



Wishing all our service users and partners a healthy, safe and rewarding Spring



## Secrets of stress relief

Stress Awareness Month is held every April to highlight the negative impact of stress and promote healthy ways to manage it.

At some point in our lives, all of us will experience stress. Whether it's through exams, work or personal problems, stress is something most people experience at some time in their life.

Though not in itself a mental health problem, stress can be difficult and unpleasant to deal with and can have a serious and debilitating effect on life for some people.

Stress can often lead to the development of mental health issues or it can make pre-existing mental health problems worse.

There is no easy fix for dealing with stress, however there are things you can do to help you deal with it and to ease the effects. Here are some tips and advice on how to deal with stress:

- Don't keep stress bottled up. Talk about your feelings to friends, family or healthcare professionals.
- Be active and exercise. Exercise can help to alleviate the symptoms of stress.
- Try not to do too much at once. This can lead to overload which then makes it difficult to do even simple tasks.
- Take regular breaks. Breaks can make you feel refreshed and help you to relax.
- Learn some breathing techniques to help you feel calm and deal with the symptoms of stress.
- Diet can have a big impact on our wellbeing. When stressed we often eat unhealthily. Try to eat healthily, as it will make you feel better in the long term.
- Get quality sleep. Being rested helps our ability to deal with stress.
- Learn new time management and organisation skills to help deal with your workload.
- Avoid unhealthy habits for dealing with stress, such as over-consumption of alcohol, cigarettes or caffeine.
- Have some time to yourself. Try to find time in the evening to relax and unwind.
- Be kind to yourself. We all make mistakes sometimes. Being overly critical of yourself can make you more stressed!

## Advocacy in West Sussex

Mind in Brighton and Hove offers a community advocacy service for people with mental health issues across West Sussex. The charity provides free, independent, professional and confidential support for:

- Adults with mental health issues.
- Adults with an undiagnosed mental health condition having difficulties accessing mental health services.
- Adults in a mental health unit but not detained under the Mental Health Act (informal or voluntary patients).

Advocacy means taking action to help you secure your rights, make your views and wishes heard, and support you to obtain the services that you need.

The charity's advocates can help to ensure that you have all the information you need and understand the information provided, so that you can make decisions about the things that affect you. The service can be accessed by telephone, online, email and in person.



Mind in Brighton and Hove also offers Independent Mental Health Advocacy for those receiving mental health treatment in hospital. This service keeps you informed about your care and treatment options and your rights whilst in hospital, so that you can make better informed decisions and have your voice heard.

These advocacy services are independent of other mental health or health and social care services and can be used by anyone living in West Sussex.

Call 01273 666950 to self-refer

Email: [info@mindcharity.co.uk](mailto:info@mindcharity.co.uk)

On 25 May 2023, there will be a workshop in Crawley to help shape mental health services in the area.

The NHS in Sussex is engaged in a programme of mental health service transformation and Crawley has been chosen as a pilot area for new ways of working to better meet the needs of the local population.

The voices of people with lived experience of mental health are vital for this process. Anyone who has used or worked in mental health services in and around Crawley is welcome to share their experiences and knowledge to help influence and design the future of these services. Please sign up and get involved if you feel able.

To book a place visit:  
[CrawleyCMHT.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.crawleycmht.eventbrite.co.uk)

**Sussex**  
Health & Care

### Crawley community mental health transformation

**Have your say and help design future  
community mental health services**

Do you live in Crawley and have experience of mental health difficulties, or care for someone who does?

Do you work in health and care services in Crawley?

Join us for a free in-person workshop to share your experiences and ideas about the future of mental health services in Crawley.

**Thursday 25 May 2023, 10am - 1pm**

The Charis Centre, West Green Drive,  
Crawley, RH11 7EL

**Sign up:** [CrawleyCMHT.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.crawleycmht.eventbrite.co.uk)

# The cost of living paradox

A recent survey suggests that money worries are preventing people from socialising with friends, pursuing hobbies and engaging in activities that help protect mental health.

Research from the Mental Health Foundation suggests that many people across the UK are feeling anxious, stressed and hopeless due to their financial situation and have stopped engaging in activities known to protect their mental health and prevent problems from developing.

A survey of adults over 18 from across the UK found that three in 10 adults were having poorer quality sleep; 23 per cent were meeting with friends less often; 15 per cent were pursuing their hobbies less; and 12 per cent were exercising less frequently.

The Mental Health Foundation said it was seeing increased reports across the UK that more people were going without basic living essentials, such as food and a warm home, and said it expected the effects of the cost of living crisis on mental health to be on a scale similar to the COVID pandemic with “poverty and financial stress likely to rise over the next few years”.

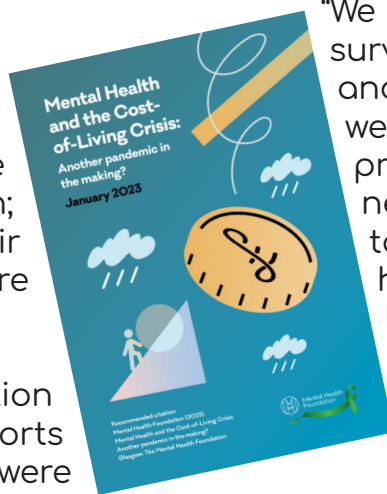
The charity noted that people living with financial stress are at increased risk of mental health problems and lower mental wellbeing and that financial hardship is linked with depression, as well as having an impact on the mental health of children and young people through increased parenting and marital strain.

It highlighted what it called ‘a cost of living paradox’ - in which behaviours that are protective of mental health (getting enough sleep and maintaining connection with family and friends) are the very behaviours that people are reducing to cope with the increased cost of living.

Mark Rowland, chief executive of the Mental Health Foundation, called the cost of living crisis “a public mental health emergency” and made recommendations for UK governments to take urgent action.

“Concerns about finances are reducing people’s ability to do the basic things that we know support good mental health,” he said. “We need good quality sleep. We need to be able to do things we enjoy. We need exercise. We need to be able to spend time with the people we love.

“We need to do more than simply survive to have good mental health and wellbeing: we must thrive if we are to prevent mental health problems from developing. We need our governments to do more to alleviate the negative mental health impacts of the cost of living crisis.”



The Mental Health Foundation published a briefing document alongside the survey, called ‘Mental Health and the Cost of Living Crisis: Another Pandemic in the Making?’. The briefing made recommendations for governments including:

- Fast-track access to additional funding for community organisations.
- Assessing the mental health impact of all government decisions around the cost of living and implementing these assessments.
- Ensuring that energy companies and other service providers and creditors have a compassionate response to customers experiencing financial strain.
- Ensuring that frontline workers, including call centre staff at energy and telecoms companies, for example, know how to respond effectively to the mental health effects of financial stress.

### CAPITAL peers viewpoint

Amid growing worries around the cost of living, CAPITAL Project Trust asked its peers about their experiences of the current crisis. Here's how they responded.

#### How are you managing your finances?

This question prompted worries around price increases for food, heating and electric bills and the impact on debts and day-to-day living expenses. Some peers mentioned managing by strict budgeting and cutting back to essentials; doubling up on clothes rather than using the heating; and keeping lights turned off.

#### How will you manage in future?

Peers answered with uncertainty and felt anxious about the coming months. This was largely due to price increases and how they will impact mortgages, credit card bills and general expenditure. Some people were unable to guess, as it felt so uncertain and unstable for them.

#### What would you say to the government?

Many peers urged the government to freeze costs or to increase pay and benefits in line with inflation. Other suggestions included making self-sufficient energy more affordable and tackling the negative effects on the environment and climate.

#### Do you currently receive help with managing your finances?

Of 51 participants, 17 were receiving help, (eg Citizens Advice, debt agency, carer, advocate). 34 were not receiving any support.

#### What other issues do you think CAPITAL could be campaigning on?

Generally, peers addressed the mental health crisis which has had a direct impact on them. They mentioned waiting times for referrals, the lack of community services and hospital aftercare. They also stressed the need to reduce the stigma around lived mental health experiences and to increase awareness of mental health conditions and suicide prevention.

## Shaping communications with lived experience

West Sussex Mind is inviting people with lived experience of mental health and an interest in communications to volunteer with its new Communications Co-Production panel.

If you have lived experience of mental health, either yourself or through supporting someone else, and are interested in communications, you could apply to West Sussex Mind's new panel.

The panel is an opportunity to share opinions in order to improve accessibility and inclusivity, and to ensure that the voices of people with experience of mental health problems are heard.

West Sussex Mind is encouraging people to come forward from under-represented communities and backgrounds to join the panel. It will be a safe space to put forward ideas and bring innovation to the charity's communications, including social media, website content and printed communications projects.

If you would be happy to contribute or would like to know more about the Communications Co-Production Panel, please contact the panel chair, Kirsty, at [kirsty.potter@westsussexmind.org](mailto:kirsty.potter@westsussexmind.org).



- Interested in communications?
- With lived experience of mental health?

**Why not volunteer for our Communications Co-Production Panel?**



# Eating disorders

## Types, causes, support and treatment

Food plays a crucial role in all our lives. As such, it's understandable that some of us, at some point in our lives, will encounter a problem with our eating. An eating problem is a relationship with food that is problematic and difficult. This can take on a variety of forms, from thinking constantly about food, eating too little, eating too much, binge eating and more.

The line between an eating problem and an eating disorder is thin. An eating disorder is a serious eating problem that has an official medical diagnosis. Meanwhile, an eating problem – overeating, comfort eating, unhealthy weight gain – can also be serious and lack of medical diagnosis doesn't mean that it should be taken any less seriously. In addition, it's important to note that each person's experience of an eating problem or disorder varies.

There are many myths and taboos around eating disorders – and unfortunately stigma around them is widespread, discouraging some people from seeking help. Stereotypes around eating disorders can also make it difficult for some groups, for example men, to seek help with their condition. Men may feel that if they try to seek help, they will not be taken seriously. As such, it's important to recognise that an eating disorder can impact anyone.

### Causes

The causes of eating disorders are wide and varied – and are dependent on the type of eating disorder a person has. Causes of eating disorders can include:

- Trauma: life experiences which were difficult and traumatic can trigger an eating disorder.
- Family history: a family history of eating disorders can increase a person's risk of developing an eating disorder.



- Personality traits: certain traits, such as perfectionism, compulsive behaviour or a desire for control, can make someone more susceptible to developing an eating disorder.
- Stress: whether in our professional or personal life, stress can lead to the development of an eating disorder as a person may seek to escape stress through their diet/food consumption.
- Mental health: mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression and more can sometimes cause eating disorders. But an eating disorder can also cause mental health conditions.
- Biological factors: it has been suggested that some people are more biologically predisposed towards an eating disorder due to their genetics.

### Journey towards recovery

The first and most crucial step in recovery is the acknowledgement of a problem. A person cannot start their journey of recovery before they acknowledge the problem and that their relationship with food needs to be dealt with.

The next step is to share. Sharing does not mean that a person suffering from an eating disorder must tell everyone about

# Types of eating disorders

## Anorexia

An eating disorder in which a person is very low weight due to severely limiting what they eat and drink. People with anorexia often have a distorted body image (body dysmorphia).

## Bulimia

This is where a person eats food and then purges the food from their system by making themselves sick. A feeling of guilt and shame is often the trigger for purging.

## Binge eating disorder

This is where a person eats large quantities of food at one time to the point of feeling uncomfortably full or sick. People suffering from a binge eating disorder feel that they cannot stop eating, which is sometimes labelled as "compulsive eating". A person with a binge eating disorder often relies on food to make themselves feel better and to cope with emotional problems.

## ARFID

(Avoidant/restrictive food intake disorder)

This is where a person avoids or heavily restricts eating certain kinds of foods. Reasons might include smell, texture or taste. This goes beyond not liking a certain kind of food, as a person suffering from ARFID will experience serious fear of the food they avoid and this food causes them to experience anxiety, stress and potentially sickness.

## Pica

An eating disorder in which a person will eat foods that have no nutritional value, such as objects like paper or soap.

## OSFED

(Other Specified Feeding or Eating Disorder)

This is a disorder that does not fit the criteria for anorexia, bulimia, binge eating or any other named eating disorder. In fact, OSFED is the most common eating disorder.

their condition, but rather, that they should reach out to those close to them, who will support them in their recovery. Such people might include family, friends or even colleagues.

Then it's important to seek help. Seeking help at the appropriate places with the appropriate people is crucial to receiving the correct treatment. The best place to get start when seeking support for an eating disorder is with a GP. A GP will be able to provide direct support and also signpost to specialist organisations and services supporting those with eating disorders.

## Treatment

Treatment will depend on the types of disorder. But there are some general forms of treatment given for eating disorders:

- Talking to a doctor: a doctor will listen to a person's problem and direct them to the appropriate specialist organisations. A GP is your first point of contact for support and treatment.
- Cognitive behavioural therapy: used more widely in mental health and counselling circles, this therapy is tailored specifically for treating eating disorders. It will typically involve regular sessions over a period of time.
- Talking therapies.
- Courses: online self-help courses are often prescribed alongside other methods of treatment.
- Hospital or clinic admission: if someone is suffering from a very severe eating disorder, it may be necessary for them to be admitted to a hospital or clinic for medical treatment.

If you're struggling with your mental health, find local sources of support on our website: [www.pathfinderwestsussex.org.uk](http://www.pathfinderwestsussex.org.uk)

Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity and a great source of information and support: [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)



## Co-production event success

On 15 March, a co-production event was held in Brighton, attracting over 100 delegates.

In the co-production spirit, the event was hosted by three organisations: CAPITAL Project Trust, Possability People and Changing Futures Sussex. Around 100 people attended the event, which included workshops and talks on the topic of co-production - or working collaboratively to identify and solve problems.

Speakers showcased examples of co-production in action, while the discussions that followed helped to develop some core principles and values for taking this approach further in Sussex.

“Co-production means working together to highlight problems, find solutions and do things differently to change and improve services,” said Duncan Marshall, CEO of CAPITAL Project Trust.

“This event brought together a diverse range of organisations, people with lived experience, service users, NHS staff and commissioners from across Sussex to share good examples of great collaboration, where people with lived experience had leadership roles. Following the event, we will build on the learning to ensure that we have a shared vision for our approach to co-production in mental health in Sussex.”

Further co-production events are likely to follow, such was the desire to continue the conversations held in March. In particular, there seemed to be an appetite among attendees for more in person events for networking and sharing learning.

Louise Patmore, systems change lead at Changing Futures Sussex, said: “What was great for me was seeing many people that I know have been doing this work for many years together in one room. These events are far less frequent than they used to be so the effect is greater, I think, of feeling the passion and commitment in the room.”





## Katie hands over the reins as CEO of West Sussex Mind

Katie Glover has stepped down as CEO of West Sussex Mind after ten years at the helm. Kerrin Page, former deputy CEO, became the new chief executive on 3 April.

Katie's tenure as CEO has seen West Sussex Mind grow substantially from a small organisation supporting just over 1,000 people a year with their mental health, to a medium-sized charity supporting 5,000 people in 2022. Katie joined following the merger of Worthing and Arun Mind with Chichester Mind in 2013-14 and then led the merger with Cornerhouse in Southwick in 2019 when the charity rebranded to become West Sussex Mind.

She also led a restructuring of West Sussex Mind's services and created the current support model, which consists of Help Point (a single point of advice and support for anyone in West Sussex), mental health recovery, peer support from people with lived experience, and social activities to connect people with their communities and build confidence.

Sue Hawker chair of West Sussex Mind said: "Katie leaves West Sussex Mind in a very strong position. We have a good structure, a stable financial base and we have grown to support more people than ever before. Katie has also built a vibrant culture at West Sussex Mind, which brings unity and involvement for staff and those getting support with us."

Patrick Stranack from the charity's Adur support hub mirrored this sentiment. "For me, Katie's greatest achievement has been to create a culture that is professional, boundaried, empathic, welcoming and hard-working. West Sussex Mind is a place where staff and service users can grow and their mental health can thrive."

"Being CEO of West Sussex Mind is the best job I have ever had and has been an honour," said Katie. "There are such huge challenges around people getting timely mental health support in the NHS, and to know that we've been there to offer that support – and have been able to grow to meet the increasing need – gives me immense satisfaction."

Kerrin Page, formerly deputy CEO, has been appointed by the Board of trustees as the new CEO of West Sussex Mind, following a rigorous recruitment process. Kerrin joined West Sussex Mind in 2015 and has co-led much of the organisation's growth and development since that time.

Kerrin said: "I would like to thank Katie for the extraordinary leadership she has brought to West Sussex Mind during a period of ever-growing need for mental health support. I am delighted to have been appointed as CEO of our amazing charity and look forward to leading it in the next stages of its development."

Katie will continue to be employed by West Sussex Mind until the end of April to provide support around the transition. The Pathfinder partners wish Katie luck and every happiness with her future endeavours.



Kerrin is the new CEO of West Sussex Mind



# Support numbers

**Samaritans**  
Open 24/7, call 116123

**Sussex Mental Healthline**  
Open 24/7, call 0800 0309 500

**SHOUT text messaging support**  
Open 24/7, text Sussex to 85258

**Calm**  
Open daily 5pm to midnight, call 0800 585 858

**Papyrus**  
Open daily 9am to midnight, call 0800 068 4141

**Anxiety UK**  
Open Mon-Fri 9:30am to 5:30pm, call 03444 775 774



## What is Pathfinder West Sussex?

Pathfinder West Sussex is an alliance of organisations working together to enable people with mental health support needs, and their carers, to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

We provide a pathway of mental health recovery support so people can move freely between services to get well and stay well.

Services are provided in ten areas: Adur, Bognor, Chanctonbury, Chichester, Crawley, Horsham, Littlehampton, Midhurst, Mid Sussex and Worthing.

The four lead providers of Pathfinder services are West Sussex Mind, United Response, Sussex Oakleaf and Richmond Fellowship. The other organisations that make up the alliance with them are CAPITAL Project Trust, Mind in Brighton and Hove, Rethink Mental Illness, Stonepillow, Southdown and Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust.



[www.pathfinderwestsussex.org.uk](http://www.pathfinderwestsussex.org.uk)