



# Anti Stigma Leeds Newsletter

## Foreword

Welcome to our latest newsletter! Over the past few months, we've been proud to be part of a number of significant initiatives that demonstrate the power of collaboration in addressing mental health and tackling stigma across Leeds.

From co-leading the Baton of Hope's arrival in our city, to hosting an Anti-Stigma priority setting workshop, and preparing for World Mental Health Day at the White Rose Centre, each milestone has been shaped by the dedication and commitment of our partners, colleagues, and communities. Together, we are building momentum, strengthening networks, amplifying lived experience, and creating opportunities for change.

This newsletter highlights just some of that work, including the creativity of local community groups, and the launch of the *Being Men* podcast. We hope you find these updates both informative and inspiring, and that they encourage continued collaboration as we work towards a more open, supportive, and stigma-free Leeds.

## Baton of Hope

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2025, the Baton of Hope tour reached Leeds and travelled 15 miles across the city to raise awareness around suicide prevention. The baton aims to bring communities together to remember the lives sadly lost to suicide, while promoting a message of hope, reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking.



Touchstone was incredibly proud to co-lead this event alongside out Leeds City Council colleagues with the day culminating in 84 baton bearers walking through Leeds and over 100 attendees at the finale event at the Old Fire Station.

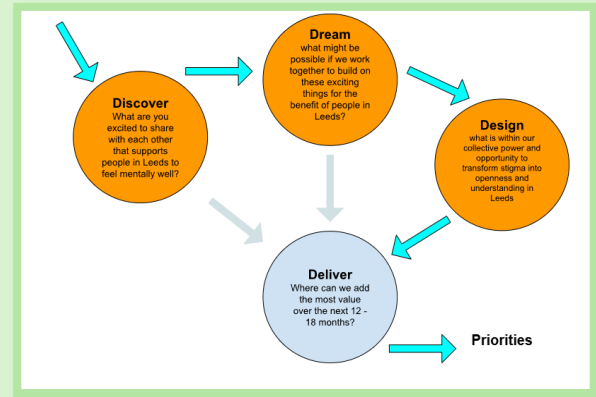


We saw many people come out to support the event including displays made by local community groups as well as a bespoke song written and performed by the Being You Leeds Men's Songwriting group.

[Listen to Here I'm Staying by the Men's Song Writing Group here.](#)



Attendees were led through the workshop by external facilitators alongside a visual harvest and were asked to share what is currently happening in Leeds to tackle stigma and support people to be well, to dream of what might be possible and to then design tangible actions focusing on their collective power.



From the workshop came 4 key priorities:

1. **Strengthen the brand**
2. **Community outreach**
3. **Enhance collaboration**
4. **Development and learning**

We are keen to ensure the legacy and momentum continues on in partnership together.

[See a summary of our workshop here!](#)

[Check out our visual harvest here!](#)

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in the day and made it the moving and impactful event that it was.

[You can find out more and see more photos from the day here!](#)

## Anti-stigma workshop

This June, we hosted an Anti-Stigma priority setting workshop, inviting key contacts from across the city, to collaborate and decide the priorities for the Anti Stigma partnership for the next 12-18 months.

Participants joined us from across sectors in Leeds including charities, education, public health, the NHS and our very own Anti Stigma champions.

## Anti-stigma rapid review report

Our desktop research project is now complete! To ensure we are doing our work effectively, we asked ourselves the following questions:

- What is the problem we are trying to solve?
- What have others done locally, regionally, nationally that we can learn from?

From these questions, we now have the [Rapid Review of Mental Health Anti-Stigma Approaches](#), exploring what works in tackling stigma and discrimination around mental

health. The report looks at the causes and effects of stigma, how it intersects with other forms of discrimination, and highlights successful national and local campaigns – from *Time to Change* to community-led initiatives here in Leeds.

The review shares key lessons and practical approaches we can use in Leeds across workplaces, communities, and services to encourage open conversations, improve mental health literacy, and place lived experience at the heart of change. By learning from what has worked elsewhere, Leeds can continue to build inclusive, supportive spaces where everyone feels able to talk about their mental health.

## Spotlight on: Being Men podcast



The Being Men podcast was formed from the Touchstone men's network that spans across the mental health sector in Leeds. The peer support network meets monthly for a check in and asks, 'how are **you** doing?'.

These sessions are simple but powerful. The conversations have flown naturally, sometimes around general wellbeing, and other times focusing on men's health, stigma, and the

barriers often faced by men in an inclusive and welcoming space.

We cannot overstate the value and the importance of men from different backgrounds coming together to learn from each other. Each man brings their own definition of 'masculinity' and what that means to them.

The podcast aims to capture these conversations, focusing on specific topics, while also allowing the conversation to flow naturally. The podcast is not about being polished or professional, in fact quite the opposite. The podcast aims to be real and empowering. These men come from many different walks of life, carrying different experiences—coming together to share, to listen, and to show that not only do men talk but to show the amazing things that happen when they do.



Listen to Being Men here:

Spotify – [Being Men - Touchstone | Podcast on Spotify](#)

Amazon music – [Being Men - Touchstone Podcast | Listen on Amazon Music](#)

Apple music – [Being Men - Touchstone - Podcast - Apple Podcasts](#)

Want to get involved? Get in touch at [info@beingyouleeds.org.uk](mailto:info@beingyouleeds.org.uk) !

## World Mental Health Day - 10<sup>th</sup> Oct 2025

This coming World Mental Health Day, Being You Leeds will be hosting an event within the central atrium of the White Rose Shopping Centre.

Alongside stalls from Men's Health Unlocked, Leeds Mental Wellbeing Service, Live Well Leeds, BME Dementia and Here for You, our champions will be showcasing the power of the living library. Shoppers will be invited to take a break from their day to listen to someone else's story and expand their knowledge of people's lived experience.

If you're in the area or would like to pop in, please come and see us in the central atrium of White Rose (outside the Leeds United shop) on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October from 11am-3pm!

**Have you got plans for World Mental Health Day?** Let us know so we can share what's happening throughout Leeds! Email us at [info@beingyouleeds.org.uk](mailto:info@beingyouleeds.org.uk) !

### Join us!

For more information on the Anti Stigma partnership – [check out our MindWell page here!](#)

To sign up to the network and receive our newsletter – [sign up here!](#)