



**Healthwatch Kent** - January 2019

Experiences of patients at the community mental health clinic in Laurel House, Canterbury



# 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](mailto:info@healthwatchkent.co.uk) or call anytime on **0808 801 0102**

**Steve Inett**

Chief Executive, Healthwatch Kent



# What were we trying to achieve

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**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?

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**Our trained volunteers visited Laurel House on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018**

We spoke to **three patients** and **one carer** during our visit.

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.





# What did we find? What did we hear?

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## In Summary

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People told us that communication with the clinic is often poor, they said that they had to ring the clinic on more than one occasion to get an appointment or to chase medication prescriptions.

People told us that they felt involved in their care plan and care.

Unfortunately no-one that we spoke to had been signposted to other health support services by the clinic, but they would have liked some more information about such services.



# What have we recommended?

- Ensure patients are issued with new appointments in a timely manner
- Talk to staff about signposting patients to alternative health services
- Organise follow up calls to patients who have recently been discharged from hospital
- Review the crisis service to make sure that patients can access the service when they need it

## 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 and plastic cups.

There were leaflets on display and a large carers' board, which was very cluttered.

Most people we spoke to had been with the service for eighteen months to four years



# What did we find? What did we hear?

## Telephone system & Appointments

- “It is not quick enough, they don’t always call back”
- “Reception staff must chase things up all the time”
- “Not enough resources, the system is dreadful. Communication is poor and there isn’t the help when needed“

## Cancellations

- “They often don’t tell us, we turn up to be told that it has been cancelled. Sometimes the CPN doesn’t turn up. Discussed at listening groups and now the Community Psychiatric Nurse is central”
- “I always need to ring up and ask for an appointment to be sent to me. Often, I ring 3 or 4 times before it is sent to me”

## Support and information

### **None of the people we spoke to had been offered information about other health services**

- “I find things out by chance – it is often a financial decision”




# What did we find? What did we hear? Continued

## Involvement

- Three people told us that they did feel involved in their care

## Crisis support

Everyone we spoke to had used the crisis service



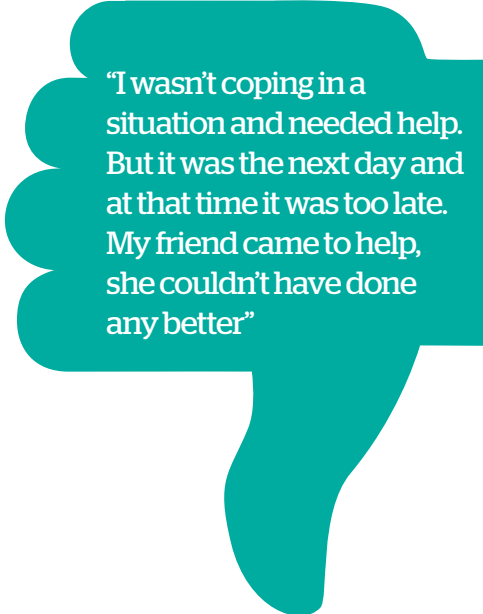
“They do their utmost to put off coming to see us. We need more involvement from people outside of the family. When discharged from hospital there was no follow up. It doesn't work”



“It's a sick joke”



“It was good”



“I wasn't coping in a situation and needed help. But it was the next day and at that time it was too late. My friend came to help, she couldn't have done any better”



# What did we find? What did we hear? Continued

## Has the service improved over the last six months?

Most thought it was about the same,  
One thought it was worse and the other thought it had improved







# Acknowledgement

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**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](mailto:info@healthwatchkent.co.uk)



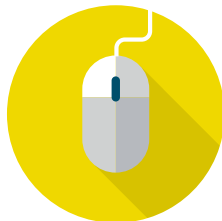
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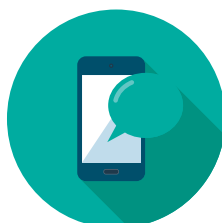


**By Post:** Write to us or fill in and send a Speak out form. **Freepost RTLG-UBZB-JUZA**  
Healthwatch Kent, Seabrooke House,  
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**Face to Face:**

Call 0808 801 01 02 to arrange a visit



**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.