



**Healthwatch Medway** - January 2019

Experiences of patients at the community mental health clinic in Canada House, Medway



# Foreword

**We hear from people all over Medway 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 in partnership with Healthwatch Kent across Medway and Kent and have spoken to 89 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 **enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com** or call anytime on **0800 136 656**

**Maggie Cane**

Manager, Healthwatch Medway



# 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?

Canada House is in Gillingham and is used by both Medway and Kent residents. We worked in partnership with Healthwatch Kent to visit the service. Our trained Healthwatch Medway volunteers visited Canada House on September 26th & October 3rd 2018.

They spoke to **46 patients** and **two carers** who were accompanying their relative.

The clinic had not been informed of our initial visit, but after talking to staff and explaining the purpose of the visit they were agreeable to us talking to people in the reception area.





# What did we find? What did we hear?

---

## In Summary

---

- The majority of people we spoke to felt involved in their care whilst eight people did not.
- The telephone calls were not answered in an efficient manner. Some people did not get a call back when they left a message.
- Over half the people we spoke to were signposted to other groups for additional support by their key worker.
- Half the people we spoke to felt that the letters from the service were easy to understand.
- People told us they hadn't found the mental health crisis service helpful when they had experienced a crisis.
- Most people felt that the service had remained the same during recent months although eight people felt it had improved. Seven people told us they felt it had got worse.



# What have we recommended?

- Ensure that patients who miss an appointment receive a phone call to check they are ok
- Continue to signpost people to additional health and support services
- Ensure all patients are involved in planning their care
- All patients should have a care plan
- Review the mental health crisis service

## 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, but no cups available on our first visit, these were available on our second visit. 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, but no leaflets on display.

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



# What did we find? What did we hear?

## Telephone system & Appointments

30 people felt they could get through to the clinic on the telephone, although seven people disagreed

- “The crisis team are hard to reach”
- “Sometimes it is easy, but not always”
- “I have to wait for a call back, that doesn't always happen”
- “Reception don't always pass on messages”
- 17 people told us that they received a call back if they left a message but 6 people didn't get a response or a call back



## Cancellations

For most people, if the Trust had to cancel an appointment, they were told the reason why and were offered another appointment.

- “I waited 6 months for an appointment, got one and the next day a letter came to say it was cancelled”



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

## Support and information



...of people felt that they had been given information about places to go for support, but the remainder disagreed. Examples of where they had been signposted to include mindfulness courses, community support, Samaritans, social care and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy.

## Support between appointments

### 16 people

had been contacted by staff to check they were ok when they didn't turn up for their appointment

### 7 people

said they hadn't been called when they had not been able to attend an appointment



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

## Involvement

- **30 people** did feel that they had been involved in their care
- **8 people** didn't feel they had been involved
- "I haven't been for some time, so may have improved"
- "I feel involved"
- "It is not patient led"
- "My therapist is really helpful"
- "I still don't know who my care co-ordinator is"
- "It is not joined up, I have to repeat information over and over"
- **20 patients** said that they had a copy of their care plan and **16** did not
- "I still don't have one after a year and a half"
- Half of those that we spoke to agreed that the appointment letters were easy to understand
- Both the Carers that we spoke to felt involved in their relative's care plan



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

## Crisis support

Thirty-two people knew who to contact in a crisis.



Half of these had used the crisis service.



Six people told us they were unsure who to contact during a mental health crisis.



Half the people we spoke to had used the mental health crisis service.



- "I was suicidal but couldn't get through to them"
- "They were useless"
- "I was taken to hospital and taken care of"
- "Some occasions good, some unhelpful"
- "I called wanting to swallow pills, they told me I would get a call back from the nurse. Told me to call back if I got worse. I called back when I had cut myself and the guy said "well that is not good is it"
- "I was unaware of what happened as in Psychosis"
- "Just chit chat offered"
- 2 patients told us it was "very good"
- "It wasn't very good, no one followed it up"
- "Not great"



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

## We spoke to two Carers who told us:

“My son was unwell at 19, in supported living for 15 years, then they told him to go into council accommodation, he had no support in doing this and I had to assist him. I am still supporting with household duties and have to remind him to change his clothes, pay his household bills and so on. If I was not around, he would be in hospital. He used to have a CPN visit 10 years ago but now has a visit to Canada House once a year.”

“The people who have worked here for years still work in the old way, new people are good. For example, someone from the old school, even though they knew my relative had a back problem, they were rough. That has now improved with the new people”.





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

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

- **Most people** felt it had remained the same
- **Eight people** felt it had improved
- **Seven people** said it had got worse





# Acknowledgement

---

**Healthwatch Medway 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 Medway

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

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

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 Medway's complicated health and social care system to ensure you can find and access the services that are available for you. Call us on 0800 136 656 or email [enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com)



## **By Telephone:**

Healthwatch Medway  
**Freephone 0800 136 656**  
between the hours of 10:00 - 16:00  
Monday to Friday



## **By Email:**

[enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com](mailto:enquiries@healthwatchmedway.com)



## **Online:**

[healthwatchmedway.com](http://healthwatchmedway.com)



**By Post:** Write to us or fill in and send a Speak out form. **Freepost RTLG-UBZB-JUZA**  
**5A New Road Avenue, Chatham, ME4 6BB**



## **Face to Face:**

Call **0800 136 656** 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.