

The Transformation Bulletin

A bi-monthly round up of how **community mental health services** are transforming across **Frimley**.

Issue #2, January 2023

Top stories

MHICS live across Frimley South

The recent launch of Fleet and Yateley Mental Health Integrated Community Service teams means that MHICS now has coverage across all PCNs in Frimley South. Key roles have been filled which has enabled the teams to start accepting referrals.

Thomas Forster, GP Partner of the Oakley Health Group says;

“We are all very excited at Oakley Health Group to have the Yateley MHICS team go live. I have been looking forward to this service starting since I first heard of the concept, but what has been most rewarding and exciting has been the way that our patients have been enthusiastic about the service as I have started discussing it with them for the initial soft-launch referrals. Their enthusiasm suggests this is filling a previously unmet need from the patient’s perspective, and is going to make a big difference to many people going forward.”

Work is continuing to set up MHICS teams for the remaining PCN’s in Frimley North. Slough SPINE soft launched in early December and the rest are on track to be live by the end of March 2023.



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Top stories

CMHTP present plans to improve staff retention at Workforce Summit

Workforce is clearly acknowledged as a significant issue across mental health. A recent follow up to Frimley's first Workforce Summit was well attended by a wide range of stakeholders with interest in the mental health workforce.

As staff retention is a significant issue for us in the transformation programme, we were asked to present our work on this issue so far. We have been focusing on staff retention, including how to make our MHICS roles more fulfilling and meaningful.

During this work, using a Quality Improvement approach, we identified two key issues; access to appropriate clinical and team space and being clear about job roles and career progression.

The team aim to address common issues raised to ensure the CMHTP workforce benefits from a sense of team cohesion, professional development and clarity around roles and responsibilities.

The overall objective is to reduce staff turnover to 10% by the end of 2023.

[See our full presentation here.](#)

Events

Dates and events to put in your diary



- **Practical tips for supporting Older Adults with anxiety and depression webinar**

Available to [watch now on YouTube.](#)

Evidence suggests older adults are less likely to seek help for their mental health. This webinar talks about practical ways professionals can identify mental health issues and support older adults in our community. The full webinar is 1 hour 30 minutes.



- **Cultural Competence Training**

Slough CVS are offering more spaces for cultural competence training sessions open to NHS Frimley, statutory sector, voluntary sector staff in 2023. Topics include Muslim Men, Mental Health and Suicide, Carers & Mental Health, Amplifying Diverse Voices for Mental Health and Faith v Culture. [Sign up now.](#)

Spotlight on MHICS

The good, the great and the challenging

Setting up a new Mental Health service during a pandemic

Jane Brooks, Frimley Transformation Programme Manager describes how the Mental Health Integrated Community Service (MHICS) came to be.

How long have you been working on the transformation and with MHICS?

I started working on the Community Mental Health transformation in January 2020. When I started, my focus was dedicated to launching the new MHICS service, although my role now is to manage effective delivery of the Community Mental Health Transformation programme across the whole of Frimley.

[Read more about the community mental health transformation.](#)

Tell us about the ethos of MHICS

The ethos is about breaking down barriers for people suffering with significant mental illness to help them access the help they need. We know that there was a gap that some people unfortunately fell in to when they had needs too complex for talking therapies but weren't unwell enough to be admitted to secondary care. The risk is that people who aren't accessing the services they require might reach the point of crisis before being able to access support. We know that people with significant mental illness have serious health inequalities, with significantly shorter life expectancy.

MHICS is designed to bridge this gap and support our Primary Care colleagues by providing specialist mental health support to people in their own community with the help and guidance of Lived Experience Practitioners.

Our MHICS teams are led by Principal Clinical Psychologists and are made up of Mental Health Practitioners, Community Connectors, Psychiatrists, Assistant Psychologists, Pharmacists and Administrators.



We also have strong links with the local authority and voluntary sector to ensure our service users can gain from the skills, experience, and expertise they offer.

“The ethos of MHICS is breaking down barriers”

How will MHICS benefit the people of Frimley?

By breaking down barriers and smoothing out the pathways, our service users in Frimley should be able to access the support they need in a much more efficient and effective way in their own communities. They will not necessarily then have to be seen in 'secondary care' and can be supported while they're still living at home with minimal disruption to their normal lives.

The service itself is holistic, looking at psychological and social determinants of mental health issues as research suggests that the two are closely linked and, for many, if their mental health issue is treated in isolation, it is unlikely to improve.

Continued...

Spotlight on MHICS

For example, a person suffering with their mental health may also be struggling with being able to work, potentially leading to financial or housing issues, causing high levels of stress which negatively impact their mental health further.

What's your most memorable moment from the programme so far?

The day we launched our very first MHICS pilot. Everyone was excited as we'd started this service from scratch, got all the systems and processes in place, worked out every single detail of how it would work. There's a document called the Gateway document which is a checklist of all the aspects you need to complete to set up a new service and it was brilliant to see that everything on the list was green and ticked off, so we could launch the service.

What's your biggest challenge been?

Six weeks after starting my new role, we went into the first lockdown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This added a whole list of challenges to working on the programme. We were recruiting new staff to the MHICS Teams and many of us hadn't met face-to-face, all our processes and planned ways of working had to be adapted, as we had a whole new programme to implement. The biggest challenges were changing to a virtual offer when the original plan was to integrate the new teams into primary care and maintaining engagement with all our key stakeholders while everyone was facing huge pandemic-related challenges .

A unexpected positive from this challenge is we have become experts in providing online services for people who struggle to feel comfortable with face-to-face contact.

When we put in the transformation bid, no one could have anticipated that the work would coincide with a global pandemic. Huge thanks to every single person that made this happen under such difficult circumstances.



“When we put in the transformation bid, no one could have anticipated that the work would coincide with a global pandemic”

Where do you see MHICS in 5 years from now?

It's going to be really interesting to see how Community Mental Health services, including MHICS, continue to transform over the coming years. We are excited to be starting work on the 'One Team' approach, so we can deliver on national requirements laid out in the Community Mental Health Framework in ways that are co-designed by both those who deliver the services and those who use them. Setting up MHICS was our starting point and now what we're doing is using the same ethos to improve Community Mental Health services on a much wider scale.

Spotlight on MHICS

What makes a MHICS team?

MHICS is made up of a variety of roles to best cater to the needs of people with complex mental illness. Meet the Slough LOCC MHICS team and find out about their varied roles and responsibilities to demonstrate what makes a MHICS team great.



Clinical Lead

Vanessa Cowle

I am the Clinical Lead for Slough LOCC and SPINE and I also work within Slough CMHT. I am a Clinical Psychologist and supervise the Team. MHICS adds value as it bridges the gap between primary and secondary care, linking with valuable community resources as well.



Senior Assistant Psychologist

Antonios Sardalos

I am responsible for delivering psychotherapeutic interventions (both individual and group) for people accessing the support from MHICS. I value group-work as it is a good opportunity for people to get together and connect. I pride myself on being reliable and would like to extend that to everyone I come across, including clients.



Mental Health Practitioner

Michael Griffith

I joined the BFHT in Feb of 2022 as a Mental Health Practitioner. My duties include triaging of referrals, assessment of patients, navigating care pathways, partnership working with other health care providers, attending meetings and care reviews, and ensuring people under the care of MHICS have a good experience of care and support.



Pharmacist

Currently recruiting

The role of a pharmacist in the MHICS team is to use their specialist expertise to give advice and guidance. They are responsible for medicines review, reconciliation and reducing polypharmacy. They also are available to support GP practices with SMI understanding and medication side effects.

Continued...

Spotlight on MHICS



Psychiatrist

Currently recruiting

The Psychiatrist role brings senior medical expertise and provides consultation and supervisory input to the MHICS team and primary care clinicians.



Administrator

Uzma Naureen

I am based in New Horizons in Slough as the Slough LOCC MHICS ADMIN and have been since April 2022. The administrator role is the first point of contact with the service user when they are referred to MHICS. I will get in touch and arrange a telephone appointment with a mental health practitioner or community connector dependent on the persons needs.



Community Connector

Jazmin Dickson

I have worked at Bucks Mind as a Community Connector for 2 years and graduated from Buckinghamshire New University where I studied Criminological Psychology. In my final year at university, I conducted my dissertation on the stigma surrounding mental health and the effect this has on overall well-being. I have experience working for Aik Saath which involved community cohesion and volunteered at Rape Crisis which involved working with women and girls who have been through any kind of sexual abuse. This involved me working on a telephone helpline, providing face-to-face support in groups and engaging in fund raising and awareness events.



What do Community Connectors do?

Our Community Connectors have expert knowledge of our local area and work together to access local support. These may include:

- Drug and alcohol support groups
- Debt and housing support via organisations such as Citizen's Advice
- Social networks to combat loneliness and isolation
- Volunteering opportunities
- Activities to enhance wellbeing

Spotlight on MHICS – Service User Voice

“I didn’t know how to get on top of the way I was feeling”

Lisa M talks about her experience with the Surrey Heath MHICS service and how early intervention was key.

Tell us about why you were referred to MHICS

I first went to the GP because I was sleeping extremely badly and it started to affect me mentally as well as physically. 2020 had been a rather horrendous year for me, but I took the attitude that it's a it's a really tough year for everybody and just carry on. But I was finding the lack of sleep was really becoming too much, too intrusive.

I started to have feelings of extreme fear, constant fear. And I thought by getting my sleep under control that perhaps I would just eliminate these rather unwelcome, negative, really strong feelings that I was feeling at the time.

I spoke to one of my GP's and he was brilliant, he immediately said about the MHICS service that was available. I must admit I pushed back a little bit saying; lots of people are going through stuff, I've just had a bit of a tough year. I don't really need this, you know, I'm fine.

But he stuck with me and he was brilliant and he outlined what the service could potentially offer me and in the meantime, he gave me some medication to help me sleeping.

And I've got to say, I'm so delighted he referred me. The service and the people who spoke to me have been brilliant.

“MHICS jumped in for me when I needed support and actually didn't recognise I needed support”



What happened once you were referred to MHICS?

I spoke to Gordon (Community Connector) on a regular basis. He was very supportive. He was very understanding of the feelings I was going through, and he made me feel that it's okay, you feel the way you do, and we can offer you support. This service jumped in for me when I needed support and actually didn't recognise I needed support.

Gordon was in regular contact with me to talk about anything I was thinking or feeling or just to make sure that I was I was okay. He also made me aware of the services that are available and there's a lot out there to help. There's meetings, there's online meetings, there's some support facilities out there. There's a lot out there to help. But he made it very clear that I could use or to only use what I felt would help me.

I spoke to Nneka the Pharmacist about the medication I was on, she was absolutely brilliant. She explained about the drug, which really helps me to sleep. This has also helped how I cope and how I feel. She was great in answering any questions about it, anything to do with any side effects or what exactly the drug did and that put my mind at rest because I was very concerned that it was an addictive drug.

Continued...

Spotlight on MHICS – Service User Voice



Was there part of the service stood out for you?

Everybody is supportive, understanding and non-judgmental. There was no pressure anytime, just somebody to talk to, somebody to go through it with. Gordon contacted me every couple of weeks to see how I was which was just brilliant.

It helped me learn to manage my negative feelings and I think a lot of people are experiencing the same at the moment. It validated me and supported me and caught me very, very early on and has helped me get back to a much stronger level.

I can't thank the service enough because it held my hand through a period of time when I didn't quite know to get on top with the way I was feeling and didn't even really acknowledge I was feeling that way.

I think the potential for this service to get to people hopefully quite early on in any form of mental health struggle is just so valuable and I think that should be available to everybody.

“In my experience, it absolutely works.”

What would you say to someone who has been referred to MHICS?

Please try it. If you can speak to somebody like Gordon, who understands how you're feeling, it'll help. Try something that you feel comfortable with. There's no pressure, there is no obligation. In my experience, it absolutely works.

Could you help amplify service user voices?

If you are working with someone who would like to feedback on the MHICS service, we'd love to hear from them. Please email cmhlivedexperience@berkshire.nhs.uk.

Top stories

New NHS England roadmap tool tested

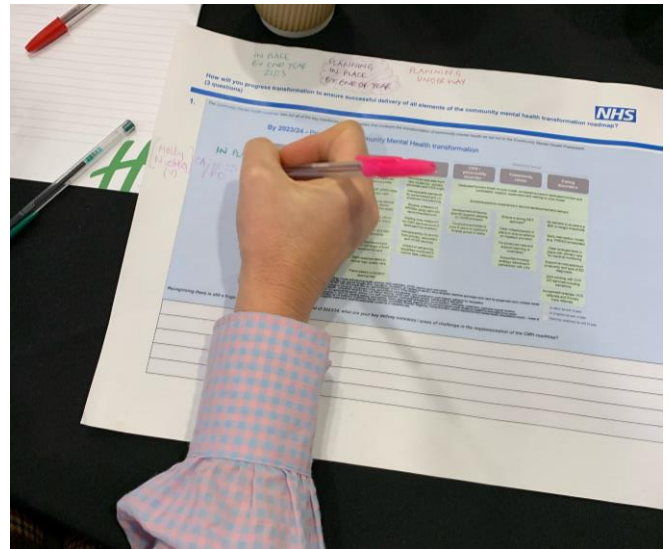
Our CMHTP team tested a new NHS England roadmap tool at a workshop in November.

Eighteen members of the Frimley Community Mental Health Transformation Programme Team met in early November to test the [NHS England's new Transformation Roadmap Tool](#) and feedback on its effectiveness.

The roadmap tool is designed to help us monitor the implementation of the programme highlighting key areas of focus for the coming year.

Susanna Yeoman commented "Bringing the team together to complete this task was a really helpful exercise. It demonstrated the breadth of the programme and showcased how much has been achieved."

The team fed back to NHSE who commented on how helpful and constructive the suggestions were. They also commented that it's positive that the team have found a meaningful way of monitoring progress using the tool.



Bucks Mind Awarded Community Connector Contract for Frimley North

Bucks Mind will continue to deliver community connector services across Frimley North following a tender exercise completed in October 2022.

Our Frimley North Community Connector roles provided by Bucks Mind are part of a multi-disciplinary team of mental health specialists, working with our colleagues employed by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to support anyone who is over 18 and experiencing significant mental health problems that are impacting life and wellbeing.

"I'm delighted that we are able to continue running this wonderful service for those people who need a helping hand and some encouragement to achieve their wellbeing goals."

Debbie Workman, Community Connector Team Lead – Bucks Mind

[Read more about the role of Community Connectors](#)

New Lived Experience Practitioner Teams

New teams of lived experience practitioners will take a fresh approach to aiding people in their recovery in Frimley.



From the start, it has been acknowledged that peer support is an essential component of our transformation across Frimley. Being able to find common ground and use their recovery as a tool to support others are the defining features of our new Lived Experience Practitioners (LExPs) roles. Although much of our workforce will have, and already use, a range of lived experience in their roles, it is the direct and intentional use of this experience in these roles which sets our LExPs apart from other staff groups. It is clear to all, colleagues and clients alike, by the very nature of their role that these individuals have their own experiences of mental distress and this helps also to broach barriers and combat stigma.

LExP roles are person-centred: They concentrate on identifying each individual's own strengths, challenges, goals and aspirations, whilst simultaneously finding common ground to connect on. LExPs can help people empower themselves, by increasing their sense of hope, helping them build autonomy, improving their sense of community belonging, and encouraging them to develop skills in self-care and self-management. Lived Experience Practitioners (LExPs) do not replace existing professional roles. Rather, they can enhance the integrated offer that is developing.

It is to be noted that whilst the LExPs have a unique skill set which complements, rather than duplicates, that of the MHICS teams it will be best suited to people presenting broadly (always to be individually considered) with the following needs to ensure that this finite resource is focused on supporting people likely to gain the maximum benefit:

- People whose individual needs and circumstances require an additional level (for example over and above that which could be provided by the community connector) of pro-active support & engagement with community assets & interventions outlined in their care plan.
- People presenting from a particular group (for example 18-25 years old) or an underserved community (for example Nepalese) and, following assessment by MHICS, it is felt they would benefit from the specialist focus and support of the LExP (if that specialism is available in that PCN).
- People who have historically found it hard to engage with community offers and would benefit from LExP support.

Overall, we are recruiting several LExPs across Frimley in order to really test out this model of support and evidence the significant impact it could have on people's individual recoveries and wellbeing as part of a holistic integrated support offer in the community. Positive news is that we have already recruited to several of these posts, with the remaining due to be recruited shortly. If you would like to hear more about the Lived Experience Programme, you can get in contact with our Lived Experience Lead holly.dale@berkshire.nhs.uk.

Things to note...

Paid Lived Experience roles for 18-25 year olds

We're looking for young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 who have lived experience of significant mental illness.

This is a paid opportunity on a sessional basis for them to be actively involved in contributing ideas to improve mental health services based on their own experiences.

Parents and/or carers can also apply. All applicants must have experience of services in East Berkshire. (Bracknell, Slough, Windsor, Ascot or Maidenhead).

[Find out more or share the application form.](#)

If you are working with someone that would like to know more about this opportunity, please contact cmhlivedexperience@berkshire.nhs.uk



One Team initiative begins work

The next phase of our Transformation work focuses on The 'One Team' vision. This will bring Mental Health services to work more closely together, across local communities, clarify the offer and eliminate any unwarranted variation. The objective is to provide consistency and equity of service provision no matter where you reside in our patch.

The team have 18 months to further develop a consistent Community Mental Health offer that will provide specialist, step-up interventions, deliver an 'easy in, easy out' model and realise the vision of One Team. This is a big piece of work that will make a huge impact on the services and the local people.

For north Frimley, the first One Team workshop in November 2022 gathered the expertise and experience of the internal community mental health teams. Subsequent events will draw on the experience of Primary care, local authority and voluntary sector partners. In South Frimley, a transformation manager has been appointed and stakeholder engagement will take place in January 2023.

Lived experience practitioners and peer support workers will add value throughout the project.

The impact of the cost of living crisis on older adults

Older People's Mental Health Transformation Leads Fleur Newton & Damien Taylor detail support older adults in the local area.



As the cost-of-living crisis continues, many of our older adult pensioners on a fixed income are struggling to make ends meet, with many having to make the difficult choice between eating and heating. With energy prices continuing to rise, many older adult residents are becoming increasingly anxious about how they are going to manage to heat their homes.

To balance their shrinking budgets, older people are also cutting back on their recreational and social activities, including TV licences and internet provision, resulting in further social isolation and loneliness.

Many organisations working with older adults have expressed concern about the effect of this crisis on older people's physical and mental health and their ability to access available support. Age UK has called for Government action following a recent poll, that found 1 in 10 over 60s across the UK were planning to reduce or stop the care they receive, which is critical to their health and well-being, because they cannot afford the cost.

Another poll of 1600 people over the age of 65 found that 22% were planning on cutting back on non-prescription medicines, like pain killers or eye-drops, and 15% of older people said they planning to reduce the number of meals they eat each day.*

“Cutting back or stopping care in this situation threatens to pile extra pressure on the NHS, our hospitals especially, as it greatly increases the chances of serious ill health and injury”

Caroline Abrahams,
Charity Director at Age UK

Continued...

Topical feature

Help available in Frimley

So how can we help? It's about connecting communities and linking older people to local support, advocacy, safe spaces, and activities.



Advice, support and advocacy

- [Age UK](#) has also launched Cost of Living Support Hubs which offer:

[Advice with energy bills and government support](#) e.g. Warm home discount, winter fuel payment, energy price guarantees and one-off payments off energy bills, council tax rebates, pension credit

[Energy saving tips](#) To help people feel more in control.

You can contact the Information & Advice Team by calling 0118 959 4242 or you can also email them at info@ageukberkshire.org.uk.

- [Age Concern](#) has branches in Bracknell, Slough, Berkshire East and Hampshire. Age concern offer advice and advocacy for dealing with the cost-of-living crisis.
- Citizen's Advice is providing information and advice to support with the cost of living crisis. Find out more on their website: [Get help with the cost of living - Citizens Advice](#)

A warm place to go

- Local Authorities across Frimley have set up Community Winter Hubs for people who are struggling to heat their homes. These are warm and welcoming places in the community where people can spend time during the colder months. See your Local Authority website for more information.
- Warm Welcome is a charity that help connect people with warm spaces in their local area. The search functionality on their website allows you to find local spaces that are free, warm, welcoming and safe. [Find a Warm Welcome Space Today](#)

Support for Mental Health

The MHICS service is older age inclusive. Older adults can benefit from the service which includes community connection alongside any required psychological intervention.

If you are working with someone who's mental health is declining due to stressors brought about by the cost of living crisis, consider if MHICS would be able to help.

[Find out more about MHICS.](#)



Closing notes

Thanks to everyone who has supported the CMH Transformation programme so far.

Over the last 12 months in particular we have made great progress, building on the MHICS and Personality difficulties services, and also extending our approach to eating disorder and rehabilitation developments, as well as expanding our workforce to include people with lived experience as part of our teams.

Our challenge in the 2023/24 will be to ensure that all our new services work seamlessly as 'One Team'.

As always we will be depending on all our stakeholders to continue their brilliant support to the programme and looking forward to continuing to work together on the next phase.

Susanna Yeoman
Transformation Lead

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