



# The Gateway

## West Sussex

### Our Impact Report 2023

West Sussex  mind





# Welcome from Kit

One of our peer supporters, Kit, introduces our Impact Report by sharing his reflections on his own mental health journey and on West Sussex Mind

At the age of 19, I was in a relationship where there was domestic violence. It lasted seven years. Then I was diagnosed with colon cancer and had 18 months of treatment. Two years later, at the age of 28, I was diagnosed with Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder.

It was a further year before I started the NHS Steps programme. And when that finished, I was referred to West Sussex Mind.

After Covid, when we were able to go to mental health workshops and social activities in person, I really appreciated the people leading the groups. It opened my eyes that you could be an expert by experience.

The social activities supervisors encouraged me to become a facilitator at the groups. One of them had received support herself, volunteered and was then employed, working her way up to be a coordinator. It was so inspiring—I could see, wow, I could do this.

I started by shadowing someone running one of the get-togethers and the walking group. One of my

favourite groups is art for relaxation — I completely love it! I also had the chance to do the peer volunteer course which was fantastic.

Now I've been employed at the charity's peer hub as a sessional peer supporter. I'm an expert by experience, leading the group around neurodivergence and complex emotions. I also volunteer in the men's group and other social activities.

The charity's plan to increase peer support is definitely a good idea. As a peer supporter, I get as much out of leading the groups as taking part. It's aided my recovery and helped me become a better person.

**The best thing is knowing I can use my own experience and knowledge to help others. When you're struggling, you can think you're the only person who feels like that. Having support from someone who can say I've been through that can be invaluable.**

I'd previously had 10 years of unemployment and was quite scared about that. Now I'm building up skills and confidence, learning on my own and aiming for more work in mental health peer support.

West Sussex Mind has shown me a great workplace culture and has exceeded my expectations of help and support for every part of my journey.

I can see the charity is evolving, listening to the people it supports and staff. And that helps the charity to grow and thrive.





## People supported

6,230

people supported

13,478

individual interventions

1,461

people reached by  
our community  
engagement work

1,022

children and young people  
(up to 25) supported

12,449

trained by us

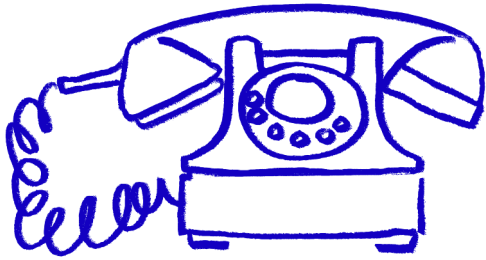
11,481

group activity attendances



# How we made an impact on mental health

## Our figures for 2022-2023



### Help Point

**8,707**

calls answered by our Help Point team

**1,340**

people requested support by using our website form

**846**

were referred to our own various support services

**2,299**

were given advice, information or signposted to other organisations



### Our social activities

**1,400**

group activity sessions held in a mix of in person and online

**7,995**

attendances in total

**437**

individual people received support planning from the team



## Adults



**1,491**

adults supported in our Pathfinder services across our areas and a

further **1,132**

through our mental health workers based in GP practices



## Young people

In our Be OK service for young people (16-25), we held

**94**

group activity sessions, with

**309** attendances.

There were

**1,070**

individual sessions of one-to-one support

**65%**

of those who completed the quality of life survey reported a positive change or stability

**72%**

of those who did a feedback form said our service was GOOD or EXCELLENT

## Website

**45,139**

people visited our website, with over

**54,000**

views of our pages that cover help, support, self-care, information and advice

## Social media



**3,543** followers



**2,776** followers



**1,854** followers



**2,597** followers

# Mental health training

In 2022-23, our training team provided training to 12,449 people, an increase of 166% on the 4,686 people in 2021-22.

A mixture of online and in-person events and learning opportunities together with a range of different projects helped us achieve this including;

- The Self-Harm Learning Network, which we run in partnership with charity YMCA Downslink Group, continued this year, training **8,157** parents, professionals and school staff across Sussex to enable them to support children and young people who were self-harming. This work culminated in a conference with over **2,206** attendees either on the day or watching the YouTube recordings.

- A total of 39 online workshops for **parents and carers** funded by West Sussex County Council and the NHS across all areas.

We offered **free suicide awareness and prevention training** by giving **126** free licences for the LivingWorks START course.

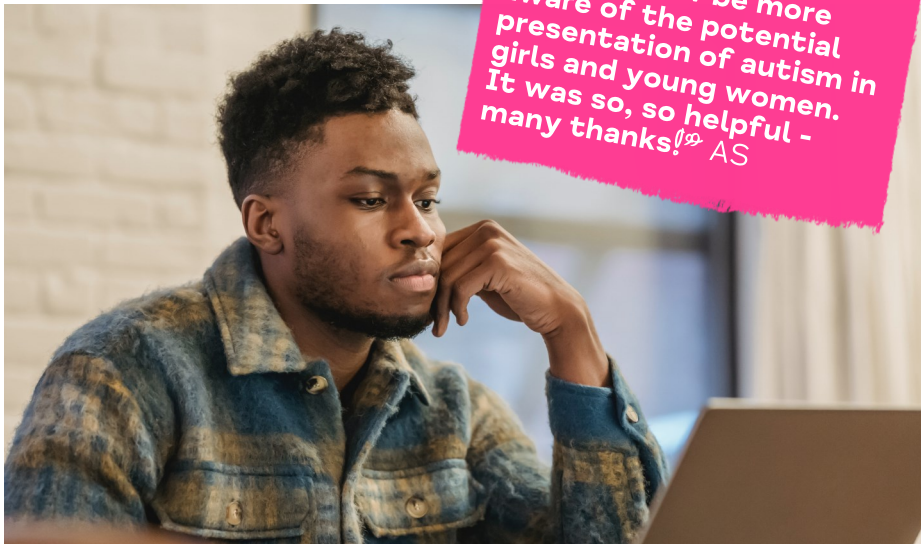
In addition, we continued **our autism programme for professionals** run in partnership with Aspens and Impact Initiatives funded by Health Education England.

We provided **adult and youth mental health first aid training** to staff in the county council

*"Thank you so much to the trainers for delivering such engaging and informative training."*

*"It was excellent and will really help to inform my support of children and young people" SW*

*"I will now be more aware of the potential presentation of autism in girls and young women. It was so, so helpful - many thanks!" AS*



and partner agencies, funded by West Sussex County Council.

The training team also ran a range of bespoke training for businesses and organisations including mental health first aid and programmes to support Mental Health at Work Week, promoting good mental health in the workplace and supporting staff with poor mental health.

## Training at work

# 703

people received workplace training

## In schools

# 286

school staff completed the Youth Mental Health First Aid course

## Within councils

# 627

Council staff received mental health training

## Autism training

# 766

professionals completed the training in autism for those working with children and young people

# 197

completed our autism e-learning courses

## On our website

# 145

completed the Understanding Mental Health course available free to anyone on our website



# Community outreach work



## Finding peace

“Showing compassion for another person in spite of their sexuality does not take anything away from you.

“Excluding people, pushing them away, making them feel unwanted only leads to them looking for acceptance elsewhere and this can push them into the hands of people who will do them harm.” K

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group guides our work ensuring we are reaching areas where people receiving our support are under-represented or where we know the need is greatest.

We set up a new outreach project to support the recently resettled Ukrainian refugees and their host families. In addition, we continued our work with the Polish community, reaching **109** individuals and **25** organisations.

Both the Ukrainian and Polish work supported people to connect to and navigate local mental health services and have conversations to reduce stigma around getting support in these communities.



We also attended Chichester and Worthing Pride. Following conversations at these events, we did some research that revealed the need for peer-led mental health groups for the LGBTQIA+ community. We are now working on setting these up.

We continued to build our peer hub in Littlehampton, which is now running four peer-led groups including on complex emotional needs, autism and ADHD. We recruited five specialist peer volunteers to the project in addition to five volunteers already involved. The project supported **26** people who were struggling with their mental health but previously not having help. The peer hub project also held a community drop-in with local charity Turning Tides which had **257** attendances.

Our EDI panel connected with **130** people through events and talks over the year, including a successful Time To Talk event in February.

## New project in Adur



We started a project to focus on five wards in Adur district that had higher levels of poverty, employing an outreach worker to connect with these communities. He worked with **43** organisations, such as Citizens Advice and foodbanks, and reached **613** people about our mental health support.

## Hannah's story



**Hannah has had anxiety since childhood which was exacerbated by having undiagnosed autism and ADHD.**

I've had anxiety since I was 14 (I'm now 21). I began having panic attacks when I was in year nine and my anxiety continued to escalate. In retrospect, having now been diagnosed with autism and ADHD, I recognise that some of these difficulties, in particular feeling frequently overwhelmed, were probably related to my autism too.

Autism definitely makes my anxiety more challenging. It means I get anxious and it escalates more easily. I'm very sensitive to noise. I don't really have social anxiety but I'm not comfortable with crowds and I often get sensory overload in crowded places.

Five years ago, things got considerably worse for me when I began experiencing health anxiety and I stopped leaving the house. I felt depressed, wasn't functioning well and felt suicidal at times.

I had some support with one of West Sussex Mind's youth mental health workers. It helped having someone independent to talk to. I then got really overwhelmed again and shut myself off from everything. A year later I started getting involved in some of the social groups West Sussex Mind offers.

I was quite worried about doing this but it was okay. It helped that it was on available on Zoom, because I wasn't leaving the house.

I always go to the Friday drop-ins. We have a general check-in and chat at the beginning, play games and have a laugh. We might play online games, such as Gartic Phone, or have general knowledge quizzes or specialist quizzes about film and TV. I find that having that connection with others, while doing something focused, helps me and I feel less isolated.

I've done different workshops at West Sussex Mind, around panic attacks, managing anxiety, catastrophising and resilience.

I've also started going to the neurodiverse group run by West Sussex Mind. It's helpful and I get satisfaction from being able to support others and share my perspectives.

## Lewis's story



**When Lewis was anxious, he felt sick, distant and detached and had to withdraw from social situations.**

I've been struggling with my mental health since I was 14, but I didn't realise I was experiencing anxiety until I was 16 years old (I'm now 26).

When I'm anxious, I feel sick and become distant and detached from myself. I also experience physical ticks, like twitching hands or legs. When I become detached, my mind wanders off onto other things to distract me from my anxiety and this can be difficult for my relationships. The debilitating sick feeling has meant that I've cancelled social events at short notice and had to have days off work – leaving people wondering what's wrong.

My first son was born a few years ago and I think my anxiety has more or less calmed down since his birth. Having a little person to look after and think about kind of moves anxiety to the back of my mind. That said, I am still terrible in groups and social situations, and the need for me to put myself in these situations has of course increased since having Kai. But because it's for him, I try to push myself to do it!

Having someone to talk to at West Sussex Mind's Families in Mind on a one-to-one basis really works for me. It's more personal and it boosts my well-being to be able to offload and talk things through. The support is great and I have learned some breathing techniques and exercises to help with my anxiety.

I am also more open to friends, family and colleagues as a result of having talked to someone. It means that I am now able to say when I feel anxious or low.

This helps enormously, because it means I have accepted myself and can talk openly with more people about how I feel.

I'm not constantly masking my anxiety, which is what I was doing before, and that was only increasing my worry about letting others down or them judging me. Having more people who understand is really important.



## Older people

Our older people's service supports those aged 65+ in Adur, Bognor, Midhurst and Chichester



**157** people supported

**876** attendances at our group activity sessions

**1,054** individual support sessions (phone, video and face-to-face)

## Crisis prevention in Worthing



Our crisis prevention service, Staying Well, in Worthing, supported an average of eight to 10 people every day

**390**

individuals were supported with one-to-one support, 27 of whom were carers

**96%**

of those who did a feedback form said our service was GOOD or EXCELLENT

**89%**

felt the Staying Well service had made a positive difference to how they managed their mental health

## Families with young children

**182**

parents received individual support with us

**1,269**

total attendances over 372 group sessions



## Parenting support

Our parenting support for those helping their children with their mental health provided online self-study courses to

**369** parent carers. We gave

individual advice to **92** parents



# Involving people

Involving people with lived experience of mental health problems in our work is important to us and we continued holding service user forums and feedback surveys through the year.

Volunteer involvement also continued to be strong. Thanks to investment from East Head Impact, we launched a new peer volunteer training programme and increased the number of peer volunteers, with 16 helping people we support.

This was the first full year of our EDI co-production panel. The panel comprises volunteers who have lived experience of mental health problems and who are passionate about diversity and inclusion. They developed some excellent web content and ran a successful event on Time to Talk Day. We set up a second co-production panel to develop our communication with the public and people who use our services.

This year we undertook a review of the largest element of our

work, the Pathfinder service supporting adults, which was led by two paid expert-by-experience chairs. They interviewed service users and external partners as part of the review.

We continued to have Kirk Lord who has a wealth of experience as an active peer volunteer and on our Board of trustees.

## Key organisational and staff achievements this year included:

- Finalising our new values which followed consultation and linked to our EDI work. These have been well adopted through the organisation and were a theme for our staff/volunteer days and at our AGM.
- Holding a staff activity day in response to our staff telling us they felt great benefit from in-person events.
- Bringing people together and celebrating successes at a staff and volunteer online conference.

- Supporting staff around the impact of the cost of living crisis by encouraging conversations through teams and one-to-ones, sharing financial support resources and by continuing with our employee assistance programme. The Board also reviewed staff salaries in April and October to ensure we were paying what we could.

- Developing six new types of role. A total of 39 people left the organisation, 57 people were new and a number of people made internal moves, either into different teams or being promoted to higher grade roles. At the end of the year, we had more than 120 employees and sessional workers.

- Achieving the Investors In People accreditation. The report highlighted that our people were proud of the work they do and the positive impact it had on the community.

The suggestions from the report will also form part of our business plan going forward.



# Communications

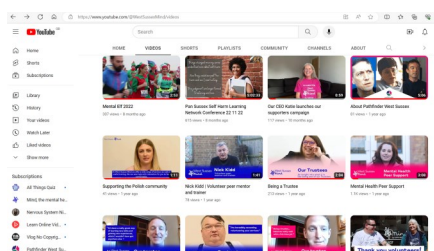
Effective communications are essential for people to know we are here and can help, and to get public and community support for our work



Our Ukrainian worker, Vlada, took part in some videos (in English and Ukrainian) and did a BBC radio interview to promote our work supporting people fleeing the war in Ukraine. We also introduced web pages in Ukrainian and bilingual social media posts.

## Our communications work included:

press and radio coverage, videos, web content, posters, social media and digital marketing



## Our social media work includes Facebook, Twitter (X), Instagram and Linked In

### Feeling low?

We help people over 65 in Bognor, Chichester, Lancing, Southwick and surrounding areas, who are feeling low, have depression, anxiety or other mental health needs



Our communications team continued to promote our regular mental health support services throughout the year. In addition, we publicised the developments mentioned in this Impact Report, including the training team's Self-Harm Learning Network, our outreach and peer support projects and our work around equality and diversity. We also published this Impact Report!

One large piece of work was a section of the website which the communications team co-produced with people with lived experience of mental health problems through our EDI panel. The content sets out how people can be involved in our work, and how we aim to make our services accessible to people from various backgrounds and communities.

Towards the end of the year, we were pleased to recruit a chair to set up a communications panel, comprising people with lived experience of mental health problems, to co-produce and inform our communications work with people who receive support with us and the public.

Other communications highlights for 2022 to 2023 included:



- Creating additional resources and articles on our website to support with the cost-of-living crisis and its impact on mental health

- Recognition of our supporters and fundraisers through a variety of news stories and social media posts about their activities and donations

- Introducing Ukrainian-language pages on our website

- Interviews and stories with people from LGBTQIA+ communities

- A series of blogs during Volunteers Week and on loneliness during Mental Health Awareness Week

- Promoting our Mental Elf 5k Fun Run and Walk, and producing a video after the fundraising event

- A farewell article as Katie Glover stood down as CEO. Our Linked In post on the piece received record engagement!

The communications team also continued to lead the communications work (printed leaflets, videos, social media, website) for the Pathfinder Alliance of mental health support providers across West Sussex.

# Financial review

In 2022-23, West Sussex Mind spent £2,756,987 providing services, which was a 9% increase on 2021/2022. During the year our principal funders were:

- NHS Sussex/Sussex Health & Care Partnership Integrated Care Board
  - West Sussex County Council and other local district and parish councils
  - GP practices and primary care networks
  - National Lottery Community Fund
  - Mind
  - Age UK West Sussex and Brighton & Hove.
- These sources of funding are generally linked to a contract to provide a specific service.



For example, the NHS contract is for our main Pathfinder support services for adults, our crisis prevention service in Worthing and our young people's service, while West Sussex County Council funds some of our training programmes.

In 2022-2023, inflation and the cost-of-living crisis was a concern for us. We regularly reviewed our commitments and expenditure to monitor the impact of this changing situation on our finances.

The biggest impact was on our staff and volunteers. Many of our staff are on comparatively low salaries and rising fuel, food and housing costs have had a big effect on them. Because of this, we gave a second pay increase to all our staff in October 2022 and we plan to take a similar approach in 2023-24, with an initial pay rise in April and then a further pay review and possible award in October.

It has been vital for us to support our staff by doing this but it is very challenging in the context that we had minimal or no increases in our NHS income in 2022-23 and expect the same in 2023-24.

## Thanks to all our partners

We received grant/trust funding from many organisations this year including:

- East Head Impact - £100,000 over two years to support the development of our peer volunteer training programme
- Active Sussex and national Mind – grant funding support to increase our physical activities programmes, with a focus on peer support to help people take first steps into a new activity
- Arun District Council, Worthing and Adur Borough Councils and national Mind – grants to help us support newly resettled Ukrainian refugees and their host families
- National Lottery Community Fund - £357,774 to support us to continue to deliver our Families in Mind service for a further three years
- Heads On – funding to run a VCSE mental health network in West Sussex supporting the work of the Community Mental Health Transformation programme

Our trustees are grateful to all the organisations who have so generously supported us financially in 2022-2023.





# Fundraising and donations



We agreed a new fundraising strategy during the year to run to end of March 2025. Our new strategy recognises the importance of communicating our case for support effectively and of engaging long-term supporters and donors.

We set targets for ourselves to increase our fundraised and non-statutory income and in 2022-23 we were pleased to achieve these targets.

Some of the community fundraising highlights of the year included:

- Mental Elf 5k Fun Run and Walk along Worthing seafront
- Former Worthing Mayor Councillor Henna Chowdhury choosing us as one of her charities for the year
- A supporters campaign
- Jacobs Steel estate agents holding a charity ball in aid of WS Mind.
- Our Mental Elf Fun Run was a highlight of our fundraising year, inspiring people of all ages and abilities, businesses and other organisations to dress up as festive elves and raise funds for us. Over the year, other fundraisers supported us in a wide variety of ways, from concerts, raffles and bake sales to marathons, cycle rides and skydives. Others chose to make a donation rather than do an activity and we were impressed by the enthusiasm and generosity of our supporters.

**“We have been raising funds for West Sussex Mind for them to help fight the mental health epidemic currently gripping young people across the UK.**

**“Organisations like West Sussex Mind provide much-needed support to young people and families.” - Jo, Randell Design Group, pictured above.**



Town crier and WS Mind trustee Bob Smytherman with the then Worthing Mayor Cllr Henna Chowdhury at a fundraising event



We continue to be members of the Fundraising Regulator, renewing our membership during the year, and we ensure our fundraising is ethical, open and responsible. All our fundraising activities adhere to the Regulator's Code of Practice.



# A final word from our chair



Chair Sue Hawker

This year we saw two big issues for our communities which impacted on people's mental health and well-being.

The cost-of-living crisis had a negative effect on the mental health of many people, including those we support. So we were pleased to secure funding for additional outreach support in more deprived areas in Adur and Arun districts. Through this work, we aim to reach people who may need us most. We also secured funding for an additional peer welfare worker to help people with financial challenges, and we worked in partnership with West Sussex County Council to give out household support fund vouchers to people we support in the last few months of the year.

The invasion of Ukraine gave us a greater focus on the mental health needs of refugees living in West Sussex and those coming here from the war in Ukraine. We were pleased to get funding for a Ukrainian-speaking outreach worker and to secure funding for a wider refugee mental health project.

We continued to see increased demand for all our services in 2022-2023 and so it was great to have funding to increase our support for adults and children in GP practices.

We were also pleased to do more for parents through the launch of our parents' support service and our Self-Harm Learning Network, both of which received very positive feedback.

Developing and offering more peer support continues to be an essential part of how we provide great mental health support and reach more people. We were, therefore, pleased to form a partnership with East Head Impact to develop and provide training for our peer volunteers.

In terms of influence, we took a more prominent role in leading the West Sussex mental health voluntary sector within the Sussex Health and Care Partnership Integrated Care System. We were also selected to lead a voluntary and community sector mental health network in West Sussex. This work strengthened pre-existing partnerships with NHS and voluntary sector providers and helped us develop new contacts and relationships which also help us reach more people.

During the year we saw the work and plans we started in 2021-2022 to develop and diversify our Board of trustees move forward. Through this succession planning, we have said farewell to Brian Hughes, a long-standing trustee who made a significant contribution to our organisation and work over the years, and to Robert Leng, who played an important role in our merger with Shoreham District Mental Health Association in 2019. I would like to thank both Brian and Robert for their commitment and contribution to the charity which has been very much appreciated. Alongside this, we welcomed four new trustees who bring a wealth of experience and new perspectives to our work.

In the last six months of 2022-2023 we planned for the departure of, and recruitment to replace, our CEO Katie Glover who left us at the end of March 2023. Following a full recruitment process, we were delighted to appoint Kerrin Page who has been deputy CEO of West Sussex Mind for a number of years. I am looking forward to working with him as our new CEO over the next period.

Katie Glover was chief executive for 10 years and I had the privilege of working with her for six. She led West Sussex Mind through many changes, from mergers to navigating through the years of the pandemic. Katie's passion and commitment to those we support, staff and the objectives of our organisation always shone through and there is no doubt West Sussex Mind would not be where it is today without her leadership and vision. I would like to thank Katie for all of her hard work and wish her all the best for the future.

Finally, I want to say a huge thank you to all our dedicated staff, trustees, volunteers, members, supporters and funders for their hard work and continuing support for our organisation over the last year. Your dedication and commitment to our work has helped us to achieve so much. We could not do what we do without you.

*Sue Hawker*



# Looking ahead



## In 2023-24 we aim to:

- Ensure participation of people with lived experience of mental health problems is at the heart of what we do. We will have a focus on how we communicate with the public and people we support in 2023-24
- Train and involve more peer volunteers in all our work
- Set up peer-led LGBTQIA+ groups within our services
- Widen our work to support the mental health of refugees in West Sussex and tackle health inequalities
- Further develop work in GP practices and continue to be involved in the leadership and development of community mental health services in West Sussex. We will also continue to be involved in the Pathfinder West Sussex Alliance to ensure the best possible mental health support services in West Sussex
- Develop and support our volunteers, staff and managers so they can provide consistent and good quality services
- Continue to take a prominent role in leading the West Sussex mental health voluntary sector within the Sussex Health and Care Partnership Integrated Care System. We will represent the mental health volun-

tary sector within the Sussex mental health programme and lead the voluntary and community sector mental health network in West Sussex.



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