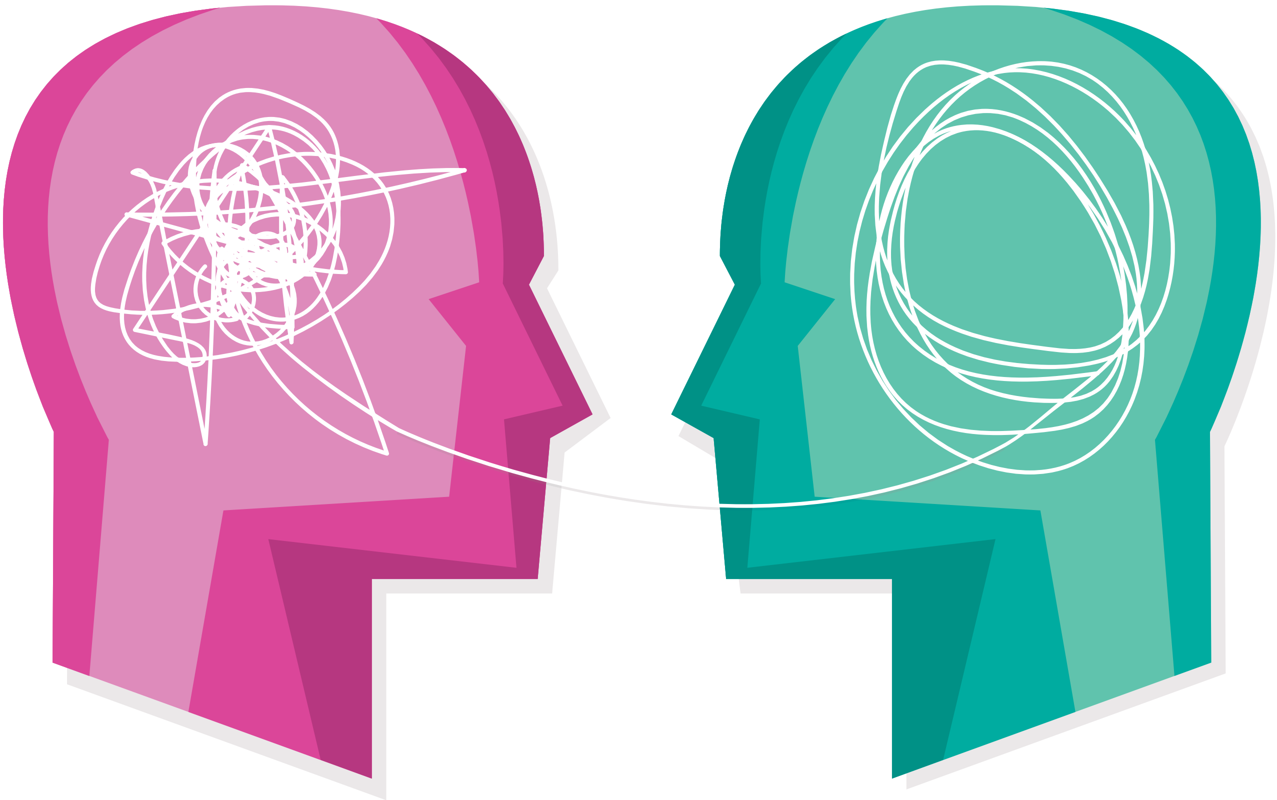
healthwatch
Kent



Healthwatch Kent - October 2019

Experiences of people using community mental health services at **The Beacon, Margate**

Foreword

In October last year, our volunteers visited The Beacon in Margate 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 The Beacon this year on two occasions, one in August and one in September. 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 Goatham

Healthwatch Kent

What were we trying to achieve?

We wanted to talk to people who were currently using mental health services at The Beacon. 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 The Beacon:

- ☑ All patients should have a care plan and be able to input into the plan
- ☑ All patients should have a care plan and be able to input into the plan
- ☑ When the Trust cancels an appointment, let the patient know why it has been cancelled
- ☑ Offer additional support between appointments

How did we go about it?

Our trained volunteers visited The Beacon twice, one during August 2019 and the other in September 2019.

We spoke to:

31 patients

8 carers

The clinic had been informed of our visit and had displayed information encouraging people to share their stories with us. The clinic provided a room for us to talk privately with people.

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?

- **A third (31%)** of patients said that the **service had improved**
- **90% of people knew who to contact** if they felt that they were in crisis and 70% of people had accessed the crisis team
- **Over three quarters (79%)** of people **were able to get through to the clinic on the telephone**, and were given a call back if they had to leave a message
- **EVERYONE** told us that they were offered an alternative date if the clinic had to cancel an appointment
- **Almost all (93%)** of patients **felt involved in their care** and 79% of them had a copy of their care plan
- **64% of people** had been **offered information about other useful agencies**, such as the Recovery College, Richmond Fellowship and voluntary work
- **All but one** of the families and carers we spoke to said that they **had been involved in the care plan**

How does it compare to last year?

Last year 89% of patients that we spoke to felt involved in their care, but only 56% had a copy of their care plan. **We said that all patients should have a care plan and be able to input into the plan.**

This year we found that **93% of people felt involved in their care**, although not all, 79% of people had a copy of their care plan.

If a patient missed their appointment, 50% said that a staff member called them to check if they were ok. **We said that staff should call to check EVERYONE if they missed their appointment.**

This year we found that **most people (85%) HAD received a call** following a missed appointment.

Last year 40% of patients told us that when the Trust had to cancel an appointment, they were NOT told the reason why. **We recommended that if the Trust has to cancel an appointment, then the patient should know why it was cancelled.**

This year we found that **almost all patients were informed why the appointment was cancelled**, and EVERYONE was offered an alternative date.

Last year 88% of patients told us that they had been offered information on other useful agencies. **We said that patients should be offered alternative support between appointments.**

This year **66% of patients told us that they had been offered information about other agencies** such as voluntary work, recovery college and bereavement groups.

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

On the whole the stories that people shared with us point to an improving picture. However, we feel there is still room for improvement in the following areas:

- **Ensure all patients are being offered information on other agencies that they might find useful.**
- **Staff should support patients who want to access other health services**
- **All patients must have an up to date care plan, documenting changes to medication or their treatment plan.**
- **Staff must ensure patients and carers understand what documentation will be used to keep them updated about their care.**
- **Look at what could be done to improve communication with Carers.**

Our findings in detail

- The staff were friendly and courteous to patients arriving for their appointments.
- The reception area was clean and tidy, with fresh drinking water. The site was accessible for visitors with a disability and there are clear fire evacuation routes displayed. There were 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 8.5 years and the longest that someone had been with the service was 20 years.

Our findings in detail

Has the service improved?

17 people felt that the service was the same, **9 people** felt that it had improved and **3 people** said that it had got worse.

- "Always been good"
- "They're more on top of things. Appointments are quicker and more efficient"
- "They are very patient and caring"
- "No complaints, the service is brilliant"
- "Appointment times are not kept and they have staffing problems"
- "There are some incompetent staff"

Telephone Systems & Appointments

79% of patients said that they were able to get through on the telephone, but **5 people** said that they couldn't.

- "Hardly ever get through"
- "I get through but the staff are not always helpful"
- "Sometimes I need to talk about medication, and it is so frustrating, I'm unable to get any advice"

If people had to leave a message, **22 people** said that staff called them back. In some cases people were told to use an alternative form of communication.

- "I was told to send an email instead"

One person commented:

- "Don't call you back on the same day"

9 people told us that they hadn't missed an appointment. Of the people who HAD missed an appointment, **85%** of them told us that a member of staff contacted them to check that they were ok.

Our findings in detail

Cancellations

7 people told us that they had never had an appointment cancelled.

19 people did have an appointment cancelled and they were told the reason why, whilst **3 people** didn't get an explanation.

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

About the care

93% of patients said that they felt involved in their care and that **79%** had a copy of their care plan.

- "They listen to me, pick up on where we left off last time"
- "I've had 3 care coordinators this year, it causes a problem with continuity talking to someone"
- "I was told what was going on but not involved. Not listened to. Feels like my views are not considered"
- "Leaflet every 2 months. No support"
- "No help given at all for families having to manage at home. No advice. Crisis team is a waste of time with no follow up phone call or acknowledgement that we've even called. Two years on a waiting list for therapy, see a nurse for 15 mins every 2 months and that's it"

Our findings in detail

Crisis service

90% of patients knew who to contact if they felt they were in crisis, with **70%** having called the crisis team before. There was a mix of feedback about the Crisis service. Some people thought there was room for improvement.

- "Waste of time, no follow up"
- "Used 5 times, not helpful"
- "Got support but once discharged the follow up fails to give any support"
- "Not good, 48 hours before help was given"
- Other people were complimentary and told us the Crisis service had worked well.
- "Went smoothly"
- "Very helpful"

Our findings in detail

Support & Information

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

8 people were not offered any information however, **19 people** were offered information, with answers including;

- "Mindset"
- "Meditation therapy"
- "Richmond Fellowship"
- "MIND"
- "Insight"
- "Aspirations"
- "Voluntary work"
- "Recovery college"
- "Bereavement groups"

We asked if patients had been offered support by staff to access other health services, and **59% of patients had been offered support**.

Of the **12 people** who were not offered support, **only 3** of them actually wanted to be offered it.

Carers

6 carers or relatives said they had been involved in drafting the care plan. One carer told us they hadn't.

5 relatives or carers told us that the Trust did "very well" or "quite well" at communicating with them.

3 people told us that they "didn't hear much" or that they "never heard anything"

Acknowledgement

Healthwatch Kent would like to thank patients, family, friends, carers and our volunteers for taking the time to contribute to this piece of work.

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.

We gather and represent people's views about any health and social care service in Kent.

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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