



Community Mental Health Services in Medway

As with any other condition, the aim for people with mental health problems is to provide interventions as early as possible and to provide care and support close to home, and avoid a hospital admission if possible. There is already a significant amount of support for the people of Medway in the community and this is described below. These services are provided through a range of providers working closely together – the NHS, the council, and voluntary, community and social enterprise sector organisations.

Live Well – launched May 2021

Live Well Kent and Medway provides free mental health support for people aged 17+. Services are provided by The Shaw Trust and Porchlight charities. Live Well offers services and support to people to:

- Improve their mental health, physical health, and general wellbeing
- Gain confidence and meet new people
- Access free therapy and counselling services
- Find work, volunteering, and education opportunities
- Access support for drug or alcohol dependency
- Join activities and support groups run by people with similar experiences.

Live Well Medway is funded by KMCCG and was officially launched in May 2021 as part of Mental Health Awareness Week. Extensive launch activity to raise awareness of the new service has been undertaken, including proactive media work, a comprehensive social media campaign, distribution of leaflets and ongoing engagement through local network and stakeholder meetings.

Both service providers have had small numbers of referrals and work is underway to set up groups and networks for clients accessing the service. It is anticipated that ongoing promotion and marketing of the service, aligned with the development of local partnerships and networks and stakeholder engagement will increase awareness and referrals.

BeYou Medway – launched April 2021

The BeYou Project launched in Medway in 2021 and is funded by KMCCG. It helps to connect young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary or are questioning their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. BeYou offers a safe, welcoming and non-judgemental space where young LGBT+ people can meet to socialise, have fun and support each other. BeYou currently provides LGBT+ support

and wellbeing services in all areas of Kent and Medway. Since the start of the pandemic, like many services in the UK, BeYou groups (Meet-ups) and one to one support have been offered virtually.

The extension of the BeYou service into Medway recognises that Medway has a younger population than nationally, with proportionally more younger people and working age residents and fewer older people. There are about 26,320 young people between the age of 15 and 25 in Medway. With YouGov¹ research suggesting that 1 in 5 young people are now identifying as LGBT+, the potential target group for BeYou in Medway is 5,264 young people.

LGBT+ children and young people face significant inequalities in the domains of health, housing, and social inclusion², disproportionately experiencing instances of hate crime, homelessness and difficulty accessing statutory services. LGBT+ individuals experience disproportionately more mental health issues³ compared to those identifying as heterosexual and cisgender. In-person meet up groups are now operating in Chatham, Gillingham and Strood and one-to-one support and advice is also available for people who aren't ready, or don't wish to join a group.

Medway Safe Haven

Kent and Medway Safe Havens offer out-of-hours (6pm-11pm every day, including weekends and bank holidays) mental health support to anyone aged 16+ in the Kent and Medway area, from four locations in Canterbury, Medway, Thanet and Maidstone.

The Medway Safe Haven is based at the Mackenney Centre, in Gillingham. The Safe Haven is a walk-in service with no requirement for a referral from a GP or Care Coordinator. Offering a welcoming, safe, comfortable, non-judgmental, and non-clinical environment - sometimes known as 'crisis cafes' - the Haven can provide information and emotional support to people in crisis or who feel they are heading towards a crisis situation. People can come in for a chat or can access one-to-one emotional support from trained mental health professionals.

The Haven also offers help in creating staying well and crisis plans and supports visitors to access other services and organisations that may be useful to them.

The Haven works closely with GPs, community mental health teams, crisis teams, A&E mental health liaison teams, police and ambulance services, street triage, and other front-line healthcare professionals to ensure that people in emotional distress

¹ https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/0mefw998rr/YG-Archive-SexualityScaleInternal-240519.pdf

² Hudson-Sharp, N., & Metcalf, H. (2016). Inequality among lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender groups in the UK: a review of evidence. Retrieved from https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/53968

³ Haas et al, 'Suicide and suicide risk in lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations: Review and recommendations.' (2011) 58(1), 10-51 Journal of Homosexuality

have a safe, supportive place to go to, with appropriate mental health support available. People using the Kent and Medway Safe Haven are also supported by our 24/7 helpline, which offers access to emotional support and information even when The Haven is closed.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Haven has also been offering virtual consultations via video call.

Medway Talking Therapies

Part of the national IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) programme, Medway Talking Therapies is delivered on behalf of the NHS by a partnership of Insight IAPT, Ieso Digital Health, and North Kent Mind. All are experienced providers of IAPT talking therapies.

Medway Talking Therapies provides free and confidential therapy for people aged 18+ years, who are registered with a Medway GP. The service offers one-to-one sessions with a dedicated therapist at a time convenient to the individual.

The service can help people experiencing common mental health issues such as:

- Low mood or depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Panic
- Phobias
- Trauma
- Bereavement and loss
- Relationship difficulties
- Family problems.

A range of talking therapies are on offer including counselling and couple counselling, cognitive behavioural therapy, online therapy courses and eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing.

The service also offers employment support through specialist employment advisors who can support if mental health has been affected by work. For example, people might want to get back into work, have been affected by furlough or working from home, have been made redundant, or be experiencing other work-related problems. This service is available to all clients who are attending therapy with Medway Talking Therapies.

GP mental health services – Medway Primary Care Mental Health Team

The Medway Primary Care Mental Health Team (PCMHT) works with GPs in Medway to provide a range of care and treatment options for people experiencing mental health problems. The team will provide an assessment of their current need

and treatment for service users with low to moderate mental health needs from the age of 18 years or older (functional adults). Support can include:

- Assessment and identification of needs including risks
- Devising and implementing a plan of care
- Knowledge of local resources and signposting
- Supportive psychosocial interventions
- Effective communication and negotiation
- Medication education and medication counselling
- Brief Solution Focus Therapy
- Motivational Interviewing Techniques
- CBT approaches
- Interpersonal Therapy (IPT) (recommended by NICE)
- Non face-to-face GP consultation for support and advice.

The team offers a comprehensive assessment of health and social care needs and signposts service users to the most appropriate service or offers brief interventions.

Recovery underpins all care and treatment, and the team also provides support for family members and wider support networks. For patients with more complex mental health needs the service works with team members from KMPT community mental health teams.

Physical health checks – three specialist nurses across Medway

People with severe mental health illness are more likely to have a physical health condition and die on average 15 years earlier than people with no mental illness. To help address this unacceptable health inequality, Medway has three nurses who implement annual health checks for people on the serious mental illness register (SMI). The nurses are embedded in GP practices and also support with dementia reviews and help our system meet national requirements from NHS England and Improvement.

Sunlight Development Trust/Wellbeing Café (self-referral)

Sunlight Development Trust is a community owned and led charity which exists to improve the general mental and physical health and wellbeing of the Medway community. The Trust is based at Sunlight Centre in Gillingham – one of the early Healthy Living Centres – where health services and community activities are located alongside each other. As well as a GP practice, family centre, pharmacy and early years nursery, the centre hosts a community café, recording and rehearsal studios, community radio station and rooms for hire ranging from meeting and therapy rooms of all sizes to a hall with capacity for up to 100 guests.

Part of the Sunlight Development Trust, the Wellbeing café offers free weekend activities to improve mental health and wellbeing. Funded by KMCCG, activities include learning to play an instrument, cooking, and crafting, playing table tennis,

using the internet, watching films and meeting people. The Wellbeing Cafe provides activities for adults at the Sunlight Centre from 6-9pm Friday, Saturday 3.30 – 6.30pm and 1-4pm on Sunday afternoons.

Megan CIC (self-referral)

The Medway Engagement Group and Network CIC (MEGAN) was established in 2009 with the aim of providing opportunities for people experiencing mental health issues to share their views and experiences. It has a current membership of 200+ people, who are aged 18+, who have or have had mental health issues and who reside or access services in Medway, Swale, Dartford, Gravesham or Swanley. It offers peer support through group attendance and raises awareness of mental health and wellbeing to combat stigma and discrimination.

Mental Health Matters helpline (self-referral)

This helpline for people with mental health problems, their carers, families, and friends is available 24 hours a day for Medway residents. The team can offer emotional guidance and information and help people who may be feeling low, anxious or stressed or in extreme emotional distress and feel that there is nowhere else to turn. Support is also provided to people caring for another person and finding it difficult to cope. The service is confidential unless it is considered there is a risk to individuals or others. A supporting webchat is also available 24/7.

Shout Text Support

Shout is the UK's first confidential 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It is a place to go for people who are struggling to cope and need immediate help.

Launched in May 2019, Shout volunteers across the UK have had more than 500,000 conversations with people who are anxious, stressed, depressed, suicidal, or overwhelmed and who need immediate support. As a digital service, Shout 85258 has become increasingly critical since Covid-19, being one of the few mental health support services able to operate as normal at this time.