



Our Strategy 2024-2026



Welcome

In the year we celebrate our 110th anniversary, we are delighted to share with you our refreshed strategy, building on all that we have achieved to date and setting out our direction and priorities to 2026. Thank you to everyone who has contributed their insights and experiences in helping to shape our thinking.

The cost-of-living crisis, Covid-19 pandemic and growing levels of poverty have put unprecedented strain on too many people living in our communities. This, combined with a mental health system under strain, with ever increasing levels of need and complexity, compels us all to act. Local people need our services in Buckinghamshire and East Berkshire more than ever.

Our work in the community looks to prevent problems before they arise, tackle long-standing inequalities to close the health gaps between different groups and put support in place so that everyone with mental ill-health can get the help they need, when they need it.

Since we published our last strategy we have continued to expand our service provision, including the establishment of Mind in Berkshire. In 2023-24, 9,130 people were supported by our services with 79% better able to manage their mental health and 84% feeling less isolated.

A big “thank you” goes out to each and every one of our trustees, colleagues, volunteers and experts by experience for your commitment, resilience and kindness and the part you have played in supporting services and enabling us to deliver our strategic aims to date, putting in place the foundations for us to evolve.

Looking to the future, we will target our work where we know we’ll have the greatest impact and, in particular, look to expand our support for children and young people and people experiencing health inequalities in our communities, including those living in poverty.

We will also strengthen our understanding of the ways we involve people with lived experience to influence our work and participate in activities. Alongside this our golden threads – Inclusive, Informed and Innovative – lay the foundations to continually advance by describing the approach we take.

We hope you enjoy reading about the difference our work makes and our plans for the future. In this milestone year, we are calling on everyone to unite with us to fight for mental health across our communities. Together we can ensure no mind is left behind.



Andrea McCubbin
Chief Executive



Lesley Michaelis
Chair

June 2024



The logo for Mind in Berkshire features a stylized blue icon of a person's head and shoulders, followed by the text "mind in Berkshire" in a blue, lowercase, sans-serif font.

Mind in Berkshire, established in 2021, is a collaboration between Buckinghamshire Mind and Oxfordshire Mind. We’re working together to increase mental health support across Berkshire. Buckinghamshire Mind is working in the East of the county and Oxfordshire Mind across the West.

Vision, purpose, values and behaviours

Vision

We're fighting for a future where no mind is left behind.



Mission

We want to create a mentally healthy society. Through our information, services and campaigns, we tackle stigma, barriers and isolation so that everyone can access mental health support when they need it.



Our purpose

We deliver mental health services in Buckinghamshire and East Berkshire, are affiliated to national Mind and are proud to play our part in the local Mind network. Together we are Mind.

We are at the heart of our local communities - promoting wellbeing and recovery; preventing mental ill-health; offering talking therapies and providing support in times of crisis.

Our values and behaviours

We put people first



We're stronger together



We speak up for what's right



We never stop learning



We demand better for mental health



Our services

Our services adapt to meet the needs of local people. We are proud that we continue to develop our offering, where our expertise enables us to have a positive impact within local communities.

Wellbeing

Befriending

We offer free support to adults who are lonely or isolated as a result of a mental health problem. We recruit and train volunteers who then form 'partnerships' with people from the local community.

Champion the Change Buckinghamshire

Our local campaign aimed at tackling mental health stigma and discrimination whilst creating hope for those affected by mental ill-health.

Community Based Support

Our team work in partnership with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust to reach out to people with mental health problems in the community and provide one-to-one support and signposting.

Community Connectors

Our Community Connectors are part of a multi-disciplinary team of mental health specialists, working with our colleagues employed by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust to support adults who are experiencing significant mental health problems.

Education

We work with children aged 4 to 18 years old in

various settings, such as primary and secondary schools, colleges, youth clubs and sports clubs. We deliver assemblies, workshops and full training days.

Peer Support in Schools

We train student peer ambassadors in mental health awareness to mentor younger students across primary and secondary schools.

Peer Support Groups

Our peer support groups offer the opportunity to make friends, share experiences and enjoy a social life, through our established services; Friends in Need and Mind the Gap. In East Berkshire, we also offer a group for young adults (17 to 25 year olds) called Peers2Pals.

Perinatal Support Service

Our Perinatal Community Support Worker provides one-to-one and group support for women who are pregnant or have given birth in the past 12 months and have mental health needs, in partnership with Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust.

Wellbeing Services

Our groups provide social contact, structure and a chance to try new activities with people who have similar experiences. The groups offer activities such as arts and crafts, cooking, interactive games and gentle exercise.





Crisis Support

Mental Health Safety Planning Service

We provide support for those who have attended A&E or Mental Health Integrated Community Service (MHICS) because they have had thoughts about ending their life and/or are at risk of self-harm.

Safe Haven

Safe Haven is a mental health crisis support service, operating from 6pm to midnight, for anyone living in Buckinghamshire aged 18 years or over. We provide listening support and signposting. We also work with people to create safety plans if they are struggling to keep themselves safe due to thoughts of self-harm or of ending their life.

Safe Haven Plus

We partner with other charities to help resolve non-medical life-issues that are potentially factors contributing to crisis. For example, drug and alcohol abuse; housing and homelessness; debt and benefits advice.

Talking Therapies

Counselling for Adults

We provide high quality one-to-one counselling in a safe, non-judgemental space to explore any concerns that might be affecting you. We work with adults experiencing a variety of mental health problems and offer face-to-face, online (video) or telephone counselling.

Counselling for Young People

We offer compassionate and confidential counselling sessions to young people (aged 13-21) facing emotional and mental health challenges. Our professional counsellors provide a safe space to explore feelings, build coping strategies and foster personal growth.

Training

Workplace Wellbeing training

We help to create mentally healthy workplaces by raising awareness and supporting and empowering employees to play their part in creating a culture of wellbeing, challenging stigma and signposting to support.

Specialist training

We deliver bespoke and responsive training designed to meet the unique needs of our community, by equipping people with the skills to adapt and thrive and supporting them to look after their own mental wellbeing. We also offer Mental Health First Aid and Suicide First Aid training.

“I have to say it was one of the best training sessions I have done! I took so much away from it, which I can use for myself and pass onto the team.”

We've achieved great things over the past 3 years...

Worked with 179 clients via the **Rough Sleepers Initiative** – aiding them to independence and preventing mental health problems being a barrier to long-term housing solutions.

Further developed our **online adult Counselling offer** and launched a **new Young Person's Counselling Service** in November 2023.

Reviewed the **wellbeing groups** to improve service structure and consistency of provision across the county.

Expanded **Safe Haven** to 7 days a week across both Aylesbury and High Wycombe. There were 761 occasions where people attended Safe Haven rather than A&E.

Befriending supported 565 people to **reduce social isolation** and improve wellbeing, with 221 volunteer Befrienders trained.

Trained 2,050 young people as **peer mentors** across 69 schools.



Continued to challenge negative attitudes to mental wellbeing and improve access to support, with a specific focus on children and young people, employers and men through **Champion the Change**, our locally focussed anti-stigma mental health campaign.

Established **Mind in Berkshire** in partnership with Oxfordshire Mind.



Influenced the provision of mental health services through **strong and productive partnerships** with the NHS and other key stakeholders.



Trained 836 people in **Mental Health First Aid and Suicide Prevention First Aid**.



Provided listening support to 36 clients through the **Suicide Bereavement Support Service**.

Increased our digital reach by launching a new, more **accessible website and adding Instagram** to our social media platforms.



Supported 3,687 people through our **social prescribing service** within GP surgeries.

Implemented a **Client Relationship Management** system to more effectively collect and analyse our data.



Across East Berkshire, the **Friends in Need** peer support service welcomed 358 new members and we launched the **Peers2Pals** service for 17–25-year-old young adults.

Launched a new **Safety Planning** service in East Berkshire – soon to be coming to Buckinghamshire.

Expanded the **Community Connectors** team, supporting 655 people across East Berkshire.



Delivered **education workshops** to 3,768 pupils.

Our **Gateway Navigators** are now an integral part of the Bucks Mental Health Gateway.



The **Mind the Gap** peer support group expanded to support 293 people.

Our **support workers** within Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust supported 728 people.

Golden threads

Our golden threads run through everything that we do. They shape our mindset and how we approach our activities. They are the ways of working that underpin everything that we do.

Inclusive

We will **challenge inequity** and ensure we **enable access** to those where we know the need for our services is greatest, closely monitoring our impact.

We will **work with partner organisations**, building on their existing trusted relationships, to **extend our reach**.

We will track our progress towards becoming an **ever more representative** organisation, reflecting the communities we serve through our staff, volunteers, trustees and people we support.

We will equip our workforce with the **skills, capabilities** and **support** to advance equality, diversity, inclusion and equity.

Informed

We will ensure that we have the **right information** to ask the **right questions** and make **good decisions**.

We will access information from a **wide range of data sources** so that we know who we are not seeing and **we understand our impact**.

We will use this **knowledge** to help **shape our services** and to **influence the decisions** of others.

Innovative

We will be curious and approach opportunities and challenges with an **open mind** and **fresh thinking**.

We will be **pioneering** and generate ideas that **improve service delivery** and organisational **processes**.

We will **empower colleagues and volunteers** to be creative, do things differently, acting quickly where we see the benefits.

Our quality commitment

In 2021, we were awarded the Mind Quality Mark. This is a rigorous quality assurance standard, ensuring that local Minds are well-run organisations delivering safe, life-changing support.

Thank you to all the people we support and our volunteers who contributed feedback for the review – we really value you taking the time to demonstrate how Buckinghamshire Mind has supported you.

Our commitment to quality is unwavering and our current areas of focus are:

Influence and participation

We are increasing the ways we involve people with lived experience to influence our work and participate in activities. This includes working with us on specific projects, campaigning against stigma and volunteering in our services. We value your experience, expert knowledge and skills.

If you live with mental ill-health, or care for a friend or family member, we'd love to hear from you. To register your interest or find out more, please email influenceparticipation@bucksmind.org.uk



Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Equity

Being there for everyone experiencing mental ill-health is fundamental to who we are. We recognise that this is an area to be approached with an openness to self-reflection and a willingness to learn and change where we need to. During 2024, the whole organisation is undertaking a series of bespoke training workshops to develop our knowledge and understanding.

Digital

The data from our newly established digital systems allows us to demonstrate our impact and make good decisions in targeting our resources to make the most difference. We will continue to learn together and consolidate our digital working practices whilst also scanning the horizon for innovative new developments relevant to our work.

“I am learning to become more independent and self-sufficient. I have made new friends. The Wellbeing Workers are friendly, sociable and helpful.”



Our refreshed ambitions for 2024-2026

We have refreshed our ambition aligned to our 5 strategic pillars: people, impact, engagement, sustainability and resources.

As we face opportunities and challenges we will ask ourselves how the decisions we make fulfil at least one of these ambitions and how they align with our golden threads.

1. We are a great place for **people** to work, volunteer, share their lived experience and access services.
2. We target our work where we know we can have the greatest **impact**.
3. We build **engagement** with our community, increase our influence and champion our vision for mental health.
4. We improve **sustainability** by diversifying our income streams and building collaborations and partnerships.
5. We maximise our **resources** to meet need and develop the organisation.

“The Befriending service has helped me transform my life to the point where I am able to socialise again. Which is anything but tiny!”





People

We are a great place for people to work, volunteer, share their lived experience and access services.

Culture

Champion a culture of kindness, respect, empathy and understanding; providing opportunities for everyone to collaborate and connect.

Workplace

Offer a workplace which supports wellbeing and makes people feel valued, enabling us to attract and retain colleagues and volunteers.

Learning and Development

Provide everyone with the opportunities they need to build the confidence and skills to succeed in their role.

Organisational Development and Structure

Plan and recruit for growth and succession and design the organisation, and the skillsets within it, to match its future direction.

Diversity

Improve the breadth and depth of our understanding of our local community and aim to represent its diversity amongst our staff and volunteers, including our trustees.

Our Volunteers

Embed the value of our volunteers within our organisation, developing our capability to support and work ‘hand-in-hand’ with volunteers to fully contribute to our success and meeting the needs of the community.

“My knowledge, understanding and skills around mental health have improved. Very good resources and engaging training day that helped me to be more confident in my role as a Peer Mentor.”



Impact

We target our work where we know we can have the greatest impact.

Prevention

Respond to demand by expanding our portfolio of children, young people and adult services to offer timely access to preventative and early intervention support, including alternatives to crisis services.

Need

Use data on local need, alongside the experiences of people using our services, to develop a fuller understanding of how to prioritise opportunities to expand or adapt service delivery.

Access

Provide information for people to access the right support for them, either within our services or signposting to other partner organisations.

Physical Health

Support people to understand the connection between mental and physical health and make informed choices.

The Difference We Make

Develop more sophisticated ways to understand our reach and social value - demonstrating both the short and long-term impact of our work.

“I’m so grateful that Friends in Need exists and it’s easily accessible to me. This really did come at the right time for me everyone is so kind and helpful. I feel so blessed.”

“I have made new friends, I have more support and feel more confident and hopeful. I love coming to Mind the Gap. They cheer me up with their sense of humour.”

Engagement

We build engagement with our community, increase our influence and champion our vision for mental health.

Influence

Use our established profile within the two Integrated Care Systems in which we work to be an influential voice in the co-production of services to meet the needs of the people who use our services.

Inclusion

Develop our ways of working to be more accessible, with a specific focus on people experiencing health inequalities and poverty.

Involvement and Participation

Welcome a team of experts by experience to influence the planning, development, delivery and evaluation of our services.

Awareness

Be a champion for improved understanding of the experience of people with mental health problems.

Community and Corporate Fundraising

Ensure all our supporters feel valued and recognise the vital role they are playing in our future.

“My Counsellor is a lovely person who really understood how to help me and gave great advice. I would 100% recommend this service for anyone else struggling.”

“My Perinatal Support Worker is amazing and has massively supported me over the past few months and given me the confidence to make some really big decisions. She has been instrumental in my overall health and wellbeing as a mum.”





Sustainability

We improve sustainability by diversifying our income streams and building collaborations and partnerships.

Impact Led

Demonstrate our value by articulating our impact – evidenced by a rich picture of data and experiences to attract new sources of funding for areas where most needed.

Income Generation

Implement a bold and ambitious income generation strategy to diversify our income streams to increase our sustainability.

Partnerships

Identify additional partners to enhance our existing services and co-produce new services based on the needs of the community. This includes exploring further collaboration opportunities with Oxfordshire Mind in the continued development of our Mind in Berkshire partnership.



Resources

We maximise our resources to meet need and develop the organisation.

Technology

Embrace innovative technologies that improve our efficiency, sustainability, reach and ability to communicate.

Data

Improve the reporting and analysis of our management information to enable us to put evidence at the heart of our decision-making processes.

Premises

Ensure our accommodation is fit for our needs and new ways of working and delivering services.

Capacity

Build capacity and skills within the organisation to support the diversification of our income and meet the needs of the community.

Volunteer with us

Volunteers are essential to Buckinghamshire Mind's work, enabling us to provide more vital, life-changing services to people experiencing mental health problems in Buckinghamshire and East Berkshire.

We could not achieve all that we do to support people's mental health without the involvement and huge contribution of our volunteers.

Our 218 adult volunteers gave an incredible 7,557 hours this year. At the same time, our Peer Support in Schools service, which works with volunteers in Years 5, 6 and Sixth Form, trained 836 children and young people as mentors across 52 schools.

We commit to continuing to develop our capability to support and work 'hand-in-hand' with volunteers to fully contribute our success, alongside ensuring that our volunteers are representative of the diversity in our communities.

We are so grateful to all our volunteers, who have made such a difference to the lives of the people we support. Thank you – you're amazing! To find out more about volunteering with Buckinghamshire Mind, please visit www.bucksmind.org.uk/volunteer or email info@bucksmind.org.uk



In 2019 our volunteers were awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest award a voluntary group can receive in the UK, considered to be the MBE for such groups. Without the support of our volunteers we couldn't deliver the range of services in the community that we do today. Their ongoing commitment will be a key factor in the successful delivery of this strategy to 2026.



“I had an incredibly rewarding and enriching experience as a volunteer Counsellor with Bucks Mind. I was fortunate to be surrounded by supportive staff members and an excellent line manager. The people I worked with have profoundly impacted my life, and I feel very grateful for the opportunity to contribute to their mental health journeys.”

Thank you



Funding, donations and fundraising

Buckinghamshire Mind is run by local people for local people and we are responsible for our own funding. We would like to thank all of our funders, including local commissioners in Buckinghamshire and East Berkshire, charitable trusts and foundations and corporate partners.

We also rely on donations and community fundraising to underpin our vital mental health services and ensure we support our community's mental health needs now and in the future. Thank you to each and every one of our donors and fundraisers that continue to provide us with this invaluable support.

To find out more about how you can support Buckinghamshire Mind as an individual, community group or corporate partner please get in touch fundraising@bucksmind.org.uk

A gift in your will is another way that you can secure the future of Buckinghamshire Mind and create a better future for local mental health. If you would like to know more then please email legacy@bucksmind.org.uk

Contact us

As a team we are united in our passion. Many of us have lived experience of mental health problems, either personally or by supporting family and friends. Please get in touch – we'd love to hear from you.



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