

Mind in Bexley and East Kent

Annual Report 2024–2025

Community, Connection and Care - Stories of Hope



Introduction

2024–2025 was a year of extraordinary progress, compassion and collaboration. Across Bexley and East Kent, Mind has continued to shape the local landscape of mental health care, building communities of trust and hope.

At a time when the national conversation around wellbeing, loneliness and recovery is more urgent than ever, our charity has played a leading role in translating national policy into community action, ensuring that government strategies, NHS priorities and public health ambitions are felt in real lives, on real streets, in our boroughs and coastal towns.

Our mission remains simple but vital: no one faces a mental health challenge alone. Whether through therapy, creative connection, peer support, out of hours crisis care or a listening ear, we work to bring people and communities together, to talk, to recover, and to thrive.

Working with artist Tommy Gurr @ Revival



This has also been a year of national recognition and influence. We worked closely with National Mind and London Mind's to finalise the Federation Agreement and contributed to Mind in London and Mind in Kent partnerships, leading discussions on talking therapies, out of hours crisis cafe, integrated pathways and research and evaluation. Mind in Bexley and East Kent was named National Mind's Research and Monitoring Organisation of the Year (2024–25), and our CEO Dr David Palmer was reappointed as a Clinical and Care Professional Lead (CCPL) within the South East London Integrated Care System. These milestones reflect our growing reputation as a trusted, evidence-driven system partner.

Looking ahead, our priorities are clear: to embed prevention across all services, champion co-production and inclusion, invest in innovation and research, and ensure long-term sustainability through enterprise, partnership and impact measurement. With our staff, volunteers, and communities at the heart of everything we do, Mind in Bexley and East Kent will continue to lead with compassion and creativity, building healthier, more connected communities across Bexley, South East London and Kent.

Summary

Building Momentum, Connection and Hope

The past year has been one of growth, innovation and influence for Mind in Bexley and East Kent. Guided by compassion, evidence and collaboration, we have strengthened our role as a leading local Mind, one recognised for its strategic leadership, research excellence and commitment to co-produced, community-led, therapeutic support and care. This year saw the launch of our new Five-Year Strategy (2025–2030), setting a clear direction built on prevention, inclusion, innovation and sustainability. Developed with staff, volunteers, trustees and people with lived experience, it reflects our vision: that community connection is the foundation of recovery.

Our collective impact has been exceptional. Across Bexley and East Kent, over 7,000 people accessed our services, from Talking Therapies and Suicide Bereavement Support to Mindful Mums, Veterans' Wellbeing, Green Spaces initiatives and East Kent mentoring and peer support programmes. Satisfaction rates remained consistently high, with most services achieving over 95% positive feedback. Working in partnership with GP's and Oxleas, Bexley's Physical Health Checks Programme for people with severe mental illness (SMI) achieved national recognition, raising completion rates from 43% to 63% in just four months.

The Suicide Bereavement Service supported more than 250 individuals across South East London and received the Third Sector Frontline Team of the Year Award (2024). Meanwhile, Revival Food & Mood continued to thrive as a self-sustaining innovative social enterprise, reducing isolation through creativity, support, good food and friendship.

The Chair's Report

Shaheen Westcombe MBE

My association with Mind in Bexley spans around two decades, beginning when I joined Bexley Council and had the privilege of supporting voluntary sector grants, monitoring organisations and witnessing the transformation of mental-health provision in the borough. In those early days, mental health was a topic many people were reluctant to raise. The irony then, as it remains now, is that the need was vast: countless individuals and unpaid carers navigating enduring distress, stigma and under-resourced systems.

I first became involved with Mind in Bexley soon after joining the Council. Over the years, I have watched with admiration as dedicated leadership, including our Chief Executive, Dr David Palmer, and a committed team have helped elevate the organisation from a local volunteer-driven charity to a major regional player with national reach. Today, Mind in Bexley and East Kent operates with a budget of approximately £7 million and a combined workforce of nearly 170 staff. It has grown its service portfolio, expanded into East Kent, and established impactful partnerships with a wide range of statutory and voluntary-sector organisations.

Some of our hallmark developments this year include:

- Embedding integrated working with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust in the Mental Health Hub, deepening primary and community care links.
- Co-designing and rolling out physical health checks in partnership with GP networks for people with severe mental illness (SMI), addressing one of the starkest health inequalities in our system.
- Elevating our governance and research capacity through sub-committees that ensure voice, oversight and ethics: the Health, Safety & Building Committee; Research & Ethics Committee; Innovation & Strategy Committee; and the Wellbeing & Staff Committee.
- Developing our five year strategy.

User and carer involvement remains a central pillar of our approach. Our governance model gives voice to lived experience, not as input only, but as co-leadership. We believe that people with experience of mental distress and caring hold essential insight for service development, monitoring and strategic direction.

We are proud to have been awarded by National Mind the designation of Research & Monitoring Organisation in the network, recognising our contribution to evaluation, learning and evidence-led innovation across the Mind federation. Additionally, our CEO was honoured with a prestigious Civic Award from the London Borough of Bexley for Outstanding Contribution, an external recognition of the difference we continue to make locally.

Looking ahead, Mind in Bexley and East Kent remains deeply committed to innovation, inclusion and partnership. We will continue to introduce new services and break ground in areas such as unpaid carer support, community-led crisis alternatives, and prevention-based models of care. Our work will carry forward in the spirit of community, care and recovery.

To our leadership team, staff, volunteers, service-users, carers, trustees, partners and funders, thank you for your dedication, collaboration and belief that better mental health is not only possible, but essential. Together, we continue to build a charity that champions quality, connection, compassion and change.

Shaheen Westcombe MBE
Chair, Mind in Bexley and East Kent



Chief Executive's Report

Dr David Palmer, Chief Executive, Mind in Bexley and East Kent

Building momentum, connection and hope

This year we consolidated scale with depth. Mind in Bexley and East Kent has continued to grow as an evidence-led, community-rooted organisation, combining innovation, research and compassion so that no one faces mental-health challenges alone.

Our new Five-Year Strategy (2025–2030) sets a clear direction: lead prevention and inclusion through place-based, co-produced care; strengthen parity between mental and physical health; and build sustainable community infrastructure. Developed with trustees, staff, partners and people with lived experience, the strategy aligns with the Mind Federation Agreement, Mind in London and Kent frameworks, and the priorities of the South East London and Kent & Medway ICSs.

System alignment and leadership advanced further. We finalised our Federation Agreement with National Mind; contributed across London and Kent collaborations on men's mental health, holistic care and community crisis alternatives; and I was reappointed as a Clinical and Care Professional Lead within the South East London ICS. The London Borough of Bexley Civic Award recognised our local contribution, and National Mind named us Research and Monitoring Organisation of the Year for 2024–25.

Our services delivered sustained impact. Talking Therapies exceeded national benchmarks and secured a five-year ICB award. The Suicide Bereavement Service in partnership with South East London Mind and SLaM supported more than 250 people and won Third Sector's Frontline Team of the Year. Mindful Mums extended evening access for working parents. In East Kent, Live Well Kent mentoring and peer-support achieved 99 per cent satisfaction, while KentCOG engaged almost 700 participants and 94 volunteers. The Veterans Programme reached a very impressive 450 veterans and families, and our highly innovative and successful Barbershop Project deepened men's mental-health conversations in trusted spaces. Revival Cafe and Wellness Hub continued to thrive as a self-sustaining social enterprise, reducing isolation and fostering belonging.

Research and evaluation are now core strengths. Three peer-reviewed papers and two public exhibitions advanced learning on bereavement support, equitable physical-health care for SMI, and ethical community research. Our Research & Ethics Committee provides rigorous governance so that lived experience shapes questions, methods and practice.

Parity of esteem has moved from idea to pathway. With Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, PCNs, Public Health Bexley and the Cancer Clinical Care Professional Leads, we improved SMI health-check completion from 43 to 63 per cent in four months and are developing an embedded smoking-cessation role to close the mortality gap further.

None of this is possible without our people. To our therapists, peer facilitators, administrators, staff, mentors, cafe teams, trustees and volunteers, thank you. Through our various sub-committees, we strengthened reflective practice, leadership pathways and a culture of openness and psychological safety. The coming year will be about implementation: turning strategy into measurable change at neighbourhood level, proving cost-effectiveness, and sharing what works across the Mind network and the wider health system.



Mind in Bexley and East Kent Services Review

NHS Bexley Talking Therapies

The Talking Therapies service sits at the centre of our Bexley offer. In 2024–25 we secured a five-year direct award from the South East London Integrated Care Board (SEL ICB) to deliver this NHS service, the first direct award of its kind in Bexley since we began in 2013. The award recognises consistent quality, reliable outcomes and alignment with national mental health policy.

Talking Therapies are a core delivery vehicle for the NHS Long Term Plan and the Talking Therapies for Anxiety and Depression programme (formerly IAPT). The model provides accessible, evidence-based psychological therapies that help people experiencing anxiety, depression and trauma recover through short, structured interventions.



Demand remained high: 6,522 referrals in 2024–25 (up 7% on last year). Sixty per cent opted into treatment, and 3,969 people attended a first appointment, 707 more than in 2023–24.

Performance stayed strong and stable:

- Reliable Improvement: 68.8% (target 68%)
- Reliable Recovery: 49.1% (target 48%)
- Waiting times: all clients seen within 6–18 weeks

These results meet national expectations and demonstrate a mature, high-performing team committed to access, safety and recovery.

Behind the figures are stories of renewal. People tell us therapy has helped them return to work, reconnect with family and regain a sense of purpose. One participant said:

“This service gave me hope when I had none left. I’ve learned how to manage my anxiety and take back control of my life.”

Talking Therapies operate within the NHS Community Mental Health Transformation agenda, with a focus on prevention, integration and timely access. We work closely with GPs, the Bexley Hub and the voluntary sector to ensure that people receive the right modality at the right time, from low-intensity digital options and guided self-help to high-intensity CBT. In 2024–25, 380 referrals came directly via the Transformation Hub, evidencing strong pathway integration with ADAPT and the Bexley Wellbeing Partnership. Partnerships with Solace Women’s Aid and Bexley Women’s Aid remain essential, providing safe routes into care for people affected by domestic abuse. Safeguarding underpins all delivery, with 11 MARAC referrals and close liaison with adults’ and children’s safeguarding teams.

Workforce sustainability is a priority. Two high-intensity and two low-intensity trainees qualified this year, and five counsellors began training in Person-Centred Counselling for Depression. This pipeline approach aligns with NHS England’s ambition for a resilient, skilled psychological therapies workforce.

Perinatal and Early Parenting Support

Our Perinatal Pathway ensures that parents in Bexley can access mental health support during pregnancy and the early years. The programme contributes to national commitments in the NHS Long Term Plan, Better Births and the Maternal Mental Health Services development programme, all of which emphasise early help, prevention and nurturing infant–parent relationships.

Two staff completed Circle of Security training in 2024–25, strengthening our attachment-informed approach. The first Circle of Security group for parents will launch in 2025–26. We work closely with midwives, health visitors and the Oxleas NHS Perinatal Mental Health Team at Queen Mary’s Hospital to keep pathways seamless.

Mindful Mums, delivered with South East London Mind, completed another successful year and has been renewed for 2025–26. New antenatal evening groups will widen access for working parents. Participants frequently describe the sessions as transformative:

“I came here exhausted and unsure. Now I’ve found a circle of mums who remind me it’s okay to not be okay.”

National Mind Guided Self-Help

In 2024 we joined the National Mind Guided Self-Help Programme to reach people who find traditional therapy settings harder to access.

The approach fits NHS England priorities on digital inclusion and accessibility. Across the year, 1,021 sessions were delivered, with 686 attendances and more than 700 people supported. Feedback was consistently positive:

“It’s been a pleasure speaking to you every week. I’m blown away by how easy it was to access this service.”

When national funding ended in March 2025, we chose to continue locally because of the programme’s clear value for reducing inequalities and offering timely early intervention, both central to Community Transformation and ICS prevention frameworks.

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Talking Therapies Employment Service

The Talking Therapies Employment Support Service, funded by the DWP, provides integrated, whole-person support that connects therapy, employment, and community engagement. Research shows that clients who receive employment support in conjunction with therapy experience improved recovery rates, highlighting the positive impact of this collaborative approach.

In 2024–25, all appointment and referral targets were achieved. People reported renewed confidence, routine and financial stability:

“Having someone believe in me made the difference. I found work, but more than that... I found purpose again.”

The service demonstrates how integrated, whole-person support links therapy, employment and community engagement.



In 2024/25, the Talking Therapies Employment Support Team worked with 398 new clients. There were a total of 1982 attended appointments.

2024/25 Employment Support Team Highlights

- 398 new clients supported
- 1982 attended appointments

Types of Support Provided

- Securing new employment
- Assisting clients to remain in current employment
- Helping clients return to work after sickness absence
- Supporting career changes
- Education, training, and voluntary work support
- Pre-employment guidance
- Ill health retirement support
- Debt and money guidance
- Complex job-related cases (ACAS, Employment Tribunals)
- Work Support Plans completed
- Signposting to other services

Suicide Bereavement Service (SBS)

Our Suicide Bereavement Service, delivered with South East London Mind and South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, remains an example of best practice in postvention. The service operates within the Suicide Prevention Strategy for England (2023–2028) and supports the South East London Suicide Prevention Partnership Plan and the Bexley Suicide Prevention strategy, with a focus on postvention, lived experience and tackling inequalities.

In 2024–25, 258 people received direct support, up 30% year on year. Of these, 126 accessed one-to-one sessions and 89 attended groups. Outcomes continue to be strong:

- 98% of clients were satisfied with the service
- 92% said support helped them cope
- Average +4.9 improvement on wellbeing measures

People describe the service as a lifeline:

“They listened when no one else could. This service helped me rebuild my life.”

The team was named Frontline Team of the Year at the Third Sector Awards 2024. A regional learning event, Supporting People Bereaved by Suicide (January 2025), brought together over 50 stakeholders; all reported increased confidence in referring people for support. Funding is secured through 2028, enabling sustained partnership working and a compassionate, system-wide response to suicide loss.

Bexley Recovery and Community Services

Empowering people to recover, connect and thrive

Recovery in Bexley is about regaining agency, confidence and connection, not simply reducing symptoms. Our Recovery and Community Services provide an integrated hybrid programme that complements Talking Therapies and primary care, helping people build skills, routines, relationships and purpose at their own pace. The model aligns with NHS Community Mental Health Transformation, Recovery College principles (co-production, peer learning, strengths-based education) and ICS prevention objectives, and it addresses local priorities on suicide prevention, digital inclusion and cost-of-living resilience.

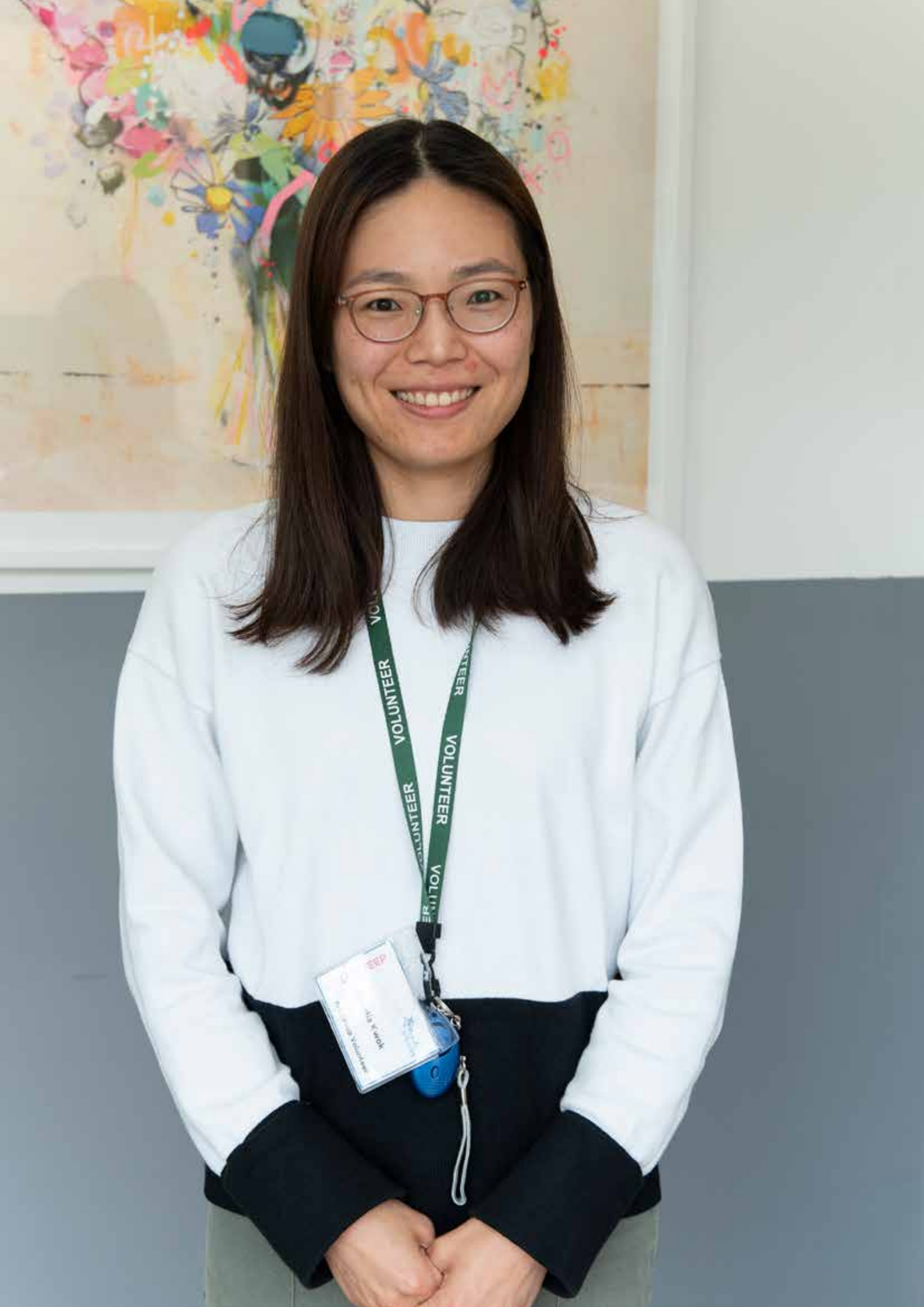
Scale and reach in 2024–2025

- Recovery College welcomed an impressive 1,585 resident learners, delivered 1,972 groups and recorded 10,970 attendances. On a typical week the timetable sustained 16 in-person and 22 online groups across psychoeducation, psychosocial groups, physical activity and peer support.
- Bexley Crisis Cafe supported 468 people across 936 interventions; at least 75 potential A&E attendances were safely avoided through de-escalation, listening support and practical next-steps planning.
- The Digital Hub delivered 322 sessions on essential digital access and skills, including support to use NHS, council and DWP online services.
- Carers in Mind supported 205 unpaid carers (76 new referrals), providing 3,554 support calls and 141 in-person groups focused on psychoeducation and future planning.
- Welfare Rights secured £745,548 in confirmed benefit gains for people with severe mental illness, alongside tribunal representation and support during Universal Credit migration.
- Employment (IPS-aligned) supported 127 people one-to-one; 34 moved into work, 30 sustained for 13 weeks, 15 for 26 weeks; 25 received job-retention support.
- Community Pantry enabled 2,172 low-cost member visits (£20 of food for £4), supported by seven regular volunteers contributing 2,032 hours.

How the model works

The programme is modular and low-barrier. People often start with welcoming groups, arts, gentle activity, digital drop-ins, then add psychoeducational courses as confidence grows, with focused help at moments of crisis or transition (Crisis Cafe, Welfare Rights, Employment, Carers). Pathways are co-produced, with peer facilitators embedded throughout. This:

- mirrors the national Recovery College ethos of adult learning rather than treatment
- bridges primary care, Talking Therapies and everyday community life
- creates continuity so people remain connected to Mind as needs and goals change



Mind in Bexley

Here to support you

College

courses and groups to support you to
mental health and wellbeing

Services Bexley

including Guided Self Help, CCBT
therapy, Counselling and EMDR

for caring for an adult
health problems or

Crisis Cafe

Out of hours drop-in
service open if you are
experiencing emotional
or mental distress

Bexley Pantry

Community food store
here to help if you are
finding it difficult to
afford the essentials

Club

unlock the
computer
with
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Recovery College:

Learning, routine and confidence

A four-phase learning journey, Explore, Learn & Practice, Reflect, Reinforce, lets people test ideas safely, build skills and apply them to daily challenges. The curriculum includes anxiety and depression management, confidence and assertiveness, young adults (18–28), physical activity and green-space/ecological sessions. Delivery is strengths-based and adapted to different learning styles; lived-experience facilitators create authentic spaces of hope and practical problem-solving. Participants describe what changes: a shared language for feelings, the normalisation of experience, and micro-skills that build agency.

“Confidence and Assertiveness made me realise I have a right to stand up for myself... It’s great to talk.”

“Stress and Anxiety made things clearer... it’s not just me. I’ve got confidence to try other courses.”

“Walk and Talk was a low-pressure way to meet people. I’m far less isolated now.”

Strategic contribution

Recovery College delivery advances ICS priorities on personalised care, prevention and lived-experience leadership. It complements Talking Therapies by strengthening self-management, social capital and daily rhythm, factors associated with sustained recovery, reduced relapse and better engagement with clinical pathways.

Out of Hours Crisis Cafe: timely alternatives to A&E

Open nightly, 18:00–22:00, year-round, the Café offers rapid face-to-face support in distress. In 2024–25, 468 individuals received 936 interventions; 26 per cent reported they would otherwise have gone to A&E. Presentations included worsening mental health, trauma, domestic abuse, poverty, homelessness, substance misuse and suicidality, highlighting the Cafe’s role as a compassionate, holistic listening space with clear safety planning and onward links.

“There’s nowhere to go out-of-hours when you’re desperately in need of help... Nights and weekends are when you get lonelier and more panicky.”

“I could talk to the cafe staff and not burden my husband anymore.”

“Recovery College and Crisis Cafe literally saved my life.”

Digital Hub: closing the digital divide

As services move online, the Hub reduces exclusion and stress. People receive drop-in help and one-to-one mentoring with the NHS app, benefits and housing portals, utilities, secure messaging, device setup and online safety; data support is available where needed. Participants report lower anxiety and more confidence engaging with health and public services.

Community Pantry: dignity, nutrition and connection

The Pantry responds to cost-of-living pressures with dignified, low-cost access to fresh and staple food. Each visit provides around £20 of food for £4, alongside warm connection to Recovery College, Talking Therapies, Welfare Rights and Carers services. People describe feeling less anxious about bills and nutrition and more welcomed and included. Volunteers give the Pantry its heartbeat, sustaining delivery week after week.

Welfare Rights: income security and mental health

Income security is prevention. The team secured over £745k in additional benefits for people with SMI and supported complex cases through appeals and tribunals. With accelerated Universal Credit migration locally, hands-on digital and administrative support prevented avoidable crises and helped people stay focused on health and recovery.

Carers in Mind: voice, skills and solidarity

Carers in Mind supported 205 unpaid carers through tailored one-to-one help and 141 groups covering mental-health awareness, self-care, CBT-informed coping strategies, boundaries and contingency planning. Practical rights-based advice sits alongside peer solidarity. Carers report feeling more capable, connected and informed, and more able to sustain care without losing themselves.

Employment support (IPS-aligned): purpose and progression

Employment specialists worked with 127 people to create realistic vocational plans, navigate applications and interviews, manage health at work and retain roles through difficult periods. Outcomes included 34 people moving into jobs, 30 sustaining for 13 weeks, 15 for 26 weeks and 25 retaining employment with targeted support.





Integration with physical health and prevention

Recovery services interlock with physical-health improvement. People in groups are supported to access SMI annual physical-health checks, smoking-cessation help and cancer-screening pathways developed with Public Health Bexley and Cancer Clinical Care Professional Leads. This one-conversation, multiple-doors approach reflects the NHS Long Term Plan and Core20PLUS5: prevention delivered in trusted community settings with peers and practitioners side by side.

Quality, safeguarding and lived-experience governance

Delivery is supported by structured supervision, safeguarding protocols and reflective practice. Lived-experience leadership is built into co-design and co-delivery, with oversight from our Research & Ethics and various committees to ensure participation is ethical, supported and impactful.

What residents told us: outcomes that matter

Residents report increased confidence, reduced isolation and stronger routines; Crisis Cafe attendees describe immediate relief and a plan for the next 24–72 hours; carers emphasise insight, boundaries and solidarity; Pantry and Welfare Rights users report lower stress and improved stability; Digital Hub users feel able to engage with services; and people supported into work describe renewed purpose.

“The course helped me use the ‘bucket and stones’ tools every day... and connecting with others showed me it’s not just me.”

“I’m learning to ask for help; breaking isolation has been the turning point.”

“As a carer, facing what is really going on and getting emotional support when it piles in, this group was a tonic.”

“My schizophrenia makes trust hard, but Welfare Rights have been kind and consistent for years. I feel calmer and more focused.”

Partnerships and system contribution

Delivery is made possible through close work with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust (shared care, crisis pathways), Primary Care Networks (checks, medication reviews, social prescribing), the London Borough of Bexley (cost-of-living response), Public Health Bexley (smoking-cessation and cancer-screening links), One Bexley and Voluntary Sector Partners and SEL ICS programmes (neighbourhood prevention, data-led commissioning). The Recovery offer functions as relational infrastructure for the borough, where clinical, social and public-health goals meet in everyday spaces.

Priorities for 2025–2026

- Establish a Community Recovery Hub footprint co-locating Recovery College, Crisis Cafe and physical-health outreach to improve evening and weekend access
- Expand the Digital Hub with creative media and virtual peer-learning labs to reach housebound and working-age adults
- Launch a Carers Peer Mentorship pathway to grow mutual support and succession in lived-experience leadership
- Embed smoking-cessation and cancer-screening prompts and support across groups and drop-ins with direct referral to public-health colleagues
- Strengthen outcome measurement (participation, wellbeing, social capital, physical-health checks, employment and income security) and publish a consolidated medium-term recovery evaluation

Barbershop Project

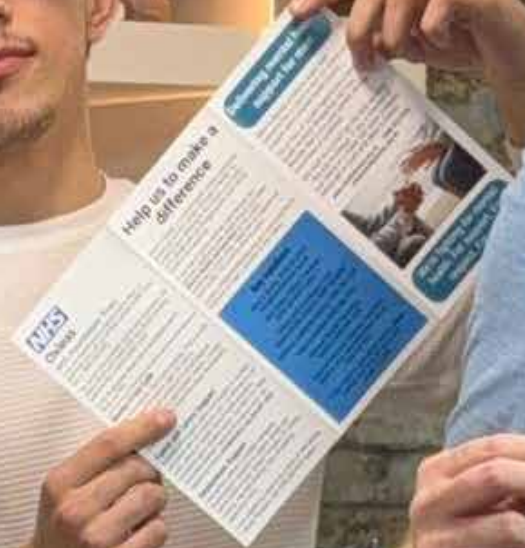
The Bexley Barbershop Project, developed in partnership with Bexley Public Health, shows innovation in reaching men who might never engage with traditional mental health services. Research nationally and locally shows that men are more likely to confide in their barber than their GP about emotional difficulties. By training barbers to have supportive conversations, Mind in Bexley has turned everyday encounters into potentially life-saving interventions.

Eight barbers were trained, with six more due to complete training by the year's end. These conversations generated 89 recorded discussions about mental health and almost 100 leaflets distributed.

This initiative aligns with the National Suicide Prevention Strategy's focus on men's mental health, early identification, and community awareness, as well as with local Public Health England priorities on reducing male suicide.

The Barbershop Project demonstrates the charity's leadership in prevention — bringing mental health into the heart of community life and meeting people where they already feel safe.

“Sometimes a haircut can be the start of a healing conversation.”



Bexley

Mental Health Hub

The Bexley Hub, delivered
in partnership by Mind in
Bexley and Oxleas NHS
Foundation Trust



Bexley Mental Health Hub

The Bexley Mental Health Hub (BMHH) provides person-centred support to adults and older adults in Bexley, addressing both mental health needs and wider social determinants of wellbeing, including social connectedness, physical health, employment, housing, and financial stability. Grounded in the principles of the Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults and delivered in partnership by Mind in Bexley and Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, the Hub offers a holistic, accessible, and preventative model of support.

During the year, the Hub has received 5,061 referrals, supporting Bexley residents to navigate services and engage with appropriate interventions closer to home. Each individual is offered a holistic assessment to explore their needs, strengths, and aspirations. Support may include short-term interventions, guided self-management, linking to specialist services, or ongoing wellbeing support in the community. The Hub operates a “no wrong door” approach, ensuring residents can access help without complex referral thresholds or repeated signposting across services.

Purpose and Transformation

The Hub was designed to shift the system from deficit-based clinical gatekeeping towards a recovery of a life model, focused on personal agency and supported self-determination. By integrating statutory and voluntary sector expertise, the Hub bridges gaps between primary and secondary care, promoting early intervention, shared learning, and reduced fragmentation of support.

Improvement Priorities for the Year Ahead

To strengthen delivery and align practice more closely with a Primary Care-based, conversational and relational model of support, the following priorities have been agreed:

1. Improve management, supervision, and communication structures to ensure shared understanding and transparency.
2. Implement a clinic-based conversational assessment model, reducing individual caseload burden and supporting shared decision-making and risk management.
3. Develop a clear Operational Policy and define care pathways, ensuring consistency across assessments, referrals and interventions.
4. Strengthen reflective practice and staff development to maintain resilience and role satisfaction within the team.
5. Improve data quality and oversight, supporting continuous service improvement and system-wide learning.



OneBexley

One Bexley Pathways (OBP) is a partnership-led model of adult social care in the London Borough of Bexley. Established in 2020, it brings together the council and eight voluntary and community sector organisations to deliver Care Act assessments, reviews, support planning, and community-based support. The purpose of the model is to enable people to live independently and remain connected to their communities, with support that is personal, relational, strengths-based, and preventative rather than driven by service processes.

The project seeks to help people maintain their wellbeing and independence, reduce the likelihood of their needs escalating into more intensive or crisis services, and draw on the skills, relationships, and trust held by voluntary and community organisations.

Support is delivered by Trusted Assessors employed across Age UK Bexley, Bexley Mencap, BVSC, Carers Support Bexley, Crossroads Care SE London, Inspire Community Trust, Mind in Bexley, and Greenwich & Bexley Community Hospice, which also acts as the lead provider. These Trusted Assessors carry out assessments and support planning, working alongside dedicated social work input to ensure statutory responsibilities are met. They connect residents to local groups, peer support networks, and practical community-based activities that help maintain independence and reduce isolation.

Residents consistently described the approach as more personal, respectful, and supportive than traditional models. Many valued being listened to and having continuity with one worker, reporting that the support helped them feel more confident, more connected, and less alone. The model also promotes independence and prevention, with people often maintaining daily routines and accessing help early, without escalating to higher-cost care.

At a system level, Trusted Assessors have supported people with stable or preventative needs, enabling social workers to focus their time on more complex situations and improving overall capacity and flow within adult social care.

Through this way of working, the project has built a committed and compassionate community-based workforce, strengthened collaboration and trust between the council and the voluntary sector, and embedded a shared ethos of strengths-based, relationship-centred practice focused on independence, voice, and belonging.



TALKS AND COURSES AVAILABLE - WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE?

	WHEN IS	
	MON	TUES
MANAGEMENT, ANXIETY	*	*
JOB	*	*
EXERCISE	*	
APP		
CHECKS	*	

MORNING

Working with the Bexley Wellbeing Partnership



East Kent Mind

Community, Creativity and Connection

East Kent Mind continues to grow as a cornerstone of community wellbeing across Canterbury, Whitstable, Herne Bay, Ramsgate, and Margate. Through the Live Well Kent and Medway contract, funded by Kent County Council and the NHS, we support hundreds of residents each year through mentoring, peer support, and wellbeing programmes that encourage connection, recovery and belonging.

This work aligns directly with the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy, which prioritises prevention, resilience and the role of the voluntary sector in supporting mental health outside clinical settings.

In 2024–25, East Kent Mind supported:

- 40 people through structured peer support
- 125 through mentoring programmes
- 153 through psychosocial and psychoeducational groups
- 68 students, staff and local residents through the Kent Community Oasis Garden (KentCOG) partnership with the University of Kent
- 698 people attended green spaces activities
- 450 veterans supported
- 103 Ramsgate residents supported via the out of hours crisis cafe provision

Satisfaction rates were exceptional, 99% of residents would recommend the service to friends or family, and 98% were contacted within two days of referral, reflecting the team’s responsiveness and commitment to early intervention.

“Attending East Kent Mind has been essential for my mental health recovery. I’ve learnt new coping skills, made friends, and feel part of something again.”

Our approach is grounded in the principles of the Recovery College model, promoted nationally by NHS England and the Centre for Mental Health. Recovery Colleges emphasise co-production, peer learning and empowerment, helping people move from being “patients” to “participants” in their own wellbeing. This philosophy runs through every East Kent Mind group and mentoring session

Groups, Workshops and Courses

Throughout the year, East Kent Mind ran over 15 in-person and 20 online groups weekly, covering topics such as Stress and Anxiety, Coping with Depression, Anger Management, and Ways to Wellbeing.

Creative groups, including art, music, photography, and Make, Mend and Motivate, remained at the heart of our offer. These sessions reflect growing national recognition that arts, nature and social connection are vital for public mental health and are key components of the NHS England Social Prescribing and Personalised Care Plan.

Participants consistently reported improvements in self-esteem and mood:

“I hadn’t painted in years... now I look forward to it every week. It’s become my therapy.”

In alignment with the Five Ways to Wellbeing framework, the groups encourage participants to connect, be active, take notice, keep learning, and give back. Regular men’s and women’s groups also provide spaces for gender-specific conversation, helping to reduce isolation and stigma around mental health.

Ramsgate Crisis Cafe

Until May 2024, the Ramsgate Crisis Cafe operated seven nights a week, providing immediate emotional support and a safe alternative to A&E. Over its final two months, the cafe delivered 103 complex interventions, each representing a life stabilised through listening and compassionate care.

This model reflected the national push within the NHS Community Transformation and Crisis Care to develop non-clinical, out-of-hours crisis support. Its success in Ramsgate has informed local planning for future community crisis alternatives and strengthened the case for voluntary sector involvement in urgent care.

Even after the contract concluded, the learning from this work continues to influence our partnerships, showing that timely, community-based crisis care can prevent escalation, reduce demand on hospitals, and build trust.

“When I walked in, I felt lost. When I left, I felt heard. That made all the difference.”

Kent Community Oasis Garden (KentCOG)

The Kent Community Oasis Garden (KentCOG), based at the University of Kent, is a vibrant partnership between Mind in Bexley and East Kent, the University of Kent and Canterbury College. The garden integrates sustainability, education and wellbeing, demonstrating how the natural environment supports mental health recovery.

This work aligns with the Greener NHS strategy, the Public Mental Health Prevention framework, and the Health and Nature agenda promoted by DEFRA and Natural England.



In 2024–25:

- 94 volunteers (including 68 students) gave 3,787 hours of time.
- 698 people attended wellbeing sessions and events.
- The garden supported biodiversity projects, climate cafés, mindfulness sessions, and student research on sustainable food systems.

Participants describe KentCOG as:

“A space to breathe and connect... with nature, with others, and with myself.”

The garden now forms part of the University’s Biodiversity Working Group, and contributes data through its iNaturalist project, which has recorded nearly 300 species this year. It has become a living classroom where ecology, community and wellbeing meet, a model of prevention and inclusion that complements the NHS’s emphasis on social determinants of health.

Veterans’ Wellbeing

Our Veterans’ Support Programme, funded by the Veterans Foundation, reached more than 450 veterans and family members this year, combining social connection, wellbeing activities and peer support.

The initiative contributes to NHS England’s Armed Forces Covenant commitments and supports the government’s Veterans Strategy Action Plan (2022–2028), which calls for increased access to local mental health and peer support for ex-service personnel.

In 2024–25:

- Over 200 veterans attended wellbeing events.
- The women’s veterans’ group grew to 25 members.
- The Veterans Information Fair became the Veterans Recognition Awards, attended by 50 veterans and hosted by the Lord Mayor of Canterbury.
- A pilot programme of Health MOTs for Veterans was fully booked and will now become a regular offer.

“It’s not just about getting support... it’s about being seen, understood, and valued again.”

This work underscores Mind’s commitment to the whole-family approach within veterans’ mental health, ensuring that spouses and dependents are supported alongside those who served.

Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards, now a highlight of the regional calendar, celebrate compassion, creativity and innovation in mental health. Organised by Mind in Bexley and East Kent, the awards embody the principle that recognition is itself a form of recovery, honouring those who make a difference every day.

This year saw a 50% increase in nominations (300 total) and 50 winners recognised at the celebration event at the Ashford International Hotel.

Guest speakers included Everest climber Hari Budha Magar and Lady Colgrain, Lord Lieutenant of Kent. A surprise highlight was Mind in Bexley and East Kent CEO, Dr David Palmer, receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award from Dr Anjan Ghosh, Director of Public Health at Kent County Council.

Seventeen-year-old Niamh Bates of Queen Elizabeth School designed the winning trophy, symbolising the creativity of young people in shaping a more compassionate world.

The event continues to strengthen engagement with the public, commissioners, and businesses, reflecting the NHS and local authority emphasis on place-based wellbeing and partnership working.



Fundraising and Awareness Campaigns: Mental Elf and Wear It Blue

2024–25 saw the launch of Mental Elf, a joyful 5km run in Canterbury that combined movement, laughter and fundraising. With 170 participants wearing elf hats and raising £3,000, the event was a powerful reminder that physical activity and fun are integral to mental wellbeing.

Meanwhile, our annual #WearItBlue campaign united 30 organisations across Kent and Bexley during Mental Health Awareness Week. These partnerships with schools, employers and community groups promoted open conversations about mental health and helped raise awareness of support available.

Both initiatives align with Public Health England’s prevention priorities, promoting physical activity, social connection and mental health literacy.

“Events like these show that mental health belongs everywhere – in workplaces, parks, and streets, not just clinics.”

Physical Health Checks and Prevention

Improving Physical Health Equity for People with Severe Mental Illness

Mind in Bexley continues to lead national innovation in addressing the severe physical health inequalities experienced by people with SMI. Our co-produced initiative to increase uptake of annual Physical Health Checks (PHCs), delivered with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, Bexley Health Neighbourhood Care GP Federation CIC, PCNs, and supported by the Health Innovation Network South London, has become a recognised model of integrated, community-based care.

The evaluation (Palmer, 2025) found PHC completion among people on the SMI register in Bexley rose from 43% to 63% (Dec 2024–Mar 2025), exceeding NHS Long Term Plan and Core20PLUS5 targets. Improvement was driven by lived-experience-led training, GP engagement, and offering checks in trusted non-clinical community settings. Participants highlighted being “met with understanding, not judgement,” while practitioners reported that personal narratives shifted PHCs from a “tick-box exercise” to a relationship-based practice.

Capacity-Building and Reach

- Eight co-produced practitioner webinars and a GP roundtable reached 90+ professionals.
- Practitioner confidence in supporting physical health improved significantly.
- Outreach engaged 80 individuals who had disengaged from primary care; 18 attended new community clinics, with eight receiving full checks.

The evaluation also identified system challenges, particularly fragmented data and rigid appointment systems, and recommended sustained joint commissioning, shared data infrastructure, and ongoing partnership between the VCS and statutory sectors.

Strengthening Prevention

Mind in Bexley is now expanding prevention and early intervention in partnership with Public Health Bexley. In 2025–26, a dedicated Smoking Cessation Worker will be embedded within community teams to reduce smoking rates among people with SMI, integrating motivational support, peer mentoring, and clinical guidance directly into mental health pathways. This work links to the Bexley Cancer Clinical Care Professional Leads to support screening, early detection, and proactive public health engagement.

Policy Alignment

This model directly supports:

- NHS Long Term Plan: reducing premature mortality among people with SMI.
- Core20PLUS5 Framework: targeted action for underserved communities.
- Public Mental Health and Prevention Strategy: embedding prevention in community systems.
- Integrated Care System Objectives: neighbourhood-based, co-produced care.

Next Steps (2025–26)

Mind in Bexley and East Kent Mind will:

- Embed PHC outreach and engagement across all community services.
- Pilot and evaluate the smoking cessation pathway with Public Health and Cancer CCPL leads.
- Integrate physical health monitoring into digital wellbeing tools and volunteering programmes.
- Train additional peer health champions with lived experience of SMI.
- Explore undertaking a follow-up evaluation focused on PHC sustainability, cessation outcomes, and cancer screening access (Palmer, 2025).

Mind in Bexley and East Kent continues to demonstrate how voluntary-sector leadership and co-production can drive preventative, relational, and equitable community health improvement.

Revival Food & Mood

A thriving social enterprise at the heart of community wellbeing

Revival Food & Mood has continued to grow as a vibrant community-rooted social enterprise, blending mental-health support, creativity, food and connection. What began as a cafe has become a model for relational and preventative mental-health care, showing that belonging, friendship and purpose are as important to recovery as clinical intervention. Revival operates on a simple belief: that social connection is itself a form of care. In an era where loneliness and isolation have become pressing public-health challenges, Revival demonstrates how inclusive, creative and welcoming spaces can restore confidence, wellbeing and hope. Through good food, shared purpose and peer support, Revival brings people together to rebuild lives, rediscover identity and create new routines of wellbeing.

The initiative now forms a key strand of Mind in Bexley and East Kent's Five-Year Strategy (2025–2030), reflecting our shared vision for prevention, participation and community-led innovation. It also aligns with the (ICS) prevention and inequalities frameworks, offering a practical example of how voluntary and social enterprise models can deliver integrated, person-centred outcomes in non-clinical settings.

Measuring impact through evidence and experience

Revival takes evaluation seriously. Every activity, from wellbeing groups to volunteering and social events, is measured for its impact on participants' mental, social and physical health. Feedback and social-impact assessments show consistent, outstanding results.

In our September 2024 community survey, more than 90 per cent of participants reported improved wellbeing after attending Revival programmes. People describe the cafe as:

“a safe, kind and creative space where I can be myself again,”

and

“the first place in years where I felt truly welcome.”

Revival is more than a cafe, it is a growing movement of over 300 Proud Members, volunteers and staff who contribute time, creativity and care.



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REVIVAL

Food & Mood

Mind
East Kent



Revival Lates: youth, belonging and prevention

Revival Lates has emerged as one of our most successful innovations, creating a safe, alcohol-free evening environment for 16–25-year-olds. Through creative workshops, social connection and wellbeing activities, the programme offers young people an alternative to nightlife dominated by commercial or high-pressure spaces.

Feedback has been exceptional. Ninety per cent of attendees said they felt “better in themselves” after taking part, and every participant reported being satisfied with the experience. Comments capture the value of the programme:

“Provides one of very few spaces dedicated to young people my age, free of charge and without pressure to stay out late and drink alcohol.”

“It’s friendly and welcoming and gives me a space to meet new people and learn new skills.”

“The Revival Lates are a brilliant and friendly support system for young adults now we’ve aged out of typical clubs and groups.”

This initiative contributes directly to local suicide-prevention and loneliness strategies, proving that creative, informal environments can build resilience, belonging and early intervention for young people.

Peer Support and Wellbeing Groups

Peer-led wellbeing remains central to Revival’s ethos. Groups such as Make, Mend & Motivate, Cuppa Club, MenTalk, Women’s Wellness, MenoPause and Walking for Wellbeing combine creativity, conversation and gentle activity in safe, welcoming settings.

In 2024–25, 93.3 per cent of participants reported satisfaction with their support, and 80 per cent said attending a group had been “very beneficial” or “life-changing.” People spoke about relief from isolation, restored confidence and improvements in both physical and mental health:

“It’s been life-changing... I feel like I’m coming back to life.”

“It gives me purpose to get out and meet lovely friends. It really helps me with my health and my mental health.”

“It’s good to share experiences. I was in need of support and my GP offered me this service.”

These outcomes align with the NHS Long Term Plan's emphasis on social prescribing, peer support and community-led prevention. Revival's approach shows that everyday connection, a coffee, a conversation, a creative act, can be as powerful as any formal intervention in helping people recover and stay well.

The Mental Health Bank: innovation for equity

The Mental Health Bank, funded through the Health Inequalities Community Fund, is one of Revival's most innovative projects. It was developed to make wellbeing support accessible for people who are financially or socially excluded. An independent evaluation by Social Enterprise Kent found that 79 per cent of participants experienced significant improvement in mental health, highlighting how small-scale, co-produced interventions can address inequalities and improve outcomes for people with long-term mental-health conditions.

Revival as a model for social enterprise and prevention

Revival's growth shows that mental-health support can be creative, joyful and economically sustainable. The cafe now forms part of the local prevention infrastructure, contributing to ICS priorities on social connection, healthy lifestyles and access to culture. It regularly hosts training, creative exhibitions and wellbeing events that bring communities together and challenge stigma. Revival also models environmental sustainability, reducing food waste and sourcing locally wherever possible, while creating volunteering pathways that often lead to employment and renewed self-worth.

Evidence, recognition and next steps

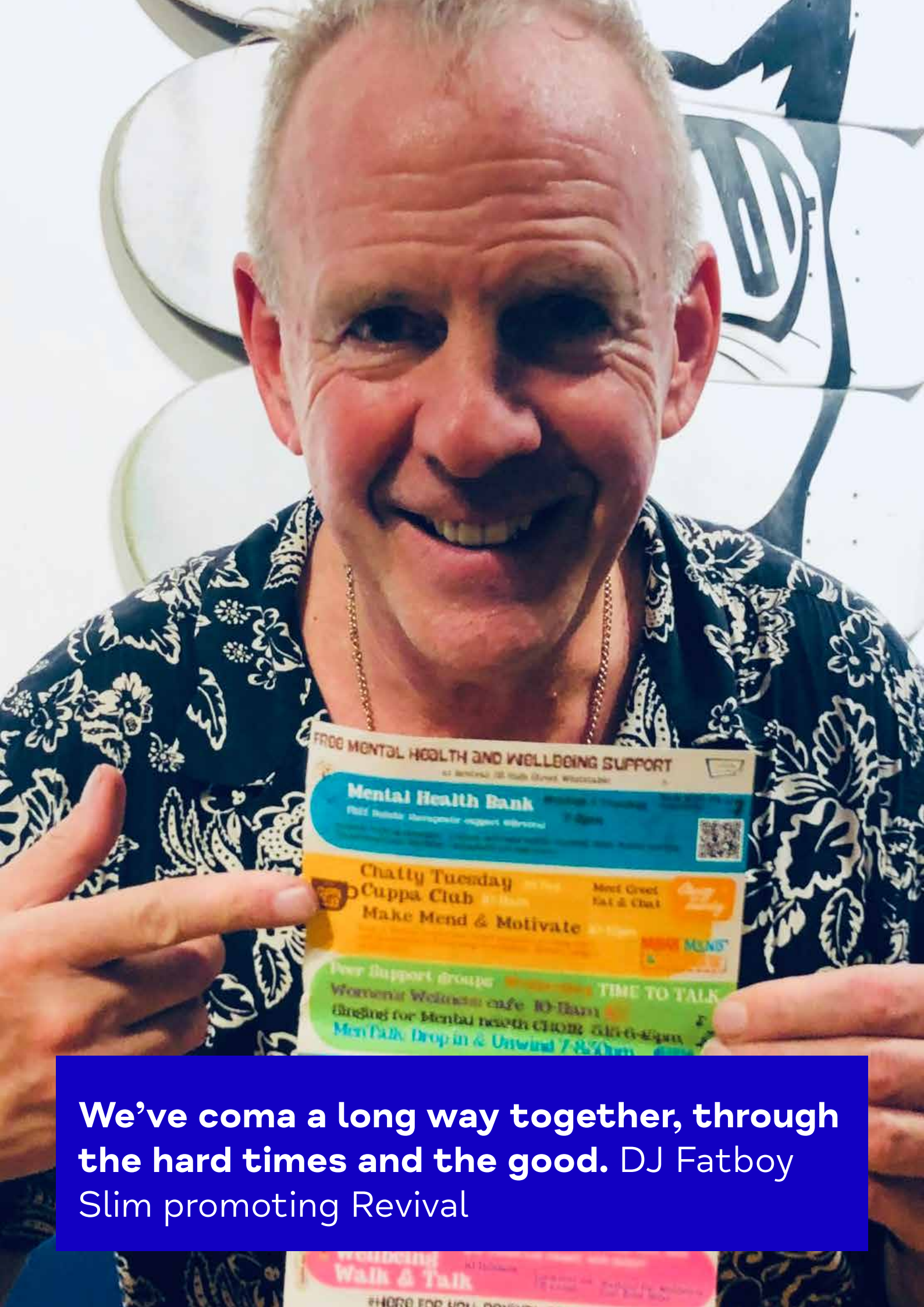
Revival's impact has been recognised regionally and nationally. It featured in the Social Enterprise Kent evaluation on health inequalities and was highlighted by commissioners as a leading example of community-based wellbeing and prevention.

Plans for 2025–26 include:

- develop Revival Lates to reach more young people
- developing intergenerational right to grow ecotherapy initiatives
- working with the Mind network to evidence wider system impact
- refining monitoring to capture long-term wellbeing, community and social participation

Revival's story shows what is possible when creativity, kindness and evidence come together. It embodies the values at the heart of Mind in Bexley and East Kent. community, compassion and collaboration. As one participant summed up,

“Revival isn't just a cafe; it's a community that makes you feel alive again.”



FREE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT
at Revival 22 High Street, Worcester

Mental Health Bank
Peer Support, Telephone Support, Support Groups

Chatty Tuesday Cuppa Club
Meet, Greet, Eat & Chat

Make Mend & Motivate
Peer Support, Telephone Support, Support Groups

Peer Support groups
Womens Wellbeing cafe 10-11am
Binging for Mental Health CHOR 2.30-4.30pm
MenTALK Drop in & Unwind 7-8.30pm

We've come a long way together, through the hard times and the good. DJ Fatboy Slim promoting Revival

Wellbeing Walk & Talk
#HORO FOR YOU

Research, Evaluation and National Recognition

Leading Innovation through Community-Based Research

Mind in Bexley and East Kent has established itself as a national leader in community-based mental health research and evaluation, known for combining lived experience, co-production and academic rigour. Our work continues to influence NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), local authorities, and national policy discussions around prevention, trauma-informed care and recovery.

This year, our achievements were recognised when Mind in Bexley and East Kent was awarded the “Research and Monitoring Organisation of the Year” by National Mind, an accolade celebrating our commitment to ethical, impactful, and co-produced research.

Our growing research portfolio now spans physical and mental health integration, suicide prevention, carers’ wellbeing, and community innovation, underpinned by partnerships with universities, NHS trusts and local commissioners.

Research Highlights (2024–25)

1. **“My Day-to-Day Life Is Awesome!”: Continuity and Innovation in Mind in Bexley’s Services During COVID-19 Lockdowns**

(Palmer, Williams, Briscoombe & Pittaway, 2025, *Journal of Public Mental Health*)

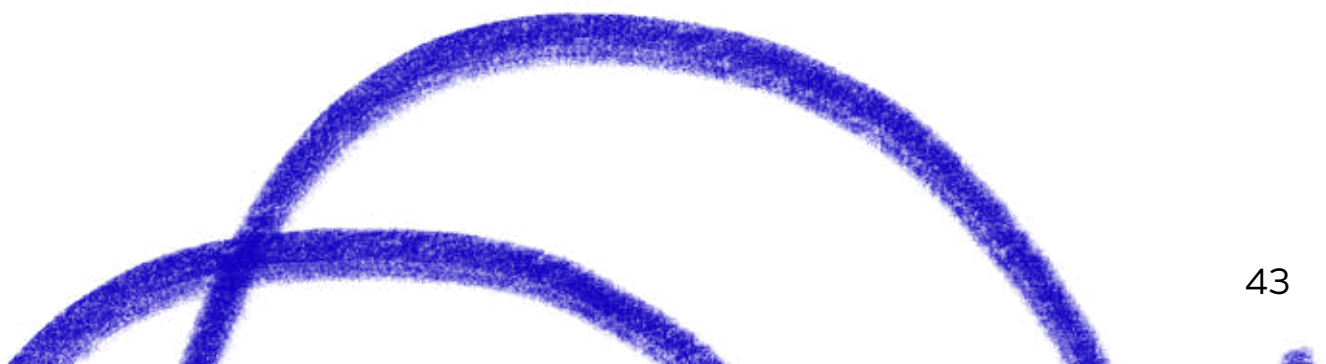
This oral history and qualitative study documented the resilience and creativity of Mind in Bexley’s service users and staff during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Conducted through 18 online interviews and a digital exhibition, the study found that remote and blended service models not only maintained but enhanced access, autonomy and wellbeing for many participants.

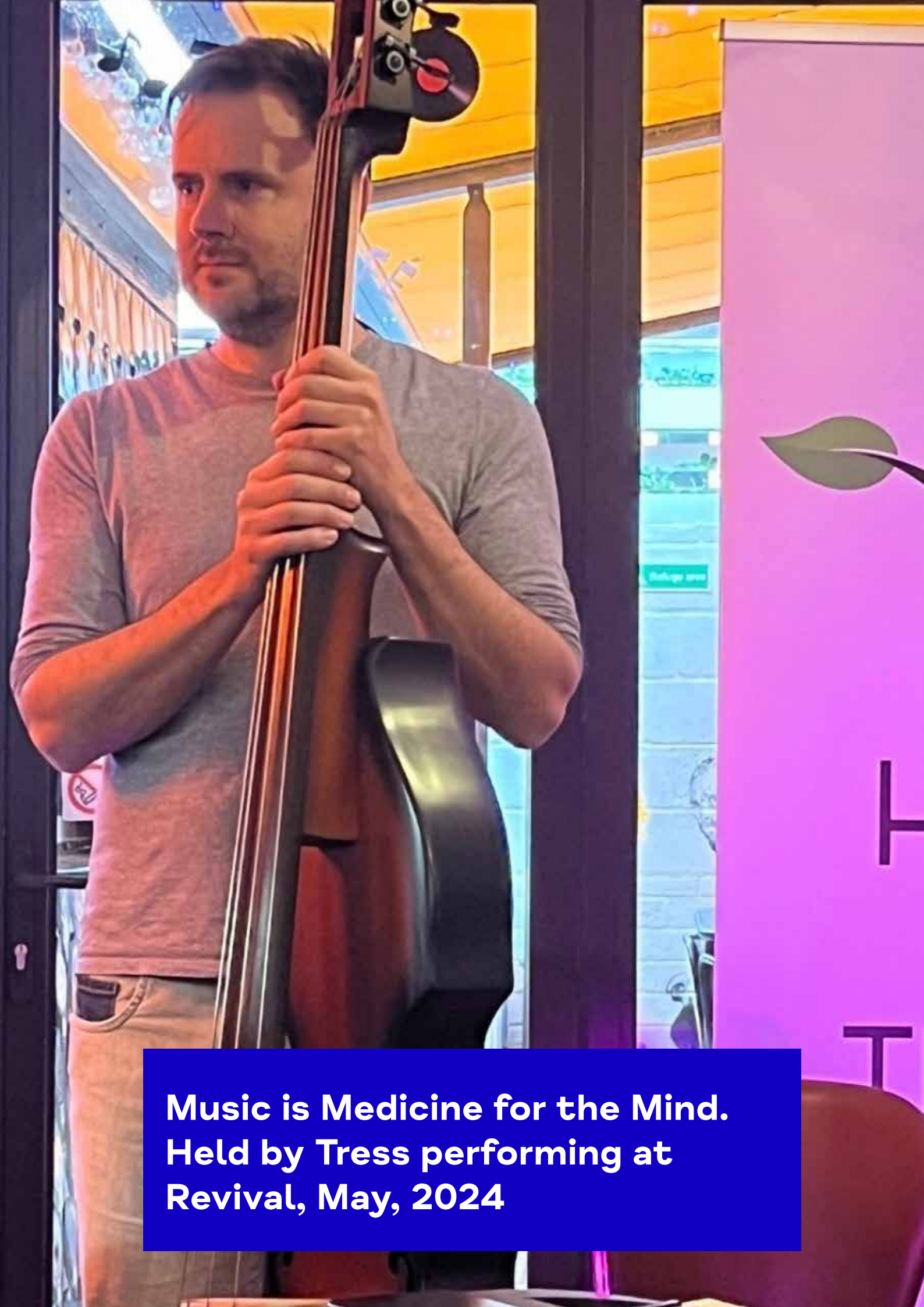
The paper’s findings have informed national guidance on digital inclusion, Recovery College practice, and tele-mental health design, aligning with NHS England’s Digital Transformation Framework and Community Transformation Programme.

“COVID-19 changed everything, but we built new communities, discovered new ways to care, and found strength in connection.”

This project led to the Hall Place exhibition, and continues to influence how Mind delivers hybrid, relational care that bridges digital and face-to-face support.

Our CEO with fellow participants celebrate completing the year long SEL collaborative leadership programme





**Music is Medicine for the Mind.
Held by Tress performing at
Revival, May, 2024**

2. “We Had to Learn How to Talk to Each Other Again”⁹: Supporting Individuals Bereaved by Suicide

(Palmer, 2025, Mind in Bexley & South East London Suicide Bereavement Service)

This study, supported by South East London ICB, used oral history and narrative research to explore the experiences of 22 people bereaved by suicide. Findings were shared through a public exhibition and report that helped shape local postvention and Suicide Prevention Strategy (2023–2028) implementation.

The work highlights the role of peer support, holistic care centred listening and storytelling in recovery, contributing to national learning on postvention and integrated bereavement care.

“It’s not just telling... it’s remembering. Sharing my story made me feel connected again.”⁹

The accompanying exhibition received critical acclaim from policymakers and academics for using visual and audio storytelling to transform grief into dialogue and awareness.

3. Improving Physical Health-Care Equity for People with Severe Mental Illness (SMI) **(Palmer, 2025, Mental Health and Social Inclusion)**

This peer-reviewed study, conducted in partnership with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust and Bexley Health Neighbourhood Care CIC, evaluated a co-produced approach to annual physical health checks for people with SMI.

Results demonstrated a 20% increase in completion rates and highlighted the impact of peer mentors and community navigators in overcoming barriers to engagement. The project supports the NHS Long Term Plan and Core20PLUS5 inequalities framework, reinforcing national commitments to reducing premature mortality among people with SMI through community-led partnership models.

“When people are met with understanding, not judgement, they start taking control of their health.”⁹

4. “Grounding Ethical Governance: Co-Produced Community-Based Research Ethics in Qualitative and Oral History Work”⁹

(Palmer, 2025, Grounding Ethical Governance)

This publication explores the ethical frameworks underpinning Mind’s research culture, arguing for community-led ethics, reflexivity and participant agency in voluntary-sector research.

It outlines Mind’s innovative Ethical Governance Framework, now adopted in several NHS collaborations, demonstrating how small charities can lead ethically robust and inclusive research practices.

Emerging and Ongoing Research (2025–26)

Building on this national recognition, Mind in Bexley and East Kent continues to develop new studies at the intersection of community, recovery and policy:

- **Revival Cafe and Wellness Hub Evaluation:**

A mixed-method study exploring how Revival’s social enterprise model supports mental health, belonging and preventative care. This work examines Revival’s governance model, volunteer engagement, and contribution to the Integrated Care System’s prevention agenda, positioning it as a prototype for relational, place-based mental health support. We aim to complete this study next year.

- **Unpaid Mental Health Carers Research:**

Expanding on the Carers in Mind study, this qualitative research uses oral history to explore agency, resilience and peer support among unpaid carers. Findings will inform national carers’ policy and contribute to Labour’s Neighbourhood Care Strategy and Integrated Community Care Framework (Palmer, 2025). We aim to finish this work next year.

- **Crisis Cafe Evaluation:**

Continuing evaluation of the Bexley Crisis Cafes to assess their impact on reducing emergency admissions, improving timely access to listening support, and enhancing social trust. Findings will contribute to NHS England’s Community Crisis Alternatives Framework and shape future commissioning models

“Every piece of research we do begins with listening...to people’s lives, their resilience, their hope.”

Exhibitions and Knowledge Exchange

Mind in Bexley and East Kent continues to use exhibitions as a medium for research translation. Projects such as “**Carers in Mind**” and “**Supporting Individuals Bereaved by Suicide**” demonstrate how art, oral history and storytelling can foster dialogue, empathy and social change.

By transforming research into public engagement, these exhibitions embody our belief that knowledge is most powerful when it is shared, felt and seen.



Working in partnership with



South East London

“Navigating the Journeys of Unpaid Mental Health Carers: Challenges, Support Systems and Strategies including Peer Support for maintaining Self-Care and Wellbeing.”

Dr David Palmer (PhD)
Clinical Care Professional Lead, Mental Health, Bexley
Honorary Senior Lecturer, Canterbury Christ Church University
CEO, Mind in Bexley
Email: d.palmer@mindinbexley.org.uk



Introduction

Research has shown that unpaid carers of people with mental health problems face significant challenges and stress. This research project aims to explore the experiences of unpaid carers and identify strategies to support their self-care and wellbeing.

The research was conducted through a series of focus groups and interviews with unpaid carers. The findings highlight the need for more support and resources for unpaid carers, particularly in the areas of self-care and wellbeing.

The research also identified the importance of peer support for unpaid carers. Peer support can provide a sense of community and shared experiences, which can be helpful in managing the challenges of unpaid caring.

The research findings will be used to inform the development of support services for unpaid carers. This includes the development of a peer support group and the provision of self-care resources.

The research also identified the need for more training and education for unpaid carers. This includes training in self-care and wellbeing strategies, as well as training in the use of support services.

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Looking Ahead: 2025–2030

Building a Sustainable, Innovative and Listening Organisation

As Mind in Bexley and East Kent enters its next five-year chapter, our ambition is to consolidate everything we have learned and achieved into a resilient, innovative, and community-led organisation fit for the future. Our Five-Year Strategy (2025–2030) sets a clear direction: to lead prevention, inclusion, and integrated care in the community, ensuring that every person we support has the opportunity not only to recover, but to thrive.

The coming years will see us build on our reputation for innovation and evidence. We will continue to demonstrate how voluntary and community organisations can deliver measurable health and social outcomes, translating national policy, from the NHS Long Term Plan to the Core20PLUS5 framework and local Integrated Care System strategies, into practical, relational care rooted in community life.

Sustainability and System Leadership

Sustainability will remain central to our strategy. We will strengthen financial resilience through a balanced portfolio of NHS contracts, local authority partnerships, charitable funding and enterprise initiatives such as Revival Food & Mood. Each programme will be underpinned by a clear impact framework, ensuring value for money, accountability and alignment with local system priorities.

We will continue to play an active leadership role within the South East London and Kent & Medway Integrated Care Systems, shaping neighbourhood prevention, personalised care and co-production models. Our partnerships with Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust, GP networks and Public Health will deepen, helping to embed voluntary-sector expertise at the heart of system design.

Innovation, Research and Continuous Learning

Innovation remains one of our defining strengths. Over the next five years, we will expand our Research and Impact work, building on our national recognition as National Mind's Research and Monitoring Organisation of the Year. This will include new community-based studies exploring holistic practices, digital inclusion, crisis prevention and ecotherapy, co-designed with universities, commissioners and people with lived experience.

We will invest in digital innovation, ensuring that access to mental-health and wellbeing support remains flexible, inclusive and safe. This will include enhancing our Digital Hub and hybrid learning environments so that more people can connect from home, work or community spaces.

Every new idea will be tested through evaluation, not simply to prove success, but to learn, improve and share. We will continue to publish and disseminate evidence through peer-reviewed journals, public exhibitions and practitioner learning events, ensuring our insights contribute to both local and national policy.

Listening, Inclusion and Co-Production

Mind in Bexley and East Kent has always been a listening organisation. Over the next five years, we will formalise this commitment through new structures that elevate lived experience in governance and service design. This includes the expansion of our Research & Ethics Committee, the development of a Lived Experience Advisory Network, and new listening forums for staff, volunteers and residents.

We will continue to diversify our workforce and leadership, ensuring our organisation reflects the communities we serve. Equality, diversity and inclusion will be built into every recruitment, training and partnership process, guided by data and dialogue.

Measuring What Matters

Our impact will continue to be measured not only in numbers, but in stories, in the everyday changes people describe when they feel heard, supported and valued. We will strengthen our outcome-measurement systems, integrating wellbeing, physical-health, economic and social indicators into a single data framework. This will help demonstrate the full social value of our work and ensure that lived experience remains at the centre of how success is defined.

Culture, People and Purpose

Our people remain our greatest strength. We will invest in leadership development, reflective practice and wellbeing, ensuring our staff and volunteers have the support and autonomy they need to deliver with confidence and compassion. Our organisational culture will continue to prioritise openness, shared purpose and psychological safety, the foundations of excellent care.

A Shared Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, our vision is clear: to be a catalyst for community-led mental-health transformation, a bridge between clinical and social care, and a model for prevention, inclusion and hope.


By 2030, Mind in Bexley and East Kent will stand not only as a provider of services, but as an evidence-led movement for compassionate, connected and equitable mental-health support. Together with our partners, funders, staff, and residents, we will continue to demonstrate that change begins with listening, and that the power of community remains the greatest resource in mental health.



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REVIVAL

The BBC One Show highlighting the work of Revival Food & Mood which was broadcast on 30 May.



Mind in Bexley and East Kent

Acknowledgements

Our achievements this year have been made possible through the dedication, skill and compassion of our 170 staff, 90 volunteers and the many partners and funders who share our vision for better mental health and community wellbeing. Their collective commitment underpins every service we deliver, from Talking Therapies and Suicide Bereavement Support to Revival Food & Mood, Veterans' Wellbeing and the East Kent mentoring and peer-support programmes.

We extend our sincere thanks to our commissioners and funders, whose continued investment enables our work to grow and innovate. In particular, we acknowledge the ongoing partnership and support of the **South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB)**, the **London Borough of Bexley**, **and Kent County Council**, alongside **Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust**, **Public Health Bexley**, and the **Live Well Kent and Medway partnership**. Their leadership in prevention, integration and co-production has created the conditions for our services to thrive.

Trustees

Shaheen Westcombe MBE
Nana Mahama
Dr Irene Guerrini
Mohummud Azaad Magho
Julie-Anne Hofmann
Emily Mason

Company Secretary and Chief Executive: Dr. David Palmer

CHARITY NUMBER: 1110130

COMPANY NUMBER: 05393807

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