



Mental health services in east & west Suffolk

This is your chance to input into and influence the future of mental health and wellbeing services.

#AVeryDifferentConversation

East and West Suffolk Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing 10 Year Strategy 2019-29

#averydifferentconversation

SUMMARY

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THE SYSTEM FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLBEING IN EAST AND WEST SUFFOLK IS FAILING, DESPITE THE BEST INTENTIONS AND HARD WORK OF MANY PEOPLE AND ADDITIONAL INVESTMENT.

We have been told that people are unable to find the mental health support they need, or gain access to it, even in moments of crisis.

Waiting times are too long and all too often the services people need in their communities are not available.

Increasing numbers of young people - especially women - are self-harming, we have a growing elderly population living with dementia, and deprivation is on the increase across the county.

We have traditionally focussed on treating mental health conditions with medication and our options need to change - GPs are now prescribing twice as many antidepressants as they did 10 years ago. Drugs are necessary for some people at some times, but they are not the answer to everyone's problems. We now understand that our physical, emotional and environmental circumstances all have a huge influence on our wellbeing. This is crucial when it comes to shaping the services we need to provide. When people better understand how they can manage their health, wellbeing and social care needs their work and family lives will improve, along with their physical health and their ability to care for others.

Over the past 7 months we have all come together - patients, families, carers, professionals and communities - to find out how we can improve the mental health and emotional wellbeing of the people across east and west Suffolk.

We wanted to hear from the people whose voices aren't normally heard and we wanted everyone's opinion to count, so we decided to do things in a way they had never been done before. Ipswich and East and West Suffolk CCG commissioners and Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust worked with local organisations including Suffolk Family Carers, Suffolk Parent Carer Network and Suffolk User Forum to provide a unique insight into the needs

of those who use and work in our mental health services by having [#averydifferentconversation](#) by the roll out of a survey and a range of public engagement events across east and west Suffolk

Through the efforts of the partnership there have been over 4430 direct contacts with the public, 737 online survey responses and in excess of 40 workshop sessions held across the county. To help us to understand this huge amount of information, Healthwatch Suffolk was commissioned to analyse the data and produce an independent report which will help support our new approach to improve mental health and emotional wellbeing in Suffolk.

What have we learnt?

- Mental health is everyone's business - it's not just a health issue
- Prevention and self-care is key
- Support is best provided in your community
- We need to respond better when people are in crisis
- GP's need more support - the vast majority of mental health issues are dealt with in GP surgeries
- We need to do more to improve outcomes for children and young people

Our new mental health and emotional wellbeing services will promote and support prevention and self-care. We will make sure people who become unwell can get help quickly, by building support primarily in communities and around GP practices. Specialist and crisis support will be easier to access - people will receive urgent care when needed and ongoing support once they are well.

Our new approach will be about how all aspects of a person's life link together. Physical health, mental health, social networks and economic circumstances all have an impact on a person's wellbeing. Our new vision is one in which everyone has a role to play - citizens, health professionals, schools, councils, police, employers, voluntary and community groups.

This challenge is not straight forward or simple, but we can rise to it. Join us in a very different conversation leading to a very different, and better, future for Suffolk.