

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Sussex community mental health transformation for adults and older adults

Version 1 - 2 May 2024

- **When Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams are established and mobilised in each neighbourhood, will the Emotional Wellbeing Service and Assessment and Treatment Service still exist?**

All the current roles and specialisms within these two services will be retained however, they will be known as the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team instead of Emotional Wellbeing Service (EWS) and Assessment and Treatment Service (ATS).

- **Why do we need to transform our community mental health services?**

Demand for mental health services has significantly increased in recent years, which has resulted in long waiting times for support, and services becoming overstretched.

With a number of different organisations providing different parts of the overall mental health system, this can be confusing and complicated to navigate, which can sometimes result in people not getting the help they need, when they need it.

The community mental health transformation aims to join up local services, to work together as 'one team', and provide people with a holistic package of care, tailored to their needs, as close to home as possible.

- **What does 'transforming community mental health services' really mean?**

Whilst there have been some new services developed in recent years, and some changes made, the community mental health transformation is much bigger. For the first time, all local health and care organisations will be brought together as one system of care, to provide more joined up and consistent support for the people of Sussex.

- **What do you mean by 'system'?**

When we say 'system' or 'system-wide', this means that it is relevant to all parts of Sussex, and not specific to a local area.

Mental health and care support is delivered by a number of different organisations and providers across Sussex, but together we make up the overall health and care system for our area. The community transformation will help support organisations and

providers to work more closely together, to improve both service user and staff experience.

- **What do you mean by 'place'?**

When we say 'place' or 'place-based', this means that the information or developments are relevant to a specific local area. Our three areas are Brighton & Hove, East Sussex, and West Sussex.

- **What are the benefits of transforming community mental health services?**

Local organisations, services and providers will come together as one healthcare system, to provide more joined up care for our communities.

Working together in this way will reduce duplication and increase efficiencies, improving service user and staff experience.

- **What is the Emotional Wellbeing Service?**

The Emotional Wellbeing Service (EWS) provides mental health roles within GP surgeries - Mental Health Support Coordinators and Mental Health Practitioners - to help people who previously would not have met the criteria for specialist mental health services, to access timely mental health support.

Acting as the foundation of the community mental health transformation, the EWS has been delivering in Primary Care Networks (PCNs), which are groups of GP surgeries, since 2020.

Currently live in 32 out of 39 PCNs across Sussex, the service is delivered collaboratively, and is staffed jointly by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) staff, with overall clinical governance provide by the PCN's.

Find out more: [Emotional Wellbeing Service](#)

- **What is the Assessment and Treatment Service?**

The Assessment and Treatment Service (ATS) is the current specialist community mental health service for adults and older adults (secondary care), provided by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Find out more: [Assessment and Treatment Service](#)

- **What are Access Facilitators?**

Access Facilitators are community support workers that work closely with GP practices across Sussex to help people who have a severe mental illness (SMI), to access physical health checks.

It is reported that the life expectancy for people with SMI is 15-20 years lower than the general population, which is partly due to physical health needs being overlooked. By taking a proactive outreach approach to those who have not had recent contact with their GP, Access Facilitators support people to have a physical health assessment, so that any issues or concerns can be identified which may require further assessment or treatment. The ambition is that by having a positive experience, the service user will also be more likely to engage with public health colleagues and attend appointments in the future.

Employed and trained by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, the 24 roles are also working alongside the Health and Wellbeing service, a social prescribing service that supports individuals to develop personalised health and wellbeing improvement plans, delivered in partnership by Southdown and Sussex Partnership.

Find out more: [Health and Wellbeing Service \(Screen and Intervene\) delivered by Southdown](#)

- **Which existing services will be included in the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team?**

As a minimum, the core team will bring together the existing primary care and VCSE service for mental health (Emotional Wellbeing Service), specialist community based mental health services (Assessment and Treatment Service), and Access Facilitators, to create a new multidisciplinary service.

We anticipate that there will also be other services and teams included, which will be agreed by local areas.

- **In West Sussex, will Pathfinder be part of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team?**

Discussions have now started at a leadership level in West Sussex to determine which services and teams will be included as part of the team, as there are different layers to offer. We will all be working together to determine how the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team is delivered at place. What is clear is that Pathfinder will be a crucial part of the overall Neighbourhood Mental Health Team in West Sussex, delivering transformed services.

- **What is the role of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team?**

Mental health support in Sussex is delivered by a number of different services and organisations. This can sometimes make it difficult for people to know where to go for help with their mental health. It can also result in a lot of duplication in tasks, such as referrals and assessments, due to different parts of the system working separately.

The new Neighbourhood Mental Health Team model aims to ensure that people with a mental health support need, new or established, are able to access local support, treatment or interventions whenever needed.

Once introduced into the neighbourhood team, people will have joined up and coordinated treatment and support according to their personal priorities, goals, and needs, irrespective of which organisation provides the support and interventions. Rather than rejected referrals and being signposting to different organisations, people will be able receive support from the most appropriate organisation, based on their individual needs. This will not just be for mental health, but will also connect with support for physical health, employment, peer support, money management and housing.

- **What is the wider network of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team?**

The Neighbourhood Mental Health Team will help to build strong connections with local VCSE Mental Health Support Services, local authority, social care and other specialist services, (such as NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression, Early Intervention in Psychosis Services, Perinatal Mental Health Services, and Specialist Older Adults Mental Health Services), and work much more closely together.


By working in an integrated way, they will be able to consider all of a person's needs (mental, physical and social) and provide them with timely and joined-up support.

- **How have you developed the integrated model, and who was involved in this?**

Over the last three years we have worked together with people with lived experience, families and carers, and colleagues from across the health and care system in Sussex, to coproduce a model for how transformed services will look post-transformation, and how they will be experienced differently.

All of the ideas and suggestions gathered from various workshops, events, webinars, meetings and forums, were brought together, and a model diagram was created to describe the new service in a conceptual way.

A series of consultation work took place throughout summer 2023, to seek feedback on the draft model diagram that had been developed, which has now been reviewed.



The model has been agreed by the Integrated Working Group (IWG) and Integrated Steering Group (ISG), and will go to the Mental Health Learning Disability and Autism (MHLDA) Board in April 2024 for final sign off.

- **What was phase one of the programme, and what was achieved?**

Phase one of the programme primarily focused on two areas: co-designing a model for integrated community mental health services, and the establishment of clinical and non-clinical mental health roles based within GP surgeries.

In collaboration with people with lived experience, families, carers, and staff working across the health and care system, a model for how our community mental health services will look post-transformation has been developed, and consulted on widely.

The Emotional Wellbeing Service is now operating in 32 out of the 39 groups of GP surgeries (Primary Care Networks) across Sussex, and are providing focused short-term mental health support to people who previously may not have met the criteria for specialist mental health services or NHS Talking Therapies for anxiety and depression.

- **What is going to happen in phase two of the programme?**

Phase two of the programme will focus on the development and launch of Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams at a local level, establishing how the three specialist pathways will integrate with the core community offer, and developing a central point of information.

This will help deliver on our ambition of providing people with a coordinated, joined-up, and holistic offer of support.

- **How have people with lived experience of mental health difficulties, families, and carers been involved in this work so far?**

People with lived experience of mental health difficulties, families and carers are an integral part of our work. With the support of colleagues in the voluntary, community and charity sector, we have supported people to attend workshops, events, focus groups, and co-chair meetings. This has included the extensive consultation of the new integrated model.

We continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG), Working Together Groups (WTG), People Participation Teams, and NHS Sussex Participation and Engagement teams, to identify further opportunities for involvement as the programme progresses.

- **What do the specialist areas of the programme focus on?**

Within the community mental health transformation programme there are three specialist pathways. These provide a focus on people with eating disorders, complex emotional needs (CEN), and those who require community rehabilitation.

Part of the aim of transformation programme is to ensure better links and coordination of care for people using these services with wider support offers.

- **Are the new Integrated Community Teams (ICTs) the same as Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams?**

NHS Sussex, our local Integrated Care Board (ICB), are developing Integrated Community Teams (ICTs), which will bring together professionals from different local organisations in health, social care, and health-related services, to provide support to people who have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health conditions. These teams will help people to have improved health and joined-up care and support, including access to opportunities such as accommodation, housing, and employment.

Whilst there are similarities in the long-term vision and approach of partnership working, the Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams will be a new multidisciplinary service, to include existing primary care services for mental health (Emotional Wellbeing Service), specialist community based mental health services (Assessment and Treatment Service), and Access Facilitators, with strong links and relationships with other parts of the local healthcare system.

Whilst they are being developed separately, the community mental health transformation programme team are working closely with ICB colleagues to ensure there is alignment between plans to prevent duplication, for example when determining the footprints of the community teams.

Find out more: [Integrated Community Teams, Sussex Health and Care](#)

Watch: [Integrated Community Teams short video](#)

- **How can I get involved?**

There are a number of ways you can get involved:

- Ask your employer how you can link in with the various networks available, such as becoming a Transformation Ambassador, or joining your local VCSE Mental Health Network
- If you work in Sussex Partnership, speak with the divisional lead / place-based

lead for your area

- Contact the Sussex Coproduction and Lived Experience Group (SCALE) or Lived Experience Advisory Group (LEAG) for your area:

West Sussex: sara.shepherd@capitalproject.org

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove: natasha@possabilitypeople.org.uk

- Contact the VCSE Mental Health Transformation Lead for your area:

West Sussex: emma.logie@bht.org.uk / leanne.challen@westsussexmind.org / kerrin.page@westsussexmind.org

East Sussex and Brighton & Hove: martin.dominy@vcse-mhtransformation.org / andrea.potter@vcse-mhtransformation.org

- Sign up to the monthly newsletter: [sign up](#)
- Attend the monthly webinars: [view all upcoming webinars](#)
- Contact the programme team at sxib-communitymhtransformation@nhs.net