

# Kent Adult Social Care Provider Bulletin



Friday 26 June 2020

## Introduction

### Paul Stephen, Senior Commissioner



As the commissioning lead for our homelessness support service, Kent Homeless Connect, I have seen the incredible way in which providers and authorities have come together to support and provide safe accommodation for vulnerable homeless individuals in Kent during this pandemic. In addition to ongoing support, the 'everyone in' directive saw everyone pull together to very quickly engage and accommodate rough sleepers, in a joint effort to protect these vulnerable individuals. This was a major accomplishment, given that some were entrenched, having slept rough for many years.

Now, we must ensure that support continues, complex needs are met, positive options for the future are made available, and those vulnerable individuals do not return to the streets; this is a considerable task, but one I am confident can be achieved, as I know the dedicated providers of this service, and the providers of all services which support vulnerable homeless individuals, will continue to strive for the best outcomes possible.

Currently, I am also assisting the drafting of a recovery strategy for adults commissioning. We now need to collectively focus on how we restart or reset services, restore delivery and ultimately recover to a stronger position than prior to this pandemic, having learnt from the numerous challenges we are facing. What is evident across our diverse portfolio is the passion and commitment of the providers we work with. Your adaptability, flexibility and sense of collective responsibility during these difficult times is commendable. Thank you.



KENT INTEGRATED  
CARE ALLIANCE

### KICA Update

KiCA were involved in a virtual roundtable meeting with Roger Gough, Leader of the Council and Clair Bell, Cabinet Member this week which was extremely positive. We know the care sector has faced many challenges during this pandemic and will continue to battle issues such as PPE, maintaining a sustainable workforce as well as financial implications. Our key focus

at KiCA is to support our care providers through these unprecedented times and through the recovery stage which we know is going to be a long and difficult process. We will continue to work together, bringing the issues you are facing to the forefront.

We also held our second webinar last week, which was very well attended. The next KiCA member webinar will be on 9th July - for further details or to join KiCA, please contact [louise.faulkner@kica.care](mailto:louise.faulkner@kica.care)

## Coping with Hot Weather

Risks from hot weather are likely to be amplified during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is because:



- many of the same groups are vulnerable to the health impacts of both heat and COVID-19. For example, older people are at risk from both
- more people will need to stay at home because of the pandemic and could be exposed to high indoor temperatures
- restrictions on social interaction reduces the opportunity for people to check on friends and neighbours who may be vulnerable
- capacity across care services (e.g. domiciliary care, care homes) may be further stretched by increased need for those who are dependent on others.

New resources and a slide pack outlining the risks of COVID-19 and hot weather have been published on the [Heatwave Plan for England collection page](#).

All local authorities in England have a responsibility to prepare for, alert people to, and prevent health problems caused by heatwaves.

Tips for staying healthy in the sun

Make sure you:

- drink plenty of water
- stay in the shade between 11am - 3pm
- take rest breaks if you're out and about
- wear sunscreen above SPF15 and cover up in the sun.

Download and print copies of the [summer posters \(PDF, 3.3 MB\)](#) for your workplace.

If you are having trouble printing the posters above, you can [print them in a smaller size \(PDF, 1.1 MB\)](#).

For more information please click [here](#).

## Developing an ACE Aware and Trauma Informed System: Community Resilience and Covid-19 Recovery



Online learning opportunity for system leaders across Kent and Medway.

**2<sup>nd</sup> July, 10am to 11.30am via webinar**

The occurrence and impacts of trauma may be heightened at times of significant social adversity such as during a pandemic or other emergency events. This webinar, delivered by Kate Cairns, enables leaders from across Kent and Medway to reflect on the implications of trauma on organisations, services and systems.

Trauma-informed practice has increasingly been recognised as important in our public services as understanding of current research evidence grows. And at a time when the whole population is living with issues of stress and severe anxiety, trauma-informed practice becomes essential for everyone.

This 90 minute webinar provides a space to focus on this vital knowledge base. It will shine a light on how the systemic application of trauma informed practice will be crucial to COVID-19 recovery and building community resilience.

Following this webinar, you will have the opportunity to join a more discursive and reflective session, offered as a web based tutorial, in a smaller group. More information about this will be available following the webinar.

To book, [click this link](#)

If you have any questions, please contact [lara.hogan@kent.gov.uk](mailto:lara.hogan@kent.gov.uk)

A recording of the webinar will be made available on the [SPACE Matters web page](#).

## Adjusting to life after lockdown - Extra Care

The next few stories are about Extra Care, including Housing 21 and the West Kent Housing Association. We have been catching up with them on how our schemes are beginning to adjust to life after lockdown.

## Housing 21

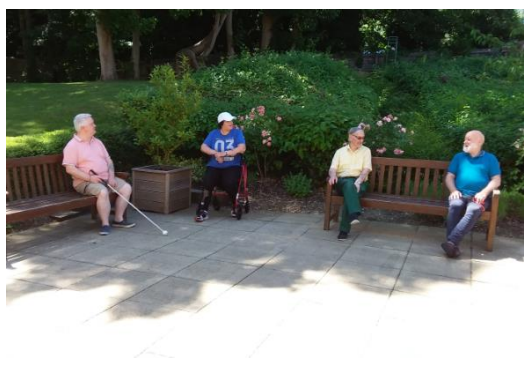
During such a challenging time Housing 21 have been working closely with the onsite care providers to reduce social isolation and to work towards creating a new normal for our residents across Kent.

Activity packs have been developed containing; advice on keeping well whilst staying at home, contacts for local resources, seated exercises, crosswords and word searches and face to face activities have been adapted so that smaller groups can take part in craft, bingo and quizzes.

Connections have been made with local businesses and charities, who have provided food parcels for tenants and sweets and treats for the staff. All staff have ensured that they have kept regular contact with the residents and had one-to-one chats to reduce isolation. The residents have also supported each other phone calls, meeting in small numbers and those who were able shopping for those who are shielding.

Although our communal gardens have remained closed to visitors, during the warmer weather the schemes have focussed on the garden to promote socialising from a distance whilst incorporating some fresh air and exercise. Care staff have taken residents for walks around the garden and residents have been encouraged to enjoy the outdoor space by setting up socially distanced seating areas.

The keen gardeners have continued their activities tending to areas of the garden and residents have been involved with the planning of the garden, including selecting bird boxes and a water feature. The staff believe the garden has been a lifeline for some of our residents and have seen a lot more people using the garden than ever before, getting involved and really enjoying seeing other residents that they wouldn't normally socialise with.



## West Kent Housing Association

West Kent have been producing regular newsletters for tenants to keep them up to date with Covid guidance changes and to provide sources of ideas for reducing boredom/inaction. This includes exercise plans, knitting patterns and hearts have been produced for local hospitals, recipes, rainbow templates which are displayed in the scheme, craft materials, growing and nurturing seeds, provision of puzzles and quizzes, bird box action/watching and a photo competition, we have had local musicians volunteer to put on concerts in the communal garden, and tea/coffee afternoon.



As Covid 19 guidance changes and lock down measures are relaxed West Kent are considering how to build tenant's confidence to start safely increasing interaction. This includes obtaining and acting on feedback/ideas from tenants and arranging small social events in the garden areas such as skittles, coffee mornings,

afternoon tea and cake, skittles, bingo and hopefully building on successful entertainment that has already taken place at some of the schemes.

As things change, it's a case of juggling tenants needs and wants and in response to this West Kent have increased daily call ups to those who have been identified would benefit, and for those who prefer not to have a group setting. In addition, West Kent Together have launched a Tackling Isolation Project. This is a referral service which will reach out to those who feel consistent contact will enable and assist them during a difficult time coping with isolation.



## 121 Care & Mobility

121 Care & Mobility received a big thank you from a couple who have not long lived at King Edward Court and we wanted to share this with you. Well done team!

*"Jill and myself wanted to drop you this email, just to say a huge thank you for what you and the care team have done during this 'Coronavirus' situation and for what you*

*continue to do on a day to day basis at King Edward Court.*

*As you know, Jill and I moved into 'The Court' due to Jill's medical condition and us needing the extra facilities to help us cope with her being wheelchair-bound. We are extremely happy, and the move here has been life-changing for us both. Although we currently have no need for a 'care package', we have settled in well and this has been very much due to you and your care team who have been fantastic in ensuring that we have been made so very welcome. We felt part of everything immediately and we know that we speak for all the residents here, in saying that everyone feels we could not have a better "care team" looking after us.*

*There have been times over the last few months since "lockdown" started when I know that some residents have struggled to cope with not seeing family and some completely shielding from any contact. Both you and the staff here have maintained a huge sense of professionalism and the sense of humour and fun that you outwardly display has been a life-saver to many, including us and helped us to get through the difficult times that I think everyone has faced at some point. We sometimes forget that you too, all have a life away from King Edward Court with your families and you too are affected by the rules and restrictions imposed. We know how difficult it is, let alone having to come to work and keep a happy smiling face and dealing with others problems as well as whatever your own personal circumstances may bring.*

*Everyone has been so grateful for the extra things that you have had to do in order to keep the court running. Your admin responsibilities must be huge and complex during the most normal of times but the extra tasks you have had to take on over this period have not gone unnoticed. With the Court being closed to visitors and deliveries etc. and the intercom system to the individual flats 'disabled', we know that you both have probably not stopped answering the door panel calls and taking in residents shopping and parcels etc. Again, a big thank you for this extra time it has taken out of your normal days duties to do this for us all - it's so obvious that your work ethic is second to none!*

*As we have seen on all the news channels over the last few months, residences similar to ours have unfortunately been subjected to outbreaks of COVID-19 and resulted in unfortunate outcomes. As I write to you, we have had no incidents and this is undoubtedly mostly due to you and the care teams professionalism and dedication in dealing with things the right way. As I've mentioned earlier, it's not just when you and your team are at work. When away from here, you have to ensure that your social-distancing measures are adhered to 100% in order to ensure things are all good here. That is dedication, so thank you to you all and to your families for this sacrifice!*

*No one has had to deal with anything like the COVID situation before and hopefully things will begin to return to some form of normality soon. Everyone has been so adaptable and excellent at ensuring the Court has run near to 'as normal as possible'. Sometimes, it's so easy to criticise when things go wrong but if things work perfectly then very little is said. Also, on occasions us old 'uns find it difficult to praise at times but we know that everyone here at King Edward Court appreciates all of*

*your efforts - hence the purpose of this email.*

*So, we thank you all from the bottom of our hearts - Helen and Ajay for what is clearly your strong but fair leadership and all the marvellous care team that look after us in the most amazing way! You all make it such a lovely place to live and we'd be lost without you!"*

## Reaching All Staff

We have been really pleased to hear the positive feedback from many of you regarding this newsletter and the value of its contents. We are keen to reach as many workers as possible at this time, so please continue to make sure that you share the newsletters with your staff.

All previous copies of our [newsletters are now available on the kent.gov website](#), and we will continue to upload the new newsletters to the site.

## Voluntary Sector Updates – Hi Kent



As soon as lockdown was announced, we determined that we would find a way to keep our two Resource Centres (in Maidstone and Canterbury) open, to ensure that we could continue to be available to our clients, and thanks to the dedication of our staff, we have achieved that.

Our phone helplines are available every weekday, and although our 160+ community hearing aid clinics had to be suspended because the premises we use to run them were temporarily closed, we are providing replacement batteries and re-tubing services to NHS clients via the post, or in person, following Covid-19 secure protocols, to those clients who are able to come to us..

Similarly we have continued to process referrals for assessment of over-65 clients on behalf of Kent County Council. Although it has not been possible to meet with clients face to face, we have evolved a way of carrying out some assessments by phone or video call.

Nearly all our British Sign Languages courses were swiftly moved to online teaching.

The unprecedented scale of the lockdown has caused considerable difficulty for our client group, many of whom experience isolation and loneliness in normal times, due to their inability to hear. The present restrictions on social interaction including meeting friends, attending clubs and family gatherings, have exacerbated these very

real problems. Our loyal team of volunteers, who help to run our community clinics network have also found the lockdown extremely frustrating and they miss seeing and helping their regular clients. They are desperate to return to their duties as soon as it is safe to do so, and we are already planning to reopen some clinics progressively over the coming weeks, as soon as we have carried out risk assessments of each venue we use.

The big challenge we set ourselves back in March was to look at whether we could perhaps continue, and even expand, some of our free services, under rapidly worsening circumstances. We had started running a Tinnitus Support Group in Maidstone back in 2013, and had subsequently managed to expand the number of groups to nine across Kent, usually running each group four or five times per year. One in eight people have persistent Tinnitus, and the ratio among those who are also deaf or hard of hearing is far higher.

Although we have no regular funding to run these groups, which are hugely valued by people who attend, three of the Hi Kent staff team have become trained as Tinnitus Advisers by the British Tinnitus Association, who have been tremendously supportive.

In the current pandemic, we have evolved a new way of running our Tinnitus Support Groups using the Zoom video platform, and this has been a huge success. We have continued to engage expert speakers for most meetings, and the Groups are now happening every week. Each meeting lasts two hours and having them in the evenings enables us to reach more people every month. People can attend regardless of where in Kent they live, and all are very comfortable with the technology. The following recent feedback is typical of the comments we are getting: "Thanks for everything you and all at Hi Kent are doing for Tinnitus sufferers".

## Resources and Tools

The Reading Well scheme is a clinically tested booklist which is supported by NHS England and The Royal College of GPs and is collated by health experts to help you to understand and manage your health and wellbeing using helpful reading. Find out more about the scheme and how to become a member [here](#).

[Updated shielding guidance](#) from the Government for people who are clinically extremely vulnerable to COVID-19.

[Support for parents as some children return to school](#) – advice and links from NHS England's Associate National Clinical Director for Children and Young People's Mental Health.

The [NHS Race and Health Observatory](#) has been set up to identify and tackle the specific health challenges facing people from black, Asian and ethnic minority (BAME) backgrounds. It comes amid significant concerns about the particular impact of the COVID-19 virus on people from BAME backgrounds.



## The Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS)



KIDAS providers have been successful in their funding bids to MoJ for COVID funding – this will be used to address waiting lists that have built up for therapeutic programmes due to COVID and the closure of venues by supporting the electronic delivery of therapeutic programmes to victims of domestic abuse. It will also be used to enable other organisations such as solicitor to deliver virtual support at One Stop Shops, improving the support available to victims.

## Sharing Your Excellence

We are always pleased to hear your good news stories, and to hear that the resources being put in place are useful and making a difference to you and your staff. If you've received or delivered any little acts of kindness or have any good news stories, [please let us know](#).