

# Community Living Well

Winter 2020

## In this edition

Keeping your  
mind and  
body fit



Anxiety and sleep



Applying for  
benefits for  
the first time



Community  
**LivingWell**

Working together for your wellbeing



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## Editor's Letter

A very warm welcome to the Winter 2020 edition of the Community Living Well magazine (and excitingly the first one of the year and decade!). I've recently taken over from Tamsin as Editor as she ventures off to pastures new. I hope you enjoy the magazine as much as I've enjoyed putting it together.

As we navigate our way through the shorter, colder winter days, you may feel a dip in your mood. It's normal for us to feel down in winter but if you find that it's recurrent every winter, then you may have seasonal affective disorder. Read our special feature on page 4 to find out more.

In this edition, you will find a range of different topics from food and mood, sleep and anxiety to a focus on men's mental health. You'll also have the opportunity to meet Matt Waters from the West London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) where he talks to us about the role the CCG plays in Community Living Well, his background and what's on the horizon.

We want you to remember that it's okay to ask for help and support when you're not okay. My hope is that when you finish reading this edition, you're left feeling informed, uplifted, inspired and understood.

As always, this magazine is about you – your thoughts, ideas, concerns and achievements. If you have any suggestions, features or stories you think we should include, please contact me, Michelle, at [michelle.jackson@kcmind.org.uk](mailto:michelle.jackson@kcmind.org.uk). Enjoy!

Michelle Jackson - Editor/Marketing Coordinator

## How to Refer

You can refer to the Community Living Well service quickly and securely by completing the form found on this page [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/). Alternatively, you can ask your GP to refer you.

After we have received your information, we will be in touch within 5 working days. If you have any questions about the referral process or other parts of Community Living Well, please contact us on **020 3317 4200**

# Community Living Well

## Eligibility

Community Living Well is a primary care service for anyone experiencing mental health difficulties who is 16 years old or over and signed up with a GP in Kensington and Chelsea, Queen's Park or Paddington.

Community Living Well offers a different kind of mental health support. It brings people together from your local community groups, NHS and the voluntary sector in one service which will work alongside you and your GP to help you access the support you need.

Our model of care aims to:

- work as one integrated service that wraps around the individual
- work with the GP at the centre as the accountable clinician responsible for each person's treatment and care

## Our Partners

**Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust** – Primary Care Liaison and Talking Therapies Services  
**Kensington and Chelsea Mind** – Peer Support Service  
**SMART** – Navigator and Employment Services

## Wellbeing Support

**Employment** – Advice and guidance on looking for work, staying in work, and improving employability skills.

**Navigators** – Advice and guidance on a range of issues including benefits, debt, housing and signposting to specialist support services.

**Peer Support** – Groups, social events and activities bringing people together to support and learn from each other.

**Self-Care** – Support and activities that help you to take care of your own mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

## Clinical Support

**Talking Therapies** – Talking therapy or counselling that can help you if you are feeling stressed, worried or low in mood.

**Primary Care Liaison** – Specialist nurse-led support and access to Primary Care Psychiatry.

Find out more information and whether we can help you on our website [communitylivingwell.co.uk](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk)



# Seasonal Affective Disorder

**W**HEN THE DAYS get shorter, darker and colder, you may feel a dip in your mood. It's common to feel affected by changes in the weather and seasons - we all have certain times of year that we enjoy more or less than others, for a variety of reasons. You might find your mood changes when the weather gets colder or warmer, or notice changes in your energy levels, sleeping patterns or eating habits. If these feelings are interfering with your day-to-day life, it could be a sign that you have depression. And if they keep coming back at the same time of the year, it might be a sign that you have seasonal affective disorder (SAD) otherwise known as 'seasonal depression'.

## What is SAD?

Seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression that comes and goes in a seasonal pattern. SAD is sometimes known as 'winter depression' or 'winter blues' because the symptoms are usually more apparent and severe during the winter. Some people with SAD may have symptoms during the summer and feel better during the winter.

1 in 3 people  
in the UK  
suffer from  
SAD



## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of SAD can include:

- a persistent low mood
- a loss of pleasure or interest in normal, everyday activities
- irritability
- feelings of despair, guilt and worthlessness
- feeling lethargic (lacking in energy) and sleepy during the day
- sleeping for longer than normal and finding it hard to get up in the morning
- craving carbohydrates and gaining weight

For some people, these symptoms can have a significant impact on their day-to-day activities.

## How can I treat the symptoms?

There are some things you can do yourself to improve your mood during winter SAD.

- **Get natural sunlight.** Getting outside in the natural light as much as possible can help boost your mood. If you can't get outside, let the sunlight in and sit next to the window.
- **Stay active.** Regular exercise can help with symptoms of low mood and depression as it releases serotonin and endorphins.
- **Connect with others.** Winter can make us feel more isolated than usual so make time to connect with others through a phone call, email, text or meet up face-to-face.
- **Have things to look forward to.** Whether it's a coffee with a friend, or the thought of spring coming - try to keep positive by having something to look forward to.
- **Pick up a new hobby.** If winter means you tend to stay indoors more, keeping busy with new hobbies can help keep your mind active. Why not pick up a book and read or learn how to knit?
- **Get cosy.** Embrace the cold by getting into warm, comfy PJs and enjoying a hot cuppa and take in the warmth. Remember, the cold won't last forever!

## What causes SAD?

The exact causes of SAD isn't fully understood however it's often linked to reduced exposure to sunlight during the shorter autumn and winter days. There is some evidence to suggest the following:

- increase in the body's level of melatonin, a hormone that regulates the sleep-wake cycle. This makes people feel sleepier and more lethargic.
- irregular production of serotonin, the neurotransmitter that influences mood and,
- less production of Vitamin D, which is needed for the production of serotonin. Insufficiency of Vitamin D is associated with symptoms of depression.

## If it doesn't get better...

You should consider seeing your GP if you're struggling to cope. Your GP will carry out an assessment by asking you questions about your mood, lifestyle, eating habits and sleeping patterns, plus any changes in your thoughts and behaviours. After the assessment, your GP will recommend the most suitable treatment programme for you.

The main types of treatments are:

- **lifestyle measures** – including getting as much natural sunlight as possible such as a brief lunchtime walk, exercising regularly and managing your stress levels
- **light therapy** – using a special lamp called a light box, which gives off a strong white or blue light, this simulates exposure to sunlight.
- **Antidepressant medication**
- **Talking therapies** – such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or counselling.





**West London Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) is responsible for planning and buying health services for people registered with a GP in Kensington & Chelsea and Queens Park and Paddington. The organisation is made up of GP and health professional members. The West London CCG not only commissions Community Living Well (CLW); they also work with CLW providers to ensure you have coordinated access to mental and physical health care and social wellbeing support. We spoke to West London CCG's Mental Health Delivery Manager, Matt Waters, who joined us last year in July, about his role and what is on the horizon for CLW. and the CCG.**

### How did you get involved with CLW?

The opportunity came up and I was really interested as I felt that CLW promoted the ethos of integrated and collaborative approaches that I had previous experience of and wanted to develop further. I was especially keen to work in, and develop, NHS services because I feel it is a great institution that everyone in the UK should be proud of but we must also recognise that it can't always do everything and be all things to everyone. To meet the needs of people in our local communities, it's important to work with partners in the Voluntary Sector and Social care to develop holistic, wrap around services for service users and carers.

“Working in CLW is a great opportunity to work with a variety of people and professionals in order to come together in an attempt to ensure we design and deliver the services that our local communities actually want and need.”

### What does your role entail?

I'm responsible for managing the contracts and relationships with our Voluntary Sector partners who work within the Community Living Well network. I also look at the performance of the services and review the quality of what is delivered to ensure that the needs of the local communities are being met and considered whilst making sure that NHS resources and public money is being used appropriately and in the most effective way.

### Have you always worked in the mental health sector?

I've worked in the mental health sector for a number of years now, both in inpatient settings and the community. I started my professional life as a Mental Health and Mental Capacity advocate in North West England. From there I worked in secure Forensic hospitals as well as general adult services as part of the respective psychology and medical teams. I've had the opportunity to work with some amazing professionals and service users who I have learnt a lot from that I feel has benefitted my practice.

### What do you hope to achieve during your time here?

I want to gain a better insight into what the communities we serve actually need and want. I am keen to build on the great work that has been done and further championing the voice of service users, carers and members of the public to ensure that we continue to develop and deliver the best quality services that we can.

“I am keen to build on the great work that has been done and further championing the voice of service users, carers and members of the public.”

### What do you enjoy about working for CLW?

Working in CLW is a great opportunity to work with a variety of people and professionals in order to come together and ensure that we design and deliver the services that our local communities actually want and need. I like that all staff, service users, carers or members of the public are considered and given a voice to represent their views which can be a challenge but, ensures that CLW continues to evolve and we have to think about different and innovative ways of working.

### What is on the horizon for CLW?

The main development for CLW in the immediate future is about how we can make sure that mental health services provided by both CLW and the Community Mental Health Teams can work together in a more joined up way to ensure that people get the support they need. This goes hand in hand with the setting up of what are called 'Primary Care Networks' (PCN). In line with the NHS' long term plan, PCNs will pull together groups of GP practices in the area, covering populations of 30-50,000, who will work together to improve the health of their population.

CLW has already pioneered a more joined up approach to services but we are looking forward to working more closely with local GPs through the PCNs to further develop these pathways and to improve the experience of people accessing mental health services. We want to do this together with people from our local communities so please make sure to keep aware of any opportunities that are coming up to contribute to these developments or you can speak to your GP to find out more.

Find out more about the West London CCG on their website:  
[www.wlccg.nhs.uk](http://www.wlccg.nhs.uk)





## Sleep and Anxiety

**T**HERE ARE PLENTY of benefits to a good nights sleep. However, we sometimes find ourselves tossing and turning with feelings of dread and unease. If you find yourself in this position, there are some simple things you can do to get back to dreamland.

### Why can't I sleep?

Many people suffer from sleep problems, including the inability to fall asleep, regularly waking up during the night and not being able to fall back asleep again and early waking. The cause of some sleep


problems may be related to physical health, for instance the effect of a health condition or medication you are taking. However, often the underlying cause is psychological, for instance symptoms of anxiety, depression or trauma. It is important to seek help from your GP for these underlying psychological problems.


You may be someone who finds that as soon as you lie in bed emotions or thoughts come to the surface. This may be a sign that you're not attending to these emotions in your waking hours. Make time to know what you're feeling and try and find an outlet, such as a journal, creating a worry list or talking to others for support.


If this doesn't improve things, then think about talking to your GP about potentially accessing a talking therapy or you can self-refer to our service.


## What can I do to improve my sleep?


Sleep hygiene is a set of good habits that can help improve sleep. Here are some tips and recommendations to help you improve your night's sleep:


 Try to go to bed and get up at the same time every day and avoid naps. A regular routine helps train your body for sleep.


 Avoid caffeine and nicotine for four to six hours before bedtime as they are both stimulants that affect your sleep. Instead have some warm milk or chamomile tea.


 Don't use alcohol to help you sleep. While it may make you sleepy in the immediate short-term, it has a negative effect on the quality of your sleep and can lead to you developing a dependency.


 If you have trouble falling asleep, try to distract yourself with breathing exercises, meditation or deep muscle relaxation.


 Avoid using smartphones, tablets or other electronic devices for an hour or so before you go to bed as the light from the screen on may have a negative effect on sleep.

 Try not to clock-watch. A lot of people worry about not getting enough sleep, but watching the clock makes you more tense and anxious, which leads to you being more stimulated and less likely to fall asleep.

 Your bed is for sleeping so try to help entrench this connection by not using it as a place to do other activities, such as watching television, eating or surfing the internet.

 Develop rituals before bedtime. For instance, having a warm bath can help you feel sleep, or do some meditation or stretching exercises.

 A good diet can help with good sleep. Try to avoid heavy meals before bed. However, an empty stomach can be quite distracting so if you're hungry, have a light snack.

 Your bedroom ideally needs to be dark, quiet, tidy and be kept at a temperature of 18C and 24C

### Helpful resources



**Sleepio** is an online sleep improvement programme based on CBT principles. It's free for people living in London. Download it here:  
[www.good-thinking.uk/sleepio](http://www.good-thinking.uk/sleepio)



Overcoming Insomnia and Sleep Problems: A Self-Help Guide Using Cognitive Behavioral Techniques by Colin A. Espie

If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...

If you feel your anxiety is causing many sleepless nights, our Talking Therapies service may be able to help. To register to service, complete the self-referral form here: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](http://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/)





# Overcoming Obstacles: Luca's story



"Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. There is no harm in admitting that we can't do it on our own."

If you would like to be a part of our creative process through sharing your story, please get in touch with our editor, Michelle Jackson, at [michelle.jackson@kcmind.org.uk](mailto:michelle.jackson@kcmind.org.uk)

**C**OMING TO TERMS with a long-term condition can be challenging, particularly around managing symptoms and making changes to your day-to-day life. It can have a detrimental effect on your mental health, causing anxiety and depression. Luca, who has Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) talks to us about how the service taught him to re-focus his life and adopt a new mindset on the illness and build his confidence.

## What led you to be referred to the CLW Talking Therapies service?

I had a difficult time in the summer; I was emotionally eating at home on my own, feeling sorry for myself and depressed and had no social life. Sleep wasn't good, I was falling asleep early, waking up in the middle of the night, staying up, watching television, eating and then falling asleep again.

The COPD team referred me because I was having problems dealing with the oxygen I needed to take. I didn't accept that I needed it, so they got a bit concerned. I caught a chest infection that took six weeks to clear up, and I thought 'this is my life, struggling to go to the next room.' I was aware that I needed to take the oxygen but emotionally I wasn't accepting of it, I feared I would become reliant.

## What long-term condition are you living with?

My main issue is COPD, lung emphysema. It's a chronic condition and it's not going to get better. I was diagnosed in 2010 and have been on oxygen therapy since July last year. I also have a cervical problem that is beginning to affect the tips of my fingers, which is annoying as I was a guitarist. I can't play sports and it takes time for me to get dressed. I lost a lot of self-confidence as my health deteriorated because of the chest infection. I have to use the oxygen whenever I move.

## What did your therapy focus on?

My therapist helped me to re-focus my life, rather than fearing death. I realised there's no point in focusing on things that I can't control; it will just drive me mad. We looked at what was going on for me emotionally but also at my values and where I wanted to go. I went to weight management which was important because putting on weight affects my breathing. The therapy rebooted me and I had a renaissance; I was attending talks, a philosophy class, walking every day, doing cooking classes and sleeping better now.

## Did you have any difficulties and challenges?

Using the Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) approach, my therapist was able to make me find tools I previously had. I didn't always do the homework, but once the ball started rolling we were doing things on the whiteboard. My therapist used it a lot to explore my thoughts and feelings about my illness.

"I realised there's no point in focusing on things that I can't control; it will just drive me mad. We looked at what was going on for me emotionally but also at my values and where I wanted to go."

## How do you plan on keeping up your progress?

I'm going to keep doing what I'm doing. Exercise is good for my health, I meet people now, I talk philosophy, I cook every day and I'm mindful of what I put in my body.

## Do you have any advice for others who are struggling?

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. There is no harm in admitting that we cannot do it all on our own. Whenever I asked for help I've received it.

"The therapy rebooted me and I had a renaissance; I was attending talks, a philosophy class, walking every day, doing cooking classes and I'm sleeping better now."

Are you experiencing some of the issues mentioned and would like some support?

To refer yourself to the Talking Therapies service, please fill out the form available here: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/) or call 020 3317 4200



## Keeping your mind and body fit

**G**EORGIA SMITH IS a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner who is running a six-week course called Step Forward. The course combines physical activity with Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). She shares with us the benefits of exercise in improving low mood and anxiety and information on the course and how to join.

We often think of mental and physical health as two separate things but the truth is, they are very closely linked. When we feel good physically, we tend to feel more positive and better about life.

Therefore, things that can be good for our physical health can also have a hugely positive impact on our mental health. Keeping active is a very powerful tool for doing this. We are all aware that exercise can improve physical health by making us stronger and reduce the risk of certain diseases. What is less known is that exercise can improve our mental wellbeing; how we feel and our ability to cope with the stresses of day-to-day life.

### What is it about exercise that makes us feel good?

When we exercise, chemicals such as serotonin and endorphins are released which help to naturally stabilise and lift our mood and improve our sleep.

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Regular exercise can increase our energy levels throughout the day and even enhance our ability to learn and memorise new things. On top of this, doing physical activity can give us a huge sense of achievement and help us to discover new interests and meet new people.

Often many of us hear the word exercise and panic, thinking we should be running marathons or lifting unearthly weights at the gym but this isn't the case!

Exercise can be anything that gets us moving; from doing our weekly shop, cleaning the house to dancing. No matter our age or fitness level, we can all seek the benefits of exercise.

Are you experiencing some of the issues mentioned and would like some support?

To refer yourself to the Talking Therapies service, please fill out the form available here: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/) or call 020 3317 4200



### STEP FORWARD COURSE

We are starting a new group which combines physical activity and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) to improve your mental health. CBT is an effective, evidence-based treatment for low mood, anxiety and stress. By improving your physical health, it should help with improving your mood and wellbeing!

The group welcomes people of all abilities. If you would like to increase your physical activity levels, it would be great to have you there!

Attendees will:

- Receive weekly support on changing their lifestyle
- Participate in an optional group walk around the borough after each session (11.30am to 12.30pm)
- Aim to complete two other physical activities per week

- Complete physical activity diaries and weekly questionnaires
- Learn about local opportunities and resources for increasing activity levels

If you're interested in attending, you'll need to be referred to Talking Therapies. Please complete this form on the website and state clearly that you're interested in joining the Step Forward course: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/)

Alternatively, you can ask your GP to refer you.

If you're interested in finding out more information, please get in touch with us by emailing [cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net](mailto:cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net) or calling 020 3317 4200.





# Food and Mood: how diet affects your mental health

**WE OFTEN LINK our diet and what we eat to our physical health, but did you know that it also affects your mental health and wellbeing?**

Having a healthy, balanced diet rich in protein, nutrients and vegetables could be the key to raising energy levels, improving your ability to concentrate and focus, bettering digestion and releasing amino acids, the chemicals your brain needs to regulate your thoughts and feelings.

By incorporating some or all of these tips into your diet, you may find an improvement to your mood and wellbeing.

## Eating regularly

If you're not eating regularly, you may find your blood sugar level drops. This can cause you to feel tired, irritable and depressed. Eating regularly and choosing foods that release energy slowly, such as pasta, rice and oats, will help to keep your sugar levels steady.

## Staying hydrated

If you don't drink enough fluids, you may find it difficult to concentrate or think clearly. This may also affect your bowels, which puts no one in a good mood. It is recommended that you drink between six to eight glasses of

fluids a day. Water is the best option but tea, coffee and smoothies also count as an intake. Be mindful though that these contain caffeine and sugar!

## Looking after your gut

Research has shown that your gut reflects how you are feeling emotionally. If you're stressed or anxious, this can make your gut slow down or speed up. For healthy digestion, you need to have plenty of fibre and fluid and you need to exercise regularly. Healthy gut foods include fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

## Managing caffeine

Caffeine is a stimulant which means it will give you a big burst of energy but it may make you feel anxious and depressed, disturb your sleep (especially if you have it before bed), or give you withdrawal symptoms if you stop suddenly. Try limiting the amount of caffeine you have a day or avoid it altogether and you might find you feel noticeably better.

## Getting your five-a-day

Vegetables and fruit contain a lot of the minerals, vitamins and fibre we need to keep us physically and mentally healthy. Eating a variety of different coloured fruits and vegetables every day means you'll get a good range of nutrients. Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and juiced (one glass) fruits and vegetables all count towards your five-a-day.

## Getting enough protein

Protein is important as it contains amino acids which make up the chemicals your brain needs to regulate your thoughts and feelings. It also helps keep you feeling fuller for longer. You can find protein in lean meat, fish, eggs, cheese and legumes (peas, beans and lentils).

## Eating the right fats

Rather than avoiding all fats, it's important to eat the right ones. Your brain needs fatty acids such as omega-3 or -6 to keep it working well. Healthy fats are found in oily fish, poultry, avocados and eggs.

There are many ways that foods can affect how we feel, just as how we feel has an influence on what foods we choose. Some of the food/mood effects are due to nutrient content, but a lot of effects are due to existing associations of foods with pleasure and reward (chocolate) or diet and deprivation (plain foods).

### Who are the Primary Care Liaison Nurse Team?

The Primary Care Liaison Nurse Team can provide assessment and support to you and your GP for things such as specialist advice on treatment options, including medication advice and clinical support. They can also help you to manage your mental health and find solutions to life's challenges.

Referrals are made through your GP. If you feel the service could help you, book an appointment with your GP so that you can talk through your options with them.





## Returning to work after sick leave

**TWO-THIRDS OF US** will have suffered from some form of mental illness at some point in our lives. It can be even more devastating when it forces us to take a lengthy absence from work. However, once we are on the right road to recovery, going back to work is often one of the most important factors in speeding up our return to full health. It provides us with a support network and is an opportunity to regain our sense of self-esteem and puts some routine and stability back into our lives. Here are some tips on how to transition seamlessly back into the workplace.

### Stay in touch

If you can, keep in touch with a trusted colleague while you're off sick, or when you're about to return. They can keep you abreast of things like door codes changing, if the stationary cupboard has moved etc, that your manager might overlook, and can help you feel at home in the office. You can also arrange a 'drop in to work' before your return to say hello to colleagues and get re-familiarised.

### Speak to your GP

Before returning to your job, speak to your GP as they might have recommendations to make for your return to work, such as:

- a phased return (not immediately returning to your full working hours or duties)
- flexible hours
- reasonable adjustments, such as recommending specialist equipment to help support you while you're at work

### Be honest

If you're struggling, be honest! Let your employer or colleagues know if you need extra support. Please remember though that it's up to you how much or how little you'd like to tell your colleagues about why you've been off work. Don't feel pressured into sharing more than you feel comfortable with.

### Prepare

There's nothing worst than being late and feeling rushed on your first day back at work. If you can, lay out your outfit and items that you will need such as lunch, the night before. This will help ensure your morning goes as smoothly as possible. It could also leave you with extra time in the morning to allow for any unexpected delays or cancellations.

## Looking for a job?

If you've had to leave your last job due to a mental illness and are now ready to return to work, here are some tips to help you with your job-seeking journey.

### Think 'transferable'

Think about your transferable skills. Sometimes it might help to talk through the person specification for a job with a friend - you might be a better match for a role than you think! There are some skills which are invaluable regardless of the role, such as, time management, communication skills, the ability to work alone and as part of a team, and being able to prioritise tasks.

### Identifying gaps in your skills and experience

Do this by looking at the job descriptions and person specifications of roles you are interested in and see what areas you may need to work on. You could "fill in the gaps" by volunteering or completing a short course.

### Network!

Sometimes it's not about what you know but who you know. Make an effort to get to know people and attend events to keep updated of industry happenings to get your foot in the door.

### Ask questions during the interview

Although it can be tempting to ask about salary or promotion opportunities, the interview isn't the best time to ask these questions. Instead, ask questions that will demonstrate a genuine interest in the company, for example, ask the panel what they enjoy about working at the company.

### Consider "flexible working"

More and more companies are offering "flexible working" and "working from home" as the way we work changes. Don't be afraid to ask questions about what this really means, as it can differ greatly from company to company.

### If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...

To refer to our employment service please fill out the form found on our website: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/)





# Applying for benefits for the first time

**W**E ALL NEED a bit of support every now and again. The United Kingdom has a benefits system which ensures those who need practical help and financial support, get it. The benefit system can feel daunting and often confusing, particularly if you are unsure what you may be entitled to. There has also been a lot of stigma attached to welfare support and that can cause one to feel anxious and distressed when starting the process for the first time.

If you feel like you require support and are unsure where to start or what you may be entitled to, here are some useful tips to help you get started.

18 | Call Community Living Well on 020 3317 4200

## What are benefits?

The benefit system exists to help provide practical help and financial support for those who are unemployed and looking for work. It also provides people with assistance if their earnings are low, if they have a disability, if they are bringing up children, retired, unwell or caring for someone who is unwell.

## How much can I get on a benefit?

How much you get is dependent on what you are entitled to. Take the first step of finding out your entitlements by using the suggested calculators in the next page.



### Use Entitled To's free Benefits calculator

The Entitled Benefits calculator is a short and simple way for you to discover what support is available. By completing a tailored questionnaire, the calculator works out an estimate of your entitlements to benefits, tax credits and Universal Credit.

Website: <https://www.entitledto.co.uk/>



### Visit the Government website

The gov.uk website is a great source of information, particularly if you are after information on benefits in general. From jobseeker's allowance to benefits for families, they provide a step-by-step guide on each benefit which will inform you how to apply.

Website: <https://www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/>



### Contact your local Citizen's Advice Service if you require further guidance throughout the process

You can get advice from your local Citizen's Advice Service on various benefits, your eligibility and how to apply. Their website is also a valuable source of information and you can find your nearest Citizen's Advice for a drop-in visit or you can contact the national phone line.

Website: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/>

Phone: 03444 111 444

## Dan's story

Dan left his last job when he was diagnosed with a long-term illness. He was living off his savings which was depleting quickly. He wasn't ready to return to full-time work and his hardship was impacting his mood and he felt lost, confused and unsure of where to go or who to turn to.

Dan met with one of our Navigators who sat down with him and went through his current situation and options. After going through the Benefits calculator, Dan worked out what support was available to him.

The Navigator team helped Dan apply for Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment, which helps with the extra costs of a long-term health condition or disability.

To make sure that Dan continues to get the support he needs, he was referred to specialist services to help support him with budgeting and money management as well as the Community Living Well Peer Support to help address and support his social needs.

**If you are experiencing some of the issues mentioned...**

To refer to the Navigator service please fill out the form found on our website: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/)

For more information on the service:



020 3317 4200



[cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net](mailto:cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net)





## In the spotlight: Men's mental health

**W**hile many of the same difficulties are experienced by both men and women, there is a difference in the way they address them. Women tend to be more open in discussing their feelings whereas men have a tendency to keep to themselves and suffer in silence. Quite often they turn to distraction techniques such as spending more time working, drinking more than usual or visiting their 'man cave' more often.

20 | Call Community Living Well on 020 3317

A report published by Public First reveals that 28% of men have experienced symptoms of a mental health issue that they believed may require treatment during the last 12 months, but have decided not to seek medical help. Another research conducted by Time to Change revealed that three-quarters of the men surveyed won't open up to their friends about their mental health struggles and concerns for fear of being a burden. Of those that take their lives in the UK, 75% of them are men.

### So why do men choose to suffer in silence?

One of the main reasons is societal gender norms; men should be "tough" and "fearless" and they aren't really men if they show any sign of weakness. This is called "toxic masculinity". Some men may also find it difficult to verbalise or even recognise their problems.

Left undetected and untreated, it can lead men to suffer from immense hopelessness, withdrawal and a shutdown of normal activity. It's important to recognise the signs and encourage each other to speak about how we're feeling – there's no shame in feeling vulnerable, lost or sad; everyone experiences these emotions.

### How do I support someone who may need it?

- **Ask them twice.** Some men are unwilling to open up the first time you ask them how they are; but the simple act of asking again shows a genuine willingness to listen and talk.
- **Read between the lines.** 35% of men have said that if they wanted to talk to a friend about their mental health, they would ask how their friend is doing first and hope they'd ask them back.
- **Know when to end the banter.** We all like a bit of banter from time to time, but it's important to know when to stop when someone isn't in the mood. If you notice a friend is acting differently, ask them how they're doing. Remember, 'grow up' and 'man up' are not effective phrases - 42% of men have said these are conversation blockers.
- **If he invites you out one-on-one, he may want to chat.** 63% of men have said that they would be most comfortable talking about their mental health with someone they trust. Try to just listen and create some space for your friend to share what's on their mind.
- **Let them know they are supported.** No need to make it awkward - just let them know you're there for them. You don't have to give advice, you just need to be the good friend you've always been.

## Growing connections through authentic listening and sharing

Peer Support run a men's group once a month. It's a safe haven for you to meet other men and hear their stories.

Hearing other men's stories that resonates with yours can help decrease feelings of loneliness as you get together to talk in an authentic, accepting and non-judgmental way.

To attend the group, you will need to refer to the Peer Support service. Please see below for details on how to refer.

If you would like to find out more about the Men's Group, please contact 020 3317 4200 or email [peersupport@kcmind.org.uk](mailto:peersupport@kcmind.org.uk).

**If you are experiencing any of the issues mentioned...**

To refer yourself to the Peer Support service, please fill out the form available here: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/) or call 020 3317 4200.





# 6 New Self-Care Services

There are lots of things you can do to take care of your mental, emotional and physical health. Self-Care is something that many of us overlook, often because we are unaware of all the tools and support available on our doorstep. There is a whole host of activities on offer that are designed to improve mood and reduce anxiety and depression. The Community Living Well website has details on the six local self-care services that will help you to feel better, stay well or manage existing health conditions: [communitylivingwell.co.uk](http://communitylivingwell.co.uk)

## Emotional Help in your Language

There are many challenges and hardships associated with moving to and living in a new country. You may miss your home and family or have moments of feeling isolated due to the absence of the support network of people who know you best.

The BME forum offers a service available in Arabic (Moroccan and Sudanese dialects), Bangla, Farsi, French, Somali and Spanish that provides the support needed to create a new life for yourself. Their support package includes emotional support and help with practical problems, including help to access other services.

Appointments take place in a safe and confidential space so that you can explore and express your thoughts, feeling and emotions with ease in your mother tongue.

**Where?** Church Street Neighbourhood Centre, Cherwell House, Penfold Street, NW8 8PT

**More Information** - [nafsika.thalassis@bmehf.org.uk](mailto:nafsika.thalassis@bmehf.org.uk) or 0795 8479 217

## Wellbeing Programme

The Clement James Centre welcomes you to their wellbeing programme. Take part in a variety of one-off workshops, ongoing activities and events at their friendly centre.

A great chance for you to build confidence, relax and connect with others. Engaging with others at a local centre can create social bonds, strengthen community ties and link you up with free resources and materials.

**Where?** 95 Sirdar Road, Notting Hill, W11 4EQ

**More Information** - [wellbeing@clementjames.org](mailto:wellbeing@clementjames.org) or 020 7221 8810

“

I think it is important for women to have their stories heard in a space that is safe. The church venue is good. Today made me remember who I was before my stroke. It was a nice reminder of who I was before. The speakers and staff were great. There needs to be more women's creative workshops. It should be a part of society. Having fun is a good way of learning and gaining more confidence.



Recipe Sharing Group



Wellbeing Programme



Volunteering



Play Reading



Help in your Language



Massage Therapy

I'm extremely happy when I came to this centre. It opened doors for me to improve myself and to accomplish more. You do well in all the courses you offer-for learning, self-care, creativity. I'm grateful I've come to your centre-thanks.

”

The lessons and the interaction with the group made me more aware of myself as a person and also dealing with others. The teachers are very knowledgeable, informative, patient and compassionate and that made me comfortable. I looked forward to attending the workshops.

## 6 New Services



### Well Read Play Reading

Reading can offer a delightful escape into our imaginations, inviting us into new worlds, scenarios, experiences and adventures. If your mental health condition makes concentrating on novels difficult, you may find that you are missing out on the many benefits and enjoyments associated with reading.

Shared reading can overcome some of the obstacles that prevent you from incorporating this pastime into your self-care routine, as you can opt to listen to others read stories, poems or plays aloud whilst participating as much or as little as you like.

Well Read is a community play-reading programme that is open to all. Join a warm, friendly and connected community that brings people together and plays to life. No experience is necessary.

**Where?** The Playground Theatre, 8 Latimer Industrial Estate, Latimer Road, London W10 6RQ

**More Information**  
wellread@theplaygroundtheatre.

### Volunteering on Prescription

Volunteering helps people feel better, supporting and enabling them to build their skills, knowledge and confidence so that they can take control of their lives and support others to do the same. It can help you on an individual level - providing a sense of purpose, satisfaction and giving additional meaning to your life, whilst also allowing you to become part of a community that unites people in pursuit of a shared goal or passion.

Join the Volunteering on Prescription project run by the Volunteer Centre Kensington and Chelsea. Volunteers are at the heart of this programme, selecting the activities and opportunities that they enjoy, sharing their interests and goals and building on their strengths to reach their goals – whether that's improving their wellbeing, making new friends who enjoy each other's company and can lean on each other when life isn't easy, or using their skills to improve their lives and the lives of others. Volunteering on Prescription is for you, whoever you are and whatever you want to do.

**Where?** Across the borough  
**More Information** -  
louisa.sch@vckc.org.uk or 020 8960 3722

### My Recipe, My Story

As well as delicious food, cooking can also produce many positive mental health benefits. The creative process contains two rewarding self-care ingredients: the activity and the result.

If you are experiencing any negative thoughts or worries, it can be a healthy outlet to bring calm into your headspace and return your mind to the present moment.

The act of cooking also unwinds the body, as getting into the flow of the task at hand can ease the tension that appears when we feel anxious or depressed. At the end of the activity, you can enjoy the meal you've created knowing that you've worked hard and learnt new skills in the process. Positive feedback and seeing others enjoy and appreciate your creation adds to this sense of accomplishment, boosting your sense of self-worth and value.

Open to women of diverse backgrounds, the My Recipe My Story activity group provides a space to explore the stories that are at the heart of your favourite recipes. If you are looking for additional social contact, then preparing a homecooked meal and sharing your most treasured recipes can be a brilliant way to get to know others in the community.

**More Information**  
info@clyd.co.uk or 0790 3865 156

### Massage Therapy

Massage therapy is being increasingly recognised as a tool and method to alleviate depression and anxiety. Tension caused by these conditions can build up causing muscle pains, cramps, headaches, joint pain, inflammation and interrupted sleep patterns. Massage therapy helps your body to relax and unwind, improves blood circulation, lowers blood pressure, boosts your immune system, releases endorphins that can help with depression and fosters an overall feeling of wellbeing.

In partnership with Community Massage London, SMART is offering centre-based therapies that will allow you to tap into the healing power of massage and restore your body-mind connection. Therapies on offer include Indian head massage, reflexology and seated massage.

**Where?** Every 2nd Tuesday of the month 1:15–5:15pm at ADKC, Whitstable House, Silchester Road W10 6SB  
Every 4th Thursday of the month 1:00–5:00pm at SMART, The Basement, 15 Gertrude Street SW10 0JN

**More Information** - teresa@communitymassagelondon.co.uk or 0754 4108 406

**Want to sign up to one of the Self-Care services?**

To refer yourself to a Self-Care service, please fill out the form available here: [communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk/self-referral-form-mental-health/) or call 020 3317 4200.



# Local Services Snapshot

There are lots of other services situated within both Kensington and Chelsea and Queen's Park and Paddington. We've included information and contact details for some of them below.



## Men's Shed

ACAVA have launched Maxilla Men's Shed at Maxilla Studios in North Kensington. The shed provides an enjoyable way to stay socially integrated in your local community, keep active and learn or pass on transferable skills in a woodworking and makerspace workshop environment. It features a series of specialised courses and training workshops which focus around learning a new skill, with shedders given the opportunity to hone and practice their new craft in the shed space.

**Email:** [Rasha.el-sady@acava.org](mailto:Rasha.el-sady@acava.org)

## The Clement James Centre

The Clement James Centre aim to help everyone in the community to reach their full potential. This is achieved through support in the fields of employment, education and wellbeing.

Their employment support service helps people overcome barriers towards work, by assisting with interview preparation and job applications. The education services include English language, maths and ICT classes as well as career workshops, and a summer arts programme. The wellbeing services include a gardening group, fitness classes, cooking sessions and creative workshops.

**Who is it for?** Kensington and Chelsea residents

**Website:** [clementjames.org](http://clementjames.org)

**Email:** [reception@clement-james.org](mailto:reception@clement-james.org)

**Phone:** 020 7221 8810

## Midaye

Midaye works to support individuals and families through befriending and empowering them, providing them with information, and by advocating on their behalf. Their Better Futures project provides one-to-one support, training and development opportunities for local women (Sewing classes, employment support, driving theory classes, IT support and volunteer training). The Education Outreach service is designed to provide intervention and support for families who are struggling to engage with their children's schools. The Family Support programme provides facilitated access to council and mainstream services in the borough.

**Who is it for?** Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster residents

**Website:** [midaye.org.uk/](http://midaye.org.uk/)

**Email:** [Contact@midaye.org.uk](mailto:Contact@midaye.org.uk)

**Phone:** 020 8969 7456



## The Dalgarno Trust

The Dalgarno Trust is a local charity which works with local communities to offer a wide range of activities, projects and services that promote health, wellbeing and inclusion for both the young and not so young. They work in partnership with the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Council to deliver core services and a youth programme. Services include creative and exercise classes, employment support, training courses, advice and information and social activities.

**Who is it for?** Kensington and Chelsea residents

**Website:** [dalgarnotrust.org.uk/](http://dalgarnotrust.org.uk/)

**Phone:** 020 7034 0303

**Email:** [reception@dalgarnotrust.org.uk](mailto:reception@dalgarnotrust.org.uk)



Community  
**LivingWell**

Working together for your  
wellbeing

## Locations

CLW North Hub  
St Charles Centre for Health  
and Wellbeing, Exmoor  
Street, W10 6DZ

CLW South Hubs  
Violet Melchett Health  
Centre, Community Living  
Well, 2nd Floor, 30 Flood  
Walk, Chelsea, SW3 5RR

Gertrude Street  
15 Gertrude Street  
London, SW10 0JN

## Contact Details

[communitylivingwell.co.uk](https://communitylivingwell.co.uk)  
020 3317 4200 | [cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net](mailto:cnw-tr.clw@nhs.net)

Community Living Well is not a crisis service. If you are worried about your mental health or the mental health of a friend or family member then please contact the Single Point of Access on **0800 0234 650** for help, advice or support over the phone, 24 hours a day.