

In the community for the community

Better mental health care for Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington

Nil Suner

Introduces the new Kentish Town mental health team

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Ingrid was one of 444 residents who received support

Mental health social support provided to Camden residents during peak of Covid-19*

444

people supported

91%

satisfied with support

60%

reported positive changes

68%

reduction in A&E attendances

45%

reduction in crisis contacts

*May 2020 to January 2021

Source: *Support and Connect Services Year 2 Report.*

A pioneering project set up to help people during the pandemic shows the value of new holistic mental health services rolling out across North Central London over the next three years.

The Camden Support and Connect Service provided befriending and practical help to 444 residents during the Covid-19 peak.

A new report has found the project ensured hundreds of people stayed well and out of hospital during the pandemic. The review says the service improved people's wellbeing and reduced their need for emergency, crisis or hospital care.

Camden resident Ingrid says the support was vital to her mental health. 'Without these services, I would have been in the crisis house every other week.'

Run in partnership with Camden Council, Mind in Camden and Likewise, the NHS-funded project is now an established service within Camden's community mental health programme. The service offers social, emotional and practical support including help to resolve problems with housing, finding work, paying bills or feeling isolated.

By 2024, similar services will be available throughout Barnet, Enfield, Haringey and Islington as part of the biggest investment in community mental health care in NHS history.

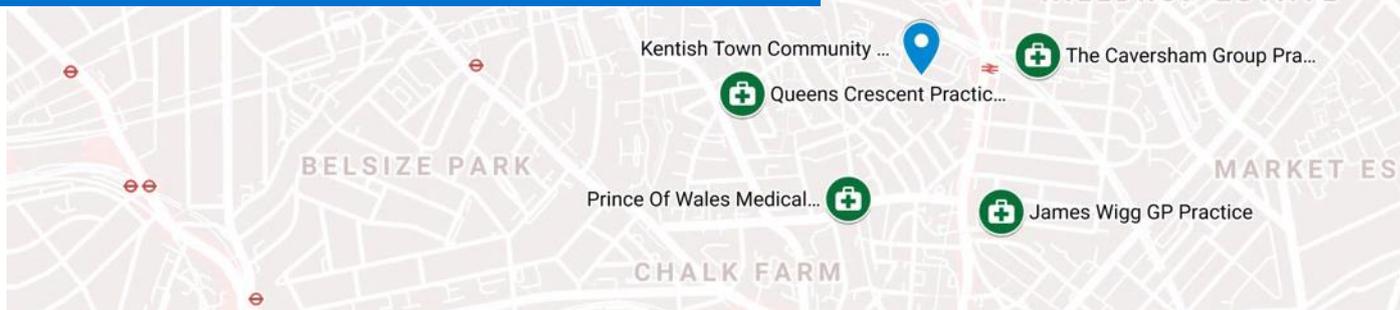


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Mental health care in your neighbourhood

KENTISH TOWN



Nil Suner introduces the new Kentish Town neighbourhood mental health team.

I'm part of the new neighbourhood team in Kentish Town, offering one-stop holistic mental health care and support.

I'm one of the peer coaches. We also have specialist nurses, a psychiatrist, social worker and new voluntary sector colleagues joining soon. They'll be able to help people find work, access benefits and other challenges that can impact mental health.

The team meets every weekday morning to discuss new referrals, next steps in the person's care and who in the team can provide most support at the first appointment.

For those who may benefit from peer coaching, we'll complete an initial assessment by phone or in the community usually within two weeks. We offer 10 one-on-one sessions, with flexibility to offer more if needed.

We can support them to prioritise practical steps to improve their mental and physical wellbeing, like improving sleep quality, sustaining a balanced diet and exercising more. We follow their pace and priorities to plan the change they want to make.

We can also help them navigate local services or link them to groups or other organisations to reduce social isolation for example.

Having people with lived experience in the team brings a different perspective to how we approach mental wellbeing. We know what it's like to be unwell and the challenges some people face in recovery. Peer coaches through this experience help ensure care is safe and responsive to people's different needs.

Nil is a senior peer coach in the new Kentish Town mental health team.

Free **NHS** apps to help you improve your physical health



Track your steps



Start running



Drink less alcohol



Quit smoking



Helping you look after your physical health

Ophelia Mensah explains how mental health teams will help you look after your physical health.

I'm on a mission to improve the physical health of people with long-term mental health conditions.

Having a serious mental illness can increase your risk of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. But with regular check-ups and small changes to how you live, they can often be prevented.

When you're trying to manage your mental health, it can be difficult to remember appointments or take medication, exercise or eat well.

We're making it easier to look after your physical health. In future, your physical health needs will be considered as part of your mental health care.

We plan to offer many more people annual physical health check-ups to make sure you're getting the care you need. These checks can be done at your home, GP clinic or wherever's convenient.

We'll take your blood pressure, monitor your heart beat and run blood tests to check for any problems. We'll make sure your vaccines are up-to-date and you've had tests for serious conditions like cancer.

We'll link you up with local programmes to help you eat well, give up smoking and exercise more.

If you have a physical health condition, we'll book your appointments and coordinate your care to make treatment as easy as possible. We'll ask your specialist to link with your mental health team so we can manage your follow-up care.

Mental and physical health are closely linked. By looking after your physical health, we'll help you to look after your mental health.

Ophelia is Senior Population Health Nurse in Camden.



Health tips



Food checker



Check your BMI



Lose weight



Healthy recipes

Meet the team

Angela Sobers

Barnet Clinical Project Lead



Each edition we introduce you to someone helping to transform community mental health care in North Central London

How do you start your day?

Usually with a strong coffee and 15 minutes quiet time before getting my nine-year-old out of the door for school.

How are you helping to transform care?

I support mental health teams to implement changes to provide more timely, personalised and holistic mental health care.

What are you working on now?

I'm helping teams to align their cases with primary care networks and making sure everyone is under the care of the correct team. I'm also helping teams recruit new colleagues.

Where did you work previously?

A social worker by training, I've worked in mental health for over 15 years and continue to practise as an Approved Mental Health Professional. My previous role was manager of a community mental health team in Barnet. My experience means I understand how teams work, the challenges they face on a day-to-day basis and what they need to successfully transform care.

Why are you passionate about mental health?

Mental illness affects people differently. Some people can have a terrible time and end up in a really bad place. If you're able to contribute even in a small way to their recovery, that's a job well done in my eyes.

What are your hopes for community mental health care?

With record NHS funding for community mental health care, I believe we can finally provide hard-working teams with the resources they need to deliver excellent care for everyone who needs it.

What are you looking forward to most after the pandemic?

I'm really looking forward to a holiday once everything gets back to normal, getting on a plane and travelling abroad.

Angela is Clinical Project Lead for Barnet's transformation programme.