

Newsletter



September has been a special month at Tees Valley Women's Centre, with the start of our new courses, our Open Day and the unveiling of our community mural – which received fantastic coverage from ITV Tyne Tees News and BBC News.

There's lots happening at Tees Valley Women's Centre and still plenty of opportunities to get involved. We hope you enjoy catching up with our latest news!

A Lasting Legacy: Celebrating Our New Community Mural

We began September with a very special celebration at Tees Valley Women's Centre as we officially unveiled our new community mural, marking almost 40 years of supporting women in South Bank and across Tees Valley. Led by local artist Jessica Leigh, the mural was a truly collaborative project. Women from the centre shared their memories, experiences and ideas before getting involved in the painting and helping to bring the finished artwork to life. Every part of the mural has a story behind it, reflecting the friendships formed, challenges overcome, opportunities created and the strong sense of community that has grown around Tees Valley Women's Centre over the years. The official reveal on 2nd September brought together women from the centre, friends, partners and supporters to celebrate the finished artwork and, most importantly, the women and stories behind it.

We were also delighted to see the project receive wider recognition. ITV Tyne Tees News joined us for the unveiling and featured the mural on television, while BBC News subsequently published an article sharing the story with an even wider audience. It was a very proud moment to see our women, our centre and the South Bank community receiving such positive recognition.

A huge thank you to Jessica, every woman who contributed to the project and everyone who helped make it possible, including Teesworks Benevolent Foundation for funding the project, TS6 Pride in Place and PPG.

The mural now provides a colourful and lasting legacy – celebrating our past, the women who have shaped Tees Valley Women's Centre and the many more stories still to come.



£10,000 Donation to Support Tees Valley Women's Centre

We were delighted to receive a generous £10,000 donation from the Wates Family Enterprise Trust, presented at Wilton House.

The event was also attended by Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen, providing an opportunity to share more about the work and impact of Tees Valley Women's Centre.

A huge thank you to the Wates Family Enterprise Trust, SES Engineering Services and particularly Eilish Heatley, SES Social Values Advisor, for their continued support and belief in our work.



A New Term of Opportunities at Tees Valley Women's Centre

September has brought a new programme of courses and activities to Tees Valley Women's Centre, with lots of opportunities for women to learn, gain qualifications, build confidence, improve wellbeing and meet new people.

For women looking to gain qualifications or take the next step towards further learning or employment, our accredited courses include Maths & English Functional Skills, Counselling Level 2, Introduction to Health, Social Care & Children's Settings Level 1, Supporting Teaching & Learning, alongside a choice of courses available through our Flexible Learning Hub.



Women looking to progress towards university and professional careers can also study Access to Higher Education courses, including Access to HE Healthcare Professionals. These courses provide an important route back into education for adults who may not have followed a traditional pathway into higher education.

But learning at Tees Valley Women's Centre isn't just about qualifications. This term also offers opportunities to try something new, develop a skill or simply make some time for yourself. Art for Confidence, Art & Craft Club, Cooking on a Budget, Confidence Building through Health & Wellbeing and Yoga are just some of the activities taking place at the centre.

We know that returning to learning or joining a new group can sometimes feel daunting. Our aim is to provide a friendly, welcoming and supportive environment where women can learn at their own pace, meet others and grow in confidence. Whatever your starting point or reason for joining us, there could be something at Tees Valley Women's Centre for you. And it's not too late to get involved this September. Some courses still have places available, so contact our team on 01642 296166 or email reception@tvwc.org.uk to find out more.



From Our Sewing Room to the Neonatal Unit

Our talented Sewing Class has been putting their skills to wonderful use, creating specially designed gowns for parents with babies on the neonatal unit.

The handmade gowns make skin-to-skin care easier and more comfortable, helping parents enjoy precious bonding time with their babies while maintaining their dignity.

We're incredibly proud of the women involved for using their creativity and skills to make a real difference to local families.



Celebrating our Women

Every woman's journey is unique, and we're proud to celebrate the incredible achievements of those who have taken steps toward positive change through our Centre. From gaining qualifications to rebuilding confidence, sharing their inspiring stories show just how powerful support, determination, and community can be.



KARLY DOBSON

One step closer to becoming a nurse

When Karly first came to Tees Valley Women's Centre, she was looking to create a better future for herself and her three children.

She enrolled on our **Access to Higher Education (Health)** course alongside Maths and English, gaining the qualifications, confidence and belief she needed to apply to university.

Today, Karly has successfully passed her **second year of Adult Nursing** and is one step closer to achieving her dream of becoming a qualified nurse.

Balancing university, placements, assignments and life as a busy mam of three hasn't always been easy, but Karly's determination has kept her moving forward. During her second year she has gained valuable experience in A&E, the Urgent Treatment Centre in Redcar, learning disability services and vascular surgery.

"There was a time in my life when I never thought I'd do anything with my future. The Women's Centre changed that. They believed in me and gave me the opportunity, encouragement and support to build a better future for me and my family."

Karly

We are incredibly proud of Karly and can't wait to see her take that final step towards becoming a qualified nurse.



ASHLEIGH McNAMARA

From learner to school professional

After becoming a mum, Ashleigh reached a point where she wanted to build a new future for herself and her children. Her journey began when she enrolled on the Supporting Teaching & Learning course at Tees Valley Women's Centre.

Ashleigh went on to complete both Level 2 and Level 3 Supporting Teaching & Learning, as well as additional Level 2 qualifications in Understanding Autism and Behaviour that Challenges.

As part of her studies, Ashleigh completed a work placement at Prior Pursglove College. Her commitment impressed the team and, at the end of her placement, she was offered a permanent position.

The opportunity transformed more than Ashleigh's career. Securing full-time employment gave her the financial stability to buy her own home and provide a secure future for her two children. And her journey hasn't stopped there – Ashleigh is now continuing her professional development and working towards becoming a qualified teacher.

"Applying for the Supporting Teaching and Learning course was the best thing I ever did. It allowed me to secure a job, buy my own house and provide my two children with a secure and happy upbringing."

Ashleigh

Ashleigh's story is a wonderful example of where taking that first step back into learning can lead.

Balfour Beatty Apprentices Give Back to Tees Valley Women's Centre



We were delighted to welcome a team of Balfour Beatty apprentices who volunteered their time to give parts of our Centre a much-needed refresh.

The team worked hard painting our training rooms and clearing the outdoor areas, making a real difference to the environment we provide for women.

A huge thank you to all the apprentices, Katie and Becky for coordinating and supporting the day, and CMT Group for generously donating the paint supplies.

We're incredibly grateful for their hard work, generosity and community spirit – thank you for helping us make Tees Valley Women's Centre an even better place for women to learn, connect and access support.

Max's Story



When Max suddenly lost his owner, a neighbour of the Centre, his future was uncertain. Thankfully, Joan and her husband Brian stepped in and welcomed him into their family, with fellow Tees Valley Women's Centre member Pat helping along the way.

After everything he had experienced, Max initially struggled to settle and his behaviour became challenging. Determined not to give up on him, Joan sought help from Cliff at Hope Animal Shelter in Loftus, whose guidance and support helped them understand Max's behaviour and work on his training.

With time, patience and plenty of love, Max began to trust again and has completely transformed. Today, he is happy, settled and enjoying a wonderful new life — including an extended stay in France with Joan and Brian!

Max's journey is a lovely story of community, kindness and the difference a second chance can make.

Time to Relax, Recharge & Reconnect

Our recent Chair Based and Mat Yoga Retreat Days gave women the chance to step away from everyday life and enjoy some well-deserved time for themselves.

Alongside gentle yoga and relaxation, the days included wellbeing activities, crafts, a nourishing lunch and plenty of time to chat and connect in a calm and welcoming environment.

It was wonderful to see women taking time to slow down, recharge and focus on their own wellbeing. A huge thank you to everyone who joined us and made the days so special. ♥

We hope to offer more wellbeing opportunities like this at Tees Valley Women's Centre in the future.



Citizens Advice at Tees Valley Women's Centre

Free, confidential advice

Available to **South Bank residents** through our partnership with Redcar and Cleveland Citizens Advice.



**Benefits
& Money**



Housing



**Energy
Costs**



**Debt &
Budgeting**

**citizens
advice**

**Darlington,
Redcar &
Cleveland**

Tees Valley
Women's Centre

*Practical advice
when you need it* ♥

Amanda Summerhill
Financial Inclusion Specialist

Amanda is here to listen, provide confidential and impartial advice, and help you understand the support and options available to you.



Get in touch

01642 296166

to find out more or arrange an appointment.



Tees Valley Women's Centre

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This service is supported by Woodsmith Foundation and Mercers Charitable Foundation.