

Healthy Minds, Healthy People

Director of Public Health for Medway's Annual Report

2018-19



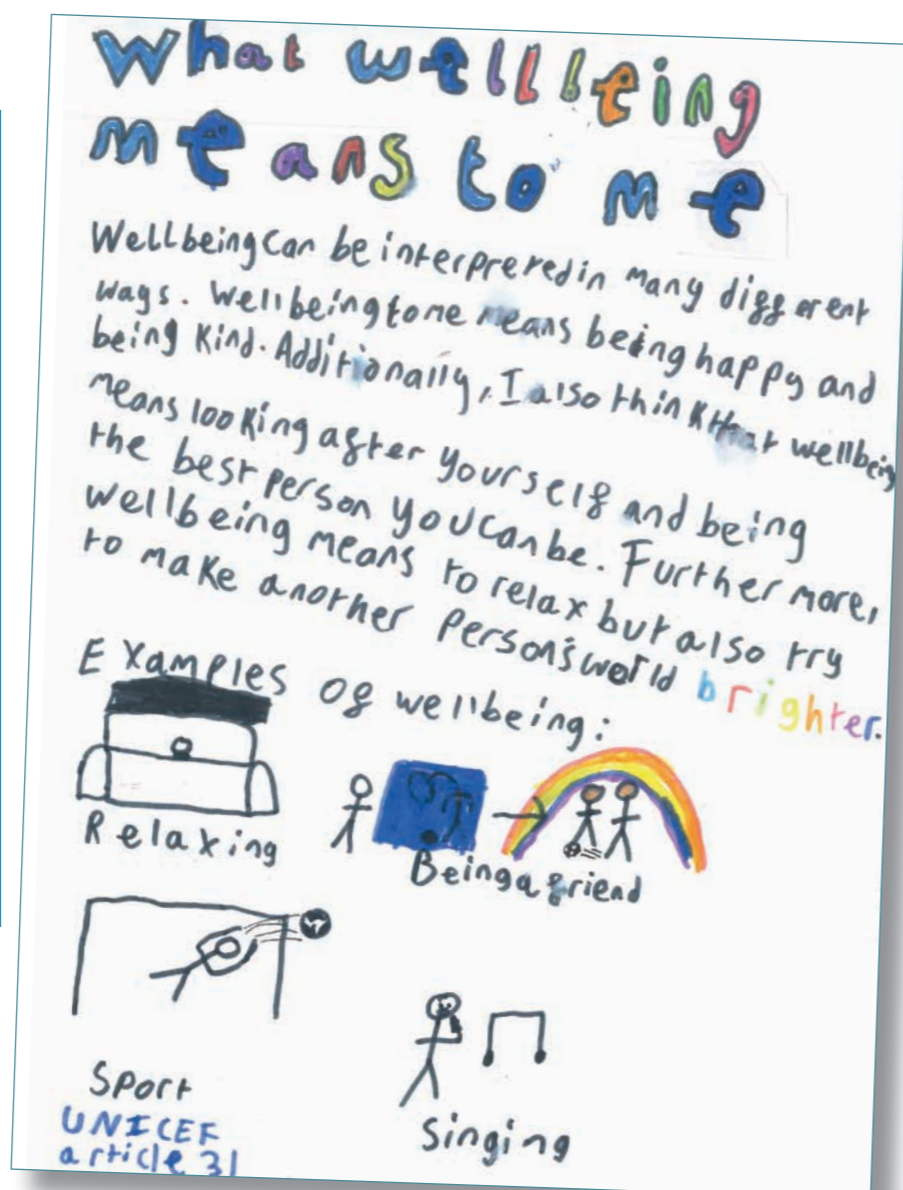
Healthy Minds, Healthy People: Wellbeing across the life course in Medway

Director of Public Health for Medway's Annual Report 2018-19



Young people and schools art competition

We asked young people and schools in Medway to create artwork showing *What wellbeing means to you?*, to better understand how young people in Medway see wellbeing. We had a huge number of fantastic and creative entries from across Medway. You can see examples of this artwork throughout this report. Themes that emerged included family, healthy eating and sleep and creativity. You can find out more about wellbeing among young people in Medway in chapter two.



Contents

- Foreword 2
- 1 What is mental wellbeing, why is it important, and what do we know about mental wellbeing in Medway? 4
- 2 Good mental wellbeing for everyone in Medway: Children and young people 8
- 3 Good mental wellbeing for everyone in Medway: Working age adults 12
- 4 Good mental wellbeing for everyone in Medway: Later life . 16
- 5 Promoting good mental wellbeing in Medway - working together to make Medway a happy, healthy place . 20
 - What's taking place in Medway to support people to have good mental wellbeing?..... 20
 - How can people in Medway improve their mental wellbeing?..... 24
- 6 Recommendations 28
- 7 Afterword: An update on recommendations in the 2017-18 Public Health Report 30
- 8 Glossary 32

Foreword

James Williams



“Improving the mental wellness of the Medway population requires all of us working and living in Medway to work together.”

“Every year, in my annual report, I take an in depth look at an issue that is having, or has the potential to have, a significant impact on the health of local people. This year, I have chosen to focus on the key subject of mental wellbeing.

There is a wealth of evidence which demonstrates that our mental health is as important as our physical health. Mental health problems are unfortunately very common and can affect anyone. Around one in four people experience a mental health problem each year and many more suffer with low mental wellbeing. If we are to improve the overall health of the population of Medway, it is essential that action is taken to address preventable causes of poor mental wellbeing.

We want the people of Medway, at all stages of life, to experience good mental wellbeing and access early support should they need help. This report will review the underlying issues related to poor mental wellbeing. As well as identifying negative impacts, it will also highlight some of the local, innovative solutions already being deployed in Medway to increase community resilience.

There are a range of actions being taken in Medway to promote good mental wellbeing throughout the life course. For example, we know how challenging it can be for expectant mothers and new parents to adjust following the birth of a child. Our Blooming Bumps programme and Child and School Health services, offer tailored expert support and advice to parents. Our Healthy Schools programme supports

“We are proud to be taking a life course approach to wellbeing here in Medway.”

schools and young people to have good emotional wellbeing from an early age.

Working age adults, in any role, can sometimes be exposed to levels of stress that may impact on their mental health. We have a comprehensive Healthy Workplaces programme. This initiative supports both employers and employees to create an environment that fosters good mental wellbeing at work. The wellbeing of people in later life can be impacted by poor physical health or changes to relationships resulting in isolation. Local programmes such as Men in Sheds and wellbeing navigators can support people in later life to maintain good mental wellbeing.

We know that we have good community networks and organisations in Medway. We want to build on these foundations and use this resource, to support more local people to improve their mental wellbeing. We have established a Connect 5 programme. This training aims to empower non-specialist health and care staff to have conversations with their patients or clients about mental wellbeing. They are then able to signpost these people more effectively to appropriate support services or self-help options.

Medway Council is determined to show leadership in relation to addressing the causes of poor mental wellbeing. This year the council has established a Medway Time to Change partnership, to end the stigma that often surrounds mental health problems. Ending stigma needs to start with each one of us recognising the signs and symptoms of mental ill health. We need to be more confident in taking action to tackle issues that impact negatively on our mental wellness or that of others in our community.

This report aims to stimulate a positive discussion about what we in Medway can do to improve our mental wellbeing. We have a Mental Health Strategy for Medway that provides a road map for action, but do we all know as individuals, families and a community, what we can do to alleviate and manage the stresses and strains of daily living in a positive way?

I have identified some local initiatives that are making a positive difference to the mental wellbeing of the people in Medway. I have highlighted practical examples of actions everyone can take to improve their own mental wellbeing.

Improving the mental wellness of the Medway population requires all of us working and living in Medway to work together. I hope this report inspires you to join us in taking action to promote good mental wellbeing in Medway.”

Councillor David Brake, Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services:

“Mental wellbeing is an issue that is important to our local community and we are proud to be taking a life course approach to wellbeing here in Medway. The case studies throughout this report highlight a range of ways we are making a difference to local people by supporting them with their wellbeing. Improving mental wellbeing is recognised as an important theme within the Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. I am therefore pleased that this report enables us to have additional conversations with the community and partners about what we can further do to raise awareness about this issue and the steps people can take to improve their own mental wellbeing”.



1. What is mental wellbeing, and why is it important?

What is mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing describes your mental state - how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Having good mental wellbeing helps people stay healthy, have positive relationships with others and their community.¹

The main focus of this report is mental wellbeing, rather than mental illness. Although these things are related, mental illness refers to mental health problems that may require treatment or an intervention by health professionals (for example severe depression or anxiety). Mental wellbeing describes an individuals' general state of mind.

Having good mental wellbeing is not simply about the absence of mental illness. It is a state of wellbeing where an individual can cope with the normal stresses of life, be productive, reach their potential and make a contribution to their community. It is possible for an individual to have a diagnosis of mental illness, but to still have good mental wellbeing if they have enough support.²



Why is mental wellbeing important?

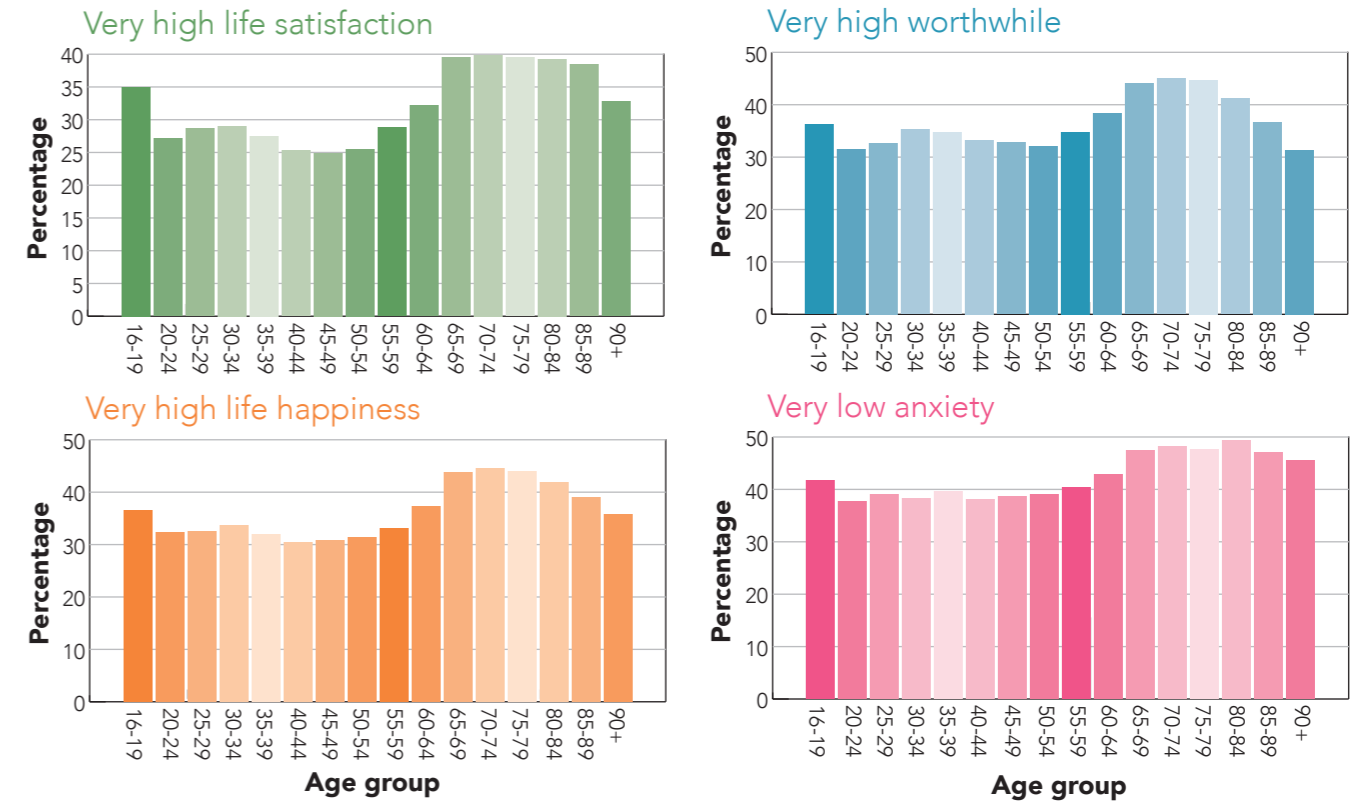
Good mental wellbeing is important as it is linked to a range of positive outcomes including:

- Better physical health
- Longer life expectancy
- Reduced inequalities
- Healthier lifestyles
- Being better able to participate in the community and relationships with others.³

As well as the health and societal related benefits, improving the mental wellbeing of the population offers significant financial benefits. For example, every £1 invested in the social and emotional development of children results in estimated savings to society of more than £5 (over 3 years). For every £1 invested in workplace wellbeing programmes, there is an estimated saving to society of over £2.⁴

By investing in promoting good mental wellbeing among our communities, we improve physical health, reduce costs associated with the treatment of mental illness and develop resilient and vibrant communities.

Figure 1: Measures of wellbeing, UK, 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics (2019). Measuring national well-being domains and measures. May 2019

A life course approach to mental wellbeing

There are many factors that can affect wellbeing throughout life. A national Annual Population Survey collects information about the wellbeing of people in England, by asking them:

- How satisfied they are with their life
- How worthwhile they feel things in their life are
- How happy they feel
- How anxious they feel

The 2018 survey found that the highest level of wellbeing was experienced by younger and older people. Middle aged individuals report the lowest wellbeing (Figure 1). It is therefore important to look at wellbeing across the life course. This enables us to tailor our support and delivery of services, to meet the needs of individuals as they move through the various phases and challenges of life. This report focuses on a life course approach to improving mental wellbeing. It reviews the issues affecting different groups of our population at various stages of their life and sets out the evidence for action to address these challenges.

What do we know about mental wellbeing? Factors that affect mental wellbeing

The Office for National Statistics analysed the responses of people who reported having the lowest wellbeing, and found these individuals were likely to be affected by at least one of the following factors:⁵

- Self-reporting very bad or bad health
- Not working and having a long term illness or disability
- Being middle aged
- Being single, separated, widowed or divorced
- Renting their home
- Having no or basic education

The causes of poor wellbeing span many areas including employment, education and health. Action to address these issues requires a partnership approach. It is also important to note that some factors are more likely to affect peoples' mental wellbeing at different times throughout their life course.

By investing in promoting good mental wellbeing among our communities, we improve physical health.

What do we know about mental wellbeing in Medway?

We asked people in Medway: *What does wellbeing mean to you?* The responses were interesting. Most respondents linked mental wellbeing to their physical health. This reinforces national studies that highlight the fact that people with low levels of wellbeing also have poor physical health. We know from other surveys that Medway has a high proportion of people living with long term health conditions that affect their physical health. The evidence would therefore suggest these people face specific challenges with their mental wellbeing.

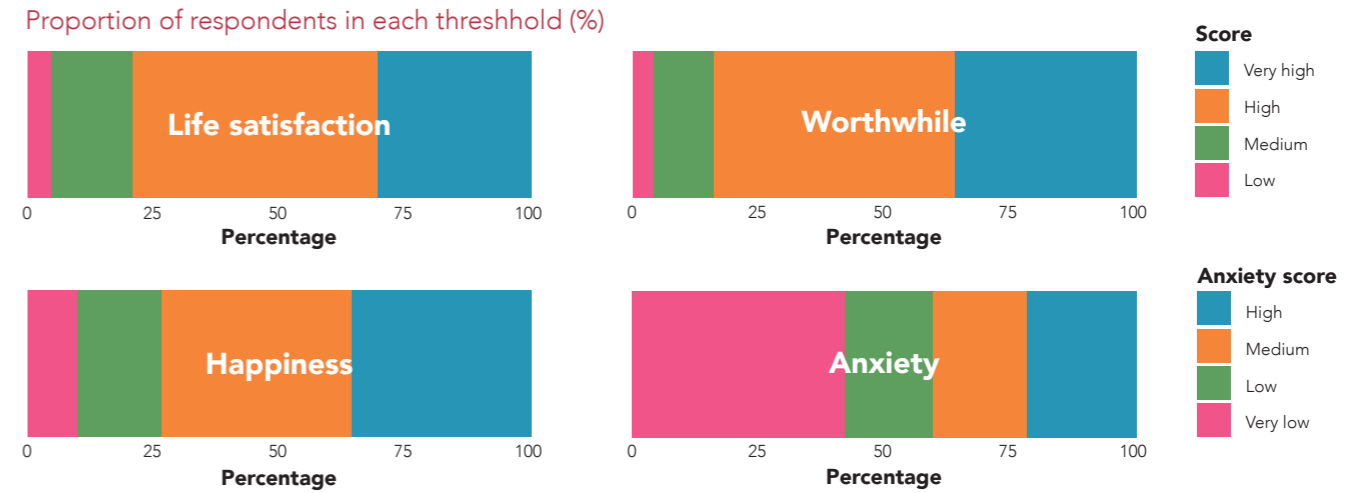
When asked, the majority of Medway residents report having very high or high life satisfaction, happiness and feeling that the things done in life are worthwhile, which can be seen in Figure 2. Overall, average wellbeing scores in Medway are similar to the England average (Figure 3). Levels of anxiety are however slightly higher than the England average with 40 per cent of local people stating they are living with medium to high anxiety compared to 36 per cent of adults in England.⁶

What wellbeing means to you? People in Medway tell us:



The next chapters provide more detail about mental wellbeing for people at different stages of life. They also provide examples of things people can do to enhance their wellbeing.

Figure 2: Measures of wellbeing in Medway, 2017/18



Source: Office for National Statistics (2019). Personal well-being estimates. April 2017 to March 2018 - Local authority update

Figure 3: Trends in Wellbeing in Medway and England, 2011/12 to 2017/18



Source: Office for National Statistics (2019). Personal well-being estimates. April 2017 to March 2018 - Local authority update

References

- [1] Mind. (2019). *How to improve your mental wellbeing*. [Online]. [accessed 1 June 2019]. Available from: www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/wellbeing/#.XUQV6_ZFzD4
- [2] World Health Organisation. (2014). *Mental Health: A State of Wellbeing*. [Online]. [accessed 1 June 2019]. Available from: www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/
- [3] Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health. (2015). *Guidance for commissioning mental health services*.
- [4] Public Health England and the London School of Economics. (2017). *Commissioning Cost Effective Services for Promotion of Mental Health and Wellbeing and Prevention of Mental Ill Health*.
- [5] Office of National Statistics. (2018). *Understanding Wellbeing Inequalities, Who has the Poorest Personal Wellbeing?*
- [6] Office of National Statistics. (2018). *Headline estimates of personal wellbeing from the Annual Population Survey (APS): by counties, local and unitary authorities*.



2. Good mental wellbeing for everyone in Medway: Children and young people

What do we know about mental wellbeing in children and young people?

Mental health problems frequently begin in childhood, with half of all mental illness beginning by the age of fourteen.¹ There are clear links between the emotional wellbeing of children and young people, their personal and social development, and educational performance.² These influences can occur even before a child is born (for example, poor maternal health and wellbeing). The physical home environment, stimulus provided in the early years and formative childhood experiences strongly influence mental wellbeing and mental health.

In 2017³, a national survey asked children and young people about their mental wellbeing and whether they were experiencing any mental health problems. The survey found that one in eight young people had a mental health problem. On average, boys reported having higher wellbeing than girls. The most common problems were emotional disorders, such as anxiety and depression. Anxiety was more common than depression, with 7.2 per cent of participants experiencing anxiety, compared to 2.1 per cent with depression. The survey reported that

59.9%
of 15 year olds in
Medway report high
life satisfaction.

mental health problems have become slightly more common among young people over time, rising from 9.7 per cent in 1999 to 11.2 per cent in 2017.

The increase in the rate of children and young people experiencing poor mental wellbeing requires an urgent focus on the underlying factors that give rise to these issues.

What affects mental wellbeing in children and young people?

There are 67,500 young people (aged 0-18) in Medway, comprising 24 per cent of the total population.⁴ Evidence suggests that young people with mental health problems are more likely to have experienced adverse life events (e.g. parental separation or financial problems). They are also more likely to have parents with mental health problems. They are also less likely to have strong social support networks than young people without mental health problems.⁵ Three of the key areas that influence mental wellbeing among children and young people are adverse childhood experiences, family relationship difficulties and challenges during adolescence.

1) Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) or trauma: Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful events occurring in a child's life. Examples include abuse, family breakdown, bullying or loss and bereavement. ACEs can have a significant impact on the mental wellbeing of children and young people, and their risk of developing mental health problems. For example, bereaved children are 1.5 times more likely than their peers to be diagnosed with a mental health condition and have a higher risk of depression.⁶ Trauma is a reaction to an adverse experience, where a child perceives the experience to be very frightening or harmful. Young adults who have experienced ACEs or childhood trauma have an increased risk of both poor mental (including psychosis)⁷ and physical health.⁸ Children and young people living in disadvantaged areas, in poverty, or with a lower socioeconomic status, are more likely to be exposed to ACEs than more advantaged children and young people.^{9,10,11}

2) Family relationships: Infancy is a key time for brain development and building a loving attachment to a caregiver is important. Without a good early bond, children are less likely to grow up to become happy and resilient adults.¹² Children who have positive and secure attachment to their caregiver are better able to cope with stress, have higher self-esteem and are better able to manage adversity.¹³

3) Adolescence: Adolescence is a time where young people experience many physical, emotional and social changes, which can impact wellbeing. When fifteen year olds in Medway were asked how satisfied they are with their lives, 59.9 per cent reported high levels of satisfaction, compared to the England average of 63.8 per cent.¹⁴ For many adolescents, their family is the most influential group they belong to. Having supportive and loving relationships with family members can influence wellbeing positively, whereas a lack of such family relationships can have a negative impact on wellbeing.¹⁵

Across Medway there are a range of ways in which families, children and young people are supported to develop and maintain good mental wellbeing. The "Grow My Brain" campaign supports families to build relationships with their baby as it grows. The Blooming Bumps" programme, included as a case study in this chapter, offers another example of how expectant women and their families are being supported to improve their wellbeing. Further information about how families are supported with their mental wellbeing in Medway is set out in chapter 5.

9.6%
of children in Medway are
estimated to have a mental
health problem, compared
to the national average of
9.2%¹⁶

Case study

Blooming Bumps



Blooming Bumps is an eight week support group for pregnant women in Medway. It supports women to stop smoking and improves their wellbeing through holistic support. Women can access help to address a range of topics, including infant feeding, stress and sleep issues.

Abigail was a local Medway expectant mum, who was referred to Blooming Bumps by a community midwife in 2019 for stop smoking support. Abigail initially felt she would only attend the first session, but she enjoyed it so much that she came every week. With the support of Blooming Bumps, Abigail was able to successfully quit smoking. She was also able to gain direct support to enhance her overall wellbeing.

For example, Abigail said that she enjoyed the social contact with other pregnant women and made new friends, who she is still in contact with. The women set up a WhatsApp group to continue supporting each other. Abigail also found learning about infant feeding, healthy eating, exercising, baby first aid and relaxation useful, and is now practising mindfulness as a way of relaxing.

Abigail said “{It was} absolutely amazing. I’ve learned so many different things, {about} sleep, healthy eating, stop smoking...if you get the chance to come to Blooming Bumps, come along, it’s great”.

“Come along, it’s great.”

Case study

Medway Healthy Schools Programme and Elaine Primary School

Medway’s Healthy Schools programme provides free support to local schools so they can become healthy settings. This enables them to take action to create an environment that supports the mental health and emotional wellbeing of students and staff.

Elaine Primary School in Rochester has engaged with the Healthy Schools programme. The school has also introduced a range of ways to support students with their social and emotional wellbeing, including introducing a nurture programme (The Den).

Small groups of children attend the nurture group with a facilitator. The group has a focus on developing emotional skills, wellbeing and behaviour. Each week a different emotion is discussed by the group, including how it affects us and what we can do to feel better. The groups include worry workshops, Lego therapy and yoga, with these activities focusing on developing skills such as reducing anxiety and stress along with managing emotions and responding to them calmly.



Case studies demonstrate that the programme is having a positive impact on children’s wellbeing. For example, improved behaviour, social relationships, and participants being more willing to talk through emotions and look for solutions rather than getting angry. One participant said “This year I am proud of my behaviour because my good behaviour has got me places... I’m just so happy that I’ve turned my behaviour around.”

References

- [1] Kessler, R., Berglund P., Demler, O., Jin, R., Merikangas, K., and Walters, E. (2005). “Lifetime Prevalence and Age-of-Onset Distributions of DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication,” *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62 (6): 593-602.
- [2] Public Health England. (2014). *The link between pupil health and wellbeing and attainment*.
- [3] NHS Digital. (2018). *Mental health of children and young people in England, 2017*.
- [4] Office for National Statistics. (2018). *Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Mid-2017*.
- [5] NHS Digital. (2018). *Mental health of children and young people in England*.
- [6] YoungMinds. (2018). *Addressing Adversity*.
- [7] Larkin, W., and Read, J. (2008). “Childhood Trauma and Psychosis: Evidence, pathways, and implications,” *Journal of Postgraduate Medicine*, 54 (4): 287-293.
- [8] Varese, F. (2012). “Childhood Adversities Increase the Risk of Psychosis: A meta-analysis of patient-control, prospective- and cross-sectional cohort studies”, *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, 4 (38): 661-671.
- [9] Felitti, V.J., Anda, R.F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D.F., Spitz, A.M., Edwards, V., Koss, M.P., and Marks, J.S. (1998). “Relationship of childhood abuse and household dysfunction to many of the leading causes of death in adults. The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study”, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 14 (4): 245-58.
- [10] Bellis, M., Hughes, K., Leckenby, N., Hardcastle, K., Perkins, C. and Lowey, H. (2015). “Measuring mortality and the burden of adult disease associated with adverse childhood experiences in England: a national survey”, *Journal of Public Health*, 7 (3): 445-54.
- [11] Ippen, C., Harris, W., Van Horn, P. and Lieberman, A. (2011). “Traumatic and stressful events in early childhood: Can treatment help those at highest risk?”. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 35 (7): 504-13.
- [12] Kenny, M. and Sirin, S. (2006). “The importance of early bonding on the long-term mental health and resilience of children”, *London Journal of Primary Care*, 8 (1): 12-14.
- [13] Kenny, M. and Sirin, S. (2006). “Parental Attachment, Self-Worth, and Depressive Symptoms Among Emerging Adults”, *Journal of Counselling & Development*, 84: 61-71.
- [14] Public Health England. (2017). *Fingertips. Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing. 92980 - Positive satisfaction with life among 15 year olds: % reporting positive life satisfaction*.
- [15] Public Health England. (2015). *Measuring mental wellbeing in children and young people*.
- [16] Public Health England. (2015). *Fingertips. Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing. 91141 – Estimate prevalence of mental health disorders in children and young people: % population aged 5-16*.

3. Good mental wellbeing for everyone in Medway: Working age adults

What do we know about mental wellbeing in adults of working age?

There are 166,400 people of working age (18-64) in Medway, comprising 60 per cent of the population.¹ Adulthood brings new challenges and experiences that can influence mental wellbeing positively or negatively. During adulthood, people experience a range of new life experiences. These can include starting a new career, getting married or entering into a long term relationship, becoming a parent, or becoming a carer. Adulthood can also be a time where new friendships and relationships are formed, or when the pressures of adulthood lead to friendships being lost.

Mental health problems are common among adults of working age. One in four people in the UK experience a mental health problem each year.²

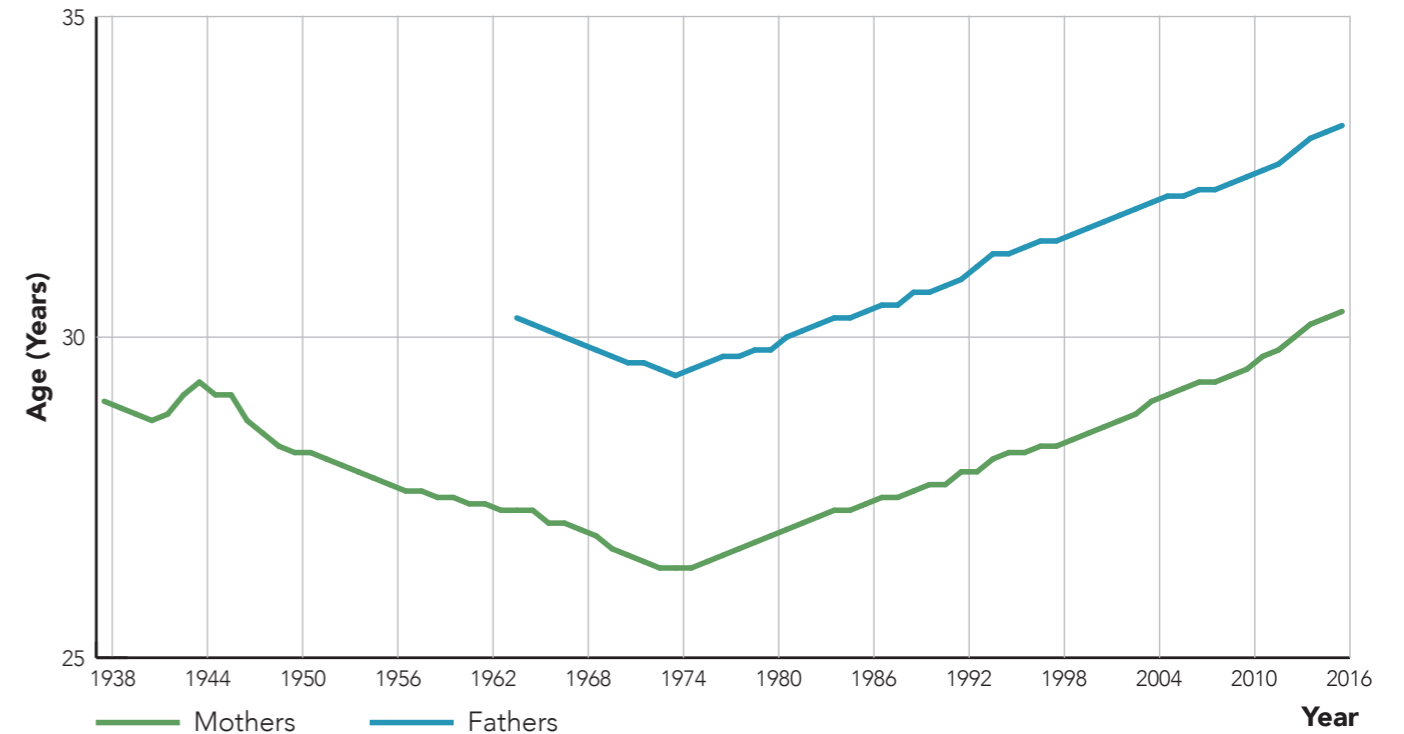
National research has shown the relationship between age and wellbeing to be U-shaped. That is, younger people and older people report having higher wellbeing than people of working age.³ On average, those aged between 45 and 59 reported

having the lowest life satisfaction and happiness. In Medway, 73 per cent of adults (aged 16 or older) report high or very high levels of happiness, compared to the England average of 75 per cent. Also, 79 per cent of adults in Medway (aged 16 or older) report having high or very high levels of life satisfaction, compared to the England average of 82 per cent.⁴

There are a number of reasons why this might be the case. People of working age may have more demands on their time related to their work and family commitments. This leaves them less free time to engage in activities that enable them to enhance or maintain their own good mental wellbeing.³ Other factors could relate to the practice of people in England delaying having children until they are older (Figure 3). This means that some people in middle age are caring for both relatively young children and their elderly parents at the same time.³ This can place significant financial and emotional pressure on individuals.



Figure 3: Average age of mothers and fathers at the birth of their child, 1938-2016.⁵



Source: Office for National Statistics

What affects mental wellbeing in adults of working age?

There are a range of factors that can impact the mental wellbeing of adults of working age. The three main areas are work (or unemployment), relationships and becoming a parent or carer.⁶

1) Work or unemployment: Employment is a vitally important factor for health and wellbeing. The type of work an individual does, their income, and working condition have a significant impact on both physical and emotional health and wellbeing.^{7,8} People who are out of work, particularly for long periods, are at risk of experiencing poor physical health and poor mental wellbeing.⁹ Those who are unemployed are also more likely to have experienced a common mental health disorder (for example anxiety or depression) in the last week than those who are in work.¹⁰ Unemployment rates in Medway (4.4 per cent) are in line with the England average (4.4 per cent).¹¹

Across all ages, people aged between 45 and 59 report having the lowest life satisfaction and happiness.

In Medway,
79% of adults
have high life
satisfaction and 73%
have high levels of
happiness.



- 2) Relationships:** For adults, relationships with a partner, family and friends can have a significant impact on mental wellbeing. Being in a stable relationship is linked to better physical and mental health, including greater life satisfaction. Conversely, being in an unhappy relationship is associated with poor mental wellbeing.¹² Not having enough good quality relationships can negatively influence wellbeing and lead to loneliness. In addition, relationship breakdowns, or if a parent, when children leave home, are critical moments when the risk of loneliness increases.¹³
- 3) Becoming a parent or carer:** Becoming a parent can increase parental wellbeing, providing a sense of purpose, positive emotions and providing the opportunity for new relationships with others. The increased demands that children may place on parents (for example financial and time pressures) can also reduce wellbeing.¹⁴ Adults of working age may also become a carer for the first time. This could be for their own parents, siblings or other family members. Having to cope with these conflicting demands can have a negative impact on wellbeing.¹⁵

Across Medway, there are a range of ways adults of working age are supported to maintain or improve their mental wellbeing. The Medway Healthy Workplaces programme supports employers to create vibrant holistic environments that enable employees to thrive in the workplace. This includes support with physical health, including wellness checks for employees, as well as support with mental wellbeing. Mental wellbeing training programmes help professionals identify those who may be experiencing mental health problems and signpost them to local advice or support services. NHS funded specialist mental health services and GP's ensure local people have access to clinical help when they need it. This includes talking therapies to assist those with common mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression. Further advice on how adults of working age can access support to enhance their wellbeing is set out in chapter 5.

References

- [1] Office for National Statistics. (2018). *Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Mid-2017*.
- [2] NHS Digital. (2009). *Adult Psychiatric Morbidity in England - 2007, Results of a household survey*.
- [3] Office for National Statistics. (2016). *Measuring National Wellbeing: At What Age is Personal Wellbeing the Highest?*
- [4] Office for National Statistics. (2019). *Personal well-being estimates. April 2017 to March 2018 - Local authority update*.
- [5] Office for National Statistics. 2017. *Births by parents' characteristics in England and Wales: 2016*.
- [6] Faculty of Public Health and Mental Health Foundation. (2016). *Better Mental Health for All: A Public Health Approach to Mental Health Improvement*.
- [7] McGinnis, J.M., Williams-Russo, P. and Knickman, J.R. (2002). "The case for more active policy attention to health promotion", *Health Affairs*, 21 (2): 78-93.
- [8] Modini, M., Joyce, S., Mykletun, A., Christensen, H., Bryant, R.A., Mitchell, P.B. and Harvey, S.B. (2016). "The mental health benefits of employment: Results of a systematic meta-review", *Australasian Psychiatry*, 24(4): 331-336.
- [9] Marmot, M. (2010). *Fair society, healthy lives: the Marmot Review: strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010*.
- [10] Stansfeld, S. and Candy, B. (2006). "Psychosocial work environment and mental health – a meta-analytic review", *Scandinavian Journal of Work Environment and Health*, 32(6): 443-462.
- [11] Public Health England. (2017). *Fingertips. Public Health Profiles. 91126 - Unemployment*.
- [12] Robles, T.F., Slatcher, R.B., Trombello, J.M. and McGinn, M.M. (2014). "Marital quality and health: A meta-analytic review", *Psychological Bulletin*, 140 (1): 140-187.
- [13] Mental Health Foundation. (2010). *The Lonely Society?*
- [14] Roeters, A., Mandemakers, J., and Voorpostel, M. (2016). "Parenthood and wellbeing, the moderating role of leisure and paid work", *European Journal of Population*, 32 (3): 381-401.
- [15] Carers UK. (2012). *In Sickness and in Health*.

Case study

Mental Health First Aid Training through Medway Workplace Health Programme

MTS Cleansing Services Limited (MTS) is a family business based in Medway. MTS joined Medway's Workplace Health Programme, which is run by the Public Health Team at Medway Council. As part of the programme, MTS received support to improve mental wellbeing in their organisation and for their employees.

The support from the workplace health programme included Mental Health First Aid training. Mental Health First Aiders are able to spot signs and symptoms of mental health problems and know how to support people to get help, should they need it. Over the last year, six employees from MTS have attended this training, and become trained as Mental Health First Aiders. MTS have promoted wellbeing services within their organisation and now have colleagues that can support each other with their wellbeing.

An employee at MTS said "The Mental Health First Aid training was a great help in dealing with the employees who approached me to discuss personal issues and mental health struggles. I was very pleased that they felt able to talk to me. I felt more confident in listening and signposting them to further help, using the guidance from the training. I think that being able to train a range of people in Mental Health First Aid across the business, really widens the net of employees who feel comfortable in using this support".

Those from the business who attended the training also talked about the positive impact the training has had on their own wellbeing. One individual said "Personally, having the Mental Health First Aid training behind me has helped me to give support and guidance to employees. It has helped my own wellbeing in what can be a stressful situation in dealing with other people's personal issues and stresses".

“ A great help in dealing with the employees who approached me to discuss personal issues and mental health struggles. ”



4. Good mental wellbeing for everyone in Medway: Later life

What do we know about mental wellbeing in later life?

The latest population estimates indicate that 43,700 people in Medway are aged 65 and over, which is about 15 per cent of the total population¹. Compared to the England average, Medway has a younger population, however as is also the case nationally, the population is aging³. The 65 and over age group is expected to grow the most over the coming years. It will increase by nearly 25 per cent by 2027 to 53,800 and 50 per cent by 2037 to 66,000.²

It is often assumed that a person's quality of life decreases with age, but this is not necessarily the case.³ In the UK, ratings of life satisfaction, a sense that what one does in life is worthwhile, and happiness tend to peak between 65 to 79 years of age.⁴ This period of life can be a time of high wellbeing, as people pursue leisure activities in retirement.⁶ Conversely, wellbeing ratings fall amongst the oldest age groups (those aged 75 and over), which may be due to a range of circumstances. For example, poor physical health or feelings of loneliness.⁴ Of all the wellbeing measures, the steepest decline among older people is in the rating related to purpose in life.

Those aged 90 and above are least likely to report feeling the things in their life are worthwhile.⁴ Maintaining a strong sense of meaning in life is particularly important at older ages. This is a time when social and emotional ties often fragment and health problems may limit an individual's options.⁵

In Medway, it is estimated that 10.4 per cent of the population aged 65 and over have a common mental health disorder (for example anxiety or depression)⁷ and 3.24 per cent have a diagnosis of dementia⁸. As the number of older people in the population is increasing, if levels of mental health problems among older people remain the same, this is likely to lead to an increased number of older people with mental health problems in future.³

What affects mental wellbeing in later life?

Five key areas are thought to influence mental wellbeing later in life.³

- 1) Discrimination:** Age discrimination is a type of prejudice which may be experienced by older people. Examples could include services being designed around the needs of young people, or older people being portrayed negatively in the media. Experiencing age discrimination may lower someone's self-esteem, lead to feelings of worthlessness, and prevent them from enjoying life to the full.³
- 2) Participation in meaningful activity:** For many, mental wellbeing is improved during retirement, as it brings opportunities to focus on leisure activities and spend more time with family and

People aged 90 and above are least likely to report feeling the things in their life are worthwhile.

friends.³ However, for some retirement can represent a loss of identity⁹ and some people may feel they no longer have meaningful activities in their life.³ Having a meaningful role later in life, such as volunteering or community involvement, can provide a sense of purpose, a reason to get up in the morning and something to care about.³

- 3) Relationships:** Connecting with others, such as family and friends, is vital for maintaining mental wellbeing later in life⁶. These relationships provide connection, social support, and a sense of being needed and belonging.³ Retirement can lead to the loss of social networks and it can strain relationships with partners, children and spouses.³ Contact with family may also be limited by lack of affordable or adequate transport, ill health or immobility, or poor relationships with family members.³ An absence of meaningful relationships can lead to loneliness or social isolation³, which can negatively influence both physical and mental health.⁶ There are 11,868 people in Medway aged 65 or over that live alone.¹⁰ However, a smaller proportion of older people live alone in Medway (11.2 per cent) than is the case nationally (12.4 per cent).¹⁰ In Medway, 44.6 per cent of adult social care users aged 65 and over have as much social contact as they would like, which is similar to the England average (44.0 per cent).¹¹ Some relationships may provide challenges for wellbeing later in life (for example becoming a carer for a partner, family member or friend).³ Being an informal carer can be stressful at times and for some people, could increase the risk of depression.³ It can also be particularly challenging for older carers who may have their

People aged 65 to 79 are most likely to report high levels of wellbeing.

(feeling happy and satisfied with life and feeling their life is worthwhile).

own health problems to cope with.⁶ Many people in later life experience bereavement, following a partner or loved one passing away. Whilst older people's experiences following the loss of a partner vary hugely, grief and depression may have an impact on their wellbeing.¹³

4) Physical health: Our physical health is extremely important and closely linked to having good mental wellbeing and quality of life.³ Generally, rates of physical inactivity increase in later years compared to early adulthood, while rates of disability tend to increase with age.³ Healthy lifestyle choices, such as undertaking regular physical activity and eating well, can help older people maintain good physical health. This in turn will reduce the likelihood of low mood and reduce the risk of mental health problems, particularly depression.³

5) Poverty: Financial security later in life provides a decent standard of living, a degree of comfort, feelings of safety and security. It also enables individuals to participate in social activities or leisure pursuits.³ Retirement can result in people having to live on a reduced income, as pensions and savings may not be sufficient to maintain the standard of living individuals become accustomed to whilst employed.^{9,3} Living in poverty can provoke worry, stress, loss of control and is a risk factor for poor mental health.³

In Medway, 99.4 per cent of eligible people aged 65 and over receive winter fuel payments, which help older people meet the costs of heating their homes in winter. This proportion is higher than the England average (96.5 per cent).¹²

Across Medway, there are a range of ways in which people in later life are supported to maintain good mental wellbeing. For example, you can read about Medway's Men in Sheds programme in this chapter's case study. Examples of other support available include Medway's Wellbeing Navigation Service and Age UK Medway's information and advice service. Information on these initiatives can be found in chapter 5.



Case study

Medway Men in Sheds

Ray, aged 70, is a retired engineer and had recently moved to the area, but didn't know many people locally, so felt isolated. Ray heard about Men in Sheds through registering with a local GP.



“The music sessions keep me mentally alert and push my boundaries.”

Ray began attending the music session at Medway Men in Sheds and particularly enjoyed playing the drums. Ray started attending the shed twice a week, also learning about electronics. Ray said: “The music sessions keep me mentally alert and push my boundaries”.

Ray said that the shed has helped his wellbeing as it has helped him connect with other people who attend shed sessions, learn new music skills and have the opportunity to learn something new in later life. The sessions help him keep active by getting up and out of the house and letting loose with drumsticks. Supporting others that attend the shed also means he can give something back by helping others.

Ray said: “I really look forward to attending the sessions and supporting another member to attend. Having a reason to get up, be clear headed and well presented is a bonus for me. I very much enjoy the comradely activities and sharing of skills. There are so many people living alone that need or want a motive in life, this music day has given me one”.

References

- [1] Office for National Statistics. (2018). *Estimates of the population for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Mid-2017.*
- [2] Office for National Statistics. (2019). *Population projections for local authorities: Table 2. 2016 based.*
- [3] Age Concern and Mental Health Foundation. (2006). *Promoting mental health and well-being in later life: A first report from the UK Inquiry into Mental Health and Well-Being in Later Life.*
- [4] Office for National Statistics. (2016). *Measuring National Well-being: At what age is Personal Well-being the highest?*
- [5] Steptoe, A. and Fancourt, D. (2019). “Leading a meaningful life at older ages and its relationship with social engagement, prosperity, health, biology, and time use,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 116 (4): 1207-1212.
- [6] Faculty of Public Health and Mental Health Foundation. (2016). *Better Mental Health for All: A Public Health Approach to Mental Health Improvement.*
- [7] Public Health England. (2017). *Fingertips. Mental Health and Wellbeing JSNA. 93496 - Estimated prevalence of common mental disorders: % of population aged 65 & over.*
- [8] Public Health England. (Dec 2018). *Fingertips. Productive Healthy Ageing. 91891 - Dementia: Recorded prevalence (aged 65 years and over).*
- [9] Mental Health Foundation. (2012). *Getting On... with life: Baby boomers, mental health and ageing well. A review.*
- [10] Public Health England. (2011). *Fingertips. Productive Healthy Ageing. 91406 - Older people living alone: % of households occupied by a single person aged 65 or over.*
- [11] Public Health England. (2017/18). *Fingertips. Productive Healthy Ageing. 90280 - Social Isolation: percentage of adult social care users who have as much social contact as they would like (65+ yrs).*
- [12] Public Health England. (2011). *Fingertips. Productive Healthy Ageing. 1187 - Percentage of people aged 65+ receiving winter fuel payments.*
- [13] Independent Age. (2018). *Good Grief: Older People's Experiences of Partner Bereavement.*



5. Promoting good mental wellbeing in Medway – working together to make Medway a happy, healthy place

What's taking place in Medway to support people to have good mental wellbeing?

There are a variety of services and organisations across Medway that support local people to achieve and maintain good mental wellbeing. This section provides some examples of the breadth and depth of mental wellbeing services and other support available in Medway.

More information about the range of broader mental health services that support and treat people with severe mental health problems in Medway, can be found online in the mental health chapter of Medway's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment at: medwayjsna.info/. These broader services are not included in this chapter, which focuses on mental wellbeing. Examples include:

For children, young people and families

- **Grow My Brain:** Medway's innovative Grow My Brain campaign launched in 2019 and is now recognised nationally. The campaign supports parents to take actions to support a baby's brain development. The first 1,000 days of a baby's life (the time between becoming pregnant and the baby's second birthday) are really important for the human brain. The campaign supports families to take simple actions, such as reading, singing and dancing with their child, to support healthy brain development. The campaign has supported many people in Medway (for example, one of the campaign videos *Love me, Grow my Brain* has been watched by over 4,500 people, and one of the campaign social media posts reached over 8,000 people).

- **Medway's Child Health Service:** offers a range of support to parents and children, including help with emotional wellbeing. This includes support from health visitors around mental wellbeing of parents. All mothers are assessed at the child's six to eight week visit and offered further support to meet their needs, where required. From September 2019, the school health team will roll out twice termly group sessions and classroom assessments in schools to provide support for young people with emerging mental health needs. During 2018-19, the Child Health Service had over 27,000 face-to-face contacts with families in Medway, supporting them with their health and wellbeing.
- **Medway's Healthy Schools programme:** offers support to schools to improve the health and wellbeing of students. This includes support with Mental Health First Aid training, emotional wellbeing lesson plans and other support and resources. The Healthy Schools programme had 13,516 interactions with local schools during 2018-19, supporting them with their wellbeing. These interactions mean that evidence-based materials, lesson plans and skills are embedded across schools. As a result, young people are being empowered to better understand what a healthy relationship looks like or the impact of getting involved in gangs, as well as providing them with a breadth of knowledge about self-care and their own health and wellbeing. The team also supported 108 professionals from across Medway's children and young peoples' workforce to be trained in Mental Health First Aid, enabling them to better support young people.
- **Family Support: Universal support with emotional wellbeing:** Medway has a universal offer in place (to help all young people and their families with their emotional wellbeing), including advice and guidance, support through schools as part of PSHE (personal, social, health and economic) lessons and the SAFE programme (mental health awareness and peer ambassador programme). Targeted and specialist support for young people with additional or complex needs is also in place in Medway. Examples include programmes that help families with parenting and positive behaviour. Further information can be found in Medway's Local Transformation Plan. Support is also available to families through Early Help Assessments, which help assess a wide range of family needs, which could include emotional wellbeing, along with helping develop a plan of support. Medway's Youth Service also provide a wealth of support and activities

- for young people, including the Be Yourself programme, which is a personal development programme for young people.
- **Blooming Bumps:** Blooming Bumps is an eight week programme that supports expectant mums and families in Medway to quit smoking and improve their wellbeing. This includes support with bonding with the baby and managing stress and anxiety. Course participants also state that the opportunity to meet and get to know other expectant mums helps to support their wellbeing. During 2018-19, Blooming Bumps supported 12 families to improve their wellbeing.
- **Medway Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Service:** This service offers advice and support for children, young people and their families, on issues such as stress, low mood, depression and anxiety. This can include online self-help, face-to-face therapy, signposting and assessments. The service supported over 14,000 young people during 2018-19. On average, 78 per cent of young people reported an improvement in their emotional wellbeing, six months after starting support with the service.
- **Medway's green spaces:** Evidence shows that spending time in nature is good for our mental wellbeing. Medway has a range of award winning green spaces. Examples include Capstone Country Park, Great Lines Heritage Park and Riverside Country Park. A range of events, play areas and volunteering opportunities are also available at these locations.

Evidence shows that spending time in nature is good for our mental wellbeing.

For people of working age and people in their later years

- Medway Healthy Workplace Programme:** Medway has a bespoke programme of support for local workplaces, to help organisations to improve the wellbeing of their employees and create healthy, happy workplaces. This includes support around mental wellbeing, such as access to mental health training, assistance with policy development, and guidance for line managers. During 2018/19, the programme worked with over 150 businesses in Medway and reached over 14,000 employees. The mental wellbeing training delivered to workplaces has demonstrated a significant impact on employees' understanding of mental health and wellbeing and their confidence to have conversations about mental wellbeing, as well as increasing awareness of local services and support available.
- Time to Change Medway:** In 2019, Medway was awarded Time to Change Organic Hub Status. The hub is a new partnership that will work to end mental health stigma in Medway. The hub will train local Time to Change Champions, who have experience of mental health problems. These champions will hold events and conversations in their communities to end mental health stigma. The hub will launch a champions fund in 2019 to support the delivery of these

25 employee wellbeing champions were trained in 2019 to provide additional support to staff with their mental wellbeing.

activities across Medway. Medway Council also signed the Time to Change Employer Pledge in 2019. This commits the council to ending mental health stigma within the organisation. Twenty five employee wellbeing champions were trained in 2019 to provide additional support to staff with their mental wellbeing.

- A Better Medway Healthy Lifestyle Services:** Evidence shows that being regularly physically active, connecting with others, giving, taking notice and learning, can help improve mental wellbeing. These are called the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*. Many of A Better Medway's services support people to do more of these things. For example, there were 9,000 referrals made to A Better Medway services



during 2018/19. These referrals led to over 1,000 people accessing the councils' Healthy Walks Programme, offering free and guided access to Medway's wonderful green spaces.

- Medway's Mental Wellbeing Training Programme: Connect 5:** Medway's Public Health Team offer a range of mental wellbeing training to improve the skills of Medway's workforce around mental wellbeing. Connect 5 is one of these programmes and helps attendees to identify people experiencing mental health problems, provide brief interventions and support people to get help. The programme also supports people to improve their own wellbeing. Since its launch in 2017, the programme has trained over 300 people from local communities, organisations and professionals and has delivered good outcomes, with over 90 per cent of people reporting it has increased their skills in supporting people with their mental health.
- Medway Talking Therapies:** This service is commissioned by the NHS and supports people with issues, such as low mood, depression, anxiety and stress, through therapy. Therapy is available face-to-face, on the telephone or online.
- Social Care Support:** Social care clients are supported with their mental wellbeing throughout their social care journey, with teams using the three conversations model with clients. The three conversations is an asset based approach, which helps people to identify and connect with support in their families, communities and services, helping them stay well in the community.
- Medway Men in Sheds:** Supports local men who are retired or out of work to stay healthy and have good mental wellbeing by getting together to share their interests and skills. There are a range of shed sessions (for example fabrication, music, green living, cookery and men's health). During 2017/18, 262 shed sessions were held, with 182 shed members. The shed demonstrates measurable improvements in men's wellbeing.
- Medway Wellbeing Navigation Service:** Medway wellbeing navigators support people to improve their wellbeing by helping them to navigate their way through health, social care and voluntary sector support services. People are helped to access a range of services. These include befriending, housing options and general support. Many of these areas relate to the Five Ways to Wellbeing and have the potential to improve an individual's mental wellbeing.



James Williams, Director of Public Health; Councillor David Brake, Portfolio Holder for Adults' Services and Neil Davies, Chief Executive of Medway Council, sign the Time to Change Employers Pledge in 2019.

- Age UK Medway's Information and Advice Service:** This free service provides advice and guidance to older people in Medway. This can include support on issues such as welfare benefits, leisure and social activities and housing. These are all issues with the potential to significantly impact mental wellbeing.
- Support for carers:** Support with emotional and mental health of carers (of all ages) is one of the key themes in Medway's Carers Strategy, which outlines support available in Medway. This includes the Carers Support Service (Carers First) and support from social care with an assessment and carers support plan.
- Bereavement support:** Medway talking therapies offer support with bereavement, in addition to support being available from a range of voluntary and community sector organisations and groups (for example Rainham Bereavement Friendship Group).
- Voluntary and community sector activities:** There are a whole host of voluntary and community sector organisations in Medway undertaking work that contributes to improving mental wellbeing. The next chapter includes information about the Connect Well Medway website, which is one source of information about these wider services available in Medway.

Medway residents tell us: What wellbeing means to you



How can people in Medway improve their mental wellbeing?

There are a wide range of services and opportunities within Medway that local people can access to improve and maintain good mental wellbeing.

This chapter provides some examples and practical advice that individuals, employers and employees, schools and communities, can adopt to improve their wellbeing.

Individuals are generally best placed to comment on factors that impact positively or negatively on their wellbeing. We therefore asked local people what helped them look after their own wellbeing. Examples of what Medway residents do to keep well are presented throughout this section.

Good mental wellbeing - For individuals in Medway

Evidence suggests that there are five key actions that people can take to improve their own mental wellbeing. These are called the *Five Ways to Wellbeing*.

Some people find it helpful to think of the Five Ways to Wellbeing as being the mental health equivalent of eating five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Regularly carrying out actions from the Five Ways to Wellbeing has been shown to improve wellbeing.

Each individual has their own method of maintaining balance in their lives. We have set out some examples from the Five Ways to Wellbeing which people may wish to add to their routines.

1 Connect: Connecting with others makes us feel good. There are numerous ways to connect, but some examples include:

- Talk to someone new
- Join a book club at one of Medway's libraries
- Take a look at Medway's Staying Connected guide, for over 55s
- Make a pledge to tackle loneliness in Medway as part of the A Better Medway - Together campaign. Visit: medway.gov.uk/community
- Visit the Connect Well Medway website to find a local group or activity to connect with.

Giving your time, support or skills to others is rewarding and can make you feel good.

2 Be active: Being active can improve the way you feel. Simple things like going for a walk, taking dance classes, cycling, or swimming, can make a significant difference to your wellbeing. Discover something you enjoy doing like gardening or flying a kite in the park. Medway's award winning green spaces and recreational areas offer easy and accessible ways to be active.

With dedicated support available from A Better Medway's qualified trainers and walk leaders, you will not be alone.

3 Take notice: Take a few minutes to slow down, be in the moment and aware of what's around you. Some people call this mindfulness or meditation. Some people find mindfulness courses or podcasts useful. Others partake in activities such as yoga or tai chi to help them be mindful.

4 Keep learning: Learning new skills can boost your wellbeing and confidence. Try something new or take up a new hobby. Adult education courses are a great way to keep learning. There are a range of courses offered in Medway for all abilities.

5 Give: Giving is a great way to make a difference to your life and other people's. Giving your time, support or skills to others is rewarding and can make you feel good. You might want to volunteer in your local community. There are a considerable range of volunteering opportunities in Medway, from being a walk leader, a volunteer driver or providing help to others who might need support.

Good mental wellbeing - For workplaces in Medway

We know that the environment we spend the most time in can have a significant impact on our wellbeing. Workplaces therefore offer a great opportunity to improve the wellbeing of employees.

Medway's free Healthy Workplaces programme supports local businesses and organisations to improve the wellbeing of their employees. By signing up to our free scheme, businesses have access to a range of support services, including training, guidance and wellbeing resources for employees.

Good mental wellbeing - For schools in Medway

Supporting young people to develop good mental wellbeing in their educational environment can be key in helping them to thrive. Schools in Medway can join the free Healthy Schools programme. This support includes access to quality assured personal, social and health education lesson plans, access to Youth Mental Health First Aid training and support with teacher training and parent workshops.

What things in Medway help you look after your wellbeing?

Volunteering, going to the gym or walking and visiting local areas such as parks.

Volunteering and being part of local activities.

Local walking group... lunch club... the library... go to National Trust places to breathe fresh air.

Walking around the heritage park and Riverside Country Park helps clear my head.

Walking in my local area, a naturally beautiful and peaceful area (Allhallows). Supporting local events... fetes, open days etc. Volunteering in the village school.

Gym, socialising, using the outdoor spaces.

Good mental wellbeing - For communities in Medway

A Better Medway Champions help improve health and wellbeing in Medway. Anyone who lives or works in Medway can apply to become a champion. Champions attend a free training course and receive a public health qualification. Champions also attend masterclasses on public health topics, including mental health. These volunteers are selfless and play a key role in improving outcomes for local Medway residents.

Good mental wellbeing - For health and care professionals in Medway

Front line professionals can access Connect 5 mental wellbeing training, to help them improve the mental wellbeing of individuals they come into contact with. Making Every Contact Count training is also available in Medway. This training helps those who are in contact with individuals who may need support to signpost them to appropriate services.

Find out more:

Follow the website links to find out how to get in touch with the organisations and activities in Medway mentioned in this report that can help you improve your wellbeing.

Individuals in Medway - Five Ways to Wellbeing:

Connect

Staying Connected guide, for over 55s

Medway Libraries Book Groups

Make a pledge to tackle loneliness in Medway

Connect Well Medway

Be active

Medway Health Walks

Dance classes in Medway

Swimming in Medway

Get Active pages of the A Better Medway website

Take notice

Find out more about mindfulness and how to practice it on NHS Choices

Keep learning

Find an adult education course

Give

Find volunteering ideas in Medway

Workplaces in Medway

Medway Workplace Health Programme

Schools in Medway

Medway Healthy Schools Programme

Health and care professionals in Medway

Connect 5 Training

Making Every Contact Count Training

Further resources

Healthy Mind pages of the A Better Medway website

Unwind with a Healthy Mind Medway leaflet

Medway's Carers Strategy



6. Recommendations for improving mental wellbeing across the life course in Medway

This report illustrates some of the wide range of actions being taken in Medway to promote good mental wellbeing throughout the life course.

Medway Council is committed to continuing to lead partnership work to ensure that all people in Medway are supported to develop and maintain good mental wellbeing. Together with its stakeholders, the council will empower local organisations, communities and individuals to take action to develop and maintain good mental wellbeing.

Achieving this aspiration requires intervention by a range of partners across Medway. Below are some actions that partners in Medway can take, to build on existing mental health promotion work and contribute to Medway becoming a mentally healthy place.

Awareness campaigns

- All organisations in Medway should continue to support local people to be aware of and act on the Five Ways to Wellbeing, including promoting Public Health England's Every Mind Matters campaign (launching in October 2019). These campaigns should include targeted actions to reach groups with the lowest wellbeing, including those in middle age.

Workforce development

- Increase access to mental wellbeing support for adults of working age through increasing the capacity of frontline health and care workers to deliver brief mental wellbeing advice and signposting. This will be achieved through delivering Connect 5 training to targeted health and care professionals in Medway during 2019-20 and continuing to deliver Making Every Contact Count Training.

Workplaces

- It is recommended that work take place to increase the number of organisations in Medway who have signed the Employers' Time to Change Pledge. The Time to Change Medway Hub will support at least eight new public sector organisations to sign the pledge during 2019-20. Over the longer term, the aspiration is that 100 per cent of public sector employers in Medway will sign the pledge.
- Medway Public Health Team should continue to increase the proportion of workplaces and schools engaged in their Healthy Settings programmes, including take up of mental wellbeing support available through these programmes. By April 2020, the team aim to have 90 per cent of local schools actively engaged in the programme. In addition, the team aim to engage at least 20 new businesses per year, with at least 20 businesses achieving a workplace health award and at least 100 workplaces in contact with the programme.

Young people and schools

- It is recommended that a mapping exercise be undertaken to identify what provision is available in schools in Medway to support students and staff with their emotional wellbeing. The findings of this exercise should be shared, to inform the dissemination of best practice and learning across Medway.
- Partners should review the findings of the Kent and Medway mapping exercise on Adverse Childhood Experiences (currently underway) and identify actions to be progressed locally. These actions should identify how support can be strengthened to mitigate the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and how trauma informed care can further be developed locally.

Commissioning

- NHS, social care and public health commissioners to audit local actions against the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on Older people: independence and mental wellbeing and identify areas for further work.
- NHS, social care and public health commissioners to include where feasible, mental wellbeing outcome measures within service contracts.
- All new NHS and social care contracts to include requirements for providers to support the referral and signposting of service users into mental wellbeing and social prescribing schemes.

We will work with local organisations, communities and individuals to take action to develop and maintain good mental wellbeing.

7. Afterword: An update on recommendations in the 2017-18 Public Health Report

My 2017-2018 annual report *Protecting the Health of Medway's Population: now and for the future* looked at the topic of health protection. You can view the report [here](#).

The report made a number of recommendations for action. Whilst there will always be a need to continue to work with partners to protect the health of local people and be vigilant for new and emerging threats to health, good progress has been made against the recommendations. Some examples of key achievements on these recommendations includes the following:

Air quality: Implementation of Medway's Air Quality Communications Strategy has begun, and has been acknowledged by Public Health England as best practice, with Medway being invited to present at a national Air Quality Conference in 2019 to share this work with others. A range of other actions have also taken place as part of the council's overall approach to air quality. For example, updating the Workplace Health Programme to include actions

around sustainability and air quality, to support businesses in Medway contribute towards good air quality. Medway Council has also partnered with Kent County Council, to deliver the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emissions Strategy. Cabinet have agreed the establishment of a Climate Change Member Advisory Group, and an Officer Steering Group. These groups will develop, deliver and oversee an action plan to meet the aspirations of the full council who have collectively agreed to tackle the climate emergency.

Food hygiene: The proportion of food businesses in Medway with good or very good food hygiene ratings has increased to 94.7 per cent in 2018-19 (from 93 per cent in 2017-18). The council's Food and Safety team have continued to educate food businesses in Medway to reduce food-borne illness and drive up compliance.

HIV testing (sexual health): The sexual health service within Medway has implemented action plans, training and education, which has resulted in increasing the uptake of HIV testing (within sexual health services) from 45 per cent in 2017 to 85 per cent in quarter one 2019-20, with 100 per cent offered testing.

Immunisations: Continued work to improve uptake of child immunisations has taken place during 2017-19, including:

- work to increase access to immunisations services through inclusion of community vaccination clinics in Medway for children who have missed routine vaccinations at their GP from 2018.
- work to improve quality of data on child immunisations, including targeted visits in Medway to support GP practices with submission of child immunisations data to the central reporting system.
- working with immunisations providers to improve the uptake of immunisations.

The most recent annual data available (2017-18) demonstrates that between 2016-17 and 2017-18, uptake has improved for five of the key childhood vaccinations in Medway, despite a decrease in vaccination uptake nationally during this period (for these five vaccinations). In addition, in 2019, a focused campaign took place to increase uptake of shingles vaccination, including support and practice visits to practices with low uptake, training and an awareness campaign.

Infection control and antimicrobial resistance: Work to address antimicrobial resistance is ongoing. A new Kent and Medway Infection Control and Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee has been established. This committee has developed a new Antimicrobial and Infection Prevention and Control Strategy. Public Health England have prioritised action to tackle antimicrobial resistance.

Screening: A task and finish group was established in 2019 to increase the uptake of bowel cancer screening in Medway. This group is taking forward a range of actions, focussed on communities within Medway where the rate of screening uptake is low. In addition, a new Kent and Medway Joint Committee has been established to focus on improving the quality of cancer services within Kent and Medway. This committee is working with NHS England to deliver improved access and uptake of cancer screening and diagnostic services for the population of Medway and Kent.

Seasonal influenza: Work to improve seasonal influenza uptake has continued, including work to increase the proportion of healthcare staff taking up the vaccination. These plans were overseen by the Medway and Swale Accident and Emergency

Medway's
Air Quality
Communications
Strategy has been
recognised as best
practice.

Delivery Board. The majority of providers of frontline healthcare in Medway increased the uptake of staff receiving influenza vaccination between 2017-18 and 2018-19. For example, Medway Foundation Trust increased uptake to 75.4 per cent (from 71.5 per cent in 2017-18) and South East Coast Ambulance Service increased uptake to 78.7 per cent (from 69.3 per cent in 2017-18).

This summary provides a basic overview of the progress partners have made to address the priorities identified in my last annual public health report. More detailed information can be obtained in relation to progress on each of the recommendations from the various partnership action plans. I will continue to work with all stakeholders to ensure robust systems are in place to protect the health of the Medway population.

Food businesses
in Medway with good
or very good food
hygiene ratings has
increased to **94.7%**
in 2018-19.



8. Glossary

A Better Medway Healthy Lifestyle Services:

These are a range of public health services delivered by Medway Council that support people to lead healthy lives. Examples include services that help people achieve a healthy weight, be physically active, stop smoking, recover from substance misuse, maintain good sexual health and many more.

Anxiety: Anxiety is a feeling of unease, such as worry or fear, which can be mild or severe. Anxiety is the main symptom of a number of mental health problems such as panic disorder or phobias.

Common Mental Health Disorder: Common mental health problems include conditions such as depression, anxiety, panic disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder. These are called common because they affect more people than other mental health problems (for example, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder).

Connect 5: A training programme created to provide non mental health staff with the skills to better understand and respond to mental health issues, through their conversations with clients about mental wellbeing. It is a preventative approach to mental health problems and promotes self-management where appropriate.

Depression: Depression is mood disorder associated with intense feelings of sadness that persist beyond a few weeks. It has a combination of physical and emotional symptoms such as disturbance of sleep, energy, appetite, and negative thoughts and can range from mild to severe in the way it affects people.

Five Ways to Wellbeing: Evidence-based activities based around five themes (connect, take notice, be active, give and keep learning), which when practised regularly, can improve mental wellbeing.

Life satisfaction: Life satisfaction measures how people evaluate their life as a whole, rather than only assessing their current feelings (e.g. happiness). It is a way of assessing how much a person likes the life they lead at a given point in time.

Medway Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy: A strategy which outlines how partners will work together to improve health and wellbeing in

Medway. The strategy is overseen by Medway's Health and Wellbeing Board and informs commissioning of services across the health and care system.

Medway Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA):

Local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups have a statutory responsibility to produce a JSNA. The JSNA is an analysis of the current and future health and wellbeing needs of local adults and children, bringing together a wide range of data including user views. This information informs the planning and commissioning of local services. Find out more at: medwayjsna.info

Men in Sheds: A community based place to pursue practical interests, develop skills and enjoy making and mending e.g. DIY, gardening and music. Aimed at reducing isolation, building connections, promoting healthy lifestyles and improving mental wellbeing for the members who are usually men and known as shedders.

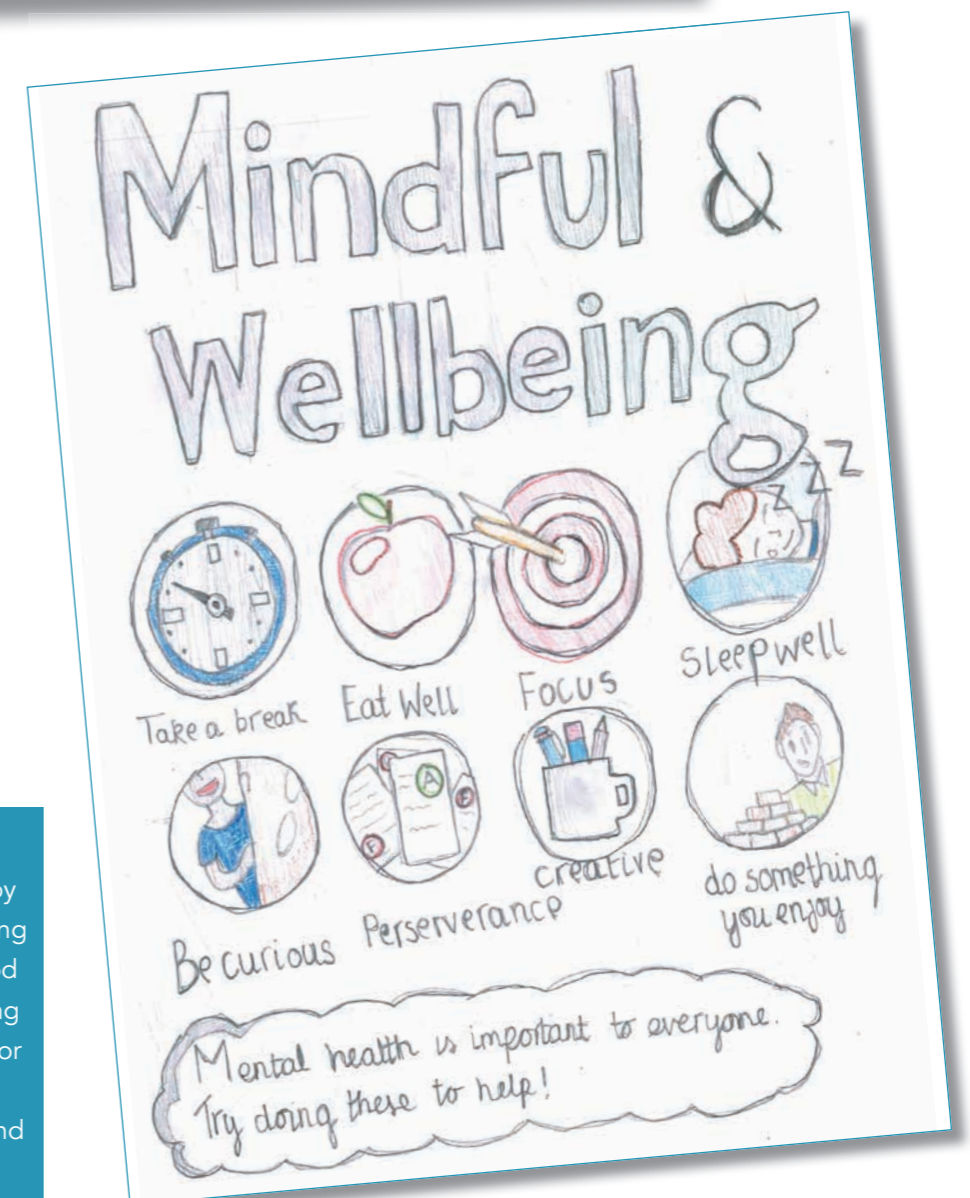
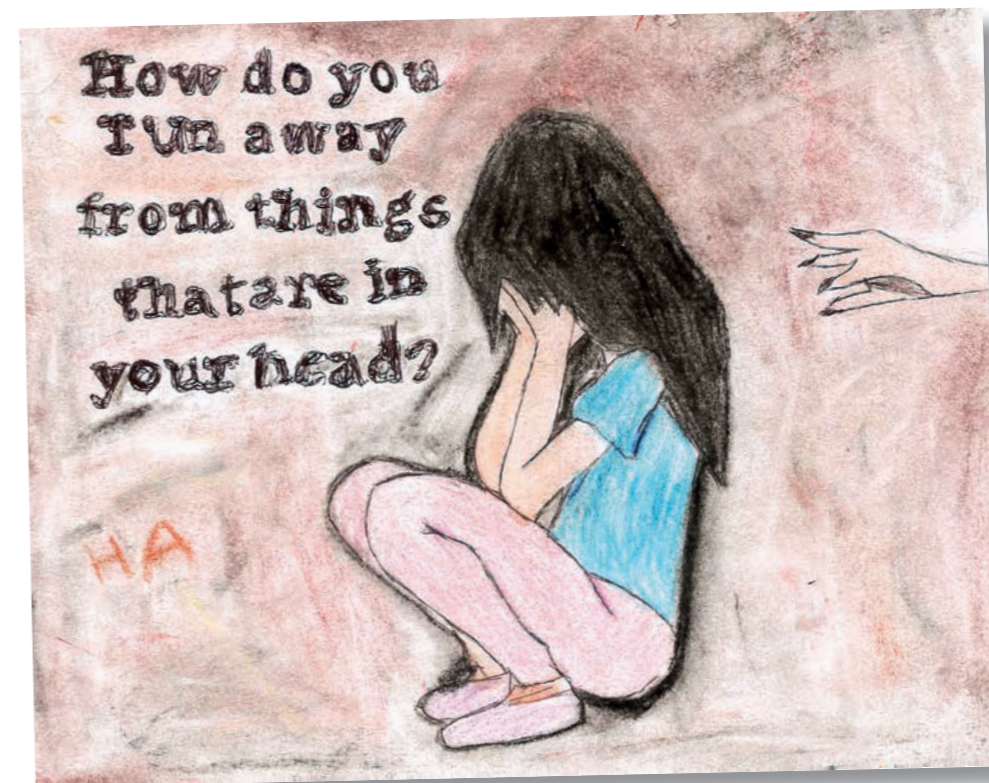
Mental Health First Aid: A training course licensed by Mental Health First Aid England which teaches people to recognise the signs that someone may need support with their mental health and offer them help on a first aid basis.

Mindfulness: The practice of being aware of your body, mind and feelings in the present moment, thought to create a feeling of calmness. Mindfulness can be learned and some people find it a useful way of improving their mental wellbeing.

Time to Change: A national social movement and campaign aimed at changing the way people think and feel about mental health problems and ending mental health stigma.

I would like to thank the many colleagues who have contributed to my report, including Clare Ebberson for leading its production, and James Harman, Natalie Goldring, Sara Moreland, Sofie Wheeldon, Hanifa Ditta, James Flower and the Public Health Intelligence Team for contributing content and analysis.

James Williams
 Director of Public Health Medway Council



These images are further examples of artwork created by young people in Medway. Being creative can contribute to good mental wellbeing and achieving the Five Ways to Wellbeing. For example, being creative can help people learn new skills and connect with others.

Healthy Minds, Healthy People

Director of Public Health
for Medway's Annual Report
2018-19

www.abettermedway.co.uk

**A BETTER
MEDWAY**
Easier ways to be healthy

Medway
COUNCIL
Serving You