their mental health.

The alternative options available range from:-

- Personal Development Programmes
- Stress Management
- Confidence Building and Negotiating Skills.
- Challenging Outdoor Activities
- Organic Horticulture
- Healthy Eating
- Mental Health Awareness
- Money Management
- Men's and Women's Health Courses.
- Team, Building
- Employment Options
- Further Education
- Voluntary Work
- Photography
- Catering
- IT
- Crafts
- Wood Occupations



“Basically Quest has made me the person I am today, confident, healthier and energetic.”

“I have built on my new found confidence by completing a level 2 food hygiene course, and a NVQ level 1 in catering....I have now got my life back”

Personal Stories

My Story by Ciara

From 2007 until 2012 I was in a very abusive and controlling relationship, most days was spent in fear of what was going to happen that day. The final straw happened after I was practically left for dead and had to take 4 weeks leave, at that time I was an Administrator and a part time night club worker.

I moved into my own home and the only way I could cope with the pain was turning to alcohol to numb and block out everything that had happened. Things got completely out of control and I ended up losing both jobs as a result of my drinking . My family and friends were really supportive but I just wouldn't accept their help or advice. I locked myself away for over 2 years and my day to day life was just drinking.

I ended up with severe anxiety and suffered panic attacks every day. My GP prescribed me loads of different medication and nothing worked, I just wanted to be left alone to drink and cry.

I wouldn't wish the pain I felt on my worst enemy, my life was going down the drain so fast and I thought I would never have a normal life again. My GP referred me to see a counsellor at Woodlea House who then referred me to Quest. I was absolutely petrified of meeting other people and I never thought I would have got through the first day.

Nine months later, I am still attending three days per week, it has been a lifeline for me, my anxiety, depression and panic attacks have gone, I've met so many lovely and genuine people. I couldn't be any happier since I joined Quest, it's like I have got my life back and have experienced a lot of different things that I never thought in my life I could tackle.

**Reducing the
resulting negative
impact on mental
health**

Starting Over by Eddie

In the past 18 months I have regained a life that I once would have considered lost forever. Since engaging with QUEST I have completed several personal development programmes, mental health awareness sessions, accredited horticulture courses and reduced my alcohol intake to almost zero levels. I do still enjoy a social able drink, but nowhere near the toxic levels that I once drank. I can see clearly now that my mental health was and continues to be an issue, but with the right support it's a manageable issue and that's the difference. QUEST gave me the confidence to consider my "Next Steps" so I have moved on from QUEST. I have built on my new found confidence by completing a level 2 food hygiene course, and a NVQ level 1 in catering. I'm not stopping there, I am now registered to undertake a NVQ level 2 in catering ... I have got my life back ,I have now got to the stage where I see a positive future, and who knows, I may fulfil a life-long ambition to work in the catering industry.



“Quest has given me confidence and lifted my self esteem , it has really benefited my mental health. There is an atmosphere in the building of happiness and hope.”

Personal Stories

QUEST for Success - John

My story starts from the age of 13, I started drinking because my father was mentally and physically abusing me. Drink took me to a safe place where I had no worries. I left my family home at the age of 14 and got myself taken into care at Harberton House, I was there for over a year before returning home.

My drinking eased up when I was in care because I wasn’t afraid of anything or anyone. On returning home my drinking started to get heavy as I started drinking vodka, again, I left home and stayed with my friend’s parents for 2 years. Still drinking heavily, I got my first job, unfortunately this lead to even heavier drinking. I started my first serious relationship and had my first child at the age of 19. This did not stop my drinking, although after my son was born the relationship ended and yet again the drink was the answer, I was now drinking day and night to numb the pain. Five months later I started another relationship and my drinking continued as it took me away from reality. Throughout the years I have sought help from my GP and many other outlets of which none changed my drinking habits.

I continued to use alcohol in my life until 2012 and was referred to the Northlands where I spent 6 weeks soul searching. When I left the centre I was 2 and a half years alcohol free, then in August 2014 my ex-partner stopped me from seeing my kids, I went on a bender drinking spirits for 16 days solid. At the end of 16 days solid drinking, I decided I had enough of life and I took an overdose, I ended up in hospital induced in a coma for one week to give my body a chance to recover, I was very lucky to pull through as the doctor told me my liver function test was the highest he had ever seen. After this I spent three weeks in Carrick Ward in Grangewood Hospital, this is who referred me to Quest.

When I first joined Quest I was very anxious and scared, I had no idea what I was getting into, the first few weeks I kept myself to myself as I thought I would be judged, little did I know that I would actually come out of my shell and be a totally different person. Everyone there made me feel very welcome, I was able to talk to people with the same problems, for the first time ever Quest has changed my life for the better. I have made new friends, I do gardening, days out and walking, things I never thought I could do.

Quest has given me the confidence and lifted my self esteem so much, if I didn’t have this programme I don’t know where I would be, it has really benefited my mental health. There is an atmosphere in the building of happiness and hope. This programme is the best thing I have ever done, Quest was and is the answer to my problems, I really enjoy every day I am there and the staff are absolutely brilliant.



A view overlooking the garden



“They have walked in my shoes and felt how I felt,”

Personal Stories

My Journey by Tony

It’s been seven years and I keep looking for the light at the end of the tunnel, that is what it is like suffering from whatever your problem is. Mine was drink, drugs and depression, if you can beat that, boy am I lucky.

I am a male, 63 years old and should be enjoying my retirement but in my case it ain’t happening. I would drink a full bottle of vodka a night, get up in the morning and limp off to work, I had to limp off to work as I am waiting to have a knee replacement operation. That is where, in my case the drugs came into play, the doctor gave me some heavy duty pain killers to get me up and moving, I had been on them for about six years until I got depressed, I started to use them to give me a lift and help me get through my day. Then one day I told my wife about my depression and how I was using my pain killers to help me try and beat it. I went to my doctors and told them what I was doing and asked what they could do to help me, he said that if I had a drink problem he could help me but as for drugs there was little help he could give me. I did the rounds of all the help groups in the City leaving no one out, this was all to no avail as no one could help me as they were all drink groups. My wife went online and found a clinic in Scotland that could help but at a cost of £7,500 for two weeks, we took out a loan from the bank and we used our house as a mortgage to get the money. I spent two weeks in hell in Scotland and a further two weeks in hell at home with no one to help. My wife found a group called HURT and made an appointment, the girl who was assessing me clearly saw that I was in a very bad state, she made an appointment for me to see Hugh my counsellor, boy could he read me like a book. There were days when I was calling in to see him and I had my mind made up that I would not talk about certain things, but Hugh being Hugh, before my session ended had me telling him everything and even more. It all helped but my sessions had to come to an end and they put me in touch with Quest. Quest, what can I say about them? I find myself surrounded with people who are all fighting their own demons, these are some of most honest people I have ever met in my life. They have walked in my shoes and felt how I felt, so now I feel I have help and some good people on my side. I don’t feel alone anymore and I am beginning to feel that this road that I am now travelling on may have some light at the end of it.

Quest is a hidden jewel located in the Springtown Industrial Estate in Derry/L ‘Derry in the building used by Foyle New Horizons and I hope a new horizons for me and all my friends who are on this journey with me. If I could give you a piece of advice, please please reach out as I did and get the help you are entitled to, it will help you beat this monster you are living with.

Warmest Regards
Tony

Ps. Don’t worry too much about what other people think of you, they are too busy worrying about what you think of them. As I have said before, I’ve met some very special people who, like me have joined Quest. We are all on the one road and we hope and pray that it helps us, each in our own way, to get well. There are lots of subjects that you can take, computers, arts and crafts, woodwork and my favourite gardening. I didn’t know the difference between a weed and a flower, I now know there is no such thing as a weed, it’s just a flower growing where you don’t want it to grow. It’s nice to look at blank flower beds in November and come June and July see everything bloom and burst out full of colour. We get to take home some of what we grow to eat ourselves plus the canteen do very well out of it too. I remember early on when we were replanting some seedlings and one of the guys said to me that this one doesn’t look as if it will make it and I said that’s a bit like us, so lets give it a chance like we’ve got and see how it turns out. I’m glad to say they all pulled through and heres hoping we all do too.

Quest in pictures



Group working on the glass Christmas Trees and Acorns—Hit the Bottle Project



A group out and about



Outbound Group out and about

Quest in pictures



'Hit the Bottle' Project

Team Building Activity at Quest



Group pictured after a Sponsored Walk for Chest, Heart and Stroke