

# Supporting those affected by the Manchester attack

Manchester Attack Support Newsletter

October 2018

## Website

Our [Manchester Attack Support website](#) continues the work started by Manchester City Council and partners in co-ordinating help and support services for anyone affected.

It also includes opportunities to contact us directly for information about advice and support services, as well as to sign up to receive further newsletters and updates about the memorial consultation process.

## Sign up for further newsletters

Sign up to receive regular newsletters via the [website](#). Please pass on details of the website and newsletter to anyone who you feel might benefit from knowing about them.

## About the newsletter

This newsletter is a new way of providing advice and information to support anyone affected by the Manchester Arena attack on 22 May 2017.

In this issue you can find out more about some of the projects, groups and support initiatives that are helping people affected by the attack, along with updates from our partners.

### Write to us

We would love to hear your thoughts on the newsletter, including your ideas for future content.

Email us at: [support@manchesterattacksupport.org.uk](mailto:support@manchesterattacksupport.org.uk)



## Having trouble finding help?

Several organisations and services remain in place to support those affected by the attack. If you are finding it difficult to access the right help for your needs, please [let us know](#).

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## Judge appointed to hear inquests

High Court Judge Sir John Saunders has been appointed by the Lord Chief Justice to hear the inquests into the deaths of those killed on 22 May 2017.

The HM Coroner's office for Manchester (city area) who worked with Greater Manchester Police on the first stages of the investigation into these deaths, have now formally handed over the investigation and inquest process to Sir John and his team to oversee.

HM Senior Coroner for Manchester (city area), Nigel Meadows, said: "I would like to pay personal tribute to the victims of the Manchester Arena attack and their families. Serving them has been a privilege and a humbling experience.

"My thoughts remain with the families as they continue to deal with the aftermath of this awful event."

If you have any queries about the inquest process, you can send them to Fiona Ledden, City Solicitor for Manchester at [fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:fiona.ledden@manchester.gov.uk) or call 0161 234 1626.

## Trek 22: Climbing Snowdon

In May, a team of survivors came together and spent the first anniversary of the attack climbing Snowdon. The trip was organised by Andy Wholey, a survivor who spent six months organising Trek 22

to empower survivors just like him. The group of friends continue to support each other through difficult times.

Journalist Adam McClean accompanied the group and [documented their story](#) describing the sense of privilege he felt at witnessing the trek.

## Supporting children

The NSPCC [has issued some advice](#) to help parents when they talk to children and young people about what to do in the event of a terror attack. The guidance includes tips such as:

- listen carefully to a child's fears and worries
- offer reassurance and comfort
- avoid complicated and worrying explanations that could be frightening and confusing
- help them find advice and support to understand distressing events and feelings
- let them know that children can always [contact Childline free and confidentially on the phone and online](#).

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## Manchester Attack Support Group Programme

The We Love Manchester Emergency Fund is funding a programme of regional support groups for people affected by the Manchester attack.

The long-term programme is currently supporting bereaved family members, those who have been injured, and survivors. It is being managed and delivered by professionals who have organised similar meetings and group support following previous traumatic events, including terrorist attacks.

Feedback from people who attended young people's and families' memorial meetings following the attack highlighted a wish to continue to meet with others in a safe, facilitated environment. Such opportunities gave them the chance to share their experiences with others in smaller groups and benefit from mutual, practical, emotional and other support.

If you are interested in peer support, please contact Jelena Watkins at [jelena@jelenawatkins.com](mailto:jelena@jelenawatkins.com) or [email us](#).

## The Manchester Resilience Hub

The Manchester Resilience Hub is an NHS service set up to help people directly affected by the Manchester Arena attack. It is for children, young people and adults, and is open to people across the UK.

The Hub is staffed by trained mental-health professionals who are used to working with children, young people and adults who have experienced trauma. They will be able to give advice about what reactions are normal and whether you would benefit from more targeted support; they will also try and help you get any services you might need.

You can contact the Hub on 0333 009 5071 (charged at local rate) or [email them](#) (if they are very busy, you may be asked to leave a

message on an answerphone so that they can get back to you, even during opening hours).

In addition, the Hub is hosting a range of one-day events over the coming year. These events will offer safe spaces where people affected by the Arena attack can get together to increase their understanding of trauma reactions and how they can be managed by sharing their experiences.

The events typically run from 10.30am to 4.30pm with lunch and refreshments provided. Help with travel and accommodation is available, provided requests are made in good time. For more information or to book, please contact the Hub at [GM.help@nhs.net](mailto:GM.help@nhs.net) or call 0333 938542.

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## Opportunities with Climbing Out

Climbing Out is a charity that runs five-day outdoor activity programmes aimed at rebuilding confidence and self-esteem in young people who have been through a life-changing injury, illness or trauma.

The programmes run Monday to Friday and offer a wide range of activities, including climbing, gorge-scrambling, kayaking, hill-walking, abseiling and raft-building.

Earlier this year, a group of young people affected by the Arena attack took part in the programme. [You can read more](#) about their experience and a poem written by one of the participants online.

In 2019, Climbing Out will be running another two programmes in the Peak District for young people involved in the Manchester Arena attack.

The first programme, for young people aged 17 to 30 years of age, will run from 27 to 31 May 2019.

The second programme, for young people aged 16 and under, will run from 7 to 11 August 2019.

The programmes suit people of all fitness levels, and activities are bespoke to the needs and capabilities of each individual participant, so everyone can take part and have a go.

If you would be interested in attending a programme yourself, or you know someone who would benefit from taking part, please contact Kelda Wood on 07977 574785 or email [keldawood@climbingout.org.uk](mailto:keldawood@climbingout.org.uk) for more information.

## The Good Grief Project: “Grief is the form love takes when someone dies”

Reuben's Retreat works with organisations such as the Good Grief Project, started by parents Jane Harris and Jimmy Edmonds, whose son Josh died in a road accident in Vietnam in 2011. Their mission is to support families grieving after the untimely death of a loved one, particularly the death of a child. They do this by encouraging a creative response to grief and by looking for new ways of expressing the pain of loss with various art forms and media.

They have also created a series of films to help people understand what it means to grieve in a society that often has difficulty talking openly about death, dying and bereavement.

[Find out more.](#)

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## Manchester Survivors' Choir: #WeSingTogether. Bee Happy

*'We were struck with darkness but we hope to spread light with our voices'*

The Manchester Survivors' Choir is a self-help group set up by and for survivors of the Arena attack and those affected by it. It was formed in Christmas 2017 after the attack and held its first meeting in a beautiful church near the Arena. Being together, singing (enjoying the singing) and supporting each other is the core ethos.

The choir has over 40 founder members from age nine to 60, from all walks of life. Members include an ex-social worker and lecturer (chair Cath Hill), a retired police inspector (secretary), a GP and his family, several nurses and a counsellor. The choir has a real family spirit and its members have become very close. They always share tea and cakes as a key part of their get togethers.

The choir sang on BBC Breakfast and in Albert Square on the attack anniversary and,

through the support of Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham, recorded a single 'A City United' with the band Prose. Members have also done some work with holistic therapists at The Christie, supporting their open day at the end of July 2018.

There were family days during the summer and an open day was held at the Peace Centre in Warrington for potential new members.

The choir set up a fundraising page to ensure its sustainability for the next few years, and funds are now sufficient to cover running costs for two years, including insurance. The group has also become a member of the National Association of Choirs.

September 2018 sees the beginning of the choir's next rehearsal programme in the Hallé's rehearsal rooms. If you would like to know more, you can [find the group on Twitter](#) or email: [c.hill1@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:c.hill1@lancaster.ac.uk)



## Seeking your views: a PhD study

Nichola Rew, a Professional Doctorate student in Criminal Justice at the University of Portsmouth, is conducting research into the different support groups available to victims of terrorism and the experiences of those who have used them.

She seeks the views of those who have been directly involved in a terror attack, those who have had friends or family involved in an attack, and those who have witnessed a terrorist attack.

If you are over 18 and would be willing to help, you can complete a short [online survey](#).

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## Reuben's Retreat

Reuben's Retreat was set up by bereaved parent Nicola Graham as a legacy to her son Reuben, who died from an undiagnosed brain tumour in 2012.

As well as supporting families with a child suffering from a life-limiting or threatening illness its mission includes relieving the distress of parents and siblings who have lost a child.

Reuben's Retreat includes various support groups, one-to-one counselling support, access to a wellbeing programme, bereavement books,

short breaks, day trips, and a safe place to feel understood and fully supported through their grief.

As well as having a dedicated counselling and support centre in Glossop, and support services based at its offices in Ashton-under-Lyne, Reuben's Retreat helps families nationwide.

If you would like to get in touch and learn more about its services, please call the support manager on 01457 680023, or email [support@reubensretreat.org](mailto:support@reubensretreat.org).

Visit the [website for more information](#).

## Invitation to contribute to a Norwegian study

The Norwegian crisis specialist and author Kjell Brataas is researching a book on victim support and family assistance that will be published in 2019. The book aims to present lessons learned and advice for victims based on terror attacks and other tragedies from around the world, and will feature interviews with survivors and family members of those who died. Topics will cover support groups, financial matters, memorials and handling the media.

The author would very much like to interview some of the individuals affected by the terror attack in Manchester. If anyone is willing to share their stories or advice for others, please contact him by email to [kbrataas@online.no](mailto:kbrataas@online.no)

Kjell Brataas handled victim support for the Norwegian government after the tsunami in 2004 and the terror attacks in Oslo and Utoya in 2011. Earlier this year, he published a book on crisis communications that includes case studies from 11 different tragedies from around the world. The book also includes chapters on social media, leadership in crisis, and crisis exercises. The largest chapter in the book covers victim support. [Find out more](#).