



**Healthwatch Kent** - January 2019

Experiences of patients at the community mental health clinic in The Beacon, Ramsgate



# 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

---

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 The Beacon, Ramsgate on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018

We spoke to **seven patients** and **two 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.





# What did we find? What did we hear?

---

## In Summary

---

- Most people could get through to the clinic on the phone when they needed to, and usually had a call back
- When the Trust had to cancel an appointment, most were told why it had been cancelled
- Most people had been signposted to other support services to assist them
- Most of the people we spoke to felt involved with their care and had a care plan
- Everyone knew who to contact in a crisis and most had used the service offering positive comments about the help received
- Most people thought that the service had stayed the same, three thought it had improved and two that it had got worse



# What have we recommended?

- All patients should have a care plan and be able to input into the plan
- If a patient misses an appointment, then staff should call to check that they are ok
- When the Trust cancels an appointment, let the patient know why it has been cancelled
- Offer additional support between appointments



## 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 evacuation fire routes displayed. There were information boards in the waiting area with a wide variety of leaflets.

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



# Findings in more detail.

## Telephone system & Appointments

**Eight** people told us that they could get through on the phone but **one** disagreed.

- “You can’t always get an answer”
- “The service is good”
- “Good responses when I call”
- “Not always, I wait a long time
- “It is difficult to get hold of my worker, but eventually I get hold of them”
- “Most of the time”

If people had to leave a message, **six** said they were called back, and **two** said they weren’t.

- “Yes, but it can take a while”
- “No quick call back, it can take a week”



# Findings in more detail.

## Cancellations

When the Trust cancels an appointment, **three** people had been told why it was cancelled and **two** had not.

- “I have turned up for my appointment with my CPN and they had left, this has happened 3 or 4 times”
- “When the CPN misses an appointment they never follow up to say why”
- “I was taken off the books because I forgot my appointment and missed it”

## Support and information

**All but one** respondent felt that they had been given additional support and information

- “Mine was volunteering which I have done for 5 years and re-training”
- “I have had information about the garden gate centre with arts, crafts and gardening”
- “The AA Forward Trust”
- “Help with re-housing and personal issues”
- “The GAP project in Broadstairs”
- “I have been given leaflets”
- “Something at St Peter’s, social services recovery group. That was 3 months ago, but it wasn’t appropriate so referred back to here”





# Findings in more detail.

## Support between appointments

**Three** people said that if they missed an appointment a staff member rang to check that they were ok, **three** did not receive a call

- “I attend monthly, but it would be good if they could offer support between appointments”.

## Involvement

**Eight** patients felt involved with their care and **one** felt partially involved. **Five** had a copy of their care plan, **three** didn't and **one** said that they were waiting to receive it. **One** of the Carers had been involved in their relative's care plan and the other had not.

A third of people had a letter that they said was easy to understand, a third had not had a letter and the final third were unsure.

“Most of the time, my GP doesn't understand mental health”

“It's good to be involved”

“Dr Nolan is excellent but my CPN is unreliable”





# Findings in more detail.

## Crisis support

**All nine** knew who to contact if they were in crisis, **seven** had used the service and **two** hadn't

- "I was sectioned to St Martins which was good but they didn't listen to me"
- "I used it 4 years ago, it was very good"
- "I have been able to phone when suicidal"
- "I have found it useful"
- "I used it last night, I spoke to someone and am awaiting more feedback"
- "They were very understanding and professional"

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

**Most people** felt it had remained the same, **three** felt it had improved and **two** thought it had got worse

- "The CPN is never available, misses appointments, does not do what they say they will in relation to groups and is very forgetful"
- "Staff are better than they used to be"
- "The staff are good at listening"
- "There is a lack of communication and follow up from the service"
- "I don't like the way the service has changed, now the GP is first line of contact"
- "The staff are very supportive with health problems"





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



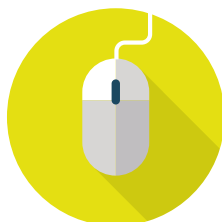
**By Telephone:**

Healthwatch Kent  
Freephone 0808 801 01 02



**By Email:**

[Info@healthwatchkent.co.uk](mailto:Info@healthwatchkent.co.uk)



**Online:**

[www.healthwatchkent.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchkent.co.uk)



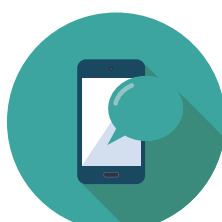
**By Post:**

Write to us or fill in and send a Speak out form. **Freepost RTLG-UBZB-JUZA**  
Healthwatch Kent, Seabrooke House,  
Church Rd, Ashford TN23 1RD



**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.