



Healthwatch Kent - December 2018

Experiences of patients at the community mental health clinic in Coleman House, Dover



Foreword

We hear from people all over Kent about community mental health services. Although some of it is positive, the majority are negative stories from people and their Carers.

We wanted to understand more about the issues people are facing when using the community mental health service.

At the same time the Care Quality Commission inspected the service and identified areas that needed to improve. Following that inspection, we have been working with the organisations which commission and provide the community mental health service to gather feedback from the people who use the service.

We visited six clinics across Kent and have spoken to 86 people about their experience.

We had hoped to speak to more people and Kent & Medway NHS & Social Care Partnership, who run these clinics, had promised to support our visits and ensure staff were aware that we were coming, and that a private room would be available for us to speak with people. Unfortunately, this didn't happen at over half of our visits which meant that we haven't spoken to as many people as we had planned. We have shared our frustrations along with our findings.

All of the feedback we have heard will be shared with the provider and commissioners of the community mental health service. We will also be giving our feedback to the Care Quality Commission.

If you would like more information, or would like to get involved then do please contact us on info@healthwatchkent.co.uk or call anytime on **0808 801 0102**

Steve Inett

Chief Executive, Healthwatch Kent



What were we trying to achieve

We wanted to talk to people who were actively using community mental health services and hear from them about their recent experiences.

How did we go about it?

Our trained volunteers visited Coleman House in Dover on 31st October 2018

We spoke to **five patients**. Unfortunately **no Carers** were present during our visit.

The clinic had not been informed of our visit, but after talking to staff they agreed that we could talk to people in the reception area. No room was available for us to talk privately with people.

Unfortunately, the clinic was very quiet on the day of our visit, so we were not able to talk to as many people as we would have expected.



What did we find? What did we hear?

In Summary

- Most people could get through on the phone when they needed to
- The Trust mostly lets patients know when an appointment has been cancelled
- Sometimes there was no reason given why an appointment had been cancelled and people had to wait a long time for another one
- Four of the five people had been signposted to other support groups and services
- Four people said they were involved in drafting their care plan and one did not
- All patients knew who to contact in a crisis and three had used the crisis service
- Most thought that the service had improved over the last six months



What have we recommended?

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

Our findings in detail

The staff were friendly and courteous to patients arriving for their appointments.

The reception area was clean and tidy but did not provide drinking water as there was no source to provide water from. During our visit a patient asked for a cup of tea, which was provided by the receptionist.

The site was accessible for visitors with a disability and there are clear evacuation fire routes displayed.

There were information boards in the waiting area with a variety of leaflets.

Most people we spoke to had been with the service for between eighteen months and fourteen years.



What did we find? What did we hear?

Telephone system & Appointments

- Three people told us that they could get through on the phone, one person disagreed and one said not always.

“I come into the clinic rather than calling”

“They answer the phone, but not at lunch time obviously”

- If people had to leave a message, three said they were called back, and one said ‘no’.

“Not always”

“Usually they call back”

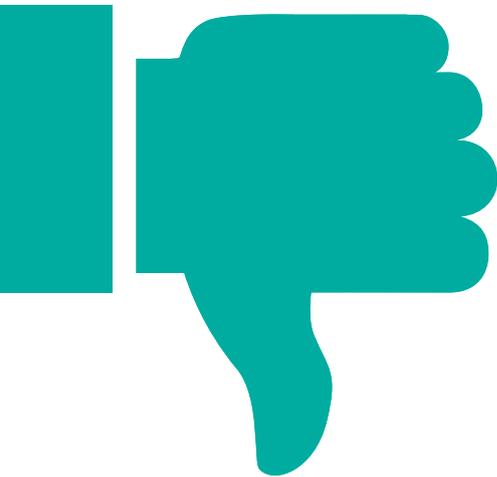
- Two people said that if they missed an appointment a staff member rang to check that they were ‘ok’, and one did not receive a call

“I phoned to cancel an appointment and then it appeared on my records that I had missed one, so I had to chase for a replacement appointment. That took 6 months to come through”



What did we find? What did we hear? Continued

Cancellations



When the Trust cancelled an appointment, three people had been told why it was cancelled and one had not. Three were offered an alternative date and one was not.

- “My appointment was cancelled at very short notice”
- “There was no explanation, just cancelled”
- “The new appointment was a long way away, I had to keep calling to get another appointment”
- “I have had 4 different consultants, they keep leaving and I have been told that the one I saw today is also going”

Support and information

Four people had been signposted to other services

- “I went on a Bi-Polar awareness - 13-week course, it was brilliant”
- “The service they recommended didn’t exist, I was told to go to the police, but I was not in a physical or mental place to do that, they then put the phone down on me”

All but one respondent felt that they had been given additional support and information to find other health services



What did we find? What did we hear? Continued

Involvement

Four people felt that they were involved in their care and one did not. Only three people had a copy of their care plan.

All had received a letter that was easy to understand and was clearly from the mental health trust.

- “I have never had a care plan or care co-ordinator”

Crisis support

Everyone we spoke to knew who to contact if they were in crisis, three had used the service and two had not.

- “I rang and spoke to a nurse, I was suicidal. She asked me why I didn't harm myself, she was brutal and sent me into a downward spiral. I know that they hear lots of stories all day, but they should not be rude and should show some compassion towards patients”.
- “They were very helpful”
- “They called me back”





What did we find? What did we hear? Continued

Has the service improved over the last six months?

Most people said that it had improved although one person thought it had got worse

"I got the help that I needed"

"It is working very well for me"

"It has improved a lot"





Acknowledgement

Healthwatch Kent would like to thank patients, family and friends 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 day stated at the beginning of this report. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all patients, family and friends, only an account of what was contributed and observed during our visit on that day.



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.

Our **FREE** Information and Signposting service can help you navigate Kent's complicated health and social care system to ensure you can find and access the services that are available for you. Call us on 0808 801 0102 or email info@healthwatchkent.co.uk



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By Text: Text us on **07525 861 639**.

By texting 'NEED BSL', Healthwatch's British Sign Language interpreter will make contact and arrange a time to meet face to face.