

**Healthwatch Enfield and Barnet, Enfield & Haringey Mental Health Trust (BEH-MHT) Online Q&A session - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**Presenters:**

- Andrew Wright- Director of Planning & Partnership, BEH-MHT
- Jackie Liveras - Managing Director, BEH-MHT
- Evri Anagnostara - Head of Nursing, BEH-MHT

**Questions and answers:**

**Q 1 - What extra support is being offered to those with mental health issues, especially since Coronavirus started?**

A - The Trust has a range of support available, which has continued throughout the pandemic response and afterwards. The Trust has established a new 24/7 help line (available on 0300 0200 500) for anyone seeking help and advice around a mental health crisis. Help can also be accessed via our Trust website: <http://www.beh-mht.nhs.uk/patients-and-carers/support-in-a-crisis.htm>

**Q2 - How can you help people to help themselves, particularly following lockdown?**

A - In terms of general advice, everyone can help themselves through regular exercise, eating a balanced diet and increasing their social contacts within the Government's social distancing guidelines. In terms of mental health and wellbeing, there are a range of online resources and support available to everyone. Details are on the Trust's website: <http://www.beh-mht.nhs.uk/camhs/13-17/looking-after-your-mental-health.htm>. Our new Crisis helpline (0300 0200 500) can also direct people to the most appropriate sources of help and support.

**Q3 - What plans do you have to re-establish face to face sessions for those who need it (not everyone has IT access or can benefit from Zoom consultations) as well as the various peer groups/support groups that has had to close?**

A - We plan to use more virtual consultations where appropriate, as these are often convenient for service users. This allows our staff to support more patients, which will help us in managing the expected increase in demand for our services. However, face to face appointments are important for some service users, either for their wellbeing, or because they cannot access virtual support. Our teams assess how, and when face to face appointments are needed, to support each individual, as required.

**Q4 - Has any mental health support been set up to help those that were in the shielding category to get re-introduced into society?**

A - The Trust is providing appropriate support to those currently shielding, which will end at the end of July. We are working closely with the Council, voluntary organisations and others to provide appropriate support. There are regular

referrals to our staff, to assess those particularly vulnerable, and / or in need of support.

**Q5 - Has there been an increase in health related anxiety since Coronavirus? Will there be any targeted help - specifically aimed at people struggling to deal with the changes and uncertainties that Covid has brought. If so, will it be a self-referral or will a GP/Hospital need to refer them?**

A - There has been a general increase in anxiety 'post Coronavirus' - both directly through the virus and indirectly through the economic impacts of lockdown and beyond. Some anxiety can be managed via your GP. If it's more urgent you can contact the crisis helpline (0300 0200 500).

**Q6 - Has mental health support services had any increase in funds to help deal with the added pressure of Coronavirus related issues/fears and concerns?**

A - Mental health services will be seeking Government financial support for the direct costs of responding to Coronavirus. In terms of long term increased financial support for mental health, the Government did promise this in 2019, but it is not yet clear how Coronavirus will affect this now.

**Q7 - How will BEH ensure people that are discharged from hospital or in the community are 'Coronavirus aware'?**

A - The Trust is following National Government guidelines and will ensure that anyone being discharged from one of our wards into the community is 'Coronavirus aware'. This includes information on hand washing, wearing a mask, having leaflets on the wards, as well as health promotion via our Occupational Therapists.

**Q8 - Are there spaces in BEH Mental Health wards or are people already there, now self-isolating?**

A -The Trust is able to admit all those who need to be admitted, to a bed on one of our mental health wards. However, demand for mental health beds has now returned to pre-Coronavirus levels and the Trust is experiencing high demand for admission.

**Q9 - Can GP's still refer people via phone or video call appointments, and if so, are there still long waiting lists?**

A -Yes, GPs can refer patients and the Trust will respond appropriately. The Trust also has a helpline specifically for GP's to help speed up referrals and get the right advice.

**Q10 - Agoraphobia/germ paranoia is likely to be a big issue as shielding is lifted. What support is there for people with this type of anxiety?**

A - This is recognised as an issue for some people and the Trust can provide appropriate support as needed. More information can be found on the Trust's website: <http://www.beh-mht.nhs.uk/services/iapt-enfield-2.htm>.

There is also information on our website about services that can provide support:  
<http://www.beh-mht.nhs.uk/patients-and-carers/national-and-north-london-charities.htm>.

**Q 11 - What help is there for young people, as isolation and loneliness has hit them hard?**

A - The Trust has a Children and Adolescent Mental Health team (CAMHS) if the impact is more severe. Information about the CAMHS team can be found on the Trust's website: <http://www.behcamhs.nhs.uk/>.

We also work with a range of other organisations and services to help support children and young people such as 'Kooth', an online mental wellbeing community for young people. You can find out more about Kooth on their website:  
<https://www.kooth.com/>

**Q12 - Can young people still be referred to CAMHS? If so is there a waiting list?**

A - Yes, young people can be referred to CAMHS services, if that is appropriate and the best form of help for them. You can find more information on the trusts website: <http://www.behcamhs.nhs.uk/>. The Trust anticipate an increase in referrals, but are working really hard for there not to be an impact on service users. Current waiting times for a first CAMHS appointment are around six weeks.

Most patients will be seen earlier than this, but in some more specialist services, the waiting times may be longer.

**Q13 - Have you seen a greater demand for Mental Health services since lockdown?**

A - Demand is now returning to pre-Coronavirus levels and we expect a further increase in demand over the coming months. The Trust are looking into what the long terms demands for the service will be. Changes to the economy, job losses and tenancy issues will impact on people's mental health. This will therefore have an effect on our service.

**Q15 - What plans will you put in place for those with a hearing impairment or dual sensory loss (deafblind) to access mental health services as the lockdown eases. During the lockdown, the Voluntary Sector has provided 'First Aid' to this client group. There has been constant contact to reassure and to listen to fears and anxieties. I am very concerned that some people will become ill due to the lack of support and access to services during this pandemic.**

A - We can provide appropriate support where needed. Such as inpatient and outpatient translators, visual cards and work with individuals who need more specific support. The crisis helpline (0300 0200 500) is another way to access our services. We are also establishing a 'chat' function on the crisis helpline, which some people may find easier to use, including those with a hearing impairment.