

**Healthwatch Kent** - December 2019

Experiences of people using community mental health services at **Coleman House, Dover**



# Foreword

**In October last year, our volunteers visited Coleman House in Dover to talk to people who were using the community mental health services. We wanted to hear their feedback about the service and understand what, in their view, could be improved. In January 2019 we published a report which detailed everything we heard as well as making a number of recommendations.**

During the same time frame, we also visited five other community mental health clinics in Kent talking to a total of 89 people about their experiences. We shared all our recommendations with the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership (KMPT) and encouraged them to make the necessary improvements.

We returned to Coleman House this year on two occasions, first in September and again in October 2019. We wanted to talk to the patients who were currently using the service to hear their experiences and to see whether the service had improved.

This report details our findings from these new visits. Once again, we will be sharing what we heard with the Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership (KMPT) as well as the organisations that commission them. We will also be sharing our findings with the Care Quality Commission.

If you have a story to tell, get in touch and share it with us.

**Robbie Gotham**

Healthwatch Kent



# What were we trying to achieve?

**We wanted to talk to people who were currently using mental health services at Coleman House. Through their feedback we wanted to find out whether the service had improved since our previous visit in 2018 and to see whether our recommendations had been put in place.**

**In January 2019, we made the following recommendations for Coleman House:**

- All patients should have an accurate and up to date care plan
- Explanations should be given when appointments are cancelled





# How did we go about it?

**Our trained Healthwatch staff and volunteers visited Coleman House alongside partners from SpeakUp CIC, a charity who are part of the new Mental Health User Network and provide mental health support in East Kent. The visits took place during September & October.**

## We spoke to:

13 patients



6 carers



The clinic had been informed of both our visits and had been sent information to display encouraging people to share their stories with us on one of the visits. However, on arrival, reception staff were unaware of our visit on both occasions. We had agreed that a private room would be available for us to talk with people, but this was not provided on the day of our first visit.

During our visits, we spoke to patients using the service and listened to their thoughts and experiences.



# What did we find? What did we hear?

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- **42% of patients** said they could **not get through to the clinic** on the telephone
- When they left a message, **67% of patients** told us that a **staff member got back to them**, but not always in a timely manner
- **EVERYONE** that we spoke to **knew who to contact** if they felt they were in crisis.
- **100% of patients** told us they had been **offered information on other agencies** that they may find useful.
- **Two thirds of carers & relatives** were involved in **drafting their relative's care plan.**
- **Only 8%** of the patients we spoke to had **NEVER** had an appointment cancelled.



# How does it compare to last year?

Last year we found that 60% of the patients we spoke to had a care plan. **We recommended that all patients should have an accurate and up to date care plan.**

This year we found that **84%** of patients have a care plan, however people told us they are not all up to date.

Last year, we heard that 75% of patients who had an appointment cancelled were given an explanation as to why. **We recommended that explanations should be given to everyone when appointments are cancelled.**

This year we found that **73%** of patients were given an explanation as to why their appointment was cancelled.



# Care Plans

**During our visits, we heard a lot of comments about care plans. Some patients told us that they never had care plans, or that they weren't eligible for one or that they had to be in the service for a year or more to get one. Others told us that they DID have a care plan with some people suggesting it was out of date.**

We went back to KMPT to get some clarification. They told us that all patients should get a care plan after their initial assessment. This plan may come in the form of a letter which patients may not always recognise as their plan. There is no set time for the care plan to be updated, as every patient is treated individually, and it will be dependent on what is agreed at their review. Reviews should be happening regularly but again the frequency can be dependent on each individual.



# Our new recommendations

- **If a patient cannot get through to their coordinator, a message should be taken by the receptionist. All messages received by the clinic should be responded to within a reasonable time (48 hours).**
- **ALL patients must be given a reason as to why their appointment has been cancelled.**
- **Privacy and dignity must be improved in the reception area, as conversations are currently not confidential.**
- **All patients must have an up to date care plan, to document changes to medication or their treatment plan.**
- **Where appropriate, all carers and relatives must be given the opportunity to be a part of drafting their relative's care plan.**
- **Staff must ensure patients and carers understand what documentation will be used to keep them updated about their care.**

## Our findings in detail

- The staff were friendly and courteous to patients arriving for their appointments.
- The reception area was clean and tidy. There was no drinking water freely available to patients but was available on request at the reception desk.
- There was no privacy at the reception desk and our volunteers were able to clearly hear the telephone conversations made by the receptionist.
- The site was accessible for visitors with a disability and there are clear fire evacuation routes displayed. There were colourful information boards in the waiting area with a wide variety of leaflets.
- The average amount of time that people had been with the service was 5 years and the longest that someone had been with the service was over 20 years.





# Our findings in detail

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## Has the service improved?

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**10% of people** felt that the service had improved, **10% of people** felt that it had gotten worse, however **80% of people** said that it was the same.

- “Sometimes it gets worse, then gets better, then gets worse again”
- “I feel that staff are better at listening to what I have to say than was the case in the past”
- “Arranging appointments that Community Mental Health workers are able to keep is extremely problematic”



# Our findings in detail

## Telephone Systems & Appointments

**42% of patients** said that they were unable to get through on the telephone, but **8 people** said that they could.

- “I can get through to reception, but not get hold of a coordinator”
- “Sometimes it is difficult contacting my allocated worker when I need to”
- “The phone isn’t always answered”
- “I keep ringing ‘til I get an answer”
- “Sometimes the phone just rings. I’ve had to try on numerous occasions”
- “It’s easier to come into clinic than phoning”
- “I’m not always able to speak to my care coordinator by phone when I want to”

If people had to leave a message, **67% of patients** told us that staff called them back.

- “It’s not quickly, sometimes up to 1 week later”
- “Not very promptly. This has caused me much anxiety at times”
- “Not always promptly or within a reasonable timescale”

On both visits, we observed the receptionist taking calls from patients and trying to put them through to the appropriate person. If they were unable to connect the patient, they were advised to call back at another time. We didn’t see any messages being taken by the receptionist.

**3 people** told us that they haven’t missed an appointment. Of the people who **HAD** missed an appointment, **89%** of them told us that a member of staff contacted them to check that they were ok.



# Our findings in detail

## Cancellations

**One person** told us that they had never had an appointment cancelled.

**8 people** did have an appointment cancelled and they were told the reason why, whilst **three people** who had an appointment cancelled didn't get an explanation.

Of the people who did have an appointment cancelled, **91%** of them were offered an alternative date.

## About the care

**100% of patients** said that they felt involved in their care however only **84%** told us they had a copy of their care plan.

We heard:

- "I am very happy that I am allowed to be involved in shaping my care plan"
- "I am fully involved in designing my care plan"

But we were also told:

- "I don't have a copy of my care plan to date"
- "I don't read it. It's not a new one. I don't know how often they write them"
- "It was written last year"



# Our findings in detail

## Crisis service

**100% of patients** knew who to contact if they felt they were in crisis, with **42%** having called the crisis team before although the feedback was not positive;

- “I did not find their support useful or helpful to me or my wife”
- “They seemed reluctant to help me and just ‘fobbed me off’ to another service”
- “It was ok, not the fastest response”
- “Very well treated but couldn’t get support after 5pm”
- “No clear reasons were given to me about why I didn’t qualify for support”

## Support & Information

We asked patients if staff had offered them information on any other agencies that they may find useful.

**100% of patients** had been offered information, with people telling us that they received information regarding;

- “Carers support”
- “Bereavement groups”
- “Samaritans”
- “SpeakUp CIC”
- “Dementia café”
- “Mental health support lines”

We asked if patients had been offered support by staff to access other health services, and **50% of patients HAD BEEN OFFERED SUPPORT.**

Of the **6 people** who were not offered support, only **1** of them actually wanted help.



# Our findings in detail

## Carers & Relatives

**4 out of the 6 carers & relatives** we spoke to said that they HAD been involved in drafting their relative's care plan. They told us:

- "I come to every appointment (with her) so I make sure I'm involved. If I didn't come, then I don't think they would involve me"

**One Carer** commented:

- "I didn't know that I could be involved"

**3 Carers** said that the Trust was "ok" at communicating with them. **2 people** said that the Trust did "very well" and **1 person** said they "didn't hear very much".

- "The GP has been good at replying to me, much better than this clinic"



# Acknowledgement

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**Healthwatch Kent would like to thank the patients, family, friends, carers and our volunteers for taking the time to contribute to this piece of work. We'd also like to thank our partners, SpeakUp CIC, who joined us on the visits and helped us to talk to patients.**

## Disclaimer

Please note this report relates to the findings on the days stated at the beginning of this report. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, family, friends and carers, only an account of what was contributed and observed during our visit on those days noted.



# Healthwatch Kent

**Healthwatch Kent is the independent voice for local people in Kent.**

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Our role is to understand what matters most to people and to use that information to influence providers and commissioners to change the way services are designed and developed.

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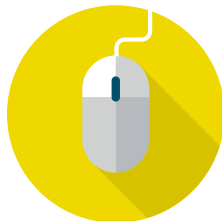
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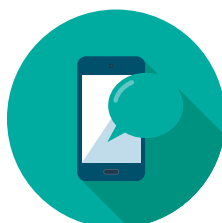
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