



# Impact report 2023-2024



# Chair's welcome

As Chair of Mid Kent Mind, it is my pleasure to welcome you to our Annual Report for 2023-2024. This past year has been one of remarkable achievements and significant challenges and I am proud to share our journey with you.

Throughout the year, our dedicated team of volunteers, staff and supporters have worked tirelessly to advance our mission. In the financial year 2023 to 2024 there were over 12,000 attendances across our services with 5,134 individuals supported (2022 to 2023 4,643 individuals). We were able to rebrand our Low Cost Counselling Service to Affordable Counselling Service significantly increasing the number of volunteer counsellors and counselling clients. We also successfully trained over 1100 people through our Kent County Council funded Adult Suicide Prevention and Youth Mental Health and Suicide Awareness courses. In addition, we were delighted to have been awarded the prestigious Mind Quality Mark accreditation demonstrating our commitment to providing high quality support services to our beneficiaries. This year also saw us secure funds to expand our youth services across to Ashford and Swale where we hope to support more children and young people than ever before. These accomplishments are a testament to the unwavering commitment and generosity of our community.

Our highly successful early intervention and prevention programmes in schools and underserved communities further exemplifies the spirit of innovation and compassion that drives our work. We know that providing direct support, raising awareness, increasing knowledge and equipping people with the tools needed to support themselves and others is a crucial step towards changing the narrative around mental health.

# Chair's welcome

Many charities continue to face a gruelling time as we navigate the cost-of-living crisis. Despite our tremendous success we are no exception and over the past 12 months we have seen greater and more complex demand within our services and have felt the impact of reduced income. This has meant we have had to consider very carefully how we manage our limited funding, knowing that the coming years will mean we will need to spend more to deliver the same services, funding will be scarcer and the needs of our community will increase in demand and in complexity. Despite this, we remain optimistic and hopeful that the mental health transformation programme that is being driven by the NHS provides a more effective, impactful and joined up experience for those experiencing mental health problems within our community.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities that the future holds. We are committed to ensuring anyone experiencing a mental health problem in Mid Kent gets timely support tailored to meet their needs and we are confident that with your continued support, we can achieve even greater things.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our volunteers, staff, donors, Trustees and partners. Your support is the cornerstone of our success and we are deeply grateful for your trust and dedication.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Together, we are making a lasting impact on our community.

**Donal Watkin**  
**Chair of Trustees**

# Chief Executive's welcome

We are delighted to share our latest impact report with you, showcasing the amazing work that takes place every day across the communities we support in Maidstone, Ashford and Swale. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all those colleagues, volunteers and people who share their lived experience with us for their commitment, skills and drive for continuous improvement over the past year.

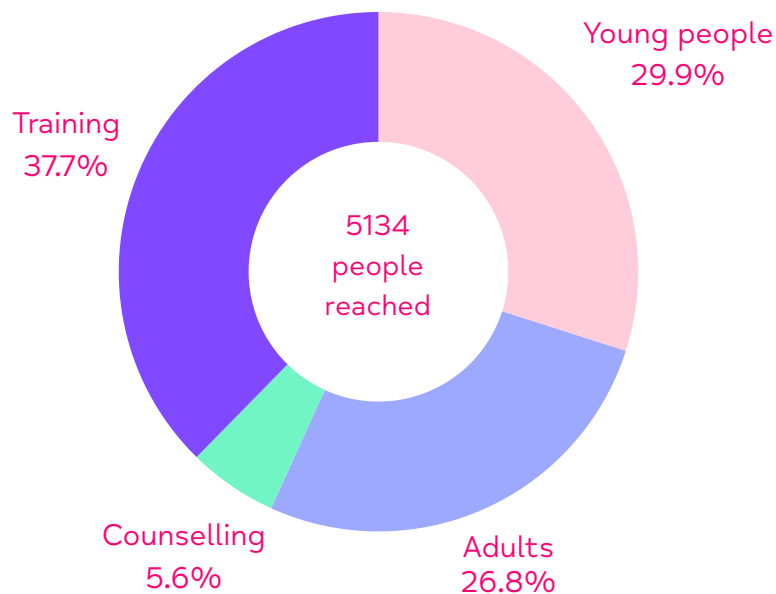
People benefit from having considerable control and choice to access the support that is more relevant and appropriate to them, we have worked tirelessly to ensure our services are truly co-produced by those that use it. During the year we have touched the lives of 5134 people. To meet this growing demand and help ensure mental health services meet the needs of local people, the charity is going through a period of consolidation; sustaining our high quality support services will be a key focus for the year ahead.

We continue to see the lasting mental health effects of the Covid pandemic, amplified by the impact of the rise in the cost of living. The scale and complexity of support needs across our communities is increasing, along with a widening gap in health inequalities. We have made considerable strides to ensure all members of the community feel our services are accessible and inclusive. As a local Mind, we will work hard, with National Mind and the federation of over 100 local Minds, to step up to the plate, galvanise real change and demonstrate our commitment to system wide leadership – standing shoulder to shoulder with those with lived experience. As your local Mind, our passion and determination to support our local community remains unchanged. We hope you enjoy learning more about the work of our organisation and are inspired to join us in championing our vision.

**Henu Cummins**  
**Chief Executive**

# Overview

We worked with over **5000 individuals** across Maidstone, Ashford and Swale; a **15% increase** in service users year-on-year. People accessed our wellbeing groups and phone lines, online and face-to-face courses, group or 1-2-1 Cognitive Behavioural Coaching courses, weekly counselling sessions, training courses or took part in a one off, community based wellbeing activity.



**Collectively, we saw over 12,000 attendances to our services.**

Our beneficiaries shared with us that they are pleased to be able to access our support quickly and easily. They like that there are a variety of activities to engage with, giving them the opportunity to find a service that will best meet their needs.

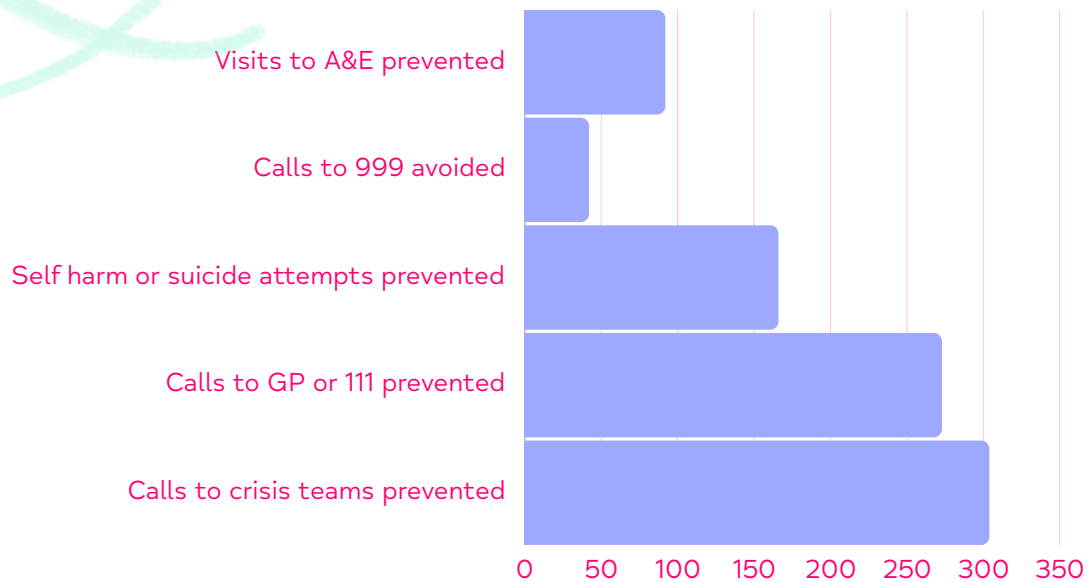
**“I don’t know what I would do without this support... This service has been transformational!”**

Service user feedback



# Support for adults

For adults, we know that our **wellbeing services** provide lifesaving support. Our regular **drop-in cafés in Maidstone and Ashford** saw **1659 attendances**.



- 100% of individuals attending our drop-in café felt the service supported their mental health and wellbeing.
- 89% felt that having set, regular times to access wellbeing support helped maintain their mental health.
- 78% reported that it helped reduce feelings of isolation.

## 1020 phone calls answered by our Wellbeing Coaches

Our phone line provides immediate support whether that's to an adult experiencing suicidal ideation and low mood or a parent whose young person is struggling and has been unable to access timely support.



# Support for adults

During the year, we ran a variety of groups and courses tailored to the needs of our community including **walking groups, art groups, Menopause Mind and Movement courses** and **Coping with Life courses**. We also piloted **specialist support programmes for perinatal individuals**.

The pilot of our new **Menopause Mind and Movement Courses**, **received 52 attendances**. Since then, we have **secured funding to run 6 more courses in 2024-2025 which will provide 27 hours of free wellbeing support** to local women struggling with the common effects of menopause such as anxiety and stress.



- 100% of participants reported the Menopause Mind and Movement course taught them useful techniques for managing stress and anxiety.
- 100% shared that the movement element of the sessions had positively impacted their mood.

## Affordable Counselling Service

Our affordable counselling service continued to grow with over 70 volunteer counsellors **donating 3850 hours of subsidised support to 286 individuals saving our organisation over £70,000**.

100% of clients reported that the counselling they received helped to improve their mental health and/or wellbeing.

**“I found the counselling to be just what I needed and so helpful. It allowed me to work through my concerns and issues in a safe, non-judgemental place”**

Counselling client feedback

# Support for adults

During the year, we ran 9 **Coping with Life** courses. This structured 3 week course utilises Cognitive Behavioural Coaching techniques to empower participants to learn more about their own mental health and how they can use positive coping strategies to improve their wellbeing.



- 100% of attendees enjoyed the course
- 100% reported their wellbeing improved.

## Case study

When X first accessed our services, they were experiencing suicidal thoughts, anxiety and depression and were regularly having panic attacks. Due to their poor mental health, they had resigned from their job and were finding day-to-day life increasingly challenging.

After finding out about our services and having a chat with one of our wellbeing coaches, X started off by attending our Coping with Life course and then went on to attend our drop-in café and art group.

Building in confidence and feeling more resilient, X successfully applied to a volunteer position with our team, helping to facilitate one of our regular wellbeing groups. In time, this in turn allowed them to apply for meaningful employment in the local area; X now works full time and is using positive coping strategies to manage their mental health.

**“There honestly aren’t the words to tell you the positive impact you have had.**

**Thank you!**

**Service user feedback**



# Support for adults



“I find the group calm, therapeutic and relaxing.”

“I now feel more confident in being with others.”

Our **regular Crafts and Chatter group** met in Maidstone throughout the year and facilitated 87 attendances. Participants took part in mindful art activities including painting, tissue craft, clay and card making.

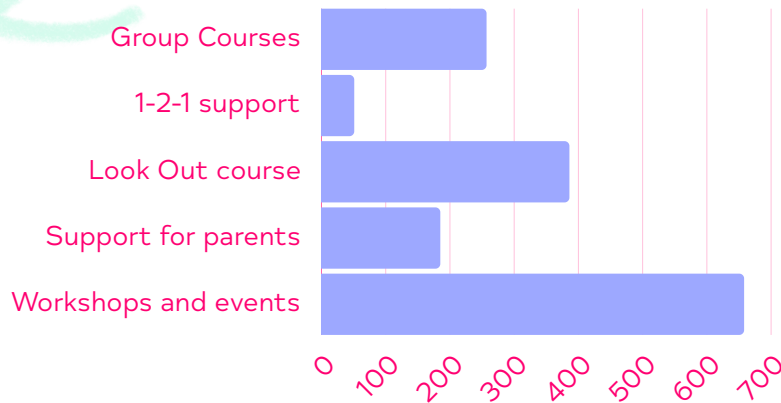
- 67% reported their stress or anxiety levels reduced
- 78% reported their self-confidence improved
- 100% benefitted from the peer-to-peer support the sessions provided
- 88% felt less isolated
- 78% felt the sessions helped to improve their wellbeing

“The leaders were very motivating and patient. The environment is quiet and relaxing allowing people to talk about their mental health.”



# Support for young people

Our programme of **youth services reached 1537 individuals**. We provided a range of activities including 1-2-1 and group Cognitive Behavioural Coaching courses, parental support and one off workshops and community events.



51 young people benefited from a **Wellbeing and Resilience Action Plan (WRAP)** which represents **255 hours of wellbeing support**.

WRAPS are weekly, 1-2-1 interventions tailored to the needs of the individual and delivered using Cognitive Behavioural Coaching techniques.



- 100% of WRAP participants showed a direct improvement to the specific areas they identified as a priority.
- 90% reported they were better able to manage their mental health and wellbeing.
- 80% reported a decrease in feelings of anxiety and low mood.

**“You have given me so many tools that I can use, but you’ve also given me my hope back that there is a future where I don’t always feel low.”**

**Feedback from a young person**

# Support for young people

**Our Look Out course reached 386 young people at local schools across the region.** This new course was launched in direct response to feedback from young people. The 1 hour session teaches them how to recognise that they or a friend might be struggling with their mental health, how to support each other and where they can get further help.



- 98% felt better able to recognise the signs that they or a friend might be struggling with their mental health.
- 95% of attendees found the session useful and were more aware of where to go to get help and support.

**“It has made me more aware of how to reply to people who are telling me secrets about their mental health...  
I now know who else to tell.”**

257 young people attended our **group Cognitive Behavioural Courses including Managing Me and Bounce Back**. These are designed to help them positively manage their wellbeing, understand anxiety and stress and improve their resilience.

- More than half of participants reported a reduction in anxiety and felt more positive about their future.
- 95% of participants reported that their wellbeing improved.

**“I’ve learned about how to handle nervous feelings, how to relax and find positivity.”**

**Feedback from a young person**



# Support for young people



“This course has helped me to improve my wellbeing because now I can do calligraphy when I feel anxious.”

**99 young people attended our holiday workshops.** These provide an opportunity to try something new, build confidence and resilience and overcome isolation. Our team facilitated a variety of fun activity days including water sports, calligraphy, chess and clay workshops.

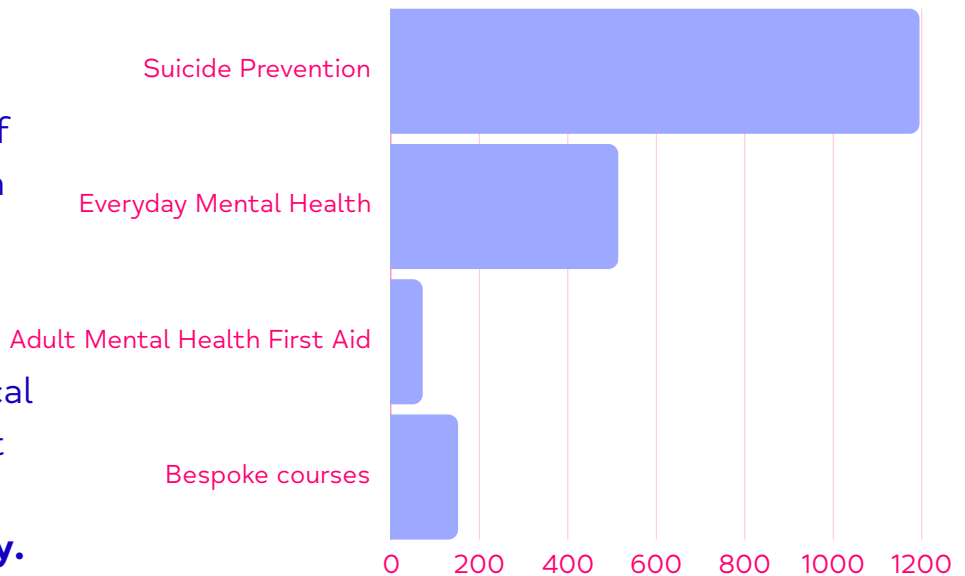
**100% of participants enjoyed it and wanted to come back again.**

“I liked being in the boats and it built my confidence as I didn’t want to do it to begin with.”



# Training

As well as Wellbeing Support, we are committed to raising awareness; we offer a range of training courses so people can better understand common mental health problems, how they can support themselves and others and what other local services exist that can benefit them. **We trained 1933 individuals in the community.**



Kent County Council has reported that our county has an above average suicide rate. To help address this, we provide a package of training to health care professionals, businesses, teachers, parents and other individuals in the community. This includes our **Adult Suicide Prevention Course, Youth Mental Health and Suicide Awareness Course** and **Everyday Mental Health Course.**

- 99% of attendees on our Adult Suicide Prevention course felt more confident in reducing suicide risk.
- 95% of attendees on our Youth Mental Health and Suicide Awareness course reported their knowledge of suicide prevention had increased.
- 97% of participants on our Everyday Mental Health course were more aware of things they could do to support their own mental health.



**“I am more confident in knowing what types of questions to ask and I have spoken directly to young people who are self-harming.”**  
Teacher





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