

Innovative Mental Health Intervention

Southdown

Staying Well is a network of out-of-hours crisis prevention spaces that provide a safe space in a non-clinical setting for people feeling emotionally distressed.

Psychosocial support, signposting to other services, and crisis prevention planning aim to help identify strengths and coping skills. The service operates out of Eastbourne and Hastings Wellbeing Centres and our Wellbeing Hub in Brighton.

Our network of eight recovery-focused Wellbeing Centres and Wellbeing Hub (WBC/H) across Sussex are designed to help people facing mental health challenges to recover, stay well and prevent crisis. The WBC/H offer a range of support to help people develop skills and resilience including peer support, one to ones, group sessions and workshops.

Collectively, over the past year, Staying Well and the WBC/H have provided psychologically-informed, recovery-focused mental health support to over 2500 clients.

The services are provided by Southdown, a Sussex-based voluntary sector provider of housing, care and support services. www.southdown.org.

Southdown's network of eight recovery-focused Wellbeing Centres and Wellbeing Hub (WBC/H) are designed to help people facing mental health challenges to recover, stay well and prevent crisis. They are thriving, dynamic hubs promoting wellbeing, recovery and community and support people to develop skills and resilience by providing peer support, one to ones, group sessions and workshops.

We are proud that our WBC/H facilitate and host a range of services, both internal and external to Southdown, continuously seeking out new collaborative opportunities and innovative ways to expand and extend partnerships. This enables us to maximise our offer by accelerating referrals, increasing knowledge and resource sharing, and providing seamless, holistic recovery planning for our clients.

It is within the context of this partnership-driven and recovery-focused working that we enter the award for Innovative Mental Health Intervention.

Our seven WBCs are located in: Eastbourne, Hailsham, Bexhill, Hastings, Lewes, Newhaven, Uckfield. Our Wellbeing Hub is located in Preston Park. They host the following Southdown Services:

Staying Well

Our out-of-hours mental health crisis prevention service is provided at The Wellbeing Hub at Preston Park in Brighton and our Eastbourne and Hastings Wellbeing Centres.

Open 7 days a week, 365 days a year, the Staying Well service provides psychosocial support and crisis prevention planning. This includes proactively contacting clients who have been referred or self-referred to the service to build crisis plans together, increasing resilience and coping skills. Individuals can phone the service directly to self-refer for support when they feel they aren't able to cope or are headed towards a crisis point.

It alleviates pressure on clinical services by offering an alternative provision to attending A&E for anyone experiencing or at risk of escalating to a mental health crisis.

Thinking Well

Our service for people with a diagnosis of complex emotional needs, Thinking Well, is co-delivered with SPFT. The service operates one day per week rotationally in the Lewes, Eastbourne and Bexhill Wellbeing Centres. It offers social, creative, therapeutic and psychoeducational groups as well as community activities, providing pre-trauma stabilisation work for people with a diagnosis of complex emotional needs.

Community Connectors

Community Connectors is a Social Prescribing service, working in partnership with GP Practices to support clients to develop personalised, practical solutions to everyday issues and improve physical and mental wellbeing. They operate out of our Eastbourne, Bexhill, Hailsham and Hastings WBCs.

Work and Wellbeing

The Work and Wellbeing service provides specialist employment support for people living with mental health challenges across Sussex. We support clients to achieve their vocational aspirations and explore other issues affecting their ability to secure or sustain employment. This is provided in partnership with the Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.

Financial Inclusion Team

Our Financial Inclusion Team support clients with benefits applications and appeals, and ensures people make the right decisions about going into work to ensure the best possible outcome.

Please note when referring to appendices: the Wellbeing Hub was previously known as Preston Park Recovery Centre.

We are a values-driven organisation; our values inform all we do. In particular, our Wellbeing Centres and Hub (WBC/H) and the services operating from them go the extra mile to fulfil the values: 'Brilliant with people' and 'Force for good'.

Brilliant with people: psychologically-informed approach to working with clients and staff

Southdown is embedding our bespoke, organisation-wide psychologically- and trauma-informed approach: the Southdown Beacon. Informed by evidence-based psychology and key approaches in the sector, this describes and directs how we support everyone (clients, colleagues and volunteers) to live well with Southdown.

We developed this by identifying core themes across the 13 models used by Southdown's Client Services. These models include Psychologically-Informed Environments, Trauma-Informed Care, Recovery Models, and Strengths-Based Approach.

Following months of research and collaboration with clients and colleagues, we developed the Southdown Beacon. Using this approach, we go above and beyond to meet clients' and colleagues' psychological needs by:

- Creating Environments of Safety, Belonging and Learning
- Building Relationships that value Choice, Individuality and Working Together
- Recognising Individual Experiences, Strengths and Potential

The Southdown Beacon is being embedded within practice, policies and procedures, people processes, and service design and delivery. This goes above and beyond to ensure the psychological well-being of our colleagues and clients is considered in every decision-making process, at every level of the organisation.

Our WBC/H are at the forefront of this transformation piece in the following ways:

Staff training on psychologically-informed approach

In late 2022, the Wellbeing Hub received an in-depth, four-part training programme on the Southdown Beacon focusing on trauma, strengths-based approaches, and staff psychological safety. Following the training, the team re-designed their assessment form to adhere to strengths-based principles and advanced the principles of 'working together' in the PIEs project (below).

Although we are yet to measure the impact on clients, our internal staff survey has demonstrated that this has contributed to the enhancement staff feeling engaged, motivated, trusted and safe to challenge (Appendix 1).

Psychologically-informed staff support

Our WBC/H go above and beyond by dedicating 1-2 hours each month to their teams' wellbeing, offering them time to do this individually or engage in team wellbeing activities e.g., forest walks, meditation, and quizzes. Staff also have access to weekly staff yoga sessions.

Our Staying Well team receives clinical support the form of monthly, facilitated reflective practice sessions. These are spaces for the team to come together to discuss and unblock any particular challenges and have been really positively received:

'I was feeling deflated, quite vulnerable, I was second guessing my abilities and carrying a lot of emotion... I shared that and was met with a lot of validation, acknowledgement that that was natural, and a lot of people I looked up to shared similar experiences. It normalised it as not something I'd done wrong and needed to be punitive about. That helped me be a lot kinder to myself and consider ways I can approach things in a more healthy, paced way' – Staying Well Recovery Advisor

Psychologically-informed Environments

In 2022 we secured funding to re-design our WBCs in Bexhill, Lewes, Eastbourne and Hastings and our Wellbeing Hub as Psychologically-Informed Environments (PIEs). Committed to ensuring fairness and meeting all our clients' psychological needs, we went above and beyond and sought additional charitable funds from Waitrose and TE Connectivity, as well as donating our own funds, to ensure our remaining Newhaven, Uckfield and Hailsham services also became PIEs.

PIEs are services designed and delivered in a way that considers the psychological needs of the individuals using and working in them. We want our WBC/H to feel welcoming, safe and inclusive – places that maximise recovery, belonging,

engagement and emotional regulation. To ensure this, we integrated Trauma Informed Design to our PIEs approach.

Our fundamental considerations were:

- Co-produce wherever possible. Some clients completed building 'walk throughs', assessing each room and providing input as to how re-design each room in line with PIEs principles, some attended focus groups to select items for the final order list, and others led on implementing changes e.g., in the gardens
- Priority focus on client facing areas
- Using principles of 'evidence-based design'
- Making the spaces more welcoming to young people
- Accessibility to people with physical disabilities and neurodiverse people particularly considering: is the furniture suitable for people with mobility issues? Is a sensory room or quiet space required?
- Considering how easy the items are to clean and what will be required to ensure they stay looking fresh and inviting.

Some examples of changes we made are:

- Development of the sensory room / quiet space
- Objects for sensory needs
- Changes to paint and lighting to appear less crowded and minimise stress
- Addition of plants
- Changes to furniture to encourage informal social interactions, decrease clutter and create a community feel.

Force for good: de-stigmatising mental health in the community

Our WBC/H also go above and beyond to meet the value: 'Force for good' by striving to de-stigmatise mental health.

One way we achieve this is the Wellbeing Hub's participation in the annual Brighton Fringe Artists Open House Exhibition. For six years, we have opened our doors to the local community, exhibiting art created by clients in support of their mental wellbeing. This year, we are showcasing over 100 pieces of art created by 54 artists and are proud to have participating artists from other UOK Brighton and Hove mental health providers e.g., Men in Sheds at Fabrica.

The Artists Open House enables us to showcase who we are, what we're about and talk with neighbours about mental health, breaking down stigma and barriers to accessing support. Beyond this, it is meaningful to our clients:

“It means the world to me to know that other people will be able to see my art and enjoy it. Taking part in the Artists Open House has given me confidence in my painting and a sense of pride” – Artist Contributor, Client of Wellbeing Hub.

Partnership Working

Our innovation lies in the deeply collaborative approach we adopt between services in our Wellbeing Centres and Hub (WBC/H). Effective partnerships with both internal and external providers develops stronger pathways across flexing levels of mental health need and increases resource and information sharing. Ultimately, this enables better results for clients and for staff.

Internal Partnerships

Collaboration with crisis services – Staying Well

Staying Well, our out-of-hours mental health crisis prevention service, is provided at The Wellbeing Hub and our Eastbourne and Hastings WBCs.

Referrals

Situating this service within our WBC/H enables quicker, smoother referrals from the WBC/H to the Staying Well team, alleviating pressure on clinical services and enabling clients to access the support they need before they reach crisis.

It provides an additional step in crisis intervention. Where other services may only have a psychiatric liaison in post, the positioning of Staying Well within the WBC/H establishes an alternative route for clients not unwell enough to refer to the psychiatric liaison. This serves as a progressive change environment that mitigates risk of escalation and support pre-crisis.

Simultaneously, the collaborative space offers Staying Well clients direct access to non-clinical community services within the building and speeds up referrals to WBC/H. With recreational, educational, health and fitness related or vocational

wellbeing offers, Staying Well clients can seamlessly transfer from pre-crisis to on-going recovery support within the same building.

Out-of-hours

Offering local, extended out-of-hours provision of clinical and non-clinical support offers a safe space to individuals experiencing potential crisis beyond regular times.

Being available beyond usual hours sets this service apart in its recognition that levels of distress persist and can rise beyond usual working hours. It bridges the gap between access to regular working hour services and those available out-of-hours: emergency services.

The service supports people to avoid reaching point of urgent care and offers a place for those at pre-crisis point, thus alleviating pressure on emergency services and providing a more cost-effective intervention.

Client Testimonial

“It’s good that the service is open out of hours/late as mental health problems don’t stop outside of 9-5 hours.” – Staying Well client (Appendix 3: Commissioner Report)

Joint Care Planning

The WBC/H and Staying Well coordinators and managers regularly present cases at Triage Hub Meetings, which provides space for the services to discuss referrals, handovers and jointly work to assess risk. This means one service is not alone holding risk and clients have a plan that accommodates their needs at different levels of risk or emotional intensity. This ultimately results in better support for both the client and for staff members.

Collaboration with services for people with a diagnosis of complex emotional needs.

Our service for people with a diagnosis of complex emotional needs, Thinking Well, operates one day per week rotationally in the Lewes, Eastbourne and Bexhill WBCs. It offers social, creative, therapeutic and psychoeducational groups as well as community activities, providing pre-trauma stabilisation work for people with a diagnosis of complex emotional needs.

Thinking Well’s location in the WBCs supports its members to build a secure attachment to a particular venue in preparation for step down care; when members "graduate" Thinking Well, they still have the WBCs for support. Additionally, higher functioning Thinking Well members may access the WBC offer alongside Thinking Well, granting them access to different groups or interventions throughout the week.

The collaboration also enables resource, experience and knowledge sharing between the services, with the WBCs learning from Thinking Well's Trauma-Informed Care approach, which is deeply embedded within its service design.

Collaboration with social prescribing, employment and financial inclusion services

We have a number of other services operating out of the WBCs, including:

Community Connectors

Our Community Connectors' presence in 4 WBCs enables continuous conversations and quicker referrals to targeted support. The Social Prescribing service supports clients with their mental health and wellbeing by linking them into relevant services, education and volunteering as well as providing 121 support to explore opportunities.

Being situated within the WBCs enables Community Connectors clients that are not yet ready for a recovery journey to easily access other relevant support e.g., financial or educational. In the other direction, WBC clients often build confidence through their recovery plans and become ready to access the Community Connectors offer and explore other community services or activities to continue their recovery.

Similar to Staying Well, our Community Connectors attend joint managers meetings to share service updates and discuss triage clients. This has been extremely effective, as teams are able to share knowledge, expertise and discussions on relevant clients to ensure appropriate referral to service.

Financial Inclusion and Employment Services

Our WBC/H host our Financial Inclusion Team, which offers money management courses and benefit support, and the Work and Wellbeing Team, which provides a specialist employment service.

This enables the WBC/H and the above teams to directly refer clients to the other service, with quicker, more seamless transitions as conversations happen and connections are built 'in the moment'. Sharing the space allows us to work collaboratively in real time with clients, benefitting all parties in terms of time-saving, ease and relationship building.

The synergy between Southdown services, and capitalising on the opportunities provided by fostering internal collaboration, sets these services apart. Bringing together our wide-ranging services enables maximises our offer, furthering support avenues for clients in places they already feel safe and secure. The collaboration

between multiple teams with diverse expertise increases staff support, knowledge and experience, and enables holistic recovery planning for our clients.

External Partnerships

In addition to drawing on Southdown's services, our WBC/H teams develop positive external partnerships. Through seeking innovative opportunities to both elevate our offer to our clients, support local providers and expand our own learning, we have established the following partnerships.

N.B.: this is a non-exhaustive list. For more, see Appendix 4: Excerpt from WBC Quarterly Report 2022-23

Assessment and Treatment Services (ATS): We regularly host manager meetings between WBCs and ATS, the NHS pre-crisis service supporting people with psychiatric needs. They collaborate to support particularly challenging clients keep well. This, along with ATS staff visits to the WBC and facilitated groups describing the ATS to WBC clients, enables mutual understanding of the services and enhances referral opportunities. Since the co-facilitated group started in April, 4 of the 8 ATS clients have now referred to and joined the Wellbeing Centres. Another co-facilitated group is currently being planned.

Sussex Community Development Association: we open up our Lewes and Hailsham WBC space to provide their clients with low-cost, onsite counselling opportunities, developing a Community Partnership opportunity.

CGL – in Hailsham, CGL work on-site providing face-to-face sessions to clients. Newhaven WBC and CGL are collaborating to support clients of both services living in the local community

One You East Sussex: our work with One You has led to the presence of a health coach to complete health checks for Hastings and Bexhill WBCs clients. We are currently looking to develop this in all WBC/H.

Wellbeing Groups for Support Services: we offer regular wellbeing spaces for other providers e.g., Hailsham WBC runs a weekly group for community support teams and a monthly wellbeing group for Care for Carers.

Our partnerships with statutory and voluntary mental health providers, including specialist, clinical and community provision ensures effective referral pathways and progression routes. The diverse nature of these partnerships enables us to maximise the use of our buildings, moving our WBC/H to become dynamic, thriving

hubs that support not only clients but other providers to build community and live well.

The exceptional initiative of our WBC/H teams to build partnerships sets us apart in the support of the NHS Mental Health Transformation Agenda, working with the ambition of ensuring 'no wrong front door', improving client experience of accessing mental health services, relieving pressure from clinical services and providing a recovery-focused, holistic approach to mental health.

Recovery-Focused

Our Wellbeing Hubs and Centres are underpinned by the Recovery Model. As recovery-oriented, socially inclusive environments that develop peer support networks and client-led sessions, as well as encouraging clients to develop their own recovery plans, our centres depart from the traditional day centre model.

Our WBC/H use evidence-based approaches to support recovery, such as Wellness Recovery Action Planning. This promotes client independence and empowerment by offering the opportunity to identify their own needs, develop their own coping strategies and tools, make use of their own social networks, recognise their own strengths and encourage hope and to work towards improving their emotional wellbeing.

The Recovery Model propels our Wellbeing Centres and Hubs to be client-led. Attending clients must be self-driven and engage in the support they want, empowering themselves to seek the support they need and want. We uphold this through:

- clear boundary-setting and being explicit about the service objectives and expectations.
- avoiding the creation of dependency on the service, establishing it as a flow through
- drawing on multiple partnerships to support clients to develop community participation beyond our services to live independently, meeting the goals they set during assessment
- support to move away from reliance on services, while remaining clear that it remains somewhere people can be re-referred to as needed

This offers a departure from similar services, as it supports a move away from being life-long clients towards an approach wherein we see clients move through services, gaining skills and strategies to be able to live with long term Severe Mental Illness independently.