

# @connect

News and events from Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust.



## Welcome to e-connect!

The Easter bank holiday weekend came and went but the sunshine appears to be staying here in Kent. This is perfect timing really with the restrictions in England continuing to ease.

The 12 April saw the return of the rule of six as well as our shops, gyms, gardens to eat in and hairdressers open, as the government's roadmap continues to lessen lockdown restrictions on the public. Here at KMPT, we have designed our own roadmap, which is in line with the government's, as we also move towards easing restrictions for our patients, carers and visitors. You can read more about this below.

The impact of COVID-19 has been huge for all of us. Groups who have been particularly affected are expectant and new parents, with maternity services having to place restrictions around visitors with many groups for parent and babies having to take place online. There are lots of services available to parents; however, we're pleased to announce the launch of two new support systems - Thrive, our new psychological support service for birth trauma and loss; and PATH, a project that's looking at the stigma around perinatal mental illnesses (PMI) and finding new ways to support and help parents, friends, families, healthcare professionals and employers to better understand its impact.

April is also stress awareness month and over the last year there's been an increase in people experiencing stress, anxiety and depression. Caring for our mental health is vital and to help we have included a list of organisations for you to contact if you're struggling and need support. Remember, there is support and assistance available – please reach out.

Although we are still living through the pandemic and our collective journey to recovery will take time, we hope that over the forthcoming months we can continue to re-connect with loved ones and enjoy more normal activities and a way of life.

Remember for now to maintain social distancing, wear a face covering as directed and adhere to the rules. We're all in this together.

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## Our KMPT COVID-19 Roadmap

During the pandemic we have adapted the ways in which we deliver our services across and Kent and Medway including the use of digital technology to support our patients, working remotely and offering assessments, treatment and reviews via video conferencing so we can help to keep our patients, their loved ones and our staff safe.

As lockdown restrictions begin to ease and we gradually return to a more usual way of life, it is vital as a Trust to maintain the safety of those we support as well as our staff during the next phase of the pandemic.

To help provide everyone with a guide as to how we will continue to support you over the forthcoming weeks up until 21 June, we have produced a KMPT roadmap for all patients, carers and visitors that is in line with the government's own roadmap.

Our roadmap has been developed alongside infection control and operational staff in the Trust and sets out when we will work to resume activities like community care, group therapy sessions, escorted and unescorted leave as well as how and when people can return safely to visiting their loved ones across our sites.

While the roadmap provides a good outline of how we hope to be able to continue to offer our services, it is important to remind everyone that we are working to not only the government's restrictions in relation to tackling COVID-19, but Public Health England's guidance also.

We want to reassure you, as we continue to work in this way for the foreseeable future, that the health and wellbeing of our patients, carers, visitors and staff is our primary concern, so should we need to review our roadmap in order to keep everyone safe we will do this in line with any changes made to the government's own roadmap.

You can find an up-to-date copy of the Trust's roadmap on our website at [www.kmpt.nhs.net](http://www.kmpt.nhs.net) together with updates and further information around any changes to our services.

If you have further questions, please contact our [PALS team](#) by emailing [kmpt.pals.kmpt@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.pals.kmpt@nhs.net) or speak with a member of staff responsible for your loved ones care.

[Find out more about the KMPT COVID-19 Roadmap here >>](#)

## New Maternal Mental Health Services supporting hundreds of expectant, new or bereaved mothers to get mental health support

'Birth trauma is very real, often overlooked, and has long term consequences on so many areas of life.' - Maternal Mental Health service user

Around one in four women experience mental health problems in pregnancy and during the 24 months after giving birth. The NHS is committed to provide them with high-quality perinatal mental health care and has recently announced the roll-out of 26 new dedicated Maternal Mental Health

Services combining maternity, reproductive health and psychological therapy for women experiencing mental health difficulties linked to their maternity experience.

The development of Maternal Mental Health Services sets out clear objectives to offer psychological therapies for birth trauma and baby loss. As part of the [Long Term Plan](#), mental health services across the country will help at least 66,000 women with moderate to severe perinatal mental health difficulties to access to specialist care by 2023/24.

We are incredibly pleased that Kent and Medway were chosen as one of the early implementers, and so KMPT alongside East Kent Hospital University NHS Foundation Trust (EKHUFT) have developed a new service called 'Thrive - Psychological support for birth trauma and loss.'

Thrive is an inclusive, multi-professional service, offering assessment and interventions to those experiencing moderate/severe mental health difficulties as a result of birth trauma and/or loss.

Specialist midwives within the service provide clinical expertise and knowledge of birth loss and trauma, and support for future pregnancies; and the specialist clinical psychologist provides eye movement desensitisation and reprocessing (EMDR) therapy and trauma informed cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

Additionally, a person at the service with lived experience of birth loss or birth trauma is available to offer support and advice. This may include supporting someone at their assessment, sharing their experience of recovery, or linking in with support groups. Based on the need of each person, further advice and signposting can be offered.

The service started receiving referrals in January 2021. To date it has received 16 referrals.

You can read a case study [here](#).



[Find out more about Thrive >>](#)

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## The Mental Health of Learning Disability (MHL) Service

This week the MHL service launched two brand new teams.

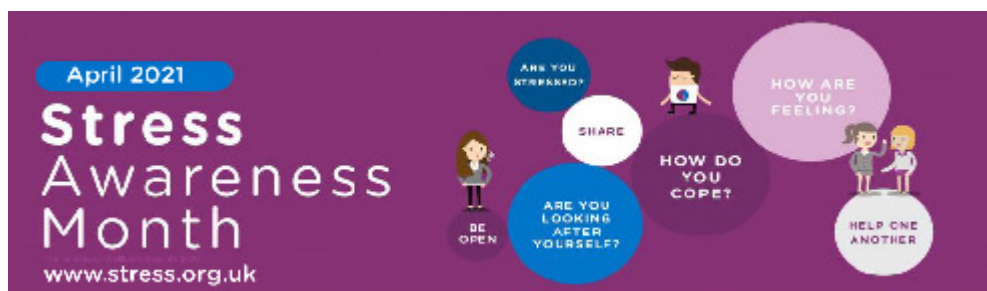
The MHL west Kent team is formed from the merger of the south west Kent and

Maidstone and Malling teams and is based in Albion Place, Maidstone and the MHLD north Kent team is made up of the Medway, Dartford, Gravesham and Swale teams and is based in Archery House, Dartford.

This change mirrors the change brought in November 2020, when the Ashford and Shepway, Canterbury and Swale and Thanet, Dover and Deal teams were merged to form the MHLD east Kent team.

All patients who live in the Swale area will receive their care from the north Kent team instead of the east Kent team to help align the service more closely with the Community learning disability team. This reorganisation will simplify access to the service by having three teams instead of seven, allowing patients and other stakeholders, including those referring patients to the service, to access in one central place.

Contact details for each team can be found here: [MHLD east Kent team](#), [MHLD west Kent team](#) and [MHLD north Kent team](#).



## Stress Awareness Month

April is Stress Awareness Month and a chance for us to reflect on our wellbeing and what we can do to help reduce our stress levels.

In a study conducted by the Mental Health Foundation, it revealed that fewer UK adults feel they are coping well with the stress of the pandemic. In April 2020, 73 per cent said they were coping well, but in February 2021 the figure dropped to 64 per cent.

Life can get really tough sometimes and the pressures placed on all of us during the pandemic has heightened stress levels. Talking is good for our mental health and with lockdown restrictions easing rebuilding social bonds with family, friends and colleagues whilst following the Coronavirus restrictions that remain in place across the country is key to helping to alleviate our stress levels.

If you're in need of support or help to manage your stress, then there are lots of resources and organisations available to you.

The NHS have lots of useful information about [managing stress, anxiety and depression](#), as well as links to [national organisations who offer support](#) when you need it most.

You can enter your postcode into the Kent County Council [website](#) and search for local Kent services near where you live or work for help and support. Samaritans have a confidential staff support line which is free to access from 7am -11pm, seven days a week. Call 0300 131 7000. Alternatively, you can text FRONTLINE to 85258 for support 24/7 via text.

If you are feeling distressed, frightened, overwhelmed, or things are just getting to much for you the [Kent and Medway Safe Havens](#) offer out-of-hours mental health support to anyone aged 16+ in the Kent area, (including healthcare professionals) from four locations in Canterbury, Medway, Thanet and Maidstone. They are open between 6pm and 11pm every day (including weekends and bank holidays). No appointment or referral is needed, but you will need to wear a face mask and have a temperature check upon arrival. The service is provided by Mental Health Matters.

The Folkestone safe haven is run by Hestia for those living in the Folkestone and Hythe district. You can call them for free on 0800 1963 569 any weekday evening between 6pm and 11pm. Weekends 12pm until 11pm. You can also email [Folkestone.Haven@hestia.org](mailto:Folkestone.Haven@hestia.org).

There is also a 24-hour telephone emotional support line staffed by trained counsellors. Call 0800 107 0160 for help from compassionate helpline staff, trained in counselling skills.

Release the Pressure - text the word Kent to 85258 for 24-hour mental health crisis support via text from trained volunteers or call 0800 107 0160.



## New perinatal mental health campaign launching from PATH

It is estimated that 1 in 5 women will suffer from perinatal mental illnesses (PMI) during their pregnancy or in the year after the birth of their child. 90 per cent of these women do not receive or reach out for the support they need. It's time for this, and for the stigma that many associate with PMI, to end.

PATH aims to enable parents to acknowledge their emotional wellbeing and recognise the signs of PMI as early as possible through digital and community innovations, including a new support hub. The project will help support women, families and healthcare professionals to prevent, diagnose and successfully manage mild/moderate PMI.

A key part of the project is a multi-media stigma campaign. The aim is to reach all parents, as well as partners, friends and family members, who might be suffering themselves or worried about a loved one suffering from PMI. We want to show the signs, the emotions and some examples of recovery, as well as help healthcare professionals and employers to better understand the repercussions of PMI and how to help a patient or employee through their journey.

Through surveys, focus groups, research and peer support sessions, we are developing resources to reach parents living with PMI, so that they can access support and know how and where to find it.

We have been working with Sandra Igwe, best-selling children's author and founder of The Motherhood Group, and Mark Williams, mental health campaigner and founder of Fathers Reaching Out, to tell their stories of PMI and share our collective voice to reach those who might be suffering and unaware of how to seek the help they need.

The campaign will be launched on Monday 10 May - so watch this space!

[Find out more about PATH >>](#)



## Get creative this Mental Health Awareness Week

This year's [Mental Health Awareness Week](#) runs from 10 to 16 May and the theme is nature.

We are also asking for staff, patients, carers, volunteers and members of the public to send us their artistic interpretations of nature. This could be a painting, sketch, collage, photograph or any other way you would like to represent what nature and the environment means to them. To send us your creation, please email the Communications team: [kmpt.communications@nhs.net](mailto:kmpt.communications@nhs.net). Look out on our social media pages for some of the entries!

Our Voluntary services team have also been busy partnering with lots of departments to organise events to help our staff and patients engage with their natural surroundings.

On Thursday 13 May Rev. Ruth Bierbaum, Chaplain, and Stephen Tucker, Voluntary services coordinator will be running 'Birds, Bugs and Butterflies.' This is a guided walk which will provide staff and patients with the understanding of what fauna and flora is around them; and to take time to appreciate the natural world and the relaxation, peace, and joy it can bring.

In the afternoon Stephen will also be accompanying our Forensic Outreach and Liaison service (FOLS) team will be taking a group of patients to Elmley Nature Reserve so they can experience the beauty of nature.

Whatever you're going to celebrate during the week, we hope that you too find some beauty in nature and take a few moments to enjoy the peace and relaxation it can bring us all.



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We'd love to hear what you think.

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