

## Two world days in one

October 2023

**October 10 is World Mental Health Day, which also coincides with World Homelessness Day.**



Many millions of people experience mental illness which can hold people back from fulfilling their potential and living a full and purposeful life. Whilst it might be a coincidence that these two world days occur on the same day, mental health illness and homelessness are not mutually exclusive but often inextricably linked.

Mental illness can change people's life trajectories in an instant; it harms relationships, and derails education and careers - and the majority of people it affects will experience a mental health crisis at some point which may risk them being admitted to hospital or face losing their long-term accommodation or housing benefit eligibility. In fact, 8 out of 10 people<sup>1</sup> who are sleeping rough have been diagnosed with a mental health issue.

So, this year, for World Homelessness Day and World Mental Health Day, we're highlighting the importance of our services as we work hard to provide accommodation, care, and support for a wide range of people, including those with mental health needs, and homeless young people and adults.

In 2021, Sanctuary Supported Living partnered with Hampshire and Isle of Wight's (HloW) Integrated Care Board to transform crisis and acute mental health services in Winchester. Together, they were keen to reimagine what mental health support services looked like with an emphasis on trauma-informed approaches and holistic development.

Soon after, HloW Integrated Care Board committed to fund an innovative project in the shape of The Lookout – a pioneering respite and recovery support centre designed to minimise the pressures and stresses of daily life, and give customers the opportunity to reset. Coupled with elements of best practise that were underpinning successful crisis houses in other parts of the country, and a wealth of experience and expertise in supported housing, violence prevention

---

<sup>1</sup> [www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health](http://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/health-and-wellbeing/mental-health)

*Continued...*

# BLOG post

and the criminal justice system, Sanctuary Supported Living redeveloped one of its buildings to deliver a game-changing model of mental health support.

In a dynamic leap away from conventional support models, residents of The Lookout benefit from its therapeutic environment, whilst the NHS can plan the most efficient use of the inpatient provision. The model considers the emotional and psychological needs of each person and delivers holistic support and interventions in a safe space, which has consequently instilled confidence in the system that non-medical interventions and support are just as effective in mental health as standard medical models. It's also highlighted the value and skills of the voluntary sector in delivering mental health services and saving money.

As further testament to the success of this innovative model of care and support, one resident's feedback noted: "From the moment I arrived, I knew I was in a safe place. This was achieved with seemingly little effort from staff, and the positive and healing environment. I'm so grateful that The Lookout exists."

Crucially, since the service began it has supported 319 individuals with successful outcomes, avoiding mental health relapse.

Earlier this year, HloW Integrated Care Board won the Care Commissioner Award at the inaugural National Housing with Care Awards for their work supporting The Lookout. Judges commented: "the multi-agency partnership has broken down traditional organisational boundaries to achieve truly holistic support for people in mental health crisis."