Important information regarding Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust’s priority is to make sure we are delivering our services in a way that supports the safe care of all our patients, clients, service users and staff during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We will keep you updated about what services our community health teams are able to offer at the moment.

Please continue to make referrals to your local community learning disability teams. We have continued to accept and process referrals throughout COVID-19, although you may have found this has meant we have changed the way we work to make sure we are all safe.

- Wherever possible, we are carrying out virtual assessment, recommendation and joint planning – this is to reduce the risk of catching or cross infection of COVID-19 for clients, families, carers and the health teams. The virtual appointment may be by phone or visually by video call.
- For people, who need face-to-face assessment, we are prioritising urgent or critical appointments and will attend with personal protective equipment (PPE) to minimise infection risks.
- For services or individuals who are fully shielding and not yet accepting visits from healthcare professionals, we will work with you to find the most appropriate way to deliver advice and support to meet the referral request for that person.
- We are following national guidance on limiting the number of people who can gather together and so are not offering group sessions at the moment. We are however exploring virtual ways to find peer support where we would usually offer a group session, for example workshops.
- You will know that some of our usual sessions or appointments are offered in external venues (leisure centres, public buildings and specific environments such as hydrotherapy pools). These are not available, but are part of our recovery and reset planning. We will let people know when sessions are re-starting. In the short and medium term, we are offering advice for home-based options as possible alternatives.
- Please remember the Government guidance when attending any face-to-face health appointment – clients and anyone with them must wear a face covering.
- If you have been invited to attend an outpatient appointment and need additional support, please contact the Community Learning Disability Team on 0300 1234 195, which can help you support you with understanding what is different and desensitisation, where needed.

One of the newer and positive ways of working together has been the rollout of NHS email accounts for care homes or supported living environments. This means that confidential client information can be securely shared between the registered manager and health professionals.
If you would like more information on applying for an NHS email account, please contact the team on the number above.

The trust has a range of resources and guidance available to support people with a learning disability on our website. This includes a guide for care homes and other health professionals about supporting people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19. You can find this here: www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/community-learning-disability-team/

As a service within an ‘outstanding’ organisation, we are committed to the ask, listen, do principles; making sure there is every opportunity for the person, their family or advocate to give feedback, raise a concern and make a complaint.

In the coming year, we look forward to further developing the ways people can give feedback via a collaborative forum of ask, listen, do meetings.

We would like to thank you and all members of your service for all the very positive joint working and planning that has and continues to take place during COVID-19. We feel very strongly that working together to support and protect people with learning disabilities has been a valuable outcome from a difficult time.