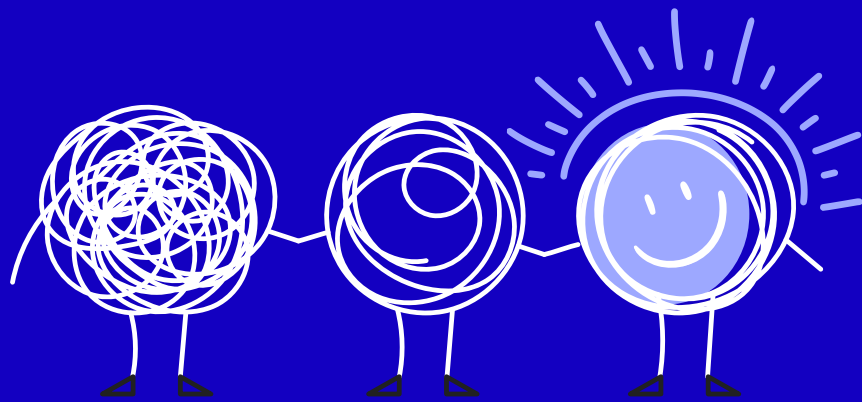


Impact Report 2023



EN *rich* **ING LIVES**

**We want those in our communities
to have the best mental health!**

 **mind BLMK**

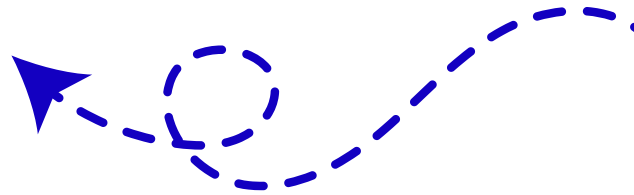
“
I wouldn't be here
without this service.
This service saved me
and I no longer feel
like ending my life
”



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WELCOME



2022-2023 Chair and CEO opening statement

Enriching Lives

After considerable growth, this year we focused on ensuring that all services deliver the highest quality and support people to achieve the outcomes that matter most to them by ensuring the voice of lived experience is at the heart of what we do. In addition, Mind BLMK continued to develop further services increasing our reach to younger people in our communities.

This year we were delighted to retain our Mind Quality Mark, and proud that we were awarded with 4 areas of excellence: Health and safety, Information, Governance, and Impact & effective services.

This demonstrates the commitment of the workforce to excel in all departments, their enthusiasm, dedication and experience continues to increase quality throughout the organisation.

We continue to be dedicated to working in partnership with our NHS providers, local authorities and other voluntary organisations. This year we worked in partnership to create a Mental Health Alliance with the aim to bring together organisations who have an interest in making a difference to those with wellbeing and mental health needs in our communities.

Together we are making a real impact on the wellbeing and mental health of those in our communities, which is highlighted in this report.

We have another challenging year ahead with greater financial pressures on the system as well as on individuals. However, we are committed to continuing to develop and deliver services which support people holistically and delivered with quality and compassion.



THANK YOU

Simon Clarke - Chair



“
I go out more and look
after myself better. I
volunteer at the
church now and I’m
more sociable
”



WHAT WE'VE ACHIEVED

2022/2023 in numbers

Demand for our services continues to grow - whether people are engaged with our support; contacting HQ for signposting or referrals to our services or accessing our website or flyers for information, our aim is to provide clarity about mental health and our local provision.

10,764

1:1 Support



individualised support sessions were delivered

28,000

Hours of support



were collectively provided by our services, training & headquarters

2,182

Group Sessions



were delivered in the Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes area

6,618

HQ Support



calls were answered by our HQ team which equals over 6 days of support

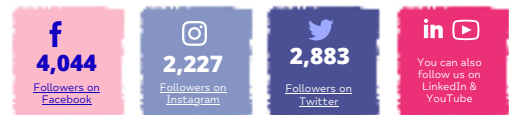
1,602

Training



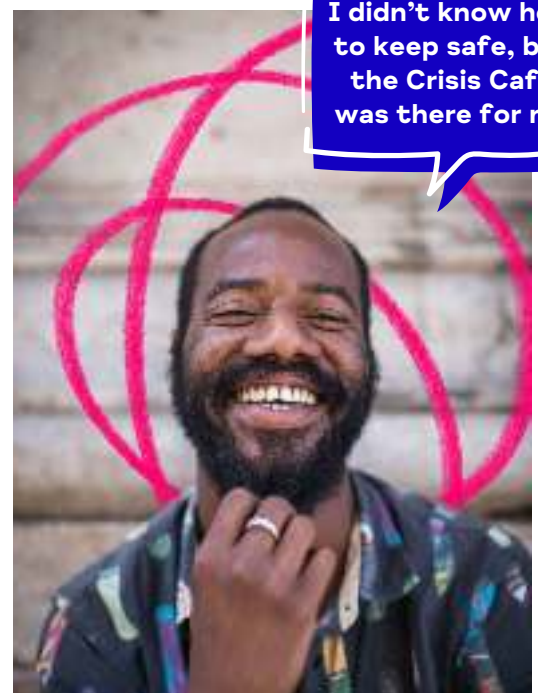
people received mental health & wellbeing training

Social Media Stats...



Click the icons to follow us:

We're determined to encourage more people to get in touch and with your support we'll keep reaching out to even more people, empowering them with the information and guidance to make the best, most informed choices about their mental health.



I didn't know how to keep safe, but the Crisis Café was there for me

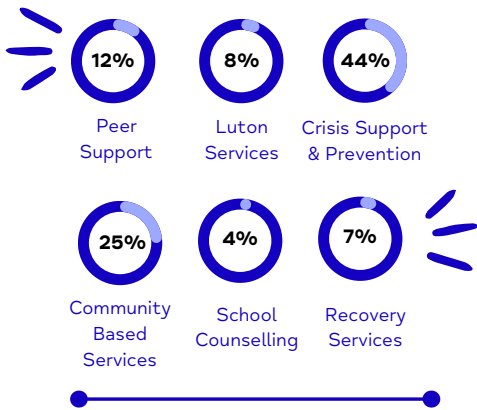
MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

IN 2023

We supported

8,329  individuals

How have we supported the people using our services



Have your say. Help build and shape our services



It has been a lifeline for me. I really do not think I would be this far without it.

Mind BLMK works across our communities to support positive mental health and wellbeing. Working closely with a range of partners, our aim is to make sure that no-one has to face a mental health problem alone.

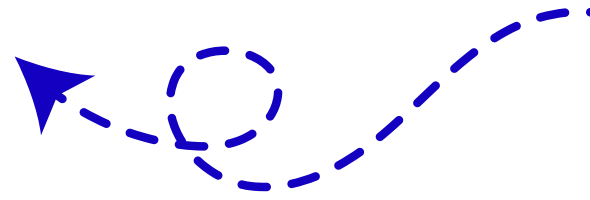
Along with providing services we also educate the community and help to prevent mental health challenges through our training options which increase knowledge and skills, enabling people to improve their own mental health and build resilience.

“Coming to group benefitted me in so many ways, from self confidence, feeling happier and increased social contact and most importantly, I felt safe to share issues in the group”

YOU ARE NOT ALONE



OUR LOCAL PROVISION



Our local services relate to individual and corporate mental wellbeing across Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes.

We provide a range of support for individuals including Crisis Support, Peer Support Groups and Mentoring, as well as specialist groups such as supporting people who are graduates of the Dialectical Behavioural Therapy program.

Mentoring

Our mentoring services provide one-to-one support, helping people to achieve their goals.

Peer Support

Our Peer Support service brings people with a similar lived experience together to provide emotional, social or practical help to each other.

Complex Emotional Needs Peer Support Group

A safe, supportive space for individuals who are experiencing difficulties with emotional regulation. It helps people to feel less isolated by sharing their experiences and by providing help, advice and encouragement to other members of the group.

DBT Graduate Peer Support Groups

This group is specifically for those who have completed DBT skills training or who are about to graduate from the DBT skills course.

Mind Matters Recovery Service

These discussion groups cover topics relating to mental health, including depression, anxiety, self-esteem, self-confidence and goal setting. The groups provide support in a safe, confidential and non-judgemental environment within which participants can discuss their wellbeing.

Severe Mental Illness

A 1-2-1 peer support service for people in Milton Keynes experiencing Severe Mental Illness.

Luton Wellbeing Centre

A drop-in daytime centre offering a range of services aimed at promoting mental health recovery, wellbeing and independence. This includes one-to-one support and groups.

Community Connectors

Community Connectors work with people to understand what could improve their mental health by supporting them and connecting them with their local communities.

Training

We offer a unique range of business training programmes focused on mental health and wellbeing, with everything from recognised qualifications such as Mental Health First Aid, right through to bespoke sessions tailored to business needs.

Community Navigators - SPA workers

This service supports those calling through to the Single Point of Access phone line in Milton Keynes. Our workers help triage and support throughout the referral process, respond to enquiries and signpost people to relevant services to best support their wellbeing and mental health.

Student Counselling

Referred through a specific referral process and assessed as suitable for therapy at Samuel Whitbread School in Bedfordshire.





Open Day at our
Luton Young
Person's Sanctuary

Crisis Support

Open 365 days of the year, this evening drop-in service is for anyone (18 years old or above) who feels they're in crisis or are experiencing mental distress. We also have our Crisis Recovery Service, which aims to provide not only immediate support, but also in managing individuals' wellbeing in the long term.

Suicide Prevention Pathway Service

A single point of contact, connecting those with suicide ideation and mental health and wellbeing needs to specialist support from voluntary and community sector organisations and other services.

A service for individuals not at immediate risk of suicide but who may require support to improve their mental health/wellbeing.

Milton Keynes Bereavement by Suicide Support Service

Mind BLMK understands that there are many practical issues that need to be carried out after a passing. These may seem confusing and be a cause of anxiety. Mind BLMK can offer support and information to help with this.

Young Person's Wellbeing Navigator Service

Providing bespoke support to young people aged between 16-25yrs across Central Bedfordshire. This service strives to promote independence and resilience and works alongside the young person to offer support enabling and equipping them with the tools, skills and knowledge they need to navigate challenges and positively manage their own mental health and wellbeing.

Young Person's Sanctuary

A drop-in service for 14-17yrs who are experiencing crisis or mental distress. Open 365 days of the year, those using the service will be met by a trained youth mental health worker who will listen and help them to identify ways to address the problems they are facing.

Training

We offer a unique range of business training programmes focused on mental health and wellbeing, with everything from recognised qualifications such as Mental Health First Aid, right through to bespoke sessions tailored to business needs.



KIM'S STORY

Three years ago, I moved to Central Bedfordshire after living in Watford for nearly 30 years. After being married and raising three children with my husband, one day he decided he was done and left, and I completely hit rock bottom.

No one knew the struggles I was going through over the years. I'm quite a bubbly, outgoing person and when I'd drop the children off at school the other parents would say 'I wish I was like you', but they wouldn't see me then getting in the car going home crying my eyes out.

I sold my house in Watford and moved to Central Bedfordshire as a friend recommended the area. I was still driving to work in Watford every day and I was really, really struggling. I ended up getting signed off work for three and a half months.

One morning I just thought I'd see if there's anything in the Ampthill Baptist Church, I don't even know why as I'm not overly religious, and that's where I discovered Mind BLMK on one of the notice boards.



I phoned them up and joined the Tuesday and Thursday Peer Support groups the following week.

After a few months at the Peer Support groups, I managed to go back to work part-time which was a big achievement for me, and I still attend the Thursday groups every week. It doesn't matter what's going on in the week, you know on a Thursday you're going to see your friends and you're going to have someone to bounce some things off. I like the fact that it isn't just a case of discussing anxiety or depression, they give us tools and suggestions on what we can do to make it better.

Each week has some structure which is good and each week we know what we're going to be doing like mindfulness, habits, tapping or goals and targets. I've made some amazing friends through the group, and we also meet up outside of the group to do things like cold water swimming.

I can only say lovely things because for me they (Peer Support Groups) were a lifesaver, I wish more people knew about them and that there's no waiting list.

There is always hope...



CENTRAL BEDS PEER SUPPORT & MIND MATTERS GROUP





A new provision for young people has seen our workforce expand significantly



INFLUENCE & PARTICIPATION

Co-production

Involve is Mind BLMK's Influence and Participation programme. We aim for people's lived experience to be at the heart of everything we do, especially those voices of underserved communities.

To achieve that we have lots of ways people can get involved, from one off feedback sessions to longer term commitments like sitting on governance panels or consulting on services and tenders, but we understand it is not one size fits all.

We are building and perfecting our processes and offerings as we go and embrace the different perspectives that each of us brings, regardless of race, gender, age, disability, religion, identity, background and experience.

To find out more about how your experiences can shape the work we do please contact : influenceparticipation@mind-blmk.org.uk


Become a Guarantor Member

Are you passionate about mental health awareness and want to help make a real difference in your local community? Do you want your voice to be heard and be able to play a key part in how we operate as a charity?

If so, please sign up as we are always looking for likeminded members.

Contact: hq@mind-blmk.org.uk



People with lived experience play an important role in shaping and developing services. Their experiences, positive and negative help us to develop tailored services that meet the needs and challenges people struggle with every day. 



At Mind BLMK, young people are involved in all aspects of running the services provided. We hold regular Youth Advisory sessions as part of 'Involve,' our Influence and Participation programme.

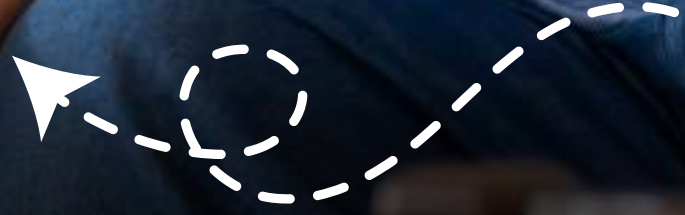




Have your say.
Help build and
shape our services

involve

Influence and Participation



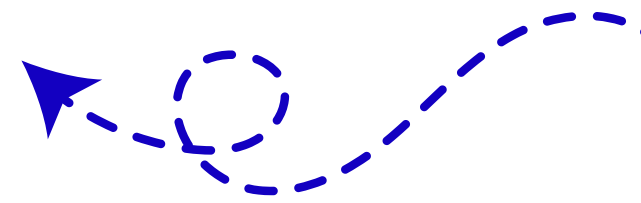
STEPHEN'S STORY

Please note the name has been changed for client anonymity

After multiple crisis café visits and several Luton Wellbeing Service, Lighthouse Youth Group visits, Stephen came in recently to say "thank you and goodbye" to the Luton Team.

Stephen stated he started attending the crisis café in January, when his mental health was at its lowest and he was homeless, feeling loss and in despair.

Through our help, support, and signposting, he was offered temporary accommodation by Luton Borough Council, however, Stephen had always expressed a strong desire to leave Luton, where he said he was "born and bred." Although he has friends and family in Luton, he said he also felt it was a place that held bad memories for him, but his mental health (anxiety & depression) was getting in the way of him being able to plan to leave. Over the past months, Stephen had often visited the café for support, sharing his desire for a fresh start... and as he said "a new chapter."



Enriching lives one day at a time

Fast forward to yesterday, when he dropped into the service to tell us that he'd finally done it! He said his mental health is now in a really good place and he's very excited about leaving Luton.

He has sorted out his supported housing in his new destination, and has packed up all his belongings and booked his train. He'll be spending one night in Colchester, then onward to sign up for his new home. He has also arranged to meet with a walking tour organisation to volunteer as a lead on walking tours in his new home.

This is an amazing success story for Stephen and also highlights the incredible work we all do in the crisis café. Thanks to all who helped Stephen on his journey of being able to live his dream, and irrespective of what happens in the future, he did it, and he did it his way!

This year we have provided:



interventions to people in the crisis cafes and over the phone.





“
I wouldn't be here
without this service.
This service saved me
and I no longer feel
like ending my life
”



ICT THEM IF YOU TRIED



LUTON WELLBEING CENTRE



Over the last year, the Luton Wellbeing Centre has continued to be a lifeline and the beating heart of our Luton Community for those who have accessed our services.

We continue to deliver our core recovery focused activities such as our peer support groups, art & crochet clubs, mindfulness and drop-in support sessions, but 2022/23 saw some new initiatives too:

Monthly Book Club

We all love a good read and cuppa and when an opportunity arose to work in partnership with Luton Libraries and World of Books, we immediately saw the benefits of sharing what is normally considered to be a solitary experience. Being able to immerse yourself in a new world, taking in all the thoughts, feelings and emotions, but also learning to perhaps read in a new way has been extremely beneficial for some of our service users. By focusing on particular books such as *The Chimp Paradox*, it has allowed us to explore ways with our groups in understanding emotions and removing ourselves from situations that we would have perhaps previously responded negatively too. A big thank you to WOB for their generous donation and to Luton Libraries for facilitating this.

LGBTQ+ Peer Support Group

Working in partnership with LGBT Beds, we piloted a new peer support group, with sessions focusing on issues faced by members of the LGBT community. Anyone can experience a mental health problem, but we know that those of us who identify as LGBTQIA+ may be more likely to encounter many types of discrimination, social exclusion or social disadvantage. We also provided LGBT Beds with a weekly space in the Luton Wellbeing Centre to deliver a monthly LGBT drop in for residents in Luton.

Warm Spaces

With the cost-of-living crisis and rising energy bills putting more pressure on everyone, we were delighted to be part of the Luton Council 'Warm Space' initiative, offering residents a warm space to enjoy a hot drink, whilst helping them to reduce the cost of heating their own homes. It is heartening to see that despite economic uncertainty, communities, voluntary and community groups will always pull together in such difficult times. We met some fantastic people and forged many new friendships, over steaming hot cups of tea.





Our Luton Wellbeing Centre
 A safe and welcoming space for all

Building Improvements:

Blackboard wall in relaxation room for service users to express themselves artistically. CCTV installed to provide a safer environment for staff and service users.

EVERYONE'S



We won't stop until everyone gets the support and help they need! - Mind BLMK 

LIVES

— One person at a time...

Crisis Cafe

“I feel strong and like I can face tomorrow after visiting the Crisis Cafe.”

“I didn't know how to keep safe when I was at my lowest and I was going to go to A&E, but the Crisis Cafe was there for me.”

Bereavement by Suicide

“Glad to have someone who speaks from experience and not a text book.”

Luton Wellbeing Centre

“I have gained so much confidence since speaking to and making new friends at Mind. I am also fitter as I go for a walk on Wednesdays. Staff are amazing and helpful.”

Crisis Recovery

“It's helped more than I could have hoped for. It's giving me back control of my issue and given me the confidence to talk openly about everything.”

Suicide Prevention Pathway Service

“I cannot sing the service's praises enough. My life has grown larger. I have new self-awareness around what impacts my mental health and I have learnt coping skills to manage life without using unhealthy coping mechanisms. Thank you.”





“ I was really scared to go to the Crisis Café for the first time but the staff were really friendly and let me take my time telling my story”



BEREAVEMENT BY SUICIDE SERVICE



In 2020, it was reported that up to 38% of respondents had considered taking their own lives after losing someone to suicide, and 8% go on to attempt suicide themselves (source - From Grief to Hope report).

Other sobering statistics indicate that up to 135 people are directly affected by every person lost to suicide (source - Centre for Suicide Prevention 2018).

The lasting impact can be huge for individuals in terms of health outcomes, isolation and work/education.

As part of the Milton Keynes Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2019-2024, Mind BLMK delivers practical support to those bereaved by suicide, working with individuals and families. This allows us to provide effective and timely emotional and practical support to help cope with the grieving process and to prevent further or longer-term emotional distress and support recovery.

Responding within just 48 hours, referrals are received from sources such as GP surgeries, third sector organisations and other services, but predominantly with Thames Valley Police.

Our Bereavement by Suicide Co-ordinator, Imogen Harrison, has received some really positive feedback from individuals that we have supported:



Thank you so much for all your listening & understanding & in particular liaising with the Coroner's court on my behalf. As I know you will agree by your own experience it can be very hard to find the impetus to do things when grieving - Mary



Our Support Worker says:



Lindsay says she likes speaking to me because I don't make her feel uncomfortable and she feels she can be open about her thoughts.



Sarah finds it comforting talking to me as I have also lost a parent to suicide. She is able to be open with all of her thoughts and feelings and feels validated and listened to. Sarah says that I often say things which she hadn't considered and it supports her in working through her grief.

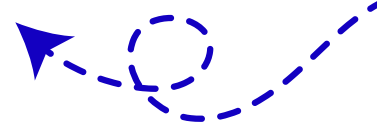


Please note names have been changed for client anonymity

Thank you to everyone who continues to support this incredible service

LOOKING AHEAD

Support for young people



As we move forward, we need to recognise the changing world that we live in. The diversity and range of services currently delivered by the organisation offer the community a wide range of preventative, recovery and crisis support.

Continuing with this focus, we look to our new Young Person's provision.

In 2017, 1 in 10 young people had a mental health problem and by 2020, it was 1 in 6.

With the support and funding from CAMHS and East London Foundation Trust (ELFT), we are delighted to be working collaboratively across Luton, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford, to provide crisis services for young people in need of mental health support.

The Young Person's Sanctuary is a key part of Mind BLMK's Crisis Service and long term vision, providing out of hours, face-to-face support for young people experiencing or approaching a mental health crisis. Operating 7 days a week, 365 days a year, from 4pm – 10pm, our Sanctuaries provide a safe, supportive and short-term private space for young people.

Deeply rooted in Mind BLMK's values, this service has been carefully co-produced by speaking to hundreds of young people to find out their experiences of mental health support and how we can best help them.

We want our young people to help shape our new service, and our Youth Advisory Panel meets regularly, providing advice and feedback on all sort of issues that affect young people, such as education, health, safety, and community development.

Did you know 1 in 10 young people has a diagnosable mental health problem

YOUNG PERSON'S SANCTUARY

Funded by



**East London
NHS Foundation Trust**

How we spend our money

Mind BLMK Figures 2022/2023



INCOME	%
Charitable Activities	
£1,770,486	91%
Donations & Legacies	
£158,227	8%
Other	
£3,978	1%
<hr/>	
TOTAL	
£1,932,691	100%

EXPENDITURE	%
Charitable Activities	
£1,805,481	96%
Other	
£11,400	1%
Business Development and Fundraising Costs	
£52,244	3%
<hr/>	
TOTAL	
£1,869,125	100%

RESERVES	%
Unrestricted	
£1,093,966	92%
Restricted	
£6,503	1%
Designated	
£77,086	7%
<hr/>	
TOTAL	
£1,177,555	100%

Overview:

Mind BLMK made a surplus of £63,566 during the year ended 31st March 2023. The surplus is largely due to the charity being able to identify operating efficiencies in the delivery of services which has enabled us to manage a difficult staff recruitment market.

Part of the review of the charity's strategy on funding streams and the mental health needs of the community was to identify how a proportion of the surplus can be reinvested back into service provision. These plans will be put into practice over the next 2 years.



Bankers: Barclays Bank PLC, 111 High Street, Bedford, MK40 1NJ

Auditors:

Myers Clark - Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditor
Egale 1
80 St Albans Road
Watford
WD17 1DL

In 2023 our fundraising,
corporate and legacy
giving total was:

£158K



“
**Thank you to
everyone who
supported us in
2022/2023**
”

If you want to find out more about fundraising, please contact our Fundraising & Engagement team at: fundraising@mind-blmk.org.uk

ENrichING LIVES

Respect / Inclusive / Compassion / Hope

**Supporting mental health and
wellbeing across Bedfordshire,
Luton and Milton Keynes**

Mind BLMK

The Rufus Centre, Steppingley Road, Flitwick MK45 1AH

 www.mind-blmk.org.uk

 hq@mind-blmk.org.uk

 @MindBLMK  @MindBLMK  @MindBLMK  @MindBLMK

Registered charity number: 1068724 Registered company number: 3511342