

PRESS RELEASE

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New mental health community support service for Kent

People in Kent are to benefit from a new community mental health and wellbeing service run by community organisations.

Starting on 1 April, it will aim to promote people's recovery from mental health challenges and their inclusion in day to day life and to support them to re-engage with their community. There will also be targeted support to help individuals enjoy a better quality of life, gain greater independence and achieve economic wellbeing.

The service is commissioned by Kent County Council (KCC) and the seven clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) for Kent (but not Medway).

The new service will be delivered through four contract areas across the county. Each contract is for five years with the possibility of a two year optional extension.

Shaw Trust, a national disability, employment, learning and skills charity, has won the bid to be the strategic partner for two of the four contract areas, covering three CCGs, West Kent, Ashford, and Canterbury and Coastal. Porchlight will deliver the contracts for the other areas. Both strategic partners commence delivery from 1 April 2016.

As strategic partners, both Shaw Trust and Porchlight will not just provide services themselves but will also co-ordinate and oversee the support provided by other voluntary and community organisations and groups for people with mental health needs, ensuring that people get the support they need. Clients under the new service will be accessing support designed to complement existing NHS mental health provision in Kent. Shaw Trust can offer additional services, including housing support, employment advice, arts and fitness activities, and personal development courses. Individuals will be assessed to determine which activities and support will help improve their wellbeing.

This community mental health and wellbeing service is completely separate from the NHS community mental health service provided by Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust, which will continue to provide medical assessment, treatment and support to people with mental health needs.

Shaw Trust will support approximately 1,000 people in the first year of delivery, working in partnership with local community organisations and groups. This means service users will benefit from holistic support that is more joined up and able to achieve better outcomes. The service will be accessible to anyone requiring community mental health and wellbeing support.

The Trust already operates in the county delivering Work Choice, a voluntary government supported employment programme that helps people who due to their disability, may find it difficult to find or keep a job, through a subcontract with Working Links. Additionally, Shaw Trust was one of several organisations receiving KCC grant funding to deliver mental health services.

Shaw Trust will also be recruiting a team of enthusiastic and community-minded volunteers to offer support as buddies or mentors. If anyone who works or lives in the CCG areas can spare at least an hour a week to help people build their confidence, Shaw Trust wants to hear from you. Please contact the charity on 0300 247 2222 or visit www.shaw-trust.org.uk/support-us to download an application form.

Roy O'Shaughnessy, Chief Executive of Shaw Trust, said: "Kent is leading the way in transforming the quality of community mental health and wellbeing services. We are delighted to be working closely with Kent County Council and local clinical commissioning groups to help deliver a more holistic approach. We believe that mental illness should be a greater public health priority. Shaw Trust looks forward to the challenge of offering new community mental health and wellbeing support in the county."

Graham Gibbens, Kent County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, said: "We are looking forward to working closely with Shaw Trust and Porchlight to provide this new community support partnership for people in Kent. The aim is to raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing and to work more seamlessly together to provide a range of support services across the community. This may be to help people who need or have already accessed services. We will support those who simply need help to improve their mental wellbeing and resilience."

He added: "We already know that approximately one in four people will have a common mental illness during their lifetime and this can affect every element of their lives. By bringing together the different assets that exist locally and making this information readily accessible, the service should enable more people in Kent with mental health problems to have the very best support as early as possible and will ultimately enable individuals to lead a better life."

For more information about the support services in Kent, go to www.liveitwell.org.uk.

Notes to editors:

For media enquiries please contact Joel Charles at Joel.Charles@shaw-trust.org.uk or 07815000221.

About Shaw Trust

Shaw Trust is a national disability, employment, learning and skills charity that helps people to achieve their work ambitions and gain greater independence. Over the past thirty years, the Trust has striven to combine its charitable heart with its commercial brain to provide the very best support to the people it was set up to serve.

It is the largest third sector contractor for Department for Work and Pensions. The charity delivers both mainstream (Work Programme) and specialist (Work Choice) employment support schemes across Britain and helps over 50,000 people per year. As well as being a subcontractor in six contract package areas, Shaw Trust, through its merger with Careers Development Group (CDG) is a prime provider on the Work Programme in London East. The Trust has now supported 14,320 people into long-term jobs since the Work Programme began, ranking 13th out of 40 contracts nationally.

With regards to Work Choice, Shaw Trust is a prime provider of 16 Work Choice contracts, and a subcontractor in seven Work Choice contract package areas. The latest official statistics from November 2015 show that nationally 91,760 people have started the programme since it started in 2010, with 39,490 of these having found a job. Shaw Trust has supported 24,480 people into work, representing 45.6% of the people starting on the programme.

Shaw Trust is a provider of justice services through an alliance with the Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI), to deliver a contract which helps some of the country's most challenging and disengaged offenders. Both charities are combining their criminal justice, employment, health and skills expertise to deliver the contract for the National Offender Management Service (NOMS). The contract is known as NOMS Co-Financing Organisation Round 3 (CFO 3) and each contractor receives funding from the European Social Fund. Together, Shaw Trust and CRI deliver CFO 3 in London and the East of England. Shaw Trust is also the prime contractor for CFO 3 in the South West, separate from the two alliance contracts. Over 18,000 offenders are planned to be supported during the life of the three 5 ¾ year contracts.

The Trust also helps people into work through a wide range of other activities including education and skills contracts, over 50 charity shops, a national volunteering programme and social enterprise projects.

In 2014, Shaw Trust created Shaw Education Trust, which runs five academies - serving young people from all backgrounds and ability to achieve their full potential.

Shaw Trust has a turnover of over £107m a year and employs over 1,438 people across over 200-plus locations. It is supported by over 600 volunteers and delivers contracts for eight major funding agencies including the European Social Fund, the Department of Work and Pensions and the Big Lottery Fund. The Trust has well-established international partnerships in Poland (Intergracja Foundation) and Romania (Motivation Romania).