

# Talking Mental Health

## Spring Newsletter

Welcome to the joint Newsletter for  
**Independent Mental Health Network (IMHN)**

and

**Forum of Carers and People who Use SaBP NHS Services (FoCUS)**

### What we do

Engaging with service users and carers to hear their experiences of using Adult mental health services. We provide a voice for people in Surrey and North East Hampshire on the mental health topics that matter to them.

Hearing directly from people who use services really helps to highlight the challenges people face and has helped to make improvements. We regularly share and contribute at decision making meetings to help people that will require the services in the future.

Both IMHN and FoCUS have a network of individuals who have experienced mental ill-health, as well as carers. Together, they collaborate with the NHS and social care service providers to improve mental health care in Surrey and North East Hampshire. Their collective efforts aim to enhance services, advocate for better support, and create positive change.



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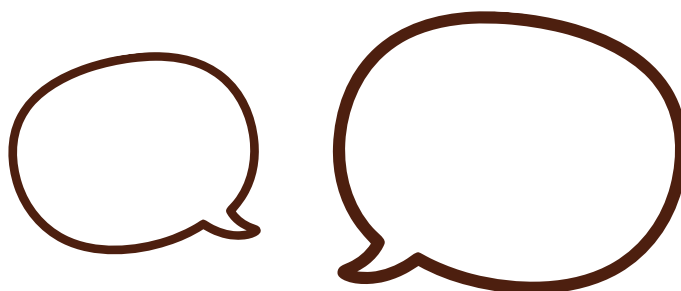
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# Contact the team



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of Disabled People

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# Dates

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Where</b>
<b>Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May 10am</b>	<b>Coffee Morning Mental Health Awareness Week</b>	<b>Contact Guy Hill Guildford Venue TBC</b>
<b>Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 5.30-6.30pm</b>	<b>FoCUS Drop-in</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 10am-2pm</b>	<b>Mental Health Awareness Event</b>	<b>Hive Guildford</b>
<b>Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2pm-4pm</b>	<b>FoCUS Committee</b>	<b>Invite only</b>
<b>Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 1-3pm</b>	<b>IMHN Coordinating meeting</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<b>Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 12.30-2.30pm</b>	<b>FoCUS Talk and Learn</b>	<b>Guildford and Zoom</b>
<b>Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 5.30-6.30pm</b>	<b>FoCUS Drop-in</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<b>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 12-1.30pm</b>	<b>Community FoCUS E&amp;M / NW</b>	<b>Chertsey and Zoom</b>
<b>Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> July 12.30-2pm</b>	<b>Community FoCUS SW / W / NEH</b>	<b>Guildford and Zoom</b>
<b>Friday 31<sup>st</sup> July 1-3pm</b>	<b>IMHN Coordinating meeting</b>	<b>Zoom</b>
<b>Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 2.30-4pm</b>	<b>FoCUS Committee</b>	<b>Invite only</b>
<b>Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September 1-3pm</b>	<b>IMHN Coordinating meeting</b>	<b>Zoom</b>

# IMHN

Independent Mental Health Network

## Message from Jacob the IMHN Chair

I hope you're having a good start to 2026. I often find the Christmas and New Year break gives me a bit of time and headspace to reset my thinking, even if only in a small way. I went through some personal challenges towards the end of last year, and a lot of my time seemed to be taken up with getting answers and trying to 'fix' things. At times, living a fulfilling life felt impossible and I was struggling to maintain enthusiasm for the normal day-to-day.

This made me think about the parallels with the world of mental health and, by extension, with our IMHN community and other lived experience-led groups like ours – how we navigate constant change while maintaining momentum and staying focused on what matters most. Change in complex systems rarely happens in straight lines, but it can still be hard not to think: why does it have to be this way? When you just want to get things moving, the reality of waiting and uncertainty in the face of lots of competing pressures can be deeply frustrating – especially when people are affected by the outcomes.

I suppose what I've been reflecting on – my own small 'resolution', if you like – is how to hold all of that complexity without letting it take over. Acknowledging that things are complicated, that progress feels slow, and that answers aren't immediate, while still finding ways to keep living my everyday life; staying as engaged as I can, noticing what is working and valuing the people and moments that make the waiting more bearable!

In both examples, the challenge is not just to acknowledge how complicated things are, but to stay engaged despite that. For me, that means valuing the patience and involvement of our members and stakeholders, recognising the honesty and support of our commissioners, and appreciating the commitment and dedication of our IMHN staff team. Holding onto all that feels especially important to help us work well together and stay connected to the purpose of the Network in the year ahead.

# IMHN

## Independent Mental Health Network

### IMHN/Focus Coffee morning

Thank you to those who attending our IMHN/FoCUS coffee morning in March. Guy from IMHN, Jennie from FoCUS, and IMHN Chair Jacob, met with members at Costa in Caterham to chat about all things mental health over a cuppa! It was lovely for members to meet in person and have a good chat.

We are hoping to run our next coffee morning in Guildford on Thursday 14th May for Mental Health Awareness Week and will share more details about the event soon!



# IMHN

Independent Mental Health Network

## Dates for your diary

### Celebrate Coproduction

Celebrate Coproduction on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2026 at the Mandolay Hotel in Guildford – Join us for a day of fun and celebration of all things Coproduction with people with lived experience and professionals.

### Get involved this Mental Health Awareness Day!

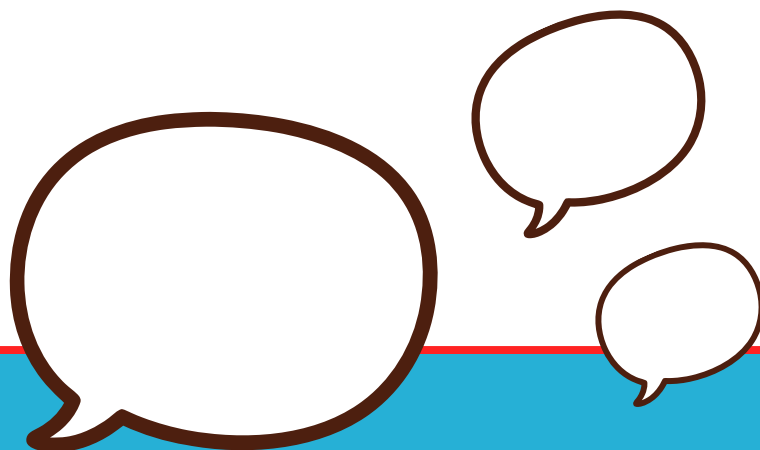
Small things can make a big difference to our mental health. A simple walk or wheel outside, spending time with friends or with our pets can help us feel calmer, happier, and more connected.

This Mental Health Awareness Week, we'd love to see what helps you. Take a photo and send it to us, then we'll share it on our social media to inspire others. Let's celebrate the little things that support our wellbeing.

Please send photos to Guy by Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May:  
[guy.hill@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:guy.hill@surreycoalition.org.uk) or SMS/txt 07305009869

### Mental Health Awareness Week at The Hive Guildford

Guy will be at the Hive Guildford on 13<sup>th</sup> May morning from 10:00am meeting with the local community about IMHN for Mental Health Awareness Week. Come visit our stall for a friendly chat with Guy and helpful resources.



# David's taking on a sponsored swim on 21st May!



**IMHN Member David will be diving in to raise funds for the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People and other fantastic charities!**

**We are wishing him all the best for his swim!  
If you would like to sponsor David then please email [guy.hill@surrecoalition.org.uk](mailto:guy.hill@surrecoalition.org.uk) or text 07305009869**



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# Accessing mental health services in the community - survey results

Easier access to mental health services in the community is a top priority for people in Surrey and Northeast Hampshire.

98 people completed our online survey about accessing mental health services in the community, and fifteen more spoke to us at an event.

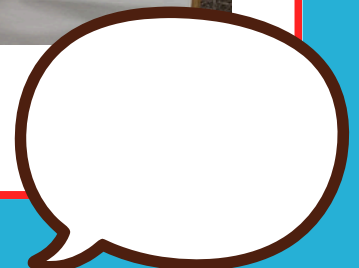
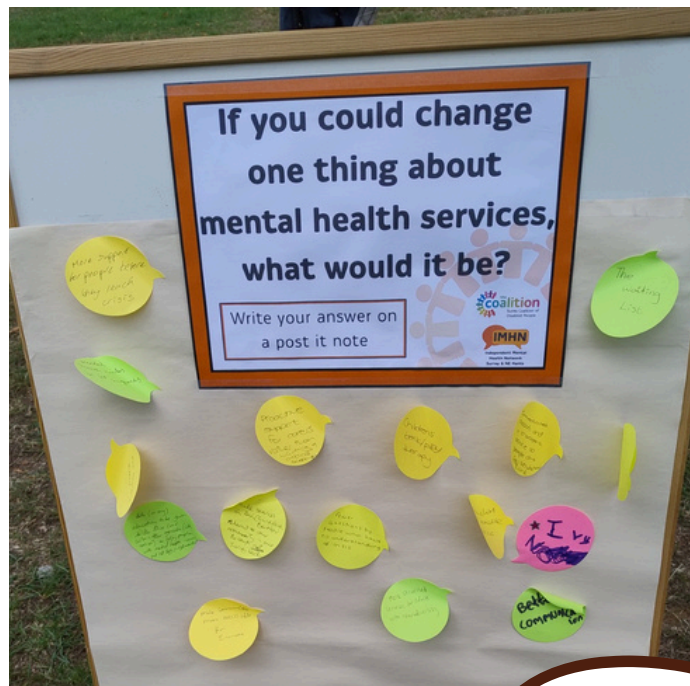
We asked "if you could change one thing about mental health services, what would it be?". The top three answers were easier access, shorter waiting times and more joined up services. Other answers included improved communication, a choice of support tailored to the person, and better support for people before or whilst in a mental health crisis.

We also asked where people would go for information, advice and help or support with their mental health. Most people would use the internet for finding information, ask their GP for advice, and turn to their GP or mental health services for help or support.

The survey results have been shared with the team developing a new framework for bringing services together, aiming to get people the help they need, when they need it.

If you'd like to see the survey results for yourself, you can find them on our website:

[Link to blog](#)



## Accessing Safe Havens - survey results

We wanted to understand how easy it is for someone to attend a Safe Haven in Surrey and Northeast Hampshire in person, what challenges they might face, and what could help. We ran a survey last November and December to find out.

A Safe Haven is a supportive, non-clinical space where trained staff are available to help anyone aged 18 or over if they're struggling with their mental health. Safe Havens are open every day from 6pm to 11pm. They offer free and confidential support, including peer support from people who have experienced mental health issues, and no referral or appointment is needed.

There are Safe Havens in Aldershot, Epsom, Guildford, Redhill and Woking. They are run by Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, in partnership with local mental health charities.

18 people told us they wanted or were recommended to go to a Safe Haven to support their mental health. Only 7 were able to attend in person, that's 39%.

The main reasons people couldn't get there were about the location of the Safe Haven, including a lack of public transport, no parking nearby, feeling the area was unsafe, or it was just too far away.

Others said they were not safe to drive when in crisis, and some didn't want to go back after an earlier negative experience.



## Accessing Safe Havens - survey results

27% of people who couldn't attend in person used the virtual Safe Haven instead. Virtual Safe Havens mean people can speak to someone at the Safe Haven via their computer, tablet or phone without needing to go there. They are open from 6-11pm and offer the same level of support as the in-person Safe Haven.

We asked people who had used the Safe Haven how helpful they found it. People who went in person scored it 3.6 out of 5, and those who accessed it virtually scored it 2.7 out of 5.

One person said "Having the opportunity to be in a safe place when I was struggling with risky behaviour kept me safe. It was helpful to have people to talk to including a nurse who could access my notes."

Someone who had a less positive experience said "There were times when I wasn't welcomed. I felt like the staff needed to understand that a crisis can be different for each person."

People said the Safe Haven would be easier and more helpful to access if:

- There was a video to show exactly what to expect to reduce anxiety, particularly for autistic people.
- They offered grounding or distraction activities.
- They reinstated early evening wellbeing groups, which stopped during the Covid Pandemic.
- They opened earlier in the day, to help people who need to find childcare and someone to drive them to the Safe Haven.

The results of the survey have been shared with Surrey and Borders Partnership teams working on crisis care and suicide prevention.

You can see the full results of our survey on our website: [Safe Havens Survey Results](#)

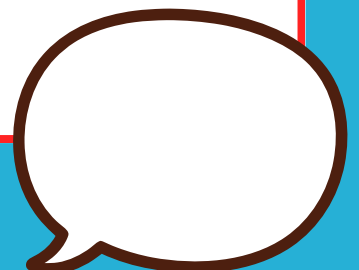
For more information about Safe Havens, visit their website: [Safe Havens : Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust](#)

# Silverwood Royal Opening

Silverwood, Surrey's mental health inpatient service, has now been officially opened by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Gloucester.

Silverwood has been up and running since February last year, on the site of the old Abraham Cowley Unit at St Peter's hospital in Chertsey and had its royal opening on Tuesday 31st March.

The Duchess toured the building and chatted with staff, people staying in Silverwood, and the team who designed and developed it. In the therapies department she joined in activities including decorating cupcakes and creating a sensory box.



# Silverwood Royal Opening

Wendy Smith, from the Coalition's mental health team, was introduced to the Duchess. Wendy explained her role in the project, speaking to people with lived experience of using mental health services, their families and carers about what mattered most to them, and representing those opinions throughout the design, development and delivery of Silverwood.

The Duchess was keen to hear about the importance of involving people with lived experience in the project, and how that shaped the overall design.

Wendy explained that people had said they needed more control over their own bedrooms, with the final design including natural daylight through windows that safely open to provide fresh air, and controls to adjust the heating and lighting.

She highlighted the importance of the ward gardens providing access to outside spaces so people can feel less enclosed, have a space to relax or be active and see the sky while feeling the sun on their skin.

The Duchess asked Wendy her favourite feature, which is the sensory spaces on every ward with interactive projections on the floor, colour changing lights and a bubble wall to help people relax and regulate their emotional state.



# FoCUS

Forum of carers and people who use SABP services

## What we are hearing

Over recent months, several themes have come through from our community.

- Enhanced Observations: The Trust has continued its work to improve enhanced observations following NHS England's quality improvement programme.
- Experiences of using Health Based Places of Safety (HBPoS)
- Challenges navigating mental health services for people with neurodiversity
- Concerns about understaffing in the NE Hampshire advocacy service
- Parking difficulties at Silverwood for those with mobility needs
- Questions about the accuracy of AI-generated clinical letters
- How to request corrections to medical notes
- Queries about access to specialist mental health support in acute hospitals

## We want to hear from you

If you've had experience with any of the topics mentioned above, or if there's something you'd like to share, please get in touch. We'd love to hear your thoughts, whether it's feedback, ideas, or positive experiences. Everything you tell us helps improve mental health.



# FoCUS

Forum of carers and people who use SABP services

## Surrey and Borders Partnership News

Council of Governor elections close on 30 April; only registered SABP Members in contested constituencies will have received ballot information. More information can be found at [sabp.nhs.uk](http://sabp.nhs.uk).

### **New Chief Nursing Officer (CNO)**

Jo Lynch retired at the end of March, with Claire Scott joining on 1st April as the new Chief Nursing Officer. Jo has been a keen advocate of FoCUS over many years, played an important role in bringing lived experience into the Trust, consistently championing the forum and engaging so positively with members, always with a focus on service improvement. FoCUS are incredibly appreciative of Jo's support and thanked her for being consistently helpful, approachable, collaborative and generous with her time. She will be very much missed.

### **New Chief Operating Officer (COO)**

The trust is delighted to announce that Ben Mensah will be joining Surrey and Borders as our new Chief Operating Officer (COO) this June. Ben brings over 20 years' experience in the NHS, including leading urgent and emergency mental health services across multiple boroughs. He has a strong passion for improving patient experience, supporting staff, and working in partnership to deliver better outcomes. Ben will take over from Lorna Payne when she retires in June. Lorna has been a fantastic supporter of FoCUS and we wish her all the best in her retirement.



# Get Involved

## Men's Mental Health

Surrey CC are working in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care's 'Strategic vision for Men's Health'

They are looking to set up a men's mental health focus group. It would be confidential and lasts 60-90 minutes in length on either the 19th, 20th or 28th May.

If you are interested, then Guy can send further information please email [guy.hill@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:guy.hill@surreycoalition.org.uk) or sms/txt 0730059869.

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## Calling All Male Gym-Goers

As part of a separate IMHN project, we're also keen to hear from male members who regularly go to the gym. If that sounds like you, please get in touch with Guy using the contact details above - we'd really value your input.



# Get Involved in co-production

## Improving the experience of inpatient wards for individuals with neurodiverse needs

Coproduction opportunity looking at gathering insights from people who have experienced Surrey and Borders inpatient services who have a diagnosis of Autism, ADHD, Dyspraxia, Tourette's Syndrome or Dyslexia.

They are looking for people who have experienced a stay on SABP wards and family members or carers of people who have experienced inpatient services who have a diagnosis of or are awaiting an assessment for:

- Autism
- ADHD
- Dyspraxia
- Tourette's syndrome
- Dyslexia

This opportunity closes at midnight on 18th of May, 2026.

If you'd like to find out more about this work and how you can get involved, or need support completing the online form please contact Jade Kelly, Assistant Psychologist by email [Jade.Kelly@sabp.nhs.uk](mailto:Jade.Kelly@sabp.nhs.uk) or by phone 01483 443701.

**For other Coproduction opportunities visit**

**[www.sabp.nhs.uk/aboutus/members-and-governors/how-to-get-involved](http://www.sabp.nhs.uk/aboutus/members-and-governors/how-to-get-involved)**



# FoCUS

Forum of carers and people who use SABP services

## Database updates

Thank you to everyone who has already been in touch to update your details on the FoCUS database, we really appreciate your prompt response.

As a reminder, we are currently updating our membership records to ensure we hold accurate and complete information for all FoCUS members. As part of this process, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust has recently updated its reporting requirements, meaning we now need to collect some additional demographic information in line with GDPR.

You can update your details using whichever method is easiest for you:

- completing an online form (should take 5-10 minutes):



- [FoCUS Members form - FoCUS Membership Update Form](#)



- [Professionals – FoCUS form for Professionals](#)  
<https://forms.office.com/e/cFFTdD54r0>



- By phone - let us know and we can arrange a convenient time to call



- Join a FoCUS Online Drop-In

**Thank you again for your cooperation, keeping our records up to date helps us support all members more effectively.**

# FoCUS

Forum of carers and people who use SABP services


## **Talk & Learn Session – Culture of Care**

Join us for our next Talk & Learn group on 9th June, 12:30–2:30pm at Theta in Frimley.


At this session, we'll hear directly from Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust about Culture of Care — what it is, how it's used, and an update on the project the Trust has been running.


This session is aimed at service users and carers who want to:

- ◆ Learn more about the Culture of Care
- ◆ Hear directly from the Trust about current work and developments
- ◆ Ask questions in an open and supportive setting
- ◆ Share their own experiences of using mental health services in Surrey and North East Hampshire

 Your voice matters. This is a great opportunity to learn, ask questions, and help shape conversations about mental health services in our area.

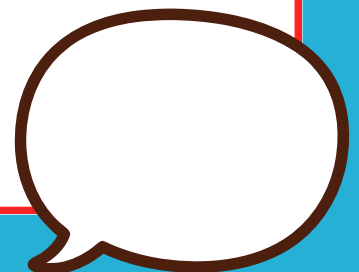
 Location: Guildford

 Date: 9<sup>th</sup> June

 Time: 12:30 – 2:30pm

We'd love to see you there!

Contact Lucy to find out more, get help with transport



# FoCUS

Forum of carers and people who use SABP services

## FoCUS Drop-in

 **Location: Zoom**

 **Date: 12<sup>th</sup> May and 17<sup>th</sup> June**

 **Time: 5:30 – 6:30pm**

Online drop-in. You can join anytime between 5.30-6.30pm to speak to Jennie and Lucy about your recent experiences using Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) NHS mental health services either as a service user or carer.

This is not a group meeting. You will be held in the zoom waiting room and will be let in individually based on first come first served. It is a safe space to share your experiences.

It is also an opportunity to speak to us if you need sign posting, want to talk about more confidential concerns, for existing members to update their information on our database or if you are thinking of joining FoCUS to learn more and join.

This is open to anyone that has used NHS mental health services for adults in Surrey or North East Hampshire including Adult Mental Health services, Drug and Alcohol services, Adult Learning Disability services, Older Adult services, Adult Eating Disorder services. We want to hear what works and what could have been better. You do not need to be a better to speak to us.

The drop-in is not the only way to contact us, you can also schedule some time with the support team online or in person, ask for a call back or email us.



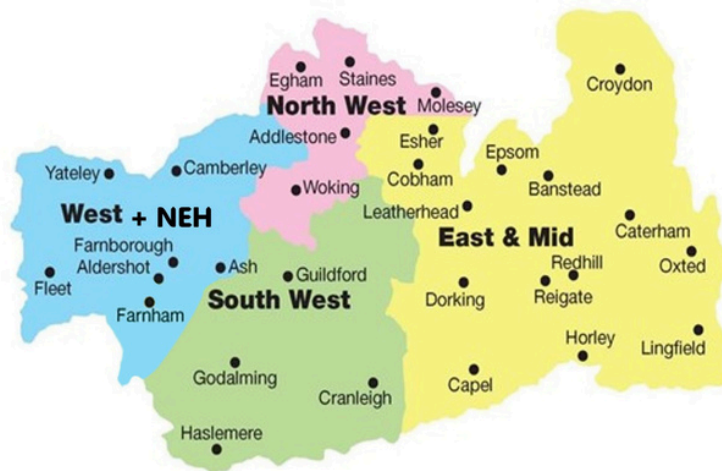
# FoCUS

Forum of carers and people who use SABP services

## Who can come to FoCUS?

Anyone that has used or cared for someone that has used Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust adult mental health services.

Contact the FoCUS Support team to attend a group or find out more!



## Can't make a meeting? Use our online survey

If you're not able to join the FoCUS meeting we'd still love to hear about your experiences using Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Trust services.

You can share your experiences by filling out our 'share your experience' form which also includes our optional question of the quarter.

You can access the form using this link or QR code

<https://forms.office.com/e/89UNwe7ugn>

Share your experiences of mental health services in Surrey and North East Hampshire



You can also email us at [focus@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:focus@surreycoalition.org.uk)

# Wellbeing Support

## **Do you need mental health support?**

The Safe Havens in Surrey remain open for people in crisis to visit in person every day of the year. You can find out more information here:

<https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health/safe-havens>.

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SABP) and the Community Connections providers have launched virtual Safe Havens. The Virtual Safe Havens are open from 6.00pm to 11.00pm every day of the year for people in crisis.

## **Virtual Safe Haven Links**

- [Epsom Safe Haven](http://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-Epsom) <http://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-Epsom>
- [Guildford Safe Haven](https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-guildford) <https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-guildford>
- [Redhill Safe Haven](https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-redhill) <https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-redhill>
- [Woking Safe Haven](https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-woking) <https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-woking>
- [Aldershot Safe Haven](https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-aldershot) <https://nhs.vc/sabp/safe-haven-aldershot>

## **Other sources of support**

- call Surrey and Borders' Mental Health Crisis Helpline on: 0800 915 4644 or by SMS text: 07717 989 024
- contact SHOUT by SMS text on 85258
- contact Samaritans on 116 123 or email them at [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)
- [go to the Healthy Surrey website for more information about mental health and emotional wellbeing support in Surrey.](#)

Shape mental health and SABP services across Surrey and North East Hampshire from your lived experience.

“FoCUS feels like you are being heard by people who care.”  
- FoCUS Member



**Join and become a member for free!**



**Work with others to improve support and care in your community**



**Have your voice heard – improve services together**

**SCAN ME**

