

Visits to mental health crisis support services in Northamptonshire:

The Warren Crisis House, Northampton

The Martins Crisis House, Rushden

Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough



October-
November
2019



Contents

Summary	4
Details of visits	4
Acknowledgements	4
Disclaimer	4
About Crisis Houses	5
About Mind Crisis Cafés	6
The Warren visit - observations and findings	7
Summary	7
About The Warren.....	7
General impressions	8
Activities for service users.....	9
Food and drink and mealtimes	9
Care and dignity of service users	9
Staff behaviour, attitudes and relationship with service users	9
What people told us	10
Recommendations for The Warren	11
Response from Head of Crisis Pathway, NHFT	11
The Martins visit - observations and findings	12
Summary	12
About The Martins	12
General impressions of the home.....	13
Activities for service users.....	14
Food and drink and mealtimes	14
Care and dignity of service users	14
Staff behaviour, attitudes and relationship with service users	15
What people told us	15
Recommendations for The Martins	16
Response from Head of Crisis Pathway, NHFT	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough visit - observations and findings	17
Summary	17
About the Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough	17



General impressions of the Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough	18
Care and dignity of service users	18
Staff behaviour, attitudes and relationships with service users	19
What people told us	19
Recommendations for Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough.....	20
Response from Head of Crisis Pathway, NHFT	20
About Healthwatch Northamptonshire.....	21
Enter and View	22
About Connected Together CIC.....	23
About Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT).....	24
About Mind	25
Contact us	26



Summary

Healthwatch Northamptonshire has been carrying out a series of visits to NHS and Social Care funded services in Northamptonshire to ascertain the experience and opinions of service users, with a particular focus on mental health.

We wanted to understand more about people's experiences of mental health crisis support so visited services provided by Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) and Mind, the main providers of mental health crisis support in the county (Mind's Crisis Cafes are run with NHFT).

We visited the two NHFT Crisis Houses in the county and a Crisis Café at Wellingborough Mind and observed good care that was centred around the needs of the service users. The service users we spoke to also commended the support they were given.

Both services were clearly beneficial to those that used them and necessary to supports people experiencing a mental health crisis.

Details of visits

Dates each visit were conducted:

- The Warren (NHFT Crisis House), Northampton: 22 October 2019
- Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough: 25 October 2019
- The Martins (NHFT Crisis House), Rushden: 28 November 2019

The visits were arranged in advance with The Warren, The Martins and the Crisis café staff being given notice of the intended visits. We sent letters and posters to the Crisis Pathway Service Lead and Business Support Manager at NHFT to inform the service users, staff, family and carers (and other visitors) about our visits and provide information about Healthwatch Northamptonshire. The visits were conducted by Healthwatch Northamptonshire volunteers and staff.

Acknowledgements

Healthwatch Northamptonshire would like to thank the managers, staff, visitors and service users of The Warren, The Martins and Mind Crisis café, Wellingborough, for their assistance in planning the visit. We would also like to thank them for giving us the opportunity to obtain information and service user feedback which supported the preparation of this report.

Disclaimer

Please note that this report relates to findings observed on the specific date set out above. Our report is not a representative portrayal of the experiences of all service users and staff, only an account of what was observed and contributed at the time.



About Crisis Houses

A Crisis House offers intensive, short-term support to help people manage a mental health crisis in a residential setting. A stay in a Crisis House is an alternative to going into hospital, for example if people do not feel safe at home overnight or things at home are contributing to their mental health crisis. There are multiple Crisis Houses across the country, but they can vary and may offer slightly different services. Generally, they offer: overnight accommodation, a small number of beds, a home-like environment and an intensive treatment plan.

Crisis Houses in Northamptonshire are run by NHFT, who work in collaboration with other independent organisations and charities, in this case Mind. Crisis Houses in Northamptonshire are free to use and are open to service users aged 18 years old or over who are referred by a mental health professional. The staff assesses everyone upon arrival to ensure that the service is the correct service to meet the person's needs.

When service users are assessed the following criteria are used to determine how it will meet their needs:

- The length of stay that is required
- The type of mental health crisis the service user is experiencing
- The service user's willingness to keep to the house rules (such as rules about no drug or alcohol use, or behaviour towards other residents)
- Consideration of the service user's mental health background



About Mind Crisis Cafés

The Mind Crisis Cafés work in partnership with the NHFT (Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust), giving access to NHS (National Health Service) services if service users need them. The Crisis Cafés are run by an NHFT mental health professional and a Mind peer support worker who can offer a safe space to offer support and advice. They support anyone, whatever degree of distress they are experiencing and help to reduce any immediate crisis and to safety plan. They look to draw on strengths, resilience, and coping mechanisms to manage people's mental health and wellbeing. Anyone can access this service; there is no need to call or book an appointment, as the service is a drop-in provision.

We were informed that there were always two Mind Crisis Cafés open at the same time, usually between 4:00pm-9:00pm, to enable mental health support to be offered within two different areas of the county.

There are six Mind Crisis Cafés across Northamptonshire, who collectively provide fifteen sessions per week. These Cafés are in Corby, Kettering, Daventry, Northampton, Rushden and Wellingborough:

The Sanctuary @ Corby Mind
18 Argyll St, Corby, NN17 1RU
Tel: 01536 267280

The Mixing Bowl @ Kettering Mind
49-51 Russell St. Kettering, NN16 0EN
Tel: 01536 523216

Daventry Mind, The Old Gasworks Car Park,
Brook Street, Daventry, NN11 4GG
Tel: 01327 879416

Anchor House @ Northampton Mind
6/7 Regent Square, Northampton NN1 2NQ
Tel: 01604 634310 / 624951

The Recovery Café @ Rushden Mind
Phoenix House, Skinner's Hill,
Rushden, NN10 9YE
Tel: 01933 312800

Wellingborough Mind
14 Havelock Street, Wellingborough, NN8 4QA
Tel: 01933 223591

www.nhft.nhs.uk/crisis-cafe



The Warren visit - observations and findings

Summary

The Warren is a Crisis House that specialises in short term mental health care based in Northampton. It is discreet in nature, set within a relatively new housing estate. It provides a service for up to seven people, for up to seven days. Individual rooms are allocated, with separate corridors and bathrooms for male and females, plus one additional room used flexibly as needed. It has a large rear garden that is well maintained and helps the house feel rehabilitative in nature. During our visit The Warren appeared well-organised and calm. The service users were generally positive with regards to their care and safety.

The Warren was clean and spacious, as were the service users' bedrooms, while the house still appeared homely. The house and staff seemed to have the resources to meet the needs of the service users and the service users at the time provided recommendations. There are measures in place for those with more complex needs to enable referrals to other mental health professionals or services.

The minimum staffing of The Warren is two, however, this can change as it is determined by the number of service users admitted and the service users' needs. On the day of the visit, the staff to service user ratio was high with four staff supporting four services users.

The staff seemed dedicated to their professional roles, which offer highly personalised support. We were informed that service users' needs are considered, and that care is continuously planned to meet these needs. There are activities available for the service users to participate in at their own convenience, as well as quiet rooms for service users' privacy and space.

Food and mealtimes are generally communal, although service users are able to eat whenever they like. Service users are able to prepare and cook their own meals or choose to have meals prepared for them by other service users or staff.

Many aspects of good practice were observed and commended, such as staff's attention to service users' safety and dignity and the provider's implementation of service user feedback.

About The Warren

The Warren is a spacious seven bedded bungalow that provides support for adults experiencing a mental health crisis. It is discreetly located within a housing estate and simply but effectively signed 'The Warren', making the bungalow noticeable whilst maintaining its privacy.



There are on site laundry facilities, individual bedrooms, two single sex shared bathrooms, a large kitchen, dining area and living room space. There are two quiet rooms as well as an activity room that service users are free to use when they want. There were no rooms specifically adapted for use by people with mobility difficulties.

The large garden is well maintained and has a vegetable patch for staff and service users to participate in maintaining. The staff office is central, and windows make it easy for staff and service users to communicate if necessary.

Staffing for The Warren is a minimum of two Band 4 support workers but generally they prefer three within the day and two at night. Staff can access a visiting psychologist, Community Psychiatric Nurse and have various other links to organisations that can provide additional support to each service user.

Upon arrival service users agree and sign a contract that they must abide to during their stay at The Warren. The contract consists of behavioural rules, confirmation that they can self-medicate, that it will be a short-term stay, as well as other 'code of conduct' requirements. If service users think that they will struggle to meet these requirements then staff will assess and consider an alternative, better suited service.

Service users can be referred to The Warren by a Band 6 mental health professional, this could be from: NHFT, Crisis teams, UCAT (Urgent Care and Assessment Team), Mind Crisis Cafés, perinatal services, A&E, police street triage, as well as many others. Staff told us that the majority of their service users are referred through the Crisis teams.

General impressions

Our overall impressions of The Warren were very positive. On entering The Warren, staff were welcoming and appeared to want to engage with our visit.

The Warren was well organised, calm and quiet, which was reflected in service users' responses on the day with regards to them feeling safe and looked after.

The staff office and kitchen are at the forefront and centre of The Warren, situated between the service users' bedrooms and the living area. The environment and furnishings appeared comfortable and fairly modern.

Staff were interacting with service users and with each other, engaging in conversation and/or activities. Formal notices were evident on the noticeboard, including numbers of other support services available.

Service users are to self-medicate at The Warren, although support is offered where needed. We were told that medication is stored within the service user's rooms in a locked cabinet. The service user only has access to seven-days' worth of prescribed medication that they are recommended to bring with them.

Service users on the day were relaxed and positive and appeared to have good relationships with the staff. The Healthwatch team spoke to two service users but



were unable to speak to all of those who were at The Warren on the day. Service users did not seem inhibited by our presence.

Service users have individual bedrooms and shared bathrooms. There is plenty of space for clothes and personal belongings for a short-term stay. The bedrooms appeared safely designed and were spacious and clean.

Activities for service users

It was clear that service users could engage in activities as and when they wanted to. Some of the activities available included gardening, board games, baking and reading. Staff encourage service users to participate, but this is determined by the service user's individual choice. Service users were observed cooking, playing board and card games. A service user was also noted to be having a one to one meeting with regards to their progress. Staff are available when service users require this support.

Food and drink and mealtimes

Service users choose and prepare their own meals and/or share this responsibility with other service users and staff. Service users have access to food and drinks at their leisure. Meals are encouraged to be consumed within the communal dining area.

Care and dignity of service users

The staff were clearly aware of issues regarding dignity and respect, as private areas and quiet rooms were readily available. Prior to the visit, staff were able to alert us of service users who may be distressed by our presence and protected them appropriately.

Service users are able to move around areas freely and do not need to be accompanied due to the service The Warren provides. They are also free to access the community as they like; they are encouraged and supported to maintain their daily routine. Service users can also contact relatives, carers and friends as and when they wish.

We were glad to see the designated smoking area is well designed and built with the service users' safety and dignity in mind.

Staff behaviour, attitudes and relationship with service users

All the staff we met appeared to have good, caring interactions with the service users. All service users were aware of their care, medications and their discharge planning. Service users were aware that they would only be at The Warren for a maximum of seven days; although staff informed us that this can be adjusted in certain individual cases. If a service user's mental health deteriorated during their time at The Warren, the crisis team would reassess and refer for appropriate treatment. Service users also knew that they were able to return to The Warren at any time they were experiencing a crisis.



The Warren provides access to a psychologist as well as other mental health professionals, offering individualised support and a continuous care plan. Staff told us that they work together with service users to set realistic targets dependant on their circumstances as well as developing coping strategies to help manage and reduce emotional stress; this is called ‘My Plan’. Service users confirmed that they were aware of their plan and were engaged and involved in their own care planning. A service user also told us that if they were uncomfortable with their treatment or would like to discuss a change, this was taken into consideration and their plan adapted to meet their needs.

We were told that service users all have one to one meetings arranged but can talk to staff at any time if they are feeling particularly distressed. The Warren provides opportunities for volunteers and has had previous service user’s return on a volunteer basis to provide peer support. Service users are also welcomed to review The Warren, where they said they are happy to take on board any changes that could benefit future service users.

Service users and staff work together to maintain The Warren; this includes painting fences, gardening, and carrying out housework. It is this collaborative approach that appears to structure a small community of support at The Warren.

What people told us

A service user told us that The Warren is “*Amazing!*” and wished that they had known about the Crisis House before they went into hospital. They continued to tell us that they feel safe and protected here and that it is a good place to come and reflect.

Staff told us how happy they were to work there and told us about their positive experiences and how they enjoy their job role. They highlighted the need for the service provided by The Warren and how successful it is.

Another service user also explained to us how The Warren had given them all the information and coping mechanisms they needed and felt ready to leave. Although they said that they would have preferred more interaction with the visiting psychologist during their stay, they were still overwhelmed with the level of support they had received. They went on to say that:

“This place has saved my life!”



Recommendations for The Warren

1. Service users told us that they would have preferred more access to the visiting psychologist. It is advised that staff support service users in reviewing their individual preferences and address their expressed psychological/professional interaction.
2. The services does not appear to be suitable for those with mobility difficulties, adapting a bathroom into an accessible bathroom would help.
3. Service users told us that they were unaware of the service prior to access and wished they had known about it before. It is recommended that further information is provided proactively by providers.
4. The efforts providers have gone to, to make the service accessible, service user led and provide care that is highly individualised, is acknowledged and highly commended. We recommend this continues and is maintained.

Response from Head of Crisis Pathway, NHFT

The feedback that we have had over the last few years for the Crisis Houses has been amazing. Our Crisis Houses have been built in co-production with our service users and carers and we constantly strive to ensure that they are available to meet the needs of the community that they serve.

We ask the teams who refer service users, to follow the care of individuals through the house. Psychology may therefore come from those teams as available rather than being a specific service that is currently attached to the houses. Our support workers in the houses are trained in lower level psychological interventions but we take on board the comments related to the possible need for increased provision and will explore this further with our commissioning colleagues.

We are aware that the Warren has limited adaptations with regards to accessibility. We have previously made adaptations to the house for specific individuals following OT assessments. We recently opened a second Crisis House in Rushden. When we designed this environment we ensured that we provided level access, wider doors and wet room type facilities to improve access for all.

We continue to advertise the houses through our Crisis Cafes, Acute Liaison Teams and Community Mental Health Services. We also regularly use Twitter and social media to link with the community but we will continue to increase our advertising in the coming months.



The Martins visit - observations and findings

Summary

The Martins is a Crisis house that recently opened in October 2019 and specialises in short term mental health care based in Rushden. It is discreet in nature and set amongst housing. It provides a service for up to six people at a time, for up to seven days. Rooms are allocated equally for male and females. It has a large rear garden that is well maintained. The Martins appeared very modern, well-organised and calm. The service users were generally positive with regards to their care and safety.

The Martins was clean and spacious, as were the service users' bedrooms, while the house still appeared homely. The house and staff appeared to have all the resources to meet the needs of the service users. We were told that there are measures in place for those with more complex needs as they have access to refer to other mental health professionals or services.

On the day of the visit, the staff to service user ratio was high with four staff supporting two services users.

The staff seemed dedicated to their professional roles which offer highly personalised support. We were informed that service users' preferences and opinions are always considered, and that care is continuously planned to meet their needs. There were activities available for the service users to participate in at their own convenience, as well as quiet rooms for service user's privacy and space.

Food and mealtimes are generally communal, although service users can eat whenever they like. Service users can prepare and cook their own meals or choose to have meals prepared for them by other service users or staff.

Staff told us that The Martins is a duplicate of The Warren with the only difference being its location. As The Martins recently opened in October 2019, there was minimal activity and it was therefore difficult to gauge staff and service user interaction. However, the care and environment witnessed on the day appeared to be very positive.

About The Martins

The Martins is a modern six bedded bungalow that provides support for adults experiencing a mental health crisis. It is conveniently located opposite a GP surgery and within a small housing estate. The Martins is discretely signed 'The Martins' making the bungalow noticeable whilst maintaining its privacy. The Martins is close to Rushden town and local transport so is easily accessible for service users.



There are on site laundry facilities, two single sex shared bathrooms, kitchen, dining room area and open plan living space. There are two quiet rooms, one of which is specifically for women, a noted addition as a result of previous experience and interactions with service users. As well as the quiet rooms, there is also an activity room that service users are free to use as and when they want to.

The large garden is well maintained and has a summer house office for staff, which is ideal for service user and staff interaction, especially in the warmer months. The inside staff office is at the forefront of the house within its corridors. The windows make it easy for staff and service users to communicate if necessary.

Staffing for The Martins is a minimum of two Band 4 support workers but generally they prefer three within the day and two at night. Staffing numbers are determined by the number of service users that are staying at The Martins and the needs of the service users. Staff can access a visiting psychologist, Community Psychiatric Nurse and have various other links to organisations that can provide additional support to service users.

As with The Warren, upon arrival service users must agree and sign a contract that they must abide to during their stay at The Martins. The contract consists of behavioural rules, confirmation that they can self-medicate, that it will be a short-term stay, as well as other 'code of conduct' requirements. If service users think that they will experience difficulties in meeting these requirements then staff will assess and consider an alternative service, better suited to meeting the service users' needs.

Service users can be referred to The Martins by a Band 6 mental health professional, this could be from; NHFT, Crisis teams UCAT (Urgent Care and Assessment Team), Mind Crisis Cafes, perinatal services, A&E, police street triage as well as many others.

Having a Crisis House open in the North of the County allows service users to have the option of attending The Martins or The Warren. The efforts providers have gone to, to make the service accessible, service user led and provide care that is highly individualised, is acknowledged and highly commended.

General impressions of the home

Our overall impressions of The Martins were very positive. On entering, staff were welcoming and appeared to want to engage with our visit.

The Martins was well organised, calm and quiet, which was reflected in service users' responses on the day with regards to them feeling safe and supported.

The environment and furnishings appear comfortable, clean and modern.

Staff were interacting with service users and with each other, engaging in conversation and/or activities. Formal notices were evident on the noticeboard, including numbers of other support services available.



Service users self-medicate, although support is offered where needed. We were told that medication is stored within the clinical room, which can only be accessed by staff.

Service users on the day were quiet but appeared to have good relationships with the staff. The Healthwatch team were able to speak to all staff and service users. The service users did not seem inhibited by our presence and were clearly aware of our planned visit.

Service users have individual bedrooms and shared bathrooms. There is plenty of space for clothes and personal belongings for a short-term stay. The bedrooms appeared safely designed and were spacious and clean.

Activities for service users

It was clear that service users could engage in activities as and when they wanted to. Some of the activities available included board games, cookery/baking, reading, watching television, computer games and many more. Staff encourage service users to participate in activities, but this is determined by the service user's individual choice.

The living room and quiet room have access to a television, service users were observed playing computer games and a game of cards with staff. There is an activities room where people can participate in arts and crafts; this room also has computers available for service users to use and access the internet. People are often supported by staff to manage their finances, including benefit and income or tax related administration that could cause additional anxiety.

Food and drink and mealtimes

Service users choose and prepare their own meals and/or share this responsibility with other service users and staff. Service users have access to food and drinks at their leisure. Meals are encouraged to be consumed within the dining area where staff and service users can sit together, or they can choose to eat at a time of their choice.

Care and dignity of service users

The staff were clearly aware of issues regarding dignity and respect, as private areas and quiet rooms were readily available. Upon arrival staff informed us that they had already made service users aware of our presence and said that service users had agreed they were happy to speak with us.

Service users are free to access The Martins and the community independently and do not need to be accompanied. They are encouraged and supported to maintain their daily routine. Service users can also contact relatives, carers and friends as and when they wish.

The service users told us they were asked daily about their health and wellbeing and whether there was anything the staff could support them with or support them to access.



Staff behaviour, attitudes and relationship with service users

All the staff we met appeared to have good, caring interactions with the service users. All service users were aware of their continuous care plan, medications and the short-term stay, however, one of the service users told us they were unaware of their discharge planning and what they would do in regard to support when they left. Staff informed us that the length of stay can be adjusted in certain individual cases. Service users also knew that they were able to return to The Martins at any time they were experiencing a crisis.

The Martins provides access to a psychologist as well as other mental health professionals, offering individualised support and a continuous care plan. Staff told us that they work together with service users to set realistic targets dependant on their circumstances. Service users confirmed that they were aware of their plan and are engaged and involved in their own care planning.

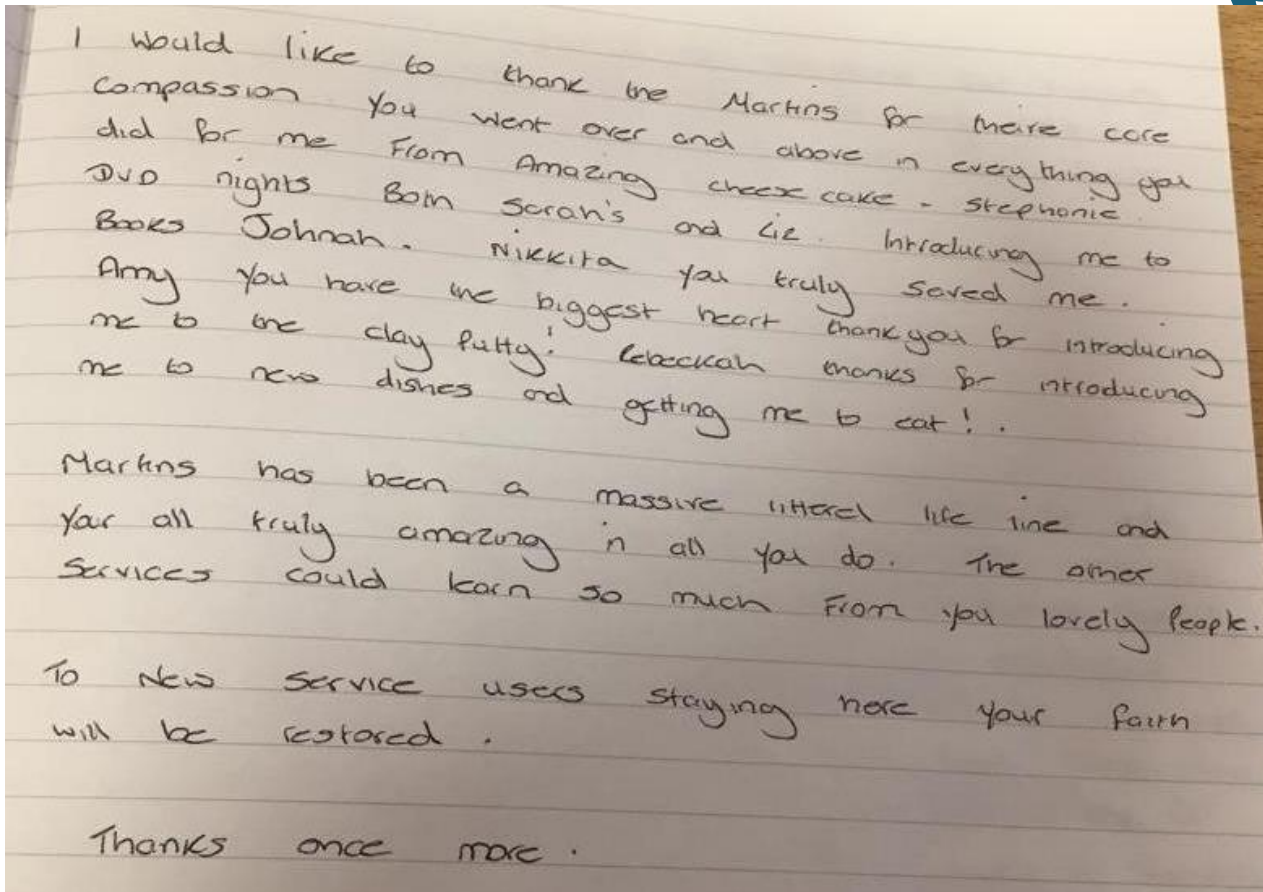
The Martins provides opportunities for volunteers and has had previous service users return on a volunteer basis to provide peer support. It was good to hear that The Martins take into consideration feedback from service users to develop the service.

Service users and staff work together to maintain The Martins; this includes gardening and carrying out housework. This encourages a collaborative community and support network in maintaining the service users' health and wellbeing.

What people told us

As The Martins has only recently opened there were only two service users present on the day of the visit. However, both service users told us that they felt happy and safe at The Martins and there was nothing they felt they would change. However, one service user did tell us they were worried about leaving in seven days' time as they were still waiting to find out about their discharge planning. They had only arrived that day.

Staff told us that service users are free to provide feedback through the comment book. An example of a recent comment pictured below:



Recommendations for The Martins

1. It was good to see that service users have the use of and access to computers. It is recommended that this support continues, and service users are provided with education regarding internet safety to encourage this to continue outside of The Martins.
2. Staff informed us that the 'clinical-looking' sofas are soon to be changed. It is recommended that this is done so as soon as possible.
3. The efforts providers have gone to, to make the service accessible, service user led and provide care that is highly individualised, is acknowledged and highly commended. We recommend this continues and is maintained.

Response from Head of Crisis Pathway, NHFT

We take on board the comments related to internet safety and will look to providing future education around this.

We can confirm that the furniture in the house has now been replaced with less clinical examples. We have also been supported through charitable donations and the local community to improve the garden area.



Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough visit - observations and findings

Summary

Healthwatch Northamptonshire arrived at the Crisis Café Wellingborough to attend an evening session that ran from 4pm to 6pm. On arrival it was clear to see that the location was accessible for the public. The Crisis Café was very welcoming in nature and had a friendly atmosphere. All visitors were greeted and immediately offered refreshments, despite the Café seeming quite busy. As there were no children present during this visit, we were not aware of whether children were welcomed here, or if there was a safe space for them if they were.

We met several volunteer staff which included three Mind counsellors plus an NHFT mental health support officer. We were told that there were more service users there than usual including some who were there for the first time. All service users stayed for the whole session and those that we spoke to told us that they found out about the Crisis Café through a professional.

We had several conversations with staff, volunteers and service users. This included students who are training for work in the mental health field. All service user feedback was generally positive.

It was clear that this Crisis Café is a very necessary facility maintained by Mind that supports a wide range of people who present with mental health needs now and in the future.

About the Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough

We were told that the Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough, opened 18 months ago. The Café provides services for people aged 17 and a half years upwards.

The Crisis Café is a clearly signed building which consisted of two floors. The ground floor consisted of a warm open planned room, which was pleasantly decorated. The area had plenty of tables and seating for service users. There was also a kitchen area for the staff and volunteers, however staff also used this area to update confidential service user information by computer.

On the second floor there were three separate rooms for private one-to-one conversations as well as toilet facilities.



General impressions of the Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough

Our overall impressions of The Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough, were positive. On entering, the staff were welcoming and friendly and seemed to want to engage with our visit. Although, it did not seem to be 'café-like' in nature and more of an office dwelling, the Café itself was still presentable, warm, spacious and well-organised. Formal notices were evident; this included those sent prior to the visit by Healthwatch Northamptonshire.

It was clear to see that staff were interacting with service users and with each other, engaging in numerous conversations. There was plenty of reading material available for service users; any other activities seemed unnecessary as people were aware of why they were attending and were happy to simply talk.

Service users on the day seemed relaxed and returning individuals appeared to have good relationships with staff. We were unable to speak to all service users on the day; however, those that we did speak to did not seem inhibited by our presence.

Staffing levels were good for the evening however, if there were any additional newcomers it may have been difficult for the staff to manage. It was noted that there is a need for additional, non-clinical staff to make refreshments so that qualified/trained staff can be readily available.

Staff told us that the Crisis Cafés have relieved some of the attendance pressures on A&E (Accident and Emergency) departments at the local hospitals. It is clear there is a need and demand for the Café services. It was understood that people need to be made more aware of these services so that this becomes their first interaction with mental health providers, rather than having to attend a GP (General Practitioner) appointment.

Care and dignity of service users

We were told that all service users have the opportunity of one to one support and private conversations in one of the three rooms that are available on the first floor, if they felt they required this. On the day the rooms were quiet, comfortable and seemed an appropriate environment to do so.

The staff's immediate attention to the service users upon entry was impressive, including the willingness to offer private conversations, assess needs and where possible, refer to available clinical records. We were told that these records are only available from certain GPs and other clinicians, but not all.

Once service users have attended the Crisis Café and staff have assessed their needs, they are then referred to the necessary service. If service users are unhappy or uncertain about any decisions, then this is taken into consideration with options and support being highly individualised to suit the needs and wellbeing of each person.

We were told that if service users require further or specialised support then the NHS support worker on duty at the time would advise staff and they would then signpost the service user accordingly to meet their specific needs.



Staff behaviour, attitudes and relationships with service users

On the day of the visit all staff were friendly and welcoming; they greeted all service users immediately and offered refreshments. People who were well known to the Crisis Café were greeted as such.

It was clear that staff were very attentive to service users, with particular emphasis on newcomers. The voluntary staff show a high level of commitment with several telling us about the sense of pleasure and fulfilment they get from volunteering at the Crisis Café.

The Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough, was clearly a support network. This was confirmed by a service user who told us that the reoccurring attendees tend to support each especially on special days such as Father's Day or Christmas.

We noted that there seemed to be an unspoken sense of respect and awareness when a new service user attends, or when someone is clearly having a tougher time coping with their crisis and requires more support from staff. It was good to see that on these occasions service users seemed happy to support and talk to one another, offering peer support.

What people told us

All service users on the day knew that they were welcome to attend the café for as long as they felt necessary.

A regular service user told us that they were happy they could use this service repeatedly and that it has provided a lot of support. Although if they had to recommend anything, it would be that the same Café is open more often so they do not have to travel to other areas. Despite this they said the service has prevented them from calling 999 (emergency services) and that the Café's safe environment lowers their stress and anxiety.

Another service user expressed how supportive and caring the Crisis Café team are and how they have always felt welcomed and listened to. The support they receive has enabled them to return to full time employment.

We were told by three service users that they '*felt safe*' in the café's environment and that it was always well organised by the staff.

The staff and volunteers at the Wellingborough Crisis Café all commented about how they enjoyed providing support and having the time to listen to service users. The staff all certainly showed passion and a high commitment to their respective roles.

All service users told us that they were recommended to visit the Crisis Café by their GP.



Recommendations for Mind Crisis Café, Wellingborough

1. It is recommended that the use of volunteers is looked to be increased so that counsellors and NHS mental health support officers can spend less time making refreshments and more time liaising with and supporting service users.
2. If possible, replace the unused reception desk to provide extra office space for staff and volunteers, instead of using the kitchen area.
3. In order to help reduce the numbers of attendees at GP practices, it is recommended that awareness of Mind Crisis Cafés is increased and publicised more accessibly.
4. The efforts providers have gone to, to make the service accessible, service user led and provide care that is highly individualised, is acknowledged and highly commended. We recommend this continues and is maintained.

Response from Head of Crisis Pathway, NHFT

We believe that the cafes have become an essential part of the mental health offer to service users in the community. These developments with third sector partners have ensured that service users are now able to self-refer to mental health services and access specialist mental health provision.

We have now opened a 24/7 mental health helpline for the county and this will allow us to ensure that where appropriate, we are able to direct service users to the cafes to obtain the right support at the right time.

We will speak with Wellingborough about the environment but there may well be reasons for the current lay out.



About Healthwatch Northamptonshire

Healthwatch Northamptonshire is the local independent consumer champion for health and social care. We are part of a national network of local Healthwatch organisations. Our central role is to be a voice for local people to influence better health and wellbeing and improve the quality of services to meet people's needs. This involves us visiting local services and talking to people about their views and experiences. We share our reports with the NHS and social care, and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) (the inspector and regulator for health and social care), with recommendations for improvement, where required.

Our rights and responsibilities include:

- We have the power to monitor (known as “Enter and View”) health and social care services (with one or two exceptions). Our primary purpose is to find out what patients, service users, carers and the wider public think of health and social care.
- We report our findings of local views and experiences to health and social care decision makers and make the case for improved services where we find there is a need for improvement
- We strive to be a strong and powerful voice for local people, to influence how services are planned, organised and delivered.
- We aim to be an effective voice rooted in the community. To be that voice, we find out what local people think about health and social care. We research patient, user and carer opinions using lots of different ways of finding out views and experiences. We do this to give local people a voice. We provide information and advice about health and social care services.
- Where we do not feel the views and voices of Healthwatch Northamptonshire and the people who we strive to speak on behalf of, are being heard, we have the option to escalate our concerns and report our evidence to national organisations including Healthwatch England, NHS England and the Care Quality Commission.

Find out more at www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk



Enter and View

Healthwatch Northamptonshire representatives carry out these visits to health and social care services to find out how they are being run and make recommendations where there are areas for improvement. The Health and Social Care Act allows local Healthwatch authorised representatives to observe service delivery and talk to service users, their families and carers on premises such as hospitals, residential homes, GP practices, dental surgeries, optometrists and pharmacies. Enter and View visits can happen if people tell us there is a problem with a service but, equally, they can occur when services have a good reputation - so we can learn about and share examples of what they do well from the perspective of people who experience the service first hand.

Healthwatch Enter and View visits are not part of a formal inspection process, neither are they any form of audit. Rather, they are a way for Healthwatch Northamptonshire to gain a better understanding of local health and social care services by seeing them in operation. Healthwatch Enter and View Authorised Representatives are not required to have any prior in-depth knowledge about a service before they Enter and View it. The representative's role is to observe the service, talk to service users, families, other visitors and staff if appropriate, and make comments and recommendations based on their subjective observations and impressions in the form of a report. All Healthwatch Northamptonshire Authorised Representatives have been through a recruitment process (either as staff or volunteers), had a Disclosure and Barring Check, and received Enter and View and safeguarding training.

This Enter and View Report is aimed at outlining what we see and hear during our visits and making relevant recommendation for improvement to the service concerned. The reports may also make recommendations for providers, commissioners, regulators or for Healthwatch to explore particular issues in more detail. Unless stated otherwise, the visits are not designed to pursue the rectification of issues previously identified by other regulatory agencies.

Healthwatch Enter and View visits are not intended to specifically identify safeguarding issues. However, if safeguarding concerns arise during a visit they are reported in accordance with Healthwatch safeguarding policies. If at any time an authorised representative observes anything that they feel uncomfortable about they need to inform Healthwatch Northamptonshire of their concerns, who will inform the service manager and may terminate the visit.

In addition, if any member of staff wishes to raise a safeguarding issue about their employer they will be directed to the CQC where they are protected by legislation if they raise a concern.



About Connected Together CIC

Connected Together Community Interest Company (CIC) is the legal entity and governing body for Healthwatch Northamptonshire.

The remit of the Connected Together CIC includes:

- Contract compliance
- Legal requirements
- Financial and risk management
- Sustainability and growth
- Agreeing strategy and operations
- Agreeing policies and procedures

Connected Together CIC is a social enterprise and a partnership between the University of Northampton and Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire. It aims to be first for community engagement across the county of Northamptonshire and beyond.

By using our expertise and experience, we can help you in delivering community engagement programmes including workshops, research, surveys, training and more. Contact us to find out how we can help your community.

We welcome ideas and suggestions for projects that benefit Northamptonshire and its community.

Find out more at www.connectedtogether.co.uk



Connected Together
First for Community Engagement





About Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT)

Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT) delivers many of the NHS services that are provided outside of hospital and in the community such as physical, mental health and speciality services.

Their 4,400 staff aim to deliver care as close to home as possible for patients, service users and carers. Where it is possible and appropriate to do so, they aim to support people in their own homes. NHFT offer more than 100 services including mental health, community nursing, sexual health, physiotherapy and a range of others, including specialty services. They also work in partnership across the county to deliver care together in an integrated way.

NHFT have more than 5,000 staff contribute to providing dedicated healthcare for our community, making contact with patients on more than 1.5 million occasions.

For more information:

Website: www.nhft.nhs.uk/about



Northamptonshire Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

About Mind



In Northamptonshire

Mind is one of the leading mental health charities in England and Wales. They provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

Local Minds support people in communities across England and Wales. Their range of services include supported housing, crisis helplines, drop-in centres, employment and training schemes, counselling and befriending.

Northamptonshire is covered by five local Mind organisations:

- Northampton and District Mind (covering Northampton, Daventry, Brackley, Towcester, and South Northants)
- Wellingborough Mind
- Corby Mind
- Kettering Mind
- Rusden Mind

Locally, Mind offer services including:

- Crisis Cafés
- Self-help, self-improvement and wellbeing courses
- One to one support
- Peer support and social groups
- Support into Employment
- Mental Health Navigators - 'six session service to reach your goals'

For more information:

Northampton and District Mind: www.northamptonmind.org.uk,
enquiries@northamptonmind.org.uk, 01604 634310

Wellingborough Mind: www.wellingboroughmind.org.uk,
admin@wellingboroughmind.org.uk, 01933 223591

Corby Mind: www.corbymind.org.uk, info@corbymind.org.uk, 01536 267280

Kettering Mind: www.ketteringmind.org.uk, info@ketteringmind.org.uk, 01536 523216

Rusden Mind: www.rushdenmind.org.uk, office@rushdenmind.org.uk, 01933 312800



Contact us

Address: Healthwatch Northamptonshire
Moulton Park Business Centre
Redhouse Road
Northampton
NN3 6AQ



Phone number: 0300 002 0010

Text message: 07951 419331

Email: enquiries@healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk

Website: www.healthwatchnorthamptonshire.co.uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Healthwatchnorthamptonshire

Twitter: twitter.com/HWatchNorthants

We confirm that we are using the Healthwatch Trademark (which covers the logo and Healthwatch brand) when undertaking work on our statutory activities as covered by the licence agreement.

If you require this report in an alternative format please contact us at the address above.

© Copyright Healthwatch Northamptonshire 2020

Part of Connected Together Community Interest Company Registered in England and Wales. Company No. 8496240

Email: hello@connectedtogether.co.uk

Facebook: [ConnectedtogetherCIC](https://www.facebook.com/ConnectedtogetherCIC)

Twitter: [@ConnectedCIC](https://twitter.com/ConnectedCIC)

Website: www.connectedtogether.co.uk



Connected Together
First for Community Engagement