

Mental health and wellbeing guide

A practical toolkit to help staff and volunteers in Islington feel confident having conversations about mental health and signposting residents to further support.



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1.0 Introduction

This mental health resource toolkit is designed to support frontline workers and volunteers in Islington. Its aim is to make it easier for non-specialists to access clear, reliable information about local mental health support so they can confidently guide residents to the help they need.

The toolkit is available in two formats:

- This comprehensive version with in-depth information and a comprehensive directory of resources.
- A compact, quick-reference version that fits easily in a back pocket.

2.0 Understanding mental health and wellbeing

What do we mean by mental health?

Mental health refers to how we think, feel, and behave – our emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. It affects how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Everyone has mental health, just like everyone has physical health. It can change over time depending on circumstances, support systems, and life events. Good mental health doesn't mean feeling happy all the time – it means being able to cope with life's ups and downs in a way that feels manageable.

Stigma and barriers seeking help

Stigma around mental health can prevent people from speaking up or asking for support. This stigma may come from cultural beliefs, fear of being judged, past negative experiences, or a lack of trust in services. Other barriers include:

- Not knowing where to go for help
- Long waiting times
- Language barriers or literacy issues
- Fear of losing housing, employment, or custody of children
- Shame or guilt

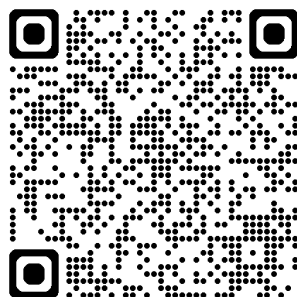
Being aware of these barriers helps frontline workers approach conversations with compassion, reassurance, and patience.

Inclusive language

The language around mental health can be confusing. It is important that the language used is as inclusive as possible to avoid stigmatisation. People have different ways of describing their own mental health and it is important that where possible you follow their lead.

Avoid using	Instead try
'a psycho' or 'a schizo'	'a person who has experienced psychosis' or 'a person who has schizophrenia'
'a schizophrenic' or 'a depressive'	someone who 'has a diagnosis of' is 'currently experiencing' or 'is being treated for...'
'lunatic' 'nutter' 'unhinged' 'maniac' 'mad'	'a person experiencing a mental health problem'
'the mentally ill', 'a person suffering from' 'a sufferer', a 'victim' or 'the afflicted'	'mental health patients' or 'people experiencing mental health problems'
'prisoners' or 'inmates' (in a psychiatric hospital)	'patients', 'service users' or 'clients'
'released' (from a hospital)	'discharged'
'happy pills'	'antidepressants', 'medication' or 'prescription drugs'
'committed suicide'	'died by suicide' or 'ended or took their life'

The Mental Health Foundation has a useful guide on talking about mental health including more detailed information around why certain phrases might be more stigmatising. The guide can be viewed by **scanning the QR code below**:



Myths about mental health debunked

MYTH

Only some people have mental health.

FACT

Mental health is like physical health – everyone has it and we need to take care of it. Good mental health means being about to think, feel and react in healthy ways and be able to live a fulfilled life.

MYTH

If you have a mental health issue you are unlikely to recover.

FACT

Mental health issues can be treated, and people can make a full recovery and go on and live happy and fulfilling lives.

MYTH

You can see if someone has a mental health issue.

FACT

You can't tell someone has a mental health issue just by looking at them – people with mental illness are just the same as everyone else.

MYTH

People who experience mental health issues tend to be violent or dangerous.

FACT

This is not true and in fact people who are experiencing mental health problems are statistically more likely to be a victim of violence.

MYTH

Nothing can be done to protect people from developing mental health conditions.

FACT

Many factors can protect people from developing mental health conditions including strengthening social and emotional skills, seeking help and support early on, developing supportive relationships, creating positive environments and looking after your physical health.

Common signs of mental distress

Frontline workers may notice signs that someone is struggling with their mental health. These signs vary from person to person, but may include:

Physical signs	Behavioural signs	Emotional signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches • Tension • Trembling • Back or joint pain • Tight jaw • Grinding teeth • Stomach problems • Change in sleeping patterns • Sweating or constantly cold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding or blaming others • Eating more or less • Increased smoking or drinking • Irritability • Anger • Over-excitement • Euphoria • Accident prone • Biting nails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritable • Frightened • Worried or anxious • Angry • Overwhelmed • Suicidal thoughts or self-harm • Cognitive difficulties • Difficulty relaxing • Memory lapses • Confusion • Loss of humour

Cultural awareness and inclusion considerations

Mental health is understood and expressed differently across cultures. In some communities, mental distress might be described using physical symptoms or spiritual language rather than emotional terms. Being culturally aware means:

- Listening without judgment.
- Being open to different ways of understanding distress.
- Avoiding assumptions based on background or appearance.
- Recognising the impact of racism, migration, trauma, or discrimination.
- Using interpreters or culturally appropriate services when needed.

Inclusion means making everyone feel welcome, respected, and understood — especially those who may have experienced exclusion or marginalisation.

3.0 Having conversations about mental health¹

Starting a conversation about mental health can be difficult or feel overwhelming, but reaching out when someone is struggling can make a real difference. It shows them they're not alone and some cares about them.

1. Find the right time and space

Before having the conversation, check that it is the right time and space for them. Ensure you can give the time and attention needed. Consider issues of privacy, noise, noise, distractions, other commitments, practicalities, etc.

2. Actively listen without judgement

Ensure they feel able to share as much or as little as they are comfortable to — without being judged

3. Ask open questions

Asking these types of questions encourages them to explore their thoughts and feelings. "I've noticed you haven't seemed yourself lately. What has been on your mind?" Try not to ask too many questions and give them time to respond.

4. Avoid making assumptions

You're not expected to be an expert. If you don't know what to say, remember that you don't need to find an answer, or even understand their feelings. Listening will let them know you care.

5. Acknowledge and validate

It might be tempting to silver-line situations to make someone feel better but it's important to acknowledge what they are saying. Saying "don't be silly, you're okay" could make them withdraw, become frustrated and angry. Instead say, "I can see this has really upset you," etc.

6. Avoid comparisons

Sometimes we can be tempted to draw a comparison to our own story, to show empathy. However, it could also discourage the other person from opening up. It's important the conversation is about them — so share sparingly.

7. Reflect back and clarify

By seeking clarity, you are showing them you are listening and want to know more. Avoid making assumptions and putting words into their mouth. Consider saying: "When you say..., do you mean...?" or "Could you tell me more about...?"

¹ <https://mentalhealth-uk.org/help-and-information/downloadable-resources/>

8. Show empathy rather than sympathy

Empathic responses show that you understand where the person is coming from, whereas sympathy often expresses pity. Rather than saying, “I’m sorry for you” say, “That must be really difficult, I’m sorry you are going through this.”

9. Empower them to find solutions

It’s important to listen first and not go straight to solutions. It’s also better that the next steps come from them. Ask questions that help them think of what to do next: “What do you think would help?”

10. Avoid advising and suggesting and easy solution

What you think might help someone may not be right for them. Suggesting easy solutions might invalidate their feelings. Try to avoid going into ‘fix’ mode.

11. Avoid diagnosing

Regardless of your observations and experiences you are not there to diagnose a mental illness. If you are concerned about them, encourage them to seek support.

4.0 Signposting with confidence

What is signposting?

Signposting is the act of guiding someone to the right support. It's not about giving advice or making a diagnosis – it's about knowing what's available, listening carefully, and helping people feel safe and supported as they take their next step.

Why is signposting important?

Signposting someone could be the first step to getting them the help they need.

But don't assume everyone wants this. Some people may just want to have a conversation about how they're feeling. Others may have had poor experiences of accessing support in the past.

Check in with them first. You could ask if they'd find it helpful for you to look into what support is available. You could offer to send them a list of support services, if they'd find it useful.

Tips for signposting

When signposting someone, it's essential to build trust and be clear about how their information is used. The right service depends on the person's needs, preferences, and circumstances. Ask yourself:

- Is this an urgent situation? If there is immediate risk, refer to crisis or emergency services.
- Is this a mental health need or a social need? A person experiencing loneliness or stress about housing may benefit more from social prescribing or community services than clinical therapy.
- What support does the person feel ready for? Sometimes, people aren't ready for therapy — but they might engage with a peer support group or activity.
- Are there specific factors to consider? Age, culture, gender, language, faith, past trauma, or identity may affect which services feel most appropriate or welcoming.
- Follow up where possible — even a simple, “Did you manage to get in touch with that service?” can mean a lot.

How to explain options to residents

- The way you explain services can make a big difference in whether someone feels able to engage with them. Use clear, simple, and kind language.
- Avoid jargon like “CBT” or “clinical thresholds” — say “talking therapy” or “someone who can help you work through your thoughts.”
- Be honest about what a service does, what it doesn’t do, and what to expect (e.g. formats, if it’s free).
- Offer choice where possible: “There’s a local service that offers counselling, or a group you could join. Would either of those feel helpful right now?”
- Show that it’s okay to ask questions, change their mind, or take small steps.

5.0 Immediate or crisis support

A mental health crisis means that someone may need urgent help with their mental health. Examples of a mental health crisis include thinking you are at risk of taking your own life or seriously harming yourself and needing urgent medical attention. You may be close to acting on suicidal thoughts or have seriously harmed yourself.

If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis and you don't feel like you can keep yourself or them safe, seek urgent specialist mental health support. In a crisis situation:

- Stay calm and try to create a safe, quiet environment.
- Listen without judgment — let the person speak and express themselves without interrupting.
- Assess the level of risk — if someone says they are having suicidal thoughts or have a plan to harm themselves, take it seriously.
- Do not leave the person alone if you believe they are at immediate risk.

It's an emergency

- If you or someone else needs immediate help and you are concerned for yours or their safety, please dial 999 immediately and ask for the ambulance service.

Urgent help – available anywhere

- Anyone in crisis, including children, or concerned family members can all 111, choose the mental health option, and talk to a trained mental health professional. The line is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

Urgent help in Islington

- If a person is already known to a service in Camden and Islington then you can contact the Islington crisis team on 080 0917 3333 (support is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- If they are not currently under the care of mental health services, they can first contact their GP and ask for an **urgent appointment**. This will allow them to discuss their experiences and situation with someone who can help them to identify what might be happening to you and organise further help for you if you need it.
- If they cannot wait to see the GP, then use Islington crisis team number - 080 0917 3333
- Hestia runs Islington's Recovery Café which is for adults who are experiencing a mental health crisis. The service provides a welcoming, safe space. They are open **6pm – 10pm on weekdays** and **2pm – 6pm on weekends**:
 - Address: 34 Islington Park Street, N1 1PX

- Call: [07384 117 241](tel:07384117241)
- Email: Islington.RecoveryCafe@hestia.org.uk

Helplines and managing suicidal thoughts

Suicidal thoughts can be a common response to psychological stress; there is support available.

Samaritans Freephone 116 123.

This service provides 24-hour confidential emotional support. You can also send an email to jo@samaritans.org and can expect a response within 24 hours.

Shout

A free 24-hour **text-based** service for anyone in crisis, just **text 85258**. They offer support via text message for people who are experiencing a personal crisis, who are feeling unable to cope and who need support. There is no app or data required, no registration process and no fee. It is confidential and anonymous.

The “Stay Alive” App

This provides useful information and tools to help you stay safe in crisis. You can use it if you are having thoughts of suicide or if you are concerned about someone else who may be considering suicide. It is available for free [download](#) on all smart phones.

The Hub of Hope

The [Hub of Hope](#) is a mental health support directory it provides mental health support in your area – for children, adults and crisis options

6.0 Navigating mental health support

Navigating mental health services can feel complicated and overwhelming. This section includes some key entry routes into mental health support in Islington.

Adults

General practitioners (GPs)

GPs are usually the first point of contact for physical and mental health concerns. They can assess symptoms, prescribe medication, refer to services like NHS talking therapies and more specialist mental health services. They are a core part of primary care services.

Who is it for?

- Anyone in England can register with a GP surgery to access NHS services. It's free to register.
- You do not need proof of address or immigration status, ID or an NHS number.

How do you access?

- You can find your nearest GP on the NHS website: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp>
- Once you've chosen your GP, you'll need to complete their registration process.

What happens at a GP appointment?²

At the appointment your doctor will make an initial assessment by asking questions about:

- Your mood, thoughts and behaviours – sometimes by using questionnaires or forms.
- Your lifestyle and any recent events in your life that might be affecting your wellbeing.
- Any sleep problems or changes in appetite.
- Your medical history, and your family's medical history.
- They might also ask about your physical health to rule out any physical illness.

What might the outcome of your appointment be?³

The outcome of your appointment will usually depend on what you say, what your doctor thinks might help and what kind of support you would like. For example, your doctor might suggest one or more of the following options:

- **Monitoring** - your doctor might ask you to come back for another appointment before offering any treatment.

² <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/what-might-happen-at-a-gp-appointment/>

³ <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/what-might-happen-at-a-gp-appointment/>

- **Diagnosis** - your doctor might give you a diagnosis, for example, of depression or anxiety. This doesn't always happen after your first appointment and may only be possible after monitoring you over time or referring you to a specialist.
- **Lifestyle changes** - your doctor may suggest that making small changes to your exercise, eating and sleep habits may help you to manage your symptoms.
- **Referral** - your doctor could refer you to another specialist mental health service.
- **Self-referral** - your doctor could give you details of a service you can contact yourself.
- **Medication** - your doctor might offer to prescribe you psychiatric medication. If they do this, they should clearly explain what it's for and explain any possible risks and benefits, so you can make an informed choice about whether or not you want to take it.

What is social prescribing?

Social prescribing services are all about helping individuals to look after their own health and wellbeing. Social prescribing is offered through a link worker who is part of the GP Practice Healthcare Team. The link worker will help you find ways to improve how you feel in a way that suits you.

The link worker can help direct you to local activities, working with the practice staff and a wide range of services provided by Islington Council, NHS and the voluntary sector to support you to feel better, more confident and more able to manage your current situation and health.

NHS Talking Therapies

Talking about your problems can really help. Camden and Islington Talking Therapies provides structured, change focused, evidence-based psychological treatments for adults with anxiety, depression, or primary insomnia.

Who is it for?

- The service is suitable for individuals who are motivated to engage in short-term, goal-focused therapy and who do not require multidisciplinary or long-term support.
- It **excludes** those with high risk, complex needs, severe mental health conditions, or those already under specialist care or receiving therapy elsewhere. They are unable to work with people presenting with active psychosis, bipolar disorder, or personality disorder.

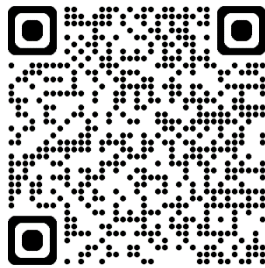
What do they offer?

- They offer face to face, video, and telephone appointments.
- They deliver evidence-based treatments for common mental health difficulties.
- They offer groups and courses available for a range of difficulties including insomnia.

- They offer employment support to help people find work, or support those struggling with their mental health in work.
- They offer self-help resources in different languages as well as some multilingual staff and interpreters.

How do you access?

- You can ask a healthcare professional such as a GP to refer you.
- Individuals can also self-refer by scanning the QR code:



What happens once a referral is made?

- They will aim to get in touch with the individual within two weeks of the referral being received to provide an update. This might involve offering an initial assessment appointment or advising a referral to another service.
- If your referral is accepted as appropriate, then an initial telephone assessment typically takes place within 6 weeks.
- If, following assessment, they feel Camden and Islington Talking Therapies could be a helpful service for you there would be a further wait for treatment. This wait can vary depending on the treatment option you choose. It could take a few weeks to several months for you to receive treatment.

Mental Health Core Teams

The Islington Community Core Teams comprise NHS, social care and voluntary sector experts all working together to support patients' mental health care and support in the community. There are three core teams across the borough (north, central and south)

Who is it for?

- The service accepts referrals for adults who are a resident of Islington or who are registered with an Islington GP.
- The service is suitable for people with complex anxiety and mood-related disorders that are too severe for NHS talking therapies and GPs to manage support.

What do they offer?

- Mental health assessment and advice
- Pharmacological treatment
- Brief psychological therapies
- Social care and inclusion
- Peer coaching
- Psycho-social support including from voluntary sector providers
- Holistic health and wellbeing support
- Referral options to other specialist services

How do you access?

- You can ask a healthcare professional such as a GP to refer you.

Children and young people

If you are a young person or you care for a young person who needs help with their emotional and mental health, there is lots of support in Islington.

Social, Emotional and Mental Health Service (SEMH)

SEMH is the front door to all services offered by Islington Children Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and their partner agencies. They screen all referrals to make sure we find each young person the right service first time.

Who are the SEMH partners?

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
- Barnardos – Talking and creative counselling
- Brandon Centre – Counselling and psychotherapies services
- Youth Counselling, Substance Misuse and Alcohol Service
- Isledon emotional wellbeing service

More information about each individual partner can be scanned by scanning the QR code:



Who is it for?

- SEMH offers social, emotional and mental health services to children, young people and their families, up to their 18th birthday (or 25th birthday for young people with special educational needs), who are registered with an Islington GP.
- Some services also support those who live in Islington and/or are educated in Islington.

How do you access?

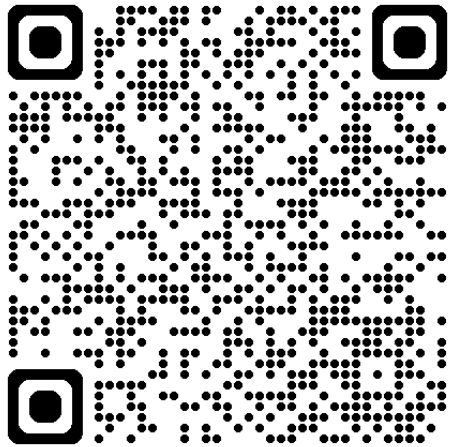
- They accept referrals from GP, schools, health professionals, early help, children's social care, charity and community provisions, or any professional working with young people and their families.
- They also accept self-referrals from parents and from children over the age of 16.
- All referrals need to be emailed to the central point of access via csctreferrals@islington.gov.uk with a completed request for service form attached to the message.
- For more information about this process, please visit the children's services contact team website by scanning the QR code:



7.0 Community mental health support

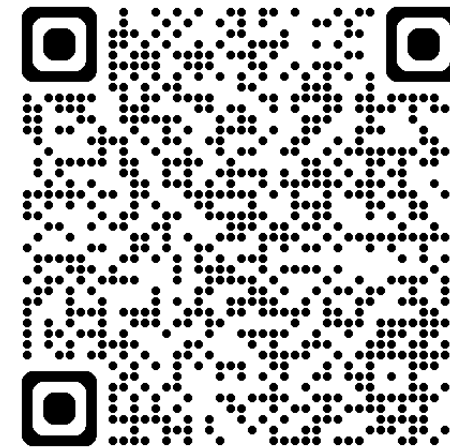
There is lots of support available in Islington to support people with their mental health. The directory below provides some options. You can also visit the council webpages or scan the QR codes:

Mental health support for children and young people in Islington:



<https://www.islington.gov.uk/children-and-families/young-people/mental-health-support-for-young-people>

Mental health support and advice for adults in Islington



<https://www.islington.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health-services-in-islington/mental-health>

General mental health support

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Mental Health Recovery Pathway Service (Islington Mind)	Adults with a formal mental health diagnosis and those who self-identify as struggling with their mental health and/or wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term one to one practical help and support • Drop in and peer support • Therapeutic group work including Art and Music • Exercise Activities • Cooking skills • Peer support groups • Specialist group work • Outreach programme delivered in partnership with Jannaty, Manor Gardens and Nafsiyat 	<p>Address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 76-80 Isledon Road, N7 7LB • 48 Despard Road, N19 5NW • 35 Ashley Road, N19 3AG <p>Website: islingtonmind.org.uk/refer/</p> <p>Telephone: 020 3301 9850</p> <p>Email: MHRP@Islingtonmind.org.uk</p>
Talking Therapies delivered by the Accept consortium	Adults	<p>Free counselling and psychotherapy for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of Black, Asian, minority ethnic or refugee backgrounds. • Those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse and/or domestic violence. • Bereaved people. 	<p>Address: Unit 4, Lysander Mews, Lysander Grove, N19 3QP</p> <p>Website: accept-consortium.org.uk/</p> <p>Email: info@accept-consortium.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7263 6947</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Hillside Club House	Adults in Camden and Islington seeking support with mental health recovery and community reintegration.	Hillside Clubhouse is a mental health charity supporting individuals in Camden and Islington. They provide a range of activities and support services aimed at rebuilding confidence, re-engaging with the community, and finding purpose. Services include one-to-one support, volunteering opportunities, and assistance with training, education, and employment.	<p>Address: Unit A, 30 North Road, N7 9GJ</p> <p>Website: hillsideclubhouse.org.uk/</p> <p>Email: enquiries@hillsideclubhouse.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7700 6408</p>
The Stress Project	Individuals in Islington seeking support for stress and mental health issues.	The Stress Project offers a range of low-cost and free therapies and wellbeing activities, including counselling, yoga, and therapeutic gardening, aimed at supporting individuals experiencing stress-related conditions or mental health problems.	<p>Address: 2 Shelburne Road, N7 6DL</p> <p>Website: stressproject.org.uk/</p> <p>Email: stressproject@hng.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7700 3938</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
The Claremont Project	Islington residents aged 18+ or adults registered with an Islington GP	Provide low-cost psychotherapy and counselling for a range of issues as well as activities particularly for 55+. Art, music, singing, dance.	<p>Address: 24-27 White Lion Street, N1 9PD</p> <p>Website: claremont-project.org/</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7837 3402</p>
Strides	Adults	Provides low-cost psychotherapy and counselling.	<p>Website: strides.org.uk/counselling/</p> <p>Email: hcc@strides.org.uk</p>
Listening Place	Individuals experiencing suicidal thoughts seeking someone to talk to.	The Listening Place provides free, regular, face-to-face support for people who feel life is no longer worth living. Their service is confidential and non-judgmental, aiming to offer support to those in suicidal crisis.	<p>Website: listeningplace.org.uk/</p> <p>Email: referrals@listeningplace.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 0203 906 7676</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Stuart Low Trust	<p>Arts, nature and wellbeing/community Programmes are open to anyone over 18 years old.</p> <p>Young adults programme is available to anyone aged 18-35 and opens each year from October and January for new bookings</p>	<p>SLT offers free, inclusive activities aimed at improving mental health and reducing isolation. Their programmes include art workshops, nature walks, philosophy forums, yoga classes, and social events. These activities are designed to foster community connection and personal wellbeing.</p>	<p>To access any of our services, please complete a registration form, which is available online slt.org.uk/how-we-help/slt-registration-form/ or a printed copy can be provided.</p> <p>Email: info@slt.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7713 9304</p>

Asylum Seekers and Refugees

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Nafsiyat – Intercultural therapy centre	<p>Psychological and emotional challenges, for those who encounter cultural or linguistic barriers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides psychotherapy for people from diverse communities. Therapy available in over twenty languages. Therapeutic help is offered to individuals, families, children and adolescents experiencing psychiatric problems, emotional strain and sexual problems. 	<p>Address: Unit 4, Lysander Mews, Lysander Grove, N19 3QP</p> <p>Website: nafsiyat.org.uk/</p> <p>Email: admin@nafsiyat.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7263 6947</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Room to Heal	Adults with experience of the asylum-seeking system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide short term individual therapy, intensive case work support, Weekly mixed gender therapeutic support groups working together in community gardens, Therapeutic retreats and regular day trips. 	<p>Website: roomtoheal.org/</p> <p>Email: admin@roomtoheal.org</p>
Helen Bamber Foundation	Adults 18+ who are Survivors of trafficking and torture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They offer a holistic programme of support which includes therapy, legal protection, housing and welfare, counter-trafficking and medical advice. 	<p>Website: helenbamber.org/refer</p>

Gender-specific support

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Maya Centre	Women aged 18+ in Islington on low incomes or with no recourse to public funds, particularly those who have experienced gender-based violence or trauma	A women-only mental health charity providing free, culturally sensitive counselling, group therapy, psychoeducation, and complementary therapies. Services are tailored for women affected by trauma, abuse, inequality, or discrimination. Specialist programmes include the Irish Women's Service, Black Women's Project, and Turkish Women's Therapy.	<p>Address: Unit 8, 9–15 Elthorne Road, London N19 4AJ.</p> <p>Website: mayacentre.org.uk/</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7281 8970</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
James' Place	Men (and people who identify as men) aged 18+ experiencing a suicidal crisis.	James' Place offers free, life-saving treatment for men in suicidal crisis. They provide a safe, friendly, therapeutic environment where men are cared for and respected, aiming to help them find hope for the future.	<p>Website: jamesplace.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 3488 8404</p> <p>Email: London@jamesplace.org.uk</p>
Highbury Grove Crisis House	Men who are experiencing, or at risk of moving into, mental health crisis	<p>12- bedroom residential Crisis House service.</p> <p>Short-term (up to 14 days) 24-hour support and treatment in a community setting.</p>	<p>Address: 16-18, Highbury Grove, N5 2EA</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7700 6408</p> <p>HighburyGrove.RecoveryHouse@Hestia.org</p>
IMECE	Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot Turkish and all women who speak Turkish over the age of 18.	A women only community-based charity, aiming to improve the lives of global majority women, also Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot Turkish women. Offers advice, advocacy and therapeutic workshops.	<p>Website: imece.org.uk/</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7354 1359</p> <p>Email: info@imece.org.uk</p>

LGBTQ+

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Outcome delivered by Islington Mind	LGBTQ+ adults in Islington seeking mental health support and a welcoming community environment.	Outcome is Islington Mind's dedicated LGBTQ+ mental health service, providing a safe and supportive space for LGBTQ+ individuals. Services include peer support groups, creative workshops, counselling, and advocacy, all aimed at promoting mental well-being and community connection.	<p>Website: islingtonmind.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 3301 9850.</p>

Carers

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Islington Carers Hub	For all carers 18+, including those of someone with a mental health condition.	Provides help and support to carers in Islington.	<p>Website: islingtoncarershub.org/</p> <p>Email: info@islingtoncarershub.org</p> <p>Telephone: 02020 7281 3319 or 0800 085 1141</p>

Children and young people

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
NCL waiting room	All children and young people	Explore over 400 wellbeing options for young people in Islington and across North Central London including information about all the main mental health services available. You can search by topic and there is also the option to create a personalised wellbeing plan.	Website: londonwaitingroom.nhs.uk/
Kooth	11-to 25- year olds living in Islington	Kooth is a free, safe and anonymous online wellbeing service for children and young people available 365 days of the year. Online support at a time that is convenient for you.	Website: www.kooth.com/ Email: contact@kooth.com
The Mix	All children and young people	Digital charity for young people with information and a forum on wide range of topics, including mental health, eating disorders, sex, alcohol, drugs & self-harm. Also offers a phone line for 1-to-1 chats.	Website: www.themix.org.uk/ Text 85258 for urgent mental health support

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Papyrus	All children and young people	A charity dedicated to the prevention of young suicide. They have a suicide prevention helpline called HOPELINE247. It is free and confidential call, text and email service, which is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year (weekends and bank holidays included).	Website: papyrus-uk.org/ HOPELINE247: 0800 068 41 41

Peer support

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Choice and Control peer coaching service	18+	<p>This service is designed to work alongside clients to improve their quality of life by providing flexible coaching support.</p> <p>The peer coach will help clients to focus on what is important to them and how they want to improve their health and wellbeing. Being practitioners with lived experience of mental health and sometimes physical health issues, they share a real understanding of living with mental and physical health conditions.</p>	Website: northlondonmentalhealth.nhs.uk/our-services-page/service/choice-and-control-peer-coaching-service-90/ Email: nlft.choiceandcontrol@nhs.net Telephone: 07970 198 572

Substance use, addiction and gambling

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Better Lives	Adults aged 18 and over	Better Lives is the main drug and alcohol service for adults in Islington. Better Lives offer free and confidential treatment and support for people and families affected by drugs and alcohol. There are a range of treatment options including self-help, psychological support, medical detox, and residential rehabilitation. Better Lives will help you find what's right for you.	<p>Email: nlft.betterlivesreferrals@nhs.net</p> <p>Call: 020 3317 6099</p> <p>Website: northlondonmentalhealth.nhs.uk/our-services-page/service/better-lives-islington-drug-and-alcohol-service-157/</p>
Islington Young People's Drug and Alcohol Service	Children and young people aged 12-21	Offers support for young people aged 12 to 21 who live, study or work in Islington and want free, confidential advice about drugs and alcohol. Specially trained staff can give one-to-one support, by sharing advice and information about substances or exploring your experiences and developing a tailored plan to take forward.	<p>Email: yccsmas@islington.gov.uk</p> <p>Call: 07702 657 402</p> <p>Website: islington.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/health-services-in-islington/drugs-and-alcohol/get-help/treatment/young-people</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Support When It Matters (SWIM)	Adults of Black African, Caribbean or mixed heritage ethnic background	Support When It Matters (SWIM) specialise in support for adults of Black African, Caribbean or mixed heritage ethnic background. They offer holistic support for people who are in contact with the criminal justice system and want to cut down or stop using drugs or drinking alcohol.	<p>Email: info@swimenterprises.com</p> <p>Call: 07463 243 146</p> <p>Website: swimenterprises.com/</p>
Rehabit	Adults (18+) in Islington and surrounding boroughs who are experiencing addiction and have limited or no financial means.	Free counselling and peer support for adults struggling with drug or alcohol addiction who have limited or no funds. Services include one-to-one counselling (up to 26 weeks), peer support from those with lived experience, and addiction awareness sessions for organisations.	<p>Self-referral or professional referral at</p> <p>Website: rehabit.uk/</p> <p>Email support@rehabit.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 0300 102 1605</p>

Bereavement

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Cruse Bereavement	All	Free and confidential support to anyone who has been bereaved. Also runs webinars for Camden and Islington residents on 'bereavement and loss'.	<p>Website: cruse.org.uk/</p> <p>Telephone: 0808 808 1677</p> <p>Email: info@cruse.org.uk</p>
Amparo – Support following Suicide	Anyone affected by suicide	Emotional support for those who have felt the impact of suicide.	<p>Referral: Self or professional referral by phone, email or referral form on the website.</p> <p>Website: amparo.org.uk/about-us/</p> <p>Telephone: 0330 088 9255</p> <p>Email: amparo.service@listening-ear.co.uk</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
CCIWBS (Camden City Islington & Westminster Bereavement Service)	All	They offer counselling support for people impacted by grief and bereavement.	Website: bereavement-counselling.org/ Email: admin@cciwbs.org.uk Telephone: 020 7284 0090

Culturally specific support

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Nafsiyat – Intercultural therapy centre	Psychological and emotional challenges, for those who encounter cultural or linguistic barriers	Provides psychotherapy for people from diverse communities. Therapy available in over twenty languages. Therapeutic help is offered to individuals, families, children and adolescents experiencing psychiatric problems, emotional strain and sexual problems.	Address: Unit 4, Lysander Mews, Lysander Grove, N19 3QP Website: nafsiyat.org.uk/ Email: admin@nafsiyat.org.uk Telephone: 020 7263 6947

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Maya Centre	Women aged 18+ in Islington on low incomes or with no recourse to public funds, particularly those who have experienced gender-based violence or trauma	A women-only mental health charity providing free, culturally sensitive counselling, group therapy, psychoeducation, and complementary therapies. Services are tailored for women affected by trauma, abuse, inequality, or discrimination. Specialist programmes include the Irish Women's Service, Black Women's Project, and Turkish Women's Therapy.	<p>Address: Unit 8, 9–15 Elthorne Road, London N19 4AJ.</p> <p>Website: mayacentre.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7281 8970</p>
IKWRO Women's Right Organisation	Women and girls aged 14+ who have experienced any form of gender-based violence.	Supports Middle Eastern and Afghan women and girls, particularly around 'honour' based violence, forced marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM). Free counselling service (and other support) in Arabic, English, Farsi and Kurdish.	<p>Website: ikwro.org.uk/</p> <p>Email: info@ikwro.org.uk</p> <p>Telephone: 0207 920 6460</p>
Mind Yourself (London Irish Centre)	All	General support, advice and information, including on mental health, for Irish people in London.	<p>Address: 50-52 Camden Square, London, NW1 9XB</p> <p>Website: londonirishcentre.org/</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7916 2222.</p> <p>Email: info@londonirishcentre.org</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Jannaty	Women and girls from disadvantages Black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds	Dressmaking, exercise classes, cooking club, language classes, Coffee mornings, bowel cancer awareness with NHS, FGM awareness with KMEWO and Labour party women's (North Islington), mother tongue counselling with Nafsiyat.	<p>Address: 229 Seven Sisters Rd, Finsbury Park, London N4 2DA</p> <p>Website: jannaty.info/</p> <p>Telephone: 07852 178 141</p> <p>Email: contactus@jannaty.info</p>
Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women's Organisation	Kurdish and Middle Eastern Women	KMEWO's core services to Kurdish, Middle Eastern and North African (KMENA) women living in London are provided FREE in a safe, confidential, non-judgmental and a women-only environment. Includes - Welfare benefit and housing, specialist advice and advocacy support for survivors of domestic abuse and harmful traditional practices. Helpline and advice line, advocacy and counselling	<p>Address: Caxton House, 129 Jon's Street</p> <p>Website: kmewo.com/</p> <p>Telephone: 07748851125</p>

8.0 Staying mentally healthy

The five ways to wellbeing

There are steps we can all take to look after our mental health and wellbeing, a great place to start is by using the five ways to wellbeing. These are simple and evidence-based practices that can help you feel better, reduce stress, and build a more positive and resilient mindset.



Connect

Being around other people can help to boost our mood and help us feel connected to the wider world.



Be active

Evidence shows that improvements in your physical health can help improve your mental health. For example, it can cut the risk of depression by up to 30%; helps manage stress, improves memory, confidence and a sense of self-worth.



Take notice

Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you



Keep learning

Learning new skills can also improve your mental wellbeing by boosting your self-confidence, helping to build a sense of purpose and helping you to connect with others.



Give

Helping others, saying thank you, or just giving someone a smile can help to improve your self-esteem and your wellbeing.

Promoting the 5 ways to wellbeing can be a good way to help more people learn about how to look after their mental health and wellbeing.

1. Use everyday language

Avoid jargon. Use simple, relatable phrases like:

- “Why not take a walk and notice the things around you?”
- “Helping a neighbour or chatting with someone can really boost your mood.”

2. Lead by example

Encourage staff and volunteers to share how they practice the 5 Ways themselves. Real stories make the message more relatable.

3. Create visual reminders

Posters, social media graphics, and flyers in community centres, GP surgeries, libraries, and cafes. Include eye-catching icons and brief tips.

4. Incorporate into activities

- **Connect:** Start meetings with a quick personal check-in.
- **Be active:** Offer walking groups or movement breaks.
- **Take notice:** Encourage mindfulness exercises.
- **Keep learning:** Run short workshops or skill shares.
- **Give:** Celebrate volunteering and kindness in newsletters or events.

5. Make it local

Use examples and resources from your local area (like free classes, community events, or local walking routes) to make the 5 ways feel achievable.

Physical activity and parks


Physical activity and parks offer the opportunity to fulfil the five steps to mental wellbeing.

Be active is one of the five steps; also, it is a way to connect, to keep learning, and, through volunteering in an organised activity, to give. Being in a park is an opportunity to take notice, to be active, and, through being involved in a park, to connect and to keep learning.

The recommended weekly levels of physical activity for adults are:


- Be active every day.
- Do at least 150 minutes moderate intensity activity, 75 minutes vigorous activity, or a mixture of both (or adults aged 19-64 do very vigorous activity).
- Do muscle-strengthening activities on two days.
- Reduce extended periods of sitting.


However, doing any level of activity can have health benefits. People who are least active gain most health-wise from being active. The benefits of being active can start quickly.

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Islington physical activity offer	Everyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are over 500 activities on offer, ranging from archery, badminton and cycling, to walking, yoga and Zumba. Many are free or low-cost. These are at more than 100 clubs, leisure centres, parks, schools, libraries, community centres and other venues. • Many activities are targeted – women and girls, people with a disability, people aged 50+, young people, members of the LGBTQ+ community. Some activities are solely for people with a mental health problem. 	<p>islington.gov.uk/active shows what is on offer, with a map for each ward in Islington, an activity finder to search and book sessions, and health information.</p>
Islington parks	Everyone	<p>There are 120 parks in Islington: 39 parks offer opportunities to do sport and fitness activities; 60 parks have playgrounds; five adventure playgrounds are in or next to a park. Parks are free and open dawn to dusk.</p>	<p>The council website provides more information around where the parks are and activities happening in the parks. You can also scan the QR code:</p> <div data-bbox="1787 1070 1973 1257" style="text-align: center;">  </div>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Volunteering in parks	Residents interested in volunteering, park activities, and enhancing local green spaces.	<p>Ways to be involved in a park, all are free:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend a volunteering session led by parks staff. 5,000+ volunteer hours are performed annually in sessions led by parks staff. • Take part in one of the activities on offer. 8000+ health and wellbeing activities take place annually in parks. • Join a Friends of Parks group. A group may offer gardening, cultural events, and volunteer opportunities. There are 45 groups in Islington: 4,000+ volunteer hours are performed annually in sessions led by Friends of Parks groups. 	<p>The council website provides more information around how to get involved.</p> <p>You can also scan the QR code:</p> 

Community connections and wellbeing

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Manor Gardens	All ages	Manor Gardens delivers a range of Wellbeing and Advocacy services to people who come to us for help and support, to manage their own health and wellbeing as well as to maximise their independence.	Referral: Self-referral or professional referral accepted through the form on the website. Website: manorgardenscentre.org/ Telephone: 020 7272 4231 or 07483 149 519 Email: admin@manorgardenscentre.org Address: 6-9 Manor Gardens, Islington, London N7 6LA
Bright Lives Coaching Service	Islington residents aged 18+ who are not currently engaged with statutory services but are experiencing difficulties impacting their wellbeing	Bright Lives provides one-to-one wellbeing coaching for adults facing challenges such as mental health issues, isolation, or complex needs. Coaches work with individuals over up to six months to set goals, build resilience, and connect them to community resources.	Telephone: 020 7527 7488 Email: BrightLivesCoaching@islington.gov.uk 

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Octopus Community Centres	All	Octopus is a mutual collaboration of 14 of Islington largest multi-purpose community centres. They offer an opportunity to engage with different elements of the five ways to wellbeing and most have their own health and wellbeing programmes.	
Lift Youth Hub	<p>Young people aged 13–21 in or near Islington.</p> <p>Open access, no referral needed.</p>	Activities for ages 13–21 including gym, cooking, creative workshops, job support, mentoring, and counselling. Youth workers offer advice on personal and health issues.	<p>Website: liftislington.org.uk/</p> <p>Telephone: 07825 098689</p> <p>Email: lift@isledon.co.uk or wellbeing@isledon.co.uk</p> <p>Address: 45 White Lion Street London, N1 9PW</p>
Islington Faith Forum	All	A community partnership of faith-based organisations and projects working together to assist the local community.	<p>If anyone has any questions about accessing faith groups in Islington, please contact Islington Faiths Forum via:</p> <p>info@islingtonfaithsforum.org.uk</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
<p>Volunteering centre</p>	<p>All</p>	<p>The volunteering centre at Voluntary Action Islington can be accessed to find volunteering opportunities in Islington.</p> <p>You can search for opportunities online, call or text or drop-in on Monday and Wednesdays 1pm to 4pm.</p>	<p>Website: https://vai.org.uk/volunteering/find-volunteering-opportunities/</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7832 5826 or 0735 445 9113</p> <p>Address: 200a Pentonville Road, London, N1 9JP</p>

Welfare, housing and advice

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
Access Islington Hubs	All Islington residents seeking support or guidance.	Drop-in and booked sessions offering advice on employment, housing, finances, family matters, and wellbeing. Hubs are located in Central, North, and South Islington.	<p>Website: https://www.islington.gov.uk/contact-us/our-offices/access-islington-hubs</p> <p>Central Hub: 222 Upper Street, N1 1XR</p> <p>North Hub: 6-9 Manor Gardens N7 6LA</p> <p>South Hub: Finsbury Library, 245 St John's Street, EC1V 4NB</p> <p>Telephone: 020 7527 8222</p> <p>Email: HereToHelp@islington.gov.uk</p>
Age UK	Adults aged 16+ in Islington, including	Age UK Islington provides free, confidential information and guidance for adults aged 16 and over. Their services include support with housing, health, disability, transport, employment, and more. They also offer social activities and can refer individuals to various services across the borough.	<p>Telephone: 020 7281 6018</p> <p>Email: gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk</p>

Service	Who's it for?	What do they offer?	How do you access?
	unpaid carers.		<p>Drop-in appointments are available at: 6 Manor Gardens, London, N7 6LA, Monday to Friday, 9:30 am – 4 pm.</p>
Help on Your Doorstep		<p>Help on Your Doorstep aims to improve the health and wellbeing of people in Islington, especially those who are vulnerable and isolated. Their Connect Service provides information and referrals to specialist advice organisations and services. They also work to improve the lives of people in communities throughout Islington through their Good Neighbours Schemes and their health and wellbeing work. They are also working with Islington GP surgeries to offer a social prescribing service.</p>	<p>Website: https://www.helponyourdoorstep.com/</p> <p>Telephone: 020 3931 6080</p> <p>Email: connect@helponyourdoorstep.com</p>

9.0 Acknowledgements and feedback

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- Voluntary Action Islington
- Rehabit
- Islington Council (Public Health team and Parks, Sports and Physical Activity team)
- Elizabeth House Community Centre

Thank you also to those who provided information about their organisations.

How do I provide feedback?

We hope that this guide is helpful, and we welcome feedback to ensure the toolkit is effective and user friendly. This is a live document, and we will update it on a periodic basis to ensure it stays up to date.

If you have suggestions, notice something unclear or out of date, or think of a resource that could improve this toolkit, we'd love to hear from you.




Please complete the feedback form by clicking on the link or scanning the QR code:

<https://forms.office.com/e/jLBRugeXyx>



If you are having difficulty accessing the feedback form, then please email publichealth@islington.gov.uk with your comments.

10.0 Further resources

Resources	Scan QR code
5 ways to wellbeing for children and young people	
General wellbeing guidance in 36 languages	
Health and wellbeing training including Mental Health First Aid Training, Suicide Prevention Training and Bereavement Webinars	
<p>Minds Matter Islington run interactive and fun workshops with organisations and young people ages 16-25. The sessions bust myths about mental health, increase understanding about common mental health problems and sometimes less common ones too.</p> <p>They also have a range of free, downloadable resources to help encourage discussion about mental health</p>	