



## Mastercall's visit to the Wellspring

*A behind the scenes look into the amazing work of the charity*

Our non exec Director, Tony Allen and our Marketing Manager, Kay Carter dropped in to the Wellspring with our Deputy Medical Director and on-site GP, Dr Mian.

We caught up with Paul, a Project worker and Alex, the Wellspring Manager as well as Sheilagh our on-site Advanced Nurse Practitioner to talk about all the fantastic work that goes on behind the scenes.

Before we hear from the above and our Deputy Medical Director, Dr Mian, we want to tell you a little bit more about The Wellspring.

### What is The Wellspring?

The Wellspring is a registered charity based in Stockport. It engages with the people of Stockport that are homeless or at the risk of losing their home. This means understanding the individual circumstances and needs of every single person they help. They provide free meals and hygiene facilities, clean clothing & rough sleeping resources, their health services, advice, and consultations are vital for the physical health and wellbeing of their users.

Their aim is to offer a cohesive and proactive resource centre that creates pathways and referrals to specialist services for substance misuse, adult learning, and life development.

The goal is for the people they reach to become independent with developed life skills that will guide them into a better future.

### How are Mastercall Involved?

Mastercall hosts health care services 5 days a week at the Wellspring, offering face to face drop in clinics, remote consultations and outreach, provided by a GP (Dr Mian) / ANP (Sheilagh Armstrong).

The Wellspring has a fully-equipped surgery space.

We are privileged to offer support to this fantastic charity.





**Name:** Paul Cornwall

**Role:** *Project Worker, The Wellspring*

**What is your role at the Wellspring and what does it involve?**

Project Worker – Problematic Substance use lead/Mental Health – All aspects of health/housing.

**How long have you worked there?**

6th year.

**How did you come to start working at the Wellspring?**

I have a lived experience of homelessness/mental health and problematic substance use – practice experience in working in the field of problematic substance use – mental health and recovery – I am also a researcher in the field of recovery from problematic substance use and addiction.

**What do you find most rewarding?**

Being of service and trying to implement factors of change that can have a positive impact in people's lives.

**What do you find most challenging?**

Working with the complexities of people's behaviours and the number of deaths we experience as we form relationships within our community.

**If you could sum up the Wellspring in 3 words, what would they be?**

Compassion, understanding and change.



**Name:** Alex Knight

**Role:** *Manager, The Wellspring*

**What is your role at the Wellspring and what does it involve?**

Manager- a bit of everything! Oversight of day to day operations, 1-1 support, finance, fundraising, strategy.

**How long have you worked there?**

11th year.

**How did you come to start working at the Wellspring?**

I did a 100 day social work placement in 2010. Following completion of my degree I came back and became a full time project worker in 2012.

**What do you find most rewarding?**

The people - meeting people, supporting people, working alongside people. Service users, staff, volunteers, directors, other agencies & members of the public.

### What do you find most challenging?

Individuals not seeing their own potential - the most challenging but also the most rewarding when we can support them & they do see it and achieve.

### If you could sum up the Wellspring in 3 words, what would they be?

Passionate, persistent & empathetic



**Name:** Sheilagh Armstrong

**Role:** Advanced Clinical Practitioner,  
Mastercall Healthcare, on site ACP at The  
Wellspring

### Can you tell us a little about the work you do at The Wellspring?

I work 20 hours a week over 3 days, the main responsibilities are:

**Listening** to people's story and finding out what they want/ need. Many of the people here are complex and Multi—disadvantaged, many service users have suffered recurrent Trauma as a child or an adult, this contributes to or is as a result of poor mental health. An open door and time is something few services have available to offer them – it is a luxury I can offer. The relationship built is often the first productive one with a health care worker and can reduce their feeling of exclusion.

**See and Treat** – for acute illness, injuries or infections providing assessment, treatment, dressings or advice.

**Venepuncture**, a significant number of the service users have or do use IV drugs, this makes accessing peripheral vein very difficult meaning they often miss out on necessary tests/monitoring. They find the experience in mainstream services embarrassing, painful and degrading. I will take the bloods with no judgement, or recrimination – both of which they can experience in Mainstream services.

### Seasonal Vaccination service

**Signposting** or referring on to other services.

**Health advice / reassurance**. Many of the people using the Wellspring health services feel or actually are excluded from other services and struggle with anxiety, they often have no one to just ask if something is ok or offer basic advice.

**Advocacy**. I advocate with other agencies on the service users behalf on health issues, helping them get the right prioritisation for appropriate housing, speaking with GP services, Social Care, Benefits agencies, other healthcare teams, sometimes on a 1:1 basis and sometimes as part of wider MDT meetings. I will attend appointments with them if necessary due to their fears and anxieties.

**Administration**, I will write letters or help complete forms applying for benefits or concessionary passes.

### How long have you been working there?

This is my 8<sup>th</sup> year here at the Wellspring; that continuity is a vital part of this role.

### What do you find the most rewarding?

Earning trust from people who struggle to trust. Making people feel heard when they often do not.

**What do you find the most challenging?**

- The lack of specialist accommodation for people with complex health needs which includes poor mental health + substance dependence.
- Other people's pre-judgement and belief that some are somehow not of equal worth and the effect of this attitude on people who already feels excluded from so much.

**If you could sum up the Wellspring in 3 words, what would they be?**

Recognition, Respect + Commitment.



**Name:** Dr Shah-Nawaz Mian

**Role:** Deputy Medical Director

**Can you tell us a little about the work you do at The Wellspring?**

I am able to offer an open GP surgery twice weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays where patients can be booked into or drop in on the day to be seen face to face. This is a fully equipped clinical space which was recently extended by the Wellspring to improve both patient and clinician experience. I am able to record observations, offer minor procedures and administer medications as needed to Wellspring users.

In addition there is a shared understanding that the staff can contact Mastercall 24/7 if they have any concerns re any users and we will prioritise any calls from the Wellspring staff and consider them for an "URGENT CALL-BACK."

We have also agreed to facilitate access for a face to face review by organising transport to our main base to attend an appointment. We often provide services beyond those expected from a GP surgery re; dressing changes, management of injuries which would usually involve attending the emergency department, administering IM medications and storing repeat medications in a safe secure environment.

We promote the work the Wellspring offer within our regional provider groups, LMC and PCN forums which I hope has resulted in an improved process for registering homeless patients with local practices.

**How long have you been working there?**

Since 2007.

**What do you find the most rewarding?**

Seeing patients who present in crisis gain control of their lives and then volunteering to helping others get through similar challenges. They are experts having been through similar experiences and can provide insight into coping with the situation patients find themselves in.

**What do you find the most challenging?**

Being able to find the time to give each patient the best healthcare we can offer. I am fortunate in having Sheilagh available to follow up patients that we are concerned about.

**If you could sum up the Wellspring in 3 words, what would they be?**

Accessible supportive healthcare



**Name:** Tony Allen

**Role:** Non-Exec Director, Mastercall  
Healthcare

*Reflections from our visit*

As a non-executive director at Mastercall service visits afford first-hand experience of the great work we are involved with.

Recently I was lucky enough to spend a couple of hours at the Wellspring-a facility offering support to homeless and vulnerable adults.

Doctor Mian provided the transport as he runs a clinic there twice a week, and once through the door security I found a warm welcoming environment with about 25 people inside.

The building is well fitted out with a kitchen, showers and one to one meeting rooms.

Everything is provided free and the lower floor revealed a big food store used to provide much needed tins and packets for delivery to locally supported charities.

Everyone I met was passionate about the need and to provide the support so essential to so many.

It was really educational and a bit frightening to learn how homelessness can become an issue for so many unexpected reasons.

I am grateful to my colleagues for giving me the opportunity to learn about this valuable and necessary facility in Stockport.



**Name:** Kay Carter

**Role:** Marketing Manager, Mastercall  
Healthcare

*Reflections from our visit*

I have been wanting to visit the Wellspring for some time so when the opportunity arose, I jumped at it.

I wasn't quite sure what to expect. I had heard fantastic reports of all the great work that goes on, so was keen to see it first-hand.

We were met by Paul, a Project Worker who showed us round and led us down to the lower floor where all the donations are stored. The walls leading downstairs were full of photos of all past and present volunteers. It was wonderful to see.

Paul spoke to us about the history of the Wellspring, formed by the church and went on to say how, over the years it had expanded, notably the GP surgery room which used to be half the size. This was of particular interest to us as it is where Mastercall runs clinics 5 days a week.

We were then taken upstairs to the office which looked down over the main concourse, another hub of activity.

Returning to the main concourse, the volunteers & staff were still busy making the huge amount of hot food in the large canteen space. The food looked delicious. There was seating all round for people to socialise whilst they ate.

Dr Mian was our transport, I think we left an hour later than intended as he continued to see patients. We didn't mind one bit.

All in all, I am extremely pleased to have visited the Wellspring. What a fantastic, inspiring place. You immediately get a sense of the great relationships and genuine care all the staff and volunteers have with everyone who walks through the door. There is a huge amount of work that goes into helping and empowering those needing it, giving them a helping hand to become independent and get their lives back on track, simply fantastic.

I also feel very proud to work alongside Dr Mian & Sheilagh who's compassion and care for those who need it is nothing short of brilliant.

## How you can help...

If you would like to donate to the Wellspring and help fund their fantastic valuable work, please visit their website below:

<https://thewellspring.co.uk/>

**HOPE HELPS - CHANGE WORKS**