

LEEDS UNLOCKED

2026 #8

CHAMPIONING
#LEEDSMEN

NMF26

INSIDE...

5 MEN DESCRIBE THEIR
JOURNEYS TO BEING
THEIR BEST SELF...

Fitness - Confidence - Resilience - Pride

PRIDE MONTH
& LGBTQ+ GROUPS

A CARER'S POEM

NORTHERN MAN FESTIVAL 26

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

LOCAL GROUPS & ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING MEN & MEN'S HEALTH



PEOPLE TO TALK TO...

FINANCIAL ADVICE

MONEY BUDDIES - 0113 235 0276 - Help with money problems

GREEN DOCTOR - 0113 238 0601 - Energy advice to help you save money

MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

LIVE WELL LEEDS (LWL) - 0113 219 2727 - info@livewellleeds.org.uk
Citywide mental health support service for people to manage and recover from their mild to moderate needs. Can self-refer.

MINDWELL - www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk

Online support for men's mental health

LEEDS MENTAL WELLBEING SERVICE (LMWS) - 0113 843 4388

Talking Therapies for common mental health problems. Can self-refer.

SAMARITANS - Free phone 116 123 - Need to talk? Confidential and emotional support 24 hours a day

SPECIALIST ADVICE

GAMCARE - 0113 388 6466 - Help with gambling issues

FORWARD LEEDS - 0113 887 2477 - Advice, info and support if you are worried about alcohol or drug use

LEEDS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SERVICE - 0113 246 0401

24hr helpline for men and women

MEN'S ADVICE LINE - 0808 801 0327

Help for male victims of domestic abuse

ADULT SOCIAL CARE - 0113 222 4401 - leedsadults@leeds.gov.uk

Supporting adults to live well and be independent, short or long term

THE SILVER LINE - 0800 470 8090 - A free confidential 24hr helpline for older people, offering information, friendship and advice

CRUSE BEREAVEMENT CARE - 0113 234 4150

(National Helpline - 0808 808 1677) Support for when someone dies

CARERS LEEDS - 0113 380 4300

If you are struggling to care for someone

LEEDS REFUGEE FORUM - 0113 244 9600 - Support for migrants

GENERAL SUPPORT

LINKING LEEDS - 0113 336 7612 - Linking you to local services & activities

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - 0113 223 4400

Confidential and impartial advice

NEW TO LEEDS - newtoleeds.org - A guide for migrants to the city.

Over 50 languages introducing all aspects of life in Leeds

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES - CALL 999 / NON-EMERGENCIES - CALL 111

CARING IS A PLEASURE

by Paul Hickee Moran

Caring is a pleasure
Caring is a pain
It's wonderful
It's awful
Either way it has to be done.

Lose your friends
Your hobbies
Time is never your own
The hours quite long
24/7.

You ask only one thing
All they say is
Sorry there's nothing
But you can join
Another group.

There's plenty of things
For you these days
But nothing I wanted
All I wanted
Was a poetry group.

Sorry seems to be
The only reply I hear
Ah well so be it
I'm a carer for my wife
I'm always here
24/7 - always here.

Paul worries about the social isolation that many carers feel. Carers Leeds provides information, guidance and support to all unpaid adult and parent carers across Leeds - make sure to contact them: carersleeds.org.uk / Tel: 0113 380 4300

LGBTQ+ GROUPS

What started as protests in the 1960s, helped platform rights for the LGBT+ community, and is now celebrated as Pride, all over the world. It helps tackle stigma and prejudice whilst encouraging acceptance and diversity.

LEEDS PRIDE will take place Sat 18th and Sun 19th July 2026. See leedspride.com for more details.

Here are just some of groups and services exclusive to Leeds.

SAGE MEN LEEDS (UNDER MESMAC)

A free peer-led social group for gay men over 50 years old in Leeds, meets Wednesdays 1pm - 3:30pm, in a central location in Leeds. Email Michael or Stuart: groupsagemenleeds@gmail.com

LEEDS LGBT+ MINDS

Part of Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service Coproduction. People with personal lived experience and professionals working together to improve mental health services for the LGBTQIA+ community in Leeds. The group meets online fortnightly, as well as occasional events and socials. Email: lmwscoproduction@touchstonesupport.org.uk or see their Insta [@leedsigbtminds](https://www.instagram.com/leedsigbtminds)

TRANS LEEDS

Support and advocacy group for transgender identifying people in Leeds and the surrounding area, as well as their families and friends. They provide practical help with all stages and aspects of transition. Support groups meet every month for social activities. www.transleeds.org

BI+ LEEDS SOCIAL GROUP

A volunteer-run Instagram page promoting events in Leeds for people in and out of the LGBT community, focusing on low-cost and free events. Instagram: [bi_plus_leeds_social_group](https://www.instagram.com/bi_plus_leeds_social_group)

PRIDE PLACE

The first LGBTQ+ community and cultural space in Leeds City Centre, brought to you by Pride of Place Leeds. Supports both public and private events for LGBTQ+ groups in Leeds and West Yorkshire. www.prideplace.org.uk

ANGELS OF FREEDOM

Offers safe spaces within the community, connects people with resources and has a plethora of groups running in a variety of areas. www.angelloffreedom.org.uk

HUNTERS RUFC

Inclusive Yorkshire rugby club. A safe environment for people to engage with the sport irrespective of race, sexual orientation, ethnicity or fitness level. www.leedshuntersrugby.com

MEN'S GROUPS

Many local and community organisations run groups because they are incredible spaces to interact and have fun, to connect and celebrate.

Whether walking, cooking, gardening, fixing, playing music or sport, singing, or so much more, getting along to a group is a great way to meet people, develop friendships, and find new hobbies, so get yourself out and busy.

Groups also offer the chance to find the right support and help e.g. to know what you are entitled to. You can find lots more using the QR code here.

Check them out and get involved!



GET INVOLVED WITH LEEDS UNLOCKED

Send in your writing, poems, photos of Leeds, new & old, & of your creations, doodles, drawings or word games; all things that either inspire you as a man, or are simply fun, interesting and lovely. And we will always credit you!

Email: lawrenceg@space2.org.uk • Phone/WhatsApp: 07784 951 318

MEN'S HEALTH WEEK

Men's Health Week this year is
Monday 15 - Sunday 21 June

Men's Health Week puts a focus on men's physical & mental health and seeing this through a gendered men's lens helps to break down stigma and encourage open conversations for men in different spaces.

Men's Health Week helps to highlight particular issues with which men may struggle, including:

- **Preventative Screenings:** Encouraging regular check-ups, blood pressure testing, and cholesterol monitoring.
- **Prostate & Testicular Health:** Highlighting the importance of early detection for prostate cancer - a disease that affects 1 in 8 men, rising to 1 in 4 in black communities.
- **Mental Health:** Breaking the silence around mental health conditions like depression and anxiety, which affect a significant portion of men worldwide.
- **Cardiovascular Health:** A healthy heart can prevent related heart illnesses, and men can be more susceptible due to how body fat is stored.

NORTHERNMAN FESTIVAL 26

WHAT SHAPES A MAN?

OUR MEN'S HEALTH UNLOCKED PROJECT, CREATES ITS OWN NORTHERNMAN FESTIVAL AND THIS YEAR #NMF26 RUNS FROM THURS 11 - SUN 21 JUNE

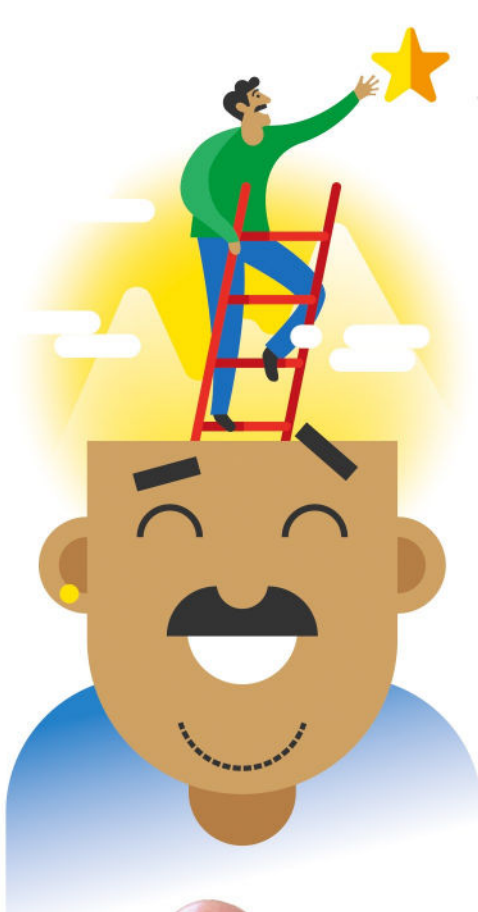
Our online updated NMF26 schedule is here - come and join in. Beyond June 21, you will find a link there to see highlights from NMF26, bringing men together in a wide range of creative expressive free activities without barriers.



The NMF26 theme is What Shapes A Man?

- What has shaped you in your life - any key moments?
- How would you like to shape your future self?
- What could help you to do that?

#LEEDSMEN #MENSHEALTHWEEK #MENSHEALTH
#NORTHERNMANFESTIVAL #NMF26



BEING YOUR BEST SELF

The men on this page describe how they have found their own strength and resilience, and the right support, that has worked for them.

Maybe some of the articles here can offer you some inspiration, too.



Mark Branigan **From Desk Working to Comedy!**

66

I work in digital systems design, but always enjoyed playing live music in bands. That all stopped with the pandemic: I got so busy with work that I just never found the time to practice, rehearse and gig! But I never lost that love of performing and entertaining and last year I scratched an itch and did the Laugh at Leeds stand-up comedy course!

It taught me how to write and test new material and more importantly how to practice. With music, we practice in a locked room, but the only way to get better in comedy is to do it in front of people - really daunting and no guitar to hide behind!

Now I have performed more than 20 comedy gigs around Yorkshire, and even been paid for some! It has filled such a huge hole that music had left, and I'd forgotten how much I loved the thrill of 'performance anxiety'. I think I'm getting better all the time, building my confidence so even when a joke doesn't land, I feel like I can style it out!

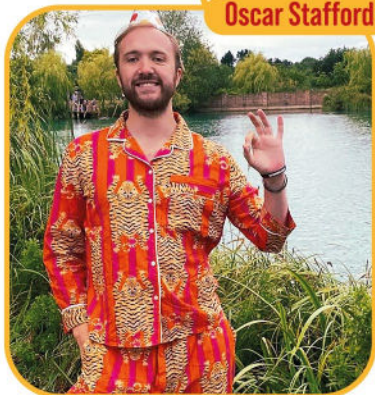
Find my content and future dates on YouTube and Insta as:

[markbranigancomedy](#)

Andy's Man Club

66 I didn't start at Andy's Man Club (AMC) to strengthen my relationship with my masculinity; I didn't know I needed to.

As a queer man with a middle-class upbringing, certain prejudices and experiences told me that I would not be welcome or accepted at a men only group in a building college. Now, as co-lead facilitator at AMC Seacroft, I look back and realise that while I was proud and secure in my identity as a queer person, I was much less comfortable with my identity as a man.



Oscar Stafford

Seeing men support each other with love and compassion, humour and determination over four years has given me the same pride in my masculinity as I have in my queerness.

In a time where we see queer people being increasingly visible with gender identities that go beyond or across the binary of man and woman, I feel my identity as a man deepen and develop year on year. I am a man who works with men; I am queer; I have built my community of men as much as it has built me; I have saved lives as much as mine has been saved.

To find your local AMC group, always 7pm - 9pm on a Monday eve (new group in Bramley from Mon 8 June) look up: [andysmanclub.co.uk/groups/](#)

#ITSOKAYTOTALK

We had 3 lucky winners from the Rebus puzzle, £15 vouchers are on their way!

Finding My Feet



How F3 Helped Me Rebuild My Health by Keith



66 *It's reminded me that community doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes it's just people showing up for themselves and, without realising it, showing up for each other too.*

When I turned up to my first F3 workout in September 2024, I wasn't chasing a dramatic transformation. At 135kg, (21st) unfit and stuck, I just knew something had to change. I wanted to move again. What I didn't expect was how simply showing up would reshape my routine, confidence, and connection to the city I've long called home.

F3 is a free, volunteer-led men's fitness group that meets outdoors, rain or shine. No membership forms, no pressure - just turn up and do what you can. That simplicity was exactly what I needed. The workouts are challenging but scalable, and the atmosphere, (relaxed, supportive, full of 6am park humour) kept me coming back.

Over time, the changes added up. I'm now 105kg (16st) and fitter than I've been in years. More importantly, I found myself alongside men of all ages and backgrounds, all trying to be a bit better than yesterday; that shared effort builds real friendships without forcing them.

Since that first session, I've helped F3 Leeds grow from a handful of blokes to more than 50 men across three locations. Watching others find their stride has been the most rewarding part.

And it's completely free! [F3 UK Yorkshire](#)



This isn't Shakespeare, but it comes from the heart!



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Hi, I'm Edward but people call me Eddy. Edward is my Sunday name.

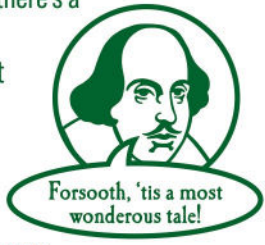
I'm 27, I'm a wheelchair user with one leg shorter than the other. I also have a stoma and cerebral palsy - I mean, as if I don't have enough problems!

Despite all of this, I don't let any of this get me down. I just take one day at a time and take each day as it comes. I follow two very simple mantras - first one, there's always somebody worse off than you - this has really helped me become who I am. And secondly, there's no such word as can't, meaning I never let anybody tell me that I can't do something, and neither should any of you. If there's a goal you want to achieve, remember to work really hard at it.

Keep a smile on your face, and remember, you may have problems or difficulties but don't let that stop you from doing what you set your mind to.

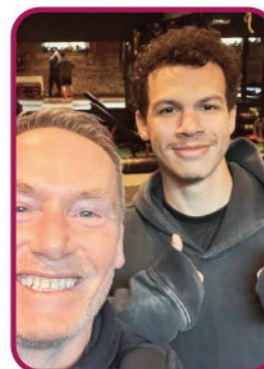
Whilst there are things I'm not able to do physically, I'm always able to speak my mind. I'll tell anyone who'll listen, it's my legs that don't work, not my gob; of course without being offensive to others, maybe that's something you can also try, too. *And if you remember nothing else, remember this: no matter what anyone may tell you, you are important, you are special.*

For anyone with learning difficulties and autism, **People In Action** are a great organisation, offering a wide range of support to learning disabled and autistic people to live happy, healthy and independent lives [peopleinaction.org.uk](#)



Forsooth, 'tis a most wondrous tale!

Inner & Outer Strength



Earlier this year Rhys was really struggling with his mental health - anxiety, depression and everything that comes with it.

When his Mum first reached out to me, Rhys, 20, was on multiple medications, including antipsychotics; leaving the house felt overwhelming, he had no social life and was in a dark place. Over the weekly fitness & health sessions, his mood started to lift; remarkably and slowly, things began to change.

Rhys and his mum then spoke with his doctors about reducing his medication. The side effects were horrendous at times, but he showed real strength by

coming and persevering and learning; week by week, he started to feel better, both mentally and physically. And now, Rhys has just returned from a family cruise holiday. With the biggest smile, he told me it was the best holiday he's ever had; socialising and making friends, and he now had a girlfriend. More importantly, he has now stopped that medication.

"If it wasn't for these sessions, I'd still be where I was before." His words really hit home - "I feel more confident, I have more energy and I finally feel like a human again."

"And take my photo, I'm very proud of myself."

And here his story can inspire others. Find out more - [trailblazerfitness.co.uk](#)