

SISTERS OF SUPPORT

Monthly Email Newsletter curated by our Directors. Issue 001-05/25



FIRST EDITION

Hi, my name is Amy Turner, founder, Director and editor, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to our first edition and thank you for taking the time to keep up to date with what our organisation is getting up to. If you have something you think would benefit our publication, and would like it to be considered as an edition, please email amy@sistersofsupport.co.uk

FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are incredibly grateful for the generous support we've received to help us continue and expand our work in the community. Here's a breakdown of recent funding and donations:

- Believe Housing – £1,000 for our Bishop group
- Banks Group – £1,700 to support the launch of new groups provide through Point North
- Gestamp – £700 for our garden project provide through Point North, plus £400 raised from their International Women's Day raffle
- ASDA Foundation – £750 for the garden project
- Allen Lane Foundation – £2,000 towards running costs
- Perfect Care Easter Raffle – £170 raised through their fundraising efforts
- PCP Happiness Hubs Fund – £6,700 towards our ongoing running costs

🙏 A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported us – your contributions make a real difference in our community.



Photo: Head gardener Clare accepting Gestamp funding

SUMMER RAFFLE

Saturday 26th July | Ayclife Music Festival

We're thrilled to be at Ayclife Music Festival this summer – and even more excited to announce our Sisters of Support Summer Raffle!

With fantastic prizes, great music, and a brilliant community atmosphere, this is the perfect way to have fun and support a meaningful cause.

💙 Every ticket sold helps local women facing mental health challenges or difficult life pressures find a safe, peer-led space where they can be heard, supported, and empowered.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of local businesses and supporters, we've already opened new groups and launched exciting projects this year – and with your help, we can do even more.



CELEBRATING SOS



WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

- Buy Tickets for the Raffle
- Spread the word to friends, family, or colleagues.
- make sure you follow our social media

Let's make a difference – together.

We're incredibly proud to share some exciting recognition Sisters of Support has received, so far, this year!

- 🌟 At the start of the year, we were honoured to win the Community Champions Award from Aycliffe Radio's Around Town show.
- 🏆 We've also been nominated and selected as finalists for several prestigious awards:
 - Make Your Mark Awards – Aycliffe Business Park (Finalists, 8th May)
 - Corporate LimeWire Innovation and Excellence Awards – (Finalists, 25th May)
 - Prix Galien Foundation UK Awards – (Finalists, 5th June)

A huge thank you to everyone who has nominated us. We are always over the moon to receive recognition for the work we do. Simply being part of these awards is an honour – and a brilliant experience for our whole team.

💜 Thank you for believing in us!

CONTACT US

info@sistersofsupport.co.uk

Visit: www.sistersofsupport.co.uk

Call: 01325965378



SCAN ME FOR OUR WEBSITE



NEW PHONE LINE



A Huge Thank You to Murtek!

Murtek, founded in 2007 by Managing Director Stuart Murray, was built on the core values of Honesty, Integrity, and Approachability. Their commitment to these principles shines through in everything they do. For Murtek, IT isn't just about fixing problems after they happen – it's about empowering businesses to be more productive, more resilient, and, especially in today's world, more secure. We are incredibly grateful to the entire team at Murtek for their fantastic support in setting up our brand-new phone line! Your help has made a big difference, and we're excited about the positive impact it will have. Thank you, Murtek, for being such a reliable and supportive partner!



THE GREAT NORTH RUN

We're excited to share that Sisters of Support is taking part in this year's Great North Run! We have five official runners representing our cause:

- Amy - Our dedicated Founder and Director
- Jason - Amy's brother
- Matthew - brother of one of our Directors - Carrie
- Aiden - Matthew's friend and supporter of our mission

We're incredibly proud of our team and their commitment to raising awareness and support for the work we do, we currently have one free space for this year's GNR, which we expect to fill.

💜 If you'd like to support our runners or get involved, please get in touch - we'd love to hear from you!



MEMBERS CORNER

What Sisters of Support Means to Me by Dannie Clark.

During my recovery from an eating disorder, and throughout the emotional highs and lows of university life, Sisters of Support became more than just a group—it became a lifeline. In a world where vulnerability is often met with discomfort or silence, this community offered a rare and sacred space of acceptance, understanding, and genuine compassion. To me, Sisters of Support represents not only shared struggle but shared strength. It's a space where my voice mattered, even on days when I felt voiceless.

Recovery is not linear, and university is not easy. When those two journeys intertwine, the weight can feel unbearable. I often found myself battling isolation, anxiety, and the nagging voice of self-doubt that thrives in silence. But in the presence of these women—who showed up week after week with open hearts and open minds—I learned to speak my truth without shame. Whether it was sharing a personal setback, celebrating a small victory, or simply sitting in silence together, I felt held in ways I hadn't thought possible.

What makes Sisters of Support so special is that it's built on peer connection. These were not therapists or authority figures, but fellow women, each navigating their own challenges. There's something deeply healing about being seen by someone who gets it—who understands what these negative emotions feels like, because they themselves have lived it. Their empathy wasn't performative; it was rooted in real experience. The mutual understanding we shared created a bond that went beyond friendship—it was sisterhood in the truest sense.

The group taught me how to support others even while I was still healing myself. I learned that I didn't have to be "fully recovered" to be a source of comfort or inspiration to someone else. Being able to offer reassurance, reflect someone's worth back to them, or simply sit in solidarity reminded me of my own strength. Peer support became a two-way street: by showing up for others, I was also showing up for myself.

Most importantly, Sisters of Support reminded me that I was never alone. In a university environment where I often prioritize achievement over wellbeing, this group centred mental health in the most human way. It offered consistency when everything else felt uncertain. It was a reminder that healing doesn't happen in isolation; it happens in community—in shared moments of truth, laughter, and even tears. Today, when I reflect on the progress I've made, I know it's not just my own willpower that carried me—it was the quiet strength of those who sat beside me, who held space for my pain, and who celebrated my growth. Sisters of Support wasn't just a chapter in my recovery; it was a foundation. And for that, I will always be grateful, for now I stand with my head held high knowing I have completed my degree in Biomedical Science when I truly thought that my mental health would prevent this from happening. Thank you girlies <3



EVENTS

We've had a busy and inspiring year so far, attending and hosting a range of events across the region. Here's what we've been up to and what's still to come!

✓ Events We've Been Part Of:

- St Clare's Food Bank - Supporting the community every other Friday
- Easter Event, Aycliffe Town Centre - 19th April
- Husqvarna HSE Week - 29th April
- Mini Mental Health Markets for Mental Health Week - 13th May (Bishop Auckland) & 16th May (Aycliffe)
- Women of the North Summit - 7th May
- Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland Business Networking Events
- Knife Angel Opening Ceremony - 31st May



📍 Upcoming Events:

- 28th June - Blue Light Day, Aycliffe Town Centre
- 23rd July - Workplace Health & Wellbeing Roadshow
- 26th July - Aycliffe, where we'll also be drawing our Summer Raffle 🎟️
- 2nd August - Shildon 200 Anniversary Celebration
- 9th August - Community Day, Aycliffe Town Centre

We love connecting with the community, raising awareness, and sharing what Sisters of Support is all about. Come say hello if you see us at any of these events!



GROUP DATES

Come along to one of our welcoming and supportive community groups this June! Here's where and when you can find us:

Shildon Group

- Monday 9th June
- Monday 23rd June

Bishop Auckland Group

- Monday 2nd June
- Monday 16th June
- Monday 30th June

Aycliffe - Simpasture

- Monday 10th June
- Monday 24th June

Aycliffe - Gilpin

- Monday 3rd June
- Monday 17th June



All sessions are a chance to connect, share, and support each other. New faces are always welcome!

POLICE OUTREACH

We have been working alongside Newton Aycliffe Neighbourhood Policing team within the community for almost a year. These outreach sessions are attended now by our Director and Group Lead for Gilpin Court Tina Hynes, when asked to provide us a few words, this is what she had to say:

"In July 2024, Amy made contact with our local police to discuss reaching out to more vulnerable women and so began our journey with them of doing Outreach with them once a month. These began in August 2024, whereupon Amy and I went out with Sgt Adam Crawford. These are now mainly attended by a female PCSO. The collaboration that Sisters of Support have with the police, is a vital part of our networking thus enabling more women to attend our groups. We are excited to announce that there are plans to branch out to Shildon and Bishop Auckland! Tina also attends local PACT meetings at The Big Club once a month and the local PCSO'S are always grateful for my attendance."



S.O.S CHOIR



From as young as I can remember, music has been a massive part of my life. As a musician, I recognise the importance of music, and yet it's often pushed aside.

A few years ago, due to a health condition, I lost the ability to walk properly and do the things I was physically used to doing. As I went from being very active to using crutches and then a wheelchair, I became frustrated with my situation, and although I had family who were amazing (and still are), the thing that really calmed my mind was my music.

One day, at my lowest point, I was introduced to Sisters of Support, a mental health and well-being peer-led support group for women. Little did I know when I first went through the doors of that meeting room how much the women of this group would come to mean to me and how much the Sisters of support would change my life for the better. I went from being upset, frustrated, and fearful to finding even more meaning and purpose in my life, which, along with my family, could support me further still.

Over time, I began to find my new normal and come to terms with my situation. In time, I learnt to give back to this amazing group that had so selflessly helped me, and I knew that giving of myself to helping others in the group was incredibly rewarding. It helped me on my own path of healing and mental well-being.

Over time, Sisters of Support grew more and a few months ago, knowing that I wanted to help out more, our directors believed in me enough to ask me if I would like to come onboard as one of the leaders, to run the music side of things and set up an informal and fun choir, just for women. They knew how much my music meant to me and knew that music had huge health benefits. Our directors knew that an informal and fun choir was where I could help our women build confidence, let their hair down and regularly socialise enjoyably and even though this would be informal and fun, I knew that running it would be a challenge for me, as I do struggle with social anxiety, but knew I would be able to manage, as the women are like family to me and I know them well enough to know that they would always be there to help me.

Since our choir began, I have grown in many ways and watched our women grow in confidence as well. I have seen them embrace their love of music, and I've learned what music they enjoy through the songs that we choose to sing together. The members' choices lead everything we do in our choir. It is steered, grown and nurtured by these amazing women, and I consider it an honour and a pleasure to be at its helm, entrusted with leading it.

By Sam Brown - Choir Leader



wish to support us in all our ventures,
SCAN HERE to find our crowd funding
here

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Since the founding of Sisters of Support in 2021, a journey sparked by my escape from an abusive relationship, I find it hard to believe how profoundly we have impacted the lives of so many women. Together with Carrie, who played a crucial role in my survival while grappling with her own challenges, we transformed our painful experiences into a beacon of hope and support for those in need.

At that time, I felt utterly lost and abandoned, with nowhere to turn, while Carrie tirelessly bore the weight of keeping me alive amidst a lack of support from the services we desperately needed. The fact that we have now become the very service I was crying out for back then fills me with immense pride.

After years of wrestling with feelings of worthlessness and believing I would never achieve anything of significance, accepting the compliments and commendations that accompany our success has been a profound challenge. When people express their admiration or refer to me as inspirational, I can't help but cringe; it's a strange sensation rooted in disbelief, though now for vastly different reasons.

The community we have cultivated through Sisters of Support is nothing short of beautiful, yet it pains me to acknowledge that our existence reflects a societal failure. By 2025, there remains a dire lack of understanding and accessibility to mental health services. Despite various national campaigns aimed at breaking the stigma, mental health continues to be treated as a taboo topic, leaving many isolated in their struggles.

Every day, I find myself grappling with the reality of how I arrived at this point in my life. I'm currently a university student studying sociology and criminology, having just completed my first year, while simultaneously being the founder and director of an incredible charitable organisation. To add to my joys, I am now engaged to the man of my dreams.

However, the years of turbulence and my relentless fight for justice, not only for myself but for others who share similar experiences, have taken a heavy toll on my physical health. I've undergone several surgeries in the past two years, leading to increased limitations in my physical capabilities. I now find myself navigating life with more disabilities than I had when I embarked on this journey.

I wish to end this with my heartfelt thanks to all who have supported Carrie and me in this journey, without you all, none of this would be possible. I look forward to keeping you updated via this newsletter with everything we are up to.

"Be Brave...Live!"

CONTRIBUTIONS BY

Amy Turner, Carrie Howarth, Tina Hynes
Dannie Batey, Sam Brown



Sisters of Support CIC is registered in England and Wales at Suite 18 BLUE BRIDGE CENTRE, St Cuthberts Way, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham, DL5 6DS Company Number:15868795