

Access Wellbeing Universal Services Impact Report 2024-25

Transforming community mental health and wellbeing support in Dorset | January 2024-March 2025

Welcome



Welcome to our first impact report about Access Wellbeing's new Universal Services. It's been a busy and exciting time since the first Access Wellbeing hub opened its doors in January 2024. By the end of March 2025, we had launched two more hubs, opened 15 community drop-in spaces, and employed 50 wellbeing coordinators at locations around Dorset.

Most importantly, however, Access Wellbeing has supported thousands of people across Dorset, with over 8,800 appointments and visits to our spaces since our first hub opened.

We all face challenges in our day-to-day lives that can become overwhelming but by providing accessible support through our hubs and drop-ins, we are giving people a vital space to talk. As one client in our Poole hub explained: 'They make me feel that I've been heard and just that little thing means the world.'

This impact report reflects on the mobilisation of our services. Early in 2024, the contract for Access Wellbeing's Universal Services was awarded to a partnership of three organisations – Bournemouth Churches Housing Association (BCHA), The Lantern Trust and Help & Care – who could support and adapt to the needs of their local communities. Since then we've welcomed two further partners on board – Harmony and Dorset Mind – and are now working together to provide support across Dorset.

I'm incredibly proud of the hard work of all our Access Wellbeing staff since we launched, their dedication and compassion has already touched so many lives. I look forward to expanding that support further in the next year to reach even more people.

Amy Maloney

Head of Access Wellbeing - Mental Health, BCHA



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Amy Maloney, Head of Access Wellbeing



Our partnership

Access Wellbeing is a partnership between the voluntary sector and NHS in Dorset. There are five areas, each managed by one charity partner.

We are truly excited to be joining the Universal Access Wellbeing team, representing West Dorset. We will be offering drop-in services to some of the most rural areas of the county, bringing the service to them. We will offer a welcoming space and time to listen to those in need.

Tracey Bovingdon, CEO, Harmony

Access Wellbeing West Dorset

Too often people can fall through the gaps in healthcare systems. Access Wellbeing aims at providing wellbeing and mental health support at the earliest opportunity in community settings. We believe that with the right support, all our community can thrive again. We are proud to have been one of the test of concept sites and to be a part of this pioneering partnership, which is changing lives in Dorset.

Mike Graham, CEO, The Lantern Trust

Access Wellbeing South West Dorset

Access Wellbeing is a true partnership between the NHS and voluntary sector, designed to make mental health and wellbeing support more accessible, preventative, and personfocused. By embedding help within our communities, we're not only responding earlier to people's needs – we're fostering resilience, connection, and long-term wellbeing.

Linda O'Sullivan, CEO, Dorset Mind

Access Wellbeing North Dorset

The Access Wellbeing partnership has impressed everyone with how much it has delivered in its first year. There is clearly a need for this community based support and the whole team have mobilised quickly to respond. It shows how collaboration can have a transformative impact for individuals when driven through partnership.

Lorraine Mealings, CEO, BCHA

Access Wellbeing East Dorset

Access Wellbeing demonstrates how partnership of VCSE organisations and the NHS can drive innovative, person centred, community support. This has been a journey of dynamic learning, ensuring our model of support and every personal interaction is to the highest possible standard, and benefits from ongoing reflection. Importantly, this report, through stories, shows the impact that Access Wellbeing has on people's lives.

Mark Sharman, CEO, Help & Care

Access Wellbeing South East Dorset



What is Access Wellbeing?

Access Wellbeing is the new approach to community mental health and wellbeing support in Dorset. It is a partnership between the NHS and voluntary sector, working together with other organisations across the community. The new approach was co-designed with people who use services, as well as organisations and groups working in Dorset.

Access Wellbeing provides different types of support depending on each person's needs, including easy access to early help with the issues that can impact on our mental health and wellbeing. This support is provided through open-access services in the community, including hubs and drop-in services delivered through the Universal element of the Access Wellbeing programme (read more about the wider programme on page 20).

The aim of the Access Wellbeing Universal offer is to provide every adult in Dorset with quick and easy access to support, to help prevent problems from escalating and empower people to live a balanced life.

Access Wellbeing hubs and drop-in spaces offer person-centred support to anyone aged 18 and over. They are staffed by friendly wellbeing coordinators who can help people to access support on topics including:



They gave me assistance and practical advice in manageable chunks to help me work towards my goals.

Access Wellbeing Boscombe client



Practical worries such as money or housing



Mental health and emotional wellbeing



Support for carers or family members



Education, training and work



Social connections and activities

Our community spaces



Who we support

Access Wellbeing provides support to the whole adult population of Dorset which is estimated to be over 520,000 people (2023 local authority data).

- 1. From January 2024 when the first hub opened to March 2025, our hubs and drop-in spaces received 6,633 visits, including people who subsequently received 1:1 appointments and those simply looking for information or brief advice. This figure includes repeat visits.
- A further 2,200 people attended groups in our hubs, either run by Access Wellbeing charity partners or other charities and community groups. This figure includes repeat visits.
- The highest proportion of our clients were aged between 35 and 54 years old (45%) based on data gathered on our digital system (laptus) the complete age breakdown based on this data was:

18-24: 11% 25-34: 17% 35-44: 23% 45-54: 22% 55-64: 16% 65+:11%

• The reasons people visited varied significantly, but common topics included mental health support for people experiencing anxiety or depression, employment, housing, disability support and advice, and support for stress.







Access Wellbeing Poole client



Who we work with

Access Wellbeing is about connecting the system, to make it easier for people to access and navigate support. Prior to launch, research revealed that people can find it confusing when they're trying to find the right mental health support, so we work closely with public services, charities and community groups to help people get the help they need more easily.

organisations based in our hubs

During 2024/25, over 60 partner organisations were based in our three hubs at different points. Some run appointments and clinics from the hubs, others host groups, and some use the space as a work base, allowing them to link with our wellbeing coordinators when needed. Organisations based in our hubs included:

- Community mental health services and other NHS mental health services such as Steps2Wellbeing
- Physical health clinics such as pre-diabetes clincs, blood pressure checks and vaccine clinics
- Mental health charities such as Dorset Mental Health Forum and Dorset Mind
- Advice organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau
- Specialist support charities such as Sexual Trauma and Recovery Services (STARS), Shelter, We Are With You, Reach and Home Start Wessex
- Local authority teams, including professionals working in social care, and work and benefits teams
- Social prescribers
- Specialist practitioners such as dementia coordinators.

Our wellbeing coordinators are the first point of contact when people arrive but they can connect people to specialist support from these and the many other organisations in our local community. It's estimated that there are approximately 6,900 charities and community groups in Dorset, in addition to public sector organisations, so we are part of a huge network of support.



I find it incredibly helpful to have the flexibility to work from the Poole hub on a regular basis. It helps me develop good working relationships with all the hub staff, as well as staff from other services working there, and learn from their immense knowledge of local services. I am also able to use this space to meet my clients in a safe central venue. This has helped some of my clients to be less reliant on CMHT staff to support with issues such as housing and benefits, where this is not our area of expertise. It is an amazing service which the people of Poole are very lucky to benefit from.

Working with colleagues in mental health

We work closely with colleagues from other organisations to provide holistic support, including primary care networks and community mental health services. A social prescribing lead from Christchurch explains how Access Wellbeing helped her when she accompanied someone she was working with to the Access Wellbeing drop-in space at the Somerford ARC: "This individual was really struggling with their mental health due to several stressful life events that happened in recent weeks, and they felt disconnected from family, friends, and services. The most pressing issue was their housing situation, and they also had very limited funds and no food at home.

"The drop-in team were able to see him straight away and offer a listening ear, as well as practical support. The wellbeing coordinator was so welcoming and really put him at ease. She provided a foodbank voucher and looked through his housing documents. She assured my patient she would contact the housing team on his behalf and booked him to come back again the following week. The Access Wellbeing team have continued to support him and offer appointments when required."

The drop-in team were able to see my patient straight away and offer a listening ear, as well as practical support.

Social Prescribing Lead, Christchurch





66Connecting support

Crissy is a Specialist Mental Health
Practitioner at Bournemouth East
Collaborative Primary Care Network, and
explains how she has worked with Access
Wellbeing teams: 'I have found working out
of the hub (and the hub as a whole) to be
invaluable to the patients I have been
working with.

'Before the hub, I would have to signpost patients to a lot of different places and while this works for some, we know that for others this can feel overwhelming. Having a set person at the hub who can come alongside them for a period of time and help them connect with those same services has made a massive difference.

'Being based at the hub each week has also helped me to connect patients with the hub who would otherwise be unmotivated or too anxious to independently attend.

'The team have been so welcoming and kind, which has made a massive difference. I have had so many patients speaking highly of the hub and the support that has been offered to them.'



Access Wellbeing East Dorset

Access Wellbeing East Dorset is managed by BCHA and covers areas including Bournemouth, Ferndown and Wimborne. BCHA is also the lead Universal partner for the Access Wellbeing contract.

BCHA launched the Access Wellbeing Boscombe hub in September 2024 at an opening which was attended by Tom Hayes MP. The hub, which is located in central Boscombe, has seen over 1,385 visitors since then.

In addition to the fixed hub in Boscombe, the team have launched five community drop-in services in the first seven months of delivery – from Bournemouth to Somerford and as far as Wimborne and Ferndown.

Strong partnership and collaborative working are key elements of our work in East Dorset. At our fixed hub, we co-locate with partners from across support sectors including BCP, Shelter, DWP and community mental health services. We endeavour to adapt to the mental health and wellbeing needs of the community, and create an accessible and safe space where people can access essential support.



I have found the hub to be invaluable to the patients I have been working with. Even just being able to signpost a patient to a service which is a central, safe and informative space with easy access has been an incredible thing.

Crissy, Specialist Mental Health Practitioner, Bournemouth East PCN



The welcoming Access Wellbeing hub offers accessible support in the heart of Boscombe





The year in pictures at East Dorset

It's been a busy time since our Boscombe hub officially opened in September 2024. As well as launching five new drop-in spaces, the team have been out and about connecting with many of the incredible organisations working in our community.







From top left clockwise:
Opening the Somerford
Arc drop-in; Access to Food
event; NHS Thrive event;
DWP event; Celebrating
Movember at our hub;
Visiting Immanuel Church
Men's Shed











Hayley's story

In August 2024, Hayley was told by her asthma specialist that after 15 years of being too unstable in her breathing to work, she could return to work.

'I met with Roxie at Access Wellbeing in Boscombe for an appointment to find a way forward to enter back into employment,' Hayley explains. 'My dream was to be a support worker.'

With support from Roxie, Hayley started an Essential Support Worker Skills course in November with BCHA Learn.

'At the end of November I had my first job interview since 2001, and Roxie gave me lots of help and positive interview tips to take with me.

'I got a job as a full time support worker starting in January 2025. None of this would have been possible without the expertise and the amazing support of Roxie and all the other staff at Access Wellbeing.'



Access Wellbeing South West Dorset

Access Wellbeing South West Dorset is managed by The Lantern Trust and covers Weymouth, Portland, Dorchester and surrounding areas.

The Access Wellbeing Weymouth & Portland hub opened its doors in February 2024 at Hope House. The hub sees people on a 1:1 basis through referrals from other services. The Lantern Trust also now runs five drop-in spaces in community venues, with three in Weymouth, two in Dorchester and one in Portland.

Since the Weymouth hub opened, the team have supported people in over 1,700 1:1 appointments, and the drop-in spaces have received over 130 visits since the first opened in November 2024.

The team in Weymouth work closely with local community mental health services, alongside a range of other partner organisations such as primary care network (PCN) colleagues, specialist charities and support agencies. Michelle is a Clinical Team Lead at Weymouth & Portland CMHT and explains: 'CMHT and Access Wellbeing are building working relationships that are strong and collaborative. Over time, we have created a space to meet regularly and review the progress and efficiency of the service we are providing together. Access Wellbeing has become a valuable and necessary resource of support for CMHT thanks to continued consistent communication and understanding.'



Access Wellbeing Weymouth client



The Access Wellbeing Weymouth & Portland hub is based at Hope House





Since it opened its doors, the Weymouth & Portland hub has also welcomed 1,784 attendees to groups (this figure includes repeat visits). The team's administrator supports and coordinates nine different groups run at the main hub location at Hope House including an art group, older person's chair yoga, yoga, a women's group, men's art group and creative writing. Many of these are attended by clients who are also supported by Access Wellbeing. In addition, the hub gives space to a further 11 groups including physical health clinics, family support and a range of holistic wellbeing support.

The year in pictures at South West Dorset

The Weymouth & Portland team have worked incredibly hard since launch to provide 1:1 appointments to clients, as well as supporting groups and launching new drop-in spaces. Here are just a few of the highlights.









From top left **clockwise:** Opening the new Weymouth dropin at the Community Front Room: Celebrating our first birthday; Attending a VCS Assembly meeting with AW colleagues; Enjoying the sunshine during Stress Awareness Week **Right:** Wellbeing coordinator Sharon enjoys a well-earned cuppa







Phil's story

After several years of health difficulties and a diagnosis of a pituitary brain tumour, Phil found he was struggling with his mental health: 'I visited my doctor and just broke down,' he recalls.

He was referred to a mental health nurse at Hope House, who then introduced him to a wellbeing coordinator through Access Wellbeing.

Phil had weekly sessions with Cassie, his wellbeing coordinator, with additional support if needed. 'Those first 6-8 weeks were really critical in allowing me to find my voice and start learning how to heal myself,' he reflects.

Cassie worked alongside Phil to help him develop tools relating to different aspects of his life, including his work-life balance and communication with friends and family: 'I actually started to open up to one of my friends who didn't realise they were struggling themselves. Through being more positive about my own mental health, I was able to help them too.'

'The tools I've developed have helped me in every part of my life,' he continues, 'to cope with difficult situations at home, difficult situations at work, even difficult situations just sat in traffic! But I think most importantly, it's given me the tools to be honest and open with myself, and then I can be open and honest with my family and my friends. It's truly given me a space to be able to check in and put mechanisms in place that are for me, and in doing so I can be a better person to help others.

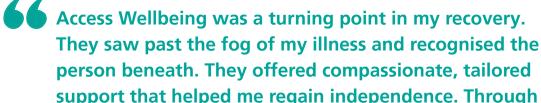
'It's not just given me back my life, it's given me a far better quality of life. Access Wellbeing has absolutely changed my life, and not just in the short term – it's changed my life for my life.'

Access Wellbeing South East Dorset

Access Wellbeing South East Dorset is managed by Help & Care and covers Poole, Purbeck and surrounding areas.

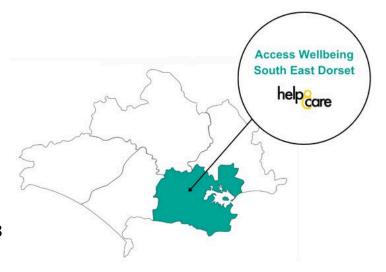
The Access Wellbeing Poole hub was the first to open in January 2024 and has seen 4,276 people walk through its doors since then (including repeat visitors, groups and partners). The hub saw its busiest month in March 2025, with 265 people attending. 18 partners work from the space to provide holistic support alongside the wellbeing coordinators. Three well-attended groups also run from the Poole hub in conjunction with Access Wellbeing – Veterans Support (With You), BCHA Learn and EDAS wellbeing workshops.

In June 2024, the East Dorset team created an Access Wellbeing Passport for external colleagues to use for their clients to access the service. The aim was to change the mindset of a traditional referral and introduce a tool to support a warm introduction from one colleague to another. This supports the principles of no referrals and accessing support at a time that is right for the person. A digital version of the passport is now available, offering more flexibility to professionals.



support that helped me regain independence. Through them, I found 'Roots', a community that gave me purpose and connection. Thanks to their support, I grew in confidence and resilience, finding my feet again.

Access Wellbeing Poole hub client



The Access Wellbeing Poole hub in The Dolphin Centre was the first to open its doors in January 2024





The year in pictures at South East Dorset

It's been an exciting 15 months since the Poole hub opened in January 2024. The team have welcomed many partners into the hub, as well as attending events and connecting with other organisations in the local community.















From top left clockwise: Peer open dialogue training with colleagues; Wellbeing coordinators Renee and Tanya enjoy a cuppa; Help & Care colleagues at the Poole hub opening; Attending an event with Dorset Mind; A team wellbeing walk to Poole Park; Connecting with NHS colleagues



Key momentPurbeck service launches

In the first week of April 2025, a new outreach service launched to support people in Purbeck.

Ahead of the launch, the team spent time understanding the current offer across Purbeck, attending team meetings and settings within the community, including CMHT meetings. They also spent time out and about within the community talking about Access Wellbeing and how we could compliment the current provisions.

We have opened in three venues that have welcomed us to support their community – Swanage, Wareham and Lytchett Matravers – with more drop-in spaces to come.



Purbeck wellbeing coordinators Andy and Nicci

Access Wellbeing North Dorset

Access Wellbeing North Dorset is managed by Dorset Mind and covers towns including Shaftesbury, Sturminster Newton, Sherborne, Gillingham and Blandford, plus surrounding areas.

The first North Dorset drop-in spaces are opening in Sturminster Newton, Blandford Forum and Gillingham in the spring of 2025. The team are also currently looking for suitable locations in Shaftesbury and Sherborne. The team aims to reach out to as many people as possible in the north of Dorset and provide an excellent service as they develop and extend their support. They will offer support to everyone who needs them, and will also focus on underrepresented populations in mental health services like the military and farming communities.

The North Dorset team joined Access Wellbeing in January 2025, and had expanded to include a senior wellbeing coordinator and two additional wellbeing coordinators by March 2025.

Since joining the Access Wellbeing team, we have been warmly welcomed and supported as we worked hard on recruitment, training and getting to know as many local stakeholders as possible. We were supported in achieving this by the members of the Universal partnership who connected us with PCNs, CMHTs and other NHS partners, as well as voluntary sector partners.

David Sutherland, Senior Wellbeing Coordinator, Access Wellbeing North Dorset



The team of North Dorset wellbeing coordinators are bringing support to community settings





Access Wellbeing West Dorset

Access Wellbeing West Dorset is managed by Harmony and covers the far west of the county, including the towns of Bridport, Beaminster, Lyme Regis and Maiden Newton, plus surrounding areas.

This first West Dorset drop-in space opened its doors at the beginning of April 2025 at the Harmony Centre in Bridport. Additional drop-in spaces are opening in the spring in Beaminster, Lyme Regis and Maiden Newton.

The West Dorset team currently includes one senior wellbeing coordinator and three wellbeing coordinators.





We are proud to be taking mental health and wellbeing support out into the rural community of West Dorset. The team are very experienced and committed to supporting mental health and joining the wider Access Wellbeing partners across the county.

We walk alongside people to ensure that day-to-day issues and stress do not become acute or overwhelming. We feel privileged to provide this service.

Erin Lewis, Senior Wellbeing Coordinator, Access Wellbeing West Dorset



The West Dorset team currently includes four wellbeing coordinators, working initially across four locations



Building a network of support Peer open dialogue

Peer open dialogue (also known as POD) is a network-focused, needs-adapted approach to serving the needs of the community in Dorset. This innovative approach looks to build, identify and adapt a network of support around a person, exploring their mental health needs.

Peer open dialogue works with the person and their significant relationships and network within a meeting setting, and links in different services, working in partnership to provide a connection. This approach provides people with far more control over what is happening, and the participant is actively involved in their own care and supported by their network.

Team members within each Access Wellbeing area have been trained in peer open dialogue. Colleagues from across other VCSE and secondary care sectors in Dorset are also in training. As well as benefitting clients, POD allows hub teams to join CMHT and other teams in shared learning and practice spaces, further strengthening relationships and interfaces between services, to improve clients' experiences of support.



My wife was invited to join our POD sessions. It was a really big shift for us. I realised my family wanted to know more about what I was going through. I had previously chosen not to have those conversations with them to protect them, but that was actually doing a lot of damage. We now use many of the tools we were given through POD in our daily lives.

Access Wellbeing Weymouth client



POD in Access Wellbeing

East Dorset

The Boscombe Hub manager is a POD practitioner and currently undergoing Train the Trainer. Nine further staff are currently undergoing POD training.

South West Dorset

There are currently five POD practitioners, with four still training, alongside a practitioner who is undergoing Train the Trainer. POD has been used to support nine different families in the past year.

South East Dorset

Eight members of the team are now trained or in training for POD, allowing the approach to be used in a range of situations to enhance support.

North Dorset

The Senior Wellbeing Coordinator is a POD practitioner and currently undergoing Train the Trainer. The aim is to see North Dorset locations being offered as POD venues in the future.

West Dorset

The new West Dorset team currently has one member of staff qualified on POD and a further staff member working through the training, with plans in place to develop further capacity.

Reaching more people online

Alongside the expansion of our physical spaces, we also developed our digital presence during 2024/25. We launched the Dorset Access Wellbeing website in July 2024, offering accessible information on all our services, and signposting to wider mental health support. The website has received 34,160 views since its launch, with 9,523 unique visitors. Work has also taken place to codesign a new digital service finder, which will provide easy access to information on a wide range of local support, and is set to launch in summer 2025.

We have also grown our social media presence with the launch of a dedicated Access Wellbeing Facebook channel. This has allowed us to share updates about services, connect with the public and partners, and foster an online community. Content on our Facebook channel has received 151,459 views since it was launched and reached 36.1k people.



Next steps for Universal Services

We have made huge progress during 2024/25, but we recognise that there is still much more to do. During 2025/26, we will further expand our services and work with our partners to integrate support, to ensure people access Dorset can access the support they need, when they need it. Key plans for 2025/26 include:

- New drop-in spaces in North Dorset and West Dorset
- The expansion of services in other areas, to deliver support that meets the needs of each community
- Wider roll-out of POD and POD Train the Trainer, to cover all of Dorset by January 2026
- Launch of our digital service finder on the Access Wellbeing website, giving people easy access to information on support from across the local community
- Focus on particular audiences to ensure we are reaching those who most need support, including older people and the LGBTQ+ community
- Launch of telephone appointments and Choose & Book
- More integration with Focused and Specialist support and wider mental health services.



Transforming community mental health services

The new Access Wellbeing Universal services form part of a wider transformation of community mental health support in Dorset. Alongside the mobilisation of these new open-access services, work is underway to transform wider NHS mental health services, to provide everyone with access to the right support, at the right time, in the right way.

The new model of care for community mental health services includes three different areas of support – Universal, Focused and Specialist. These work together to create one connected system, allowing integrated support that is centred around each person's needs.

Developing one connected system

NHS mental health services in Dorset are provided by Dorset HealthCare University NHS Foundation Trust.

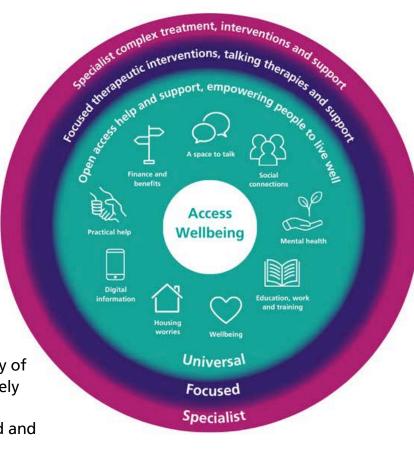
In April 2024, Dorset HealthCare commissioned the contract for the delivery of the new Universal services, and over the last year the trust has worked closely with the voluntary sector partners to ensure Universal services are safe and effective. Work is also underway to further integrate and align the Focused and Specialist areas of the model, which you can read more about on page 20.

Already the new model is making a difference. Dorset HealthCare has been able to increase support within community mental health services by 27% as part of the total Access Wellbeing model, with over 9,500 contacts in the last year compared to 7,500 in the previous year.*

Dorset HealthCare has also provided specialist training in peer open dialogue (POD) to Universal teams, to lead the roll-out of this innovative approach. Read more about how POD is helping people to build support networks on page 18.

*2+ contacts data, based on adults with serious mental illness accessing community mental services two or more times





Thriving Together – a new complex trauma pathway

The new complex trauma pathway provides psychologically-informed interventions and support to a population of people with complex needs, including those with dissociative conditions. The introduction of this pathway is an opportunity to define provision and create an equitable offer for people who have not historically had access to the same support as others. During 2024/25, work took place to develop and launch key elements of the support pathway including:

- Thriving Together Advisory Group formed, with the aim of enabling all people with experiences of trauma, dissociation and complex emotional and relational needs, described as personality disorder and/or complex PTSD, to live meaningful lives
- Five peer specialists recruited, initially from existing staff, with a recruitment plan in development for new staff and other peers
- Development of nine new and updated courses in the Recovery Education Centre (REC), including five with a specific focus on trauma and safety.
- Pilot of Flourish programme in Poole, providing accesss to psychological therapies for people with complex PTSD

Integrating support between clinical teams and wellbeing coordinators

Within the new model of care, community mental health teams (CMHTs) focus largely on providing specialist support, but clinical teams are already working closely with wellbeing coordinators in Universal hubs and drop-in spaces, and will continue to integrate support further in the future.

During 2024/25, CMHT teams linked with wellbeing coordinators to run specific activities such as reviews and medication clinics. Staff including mental health practitioners, psychiatrists and pharmacists are also now based within hub spaces for periods of time. This has allowed staff across services to work more closely together, and given service users the valuable opportunity to access support in a community space rather than a clinical setting.

We are looking at how the Universal offer can support people to step away from specialist services whilst still receiving the support they need and adopt a warm handover approach. A single point of access model is also being scoped which will integrate all aspects of the Access Wellbeing model.



The collective goals of person-centred care are prioritised through this innovative partnership. We have opportunities to learn from each other, which enhance the service outcome and promote the impact of the integration and transformation.



www.dorsetaccesswellbeing.co.uk











