

MEDIA RELEASE

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Coping at Christmas

Looking after your mental health over the festive period

Christmas is a magical time of year for many but for some of us it can be one of the loneliest and most stressful.

This holiday season there are few things we can all do to stay mentally healthy. That's the message from mental health services at Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust this December.

Here are the Trust's top tips for looking after your mental health this Christmas

1. **Connect with others** – Reaching out to others can bring you closer to the people you care about and help you form positive relationships, which are key to good mental health.
2. **Set yourself realistic expectations** – Don't feel pressured to do more than you feel able to or to get into debt that will make you feel more stressed afterwards
3. **Eat well and exercise** – It can be difficult at this time of year but eating well and staying active can relieve stress and have a really positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing
4. **Sleep well and get some rest** – Getting a good night's sleep can help to relieve stress. The holiday period can give you time and space to relax and reflect on the year.
5. **Do something you enjoy** – Take time out to do something you enjoy or are good at. Your hobbies don't have to go on hold for Christmas.
6. **Talk to someone** – It's ok to ask for support if you're struggling to cope. You're not alone.

Metka Shaw-Taylor, the Trust's Director of Therapies, said "We all lead busy lives, constantly balancing work and home responsibilities. This can take a toll on our sense of wellbeing. In order to maintain a healthy balance in our lives we need to

take time for ourselves and also for each other. Christmas time gives us an opportunity to pause and reconnect with our values, enjoy our families and friends and reach out to our wider communities. As we do so we can alleviate stress, find calmness and improve our physical and mental wellbeing.”

Colette Lane is a Senior Recovery Coach with the Trust who has lived experience of mental ill-health. She said: “So many of us put ourselves under a lot of pressure at this time of year. I try to tell myself, and the people I provide peer support to, to not feel under pressure to do more than you feel able to this Christmas and don’t expect perfection – find pleasure in the small things.”

If you feel like you are experiencing high levels of stress for a prolonged period, speak to your GP in the first instance. You can also self-refer to Surrey and Borders Partnership’s Mind Matters Talking Therapies service, which provides short courses of psychological therapy for common mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression or Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

More information, including details of how people can self-refer, is at www.mindmattersnhs.co.uk/surrey.

Where to get urgent help in Surrey and NE Hants

If you’re seeking urgent mental health support over the festive period, there are local services that can help, especially outside of GP or Community Mental Health Service opening hours:

Call the Mental Health Crisis Helpline: 0300 456 8342

- Lines are open 5pm-9am weekdays
- 24 hours during weekends and bank holidays including Christmas Day, Boxing Day, New Year’s Day.
- SMS text for people who are deaf or hard of hearing: 07717 989024

Visit a Safe Haven – Aldershot*, Epsom, Guildford, Redhill, Woking

- Drop-ins each open 6pm-11pm, 365 days a year, for anyone aged 18 and over in mental health crisis
- Aldershot is opens earlier, from 12.30pm, on weekends and bank holidays – includes Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year’s Day.
- More information at www.sabp.nhs.uk/safehaven

Visit a CYP Haven – Epsom, Guildford, Redhill, Staines,

- At least one of the drop-ins for 10-18 year olds and their carers is open on most days over the festive period.
- See festive opening times chart for details. CYP Havens are closed on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.
- More information at www.cyphaven.net

(You can also call your GP for an urgent appointment or in a physical emergency always call 999.)

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust:

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is the leading provider of specialist mental health and learning disability services for people of all ages in Surrey and north east Hampshire and drug and alcohol services in Surrey and Brighton.

We also provide social care services for people with a learning disability in Croydon and autism assessment services across Hampshire.

Our high quality care focuses on enabling people to live well with their conditions and to work towards recovery. To do this we employ over 2,400 people across 39 sites.

www.sabp.nhs.uk

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Safe Havens

Safe Havens are evening and weekend drop in services for people experiencing a mental health crisis or seeking wellbeing or peer support. There are five locations in Surrey and north east Hampshire.

- **Aldershot:** Wellbeing Centre, 121-123 Victoria Road, GU11 1JN
- **Epsom:** The larches, 44 Waterloo Road, KT19 8EX
- **Guildford:** Oakleaf Enterprise, 101 Walnut Tree Close, GU1 4UQ
- **Redhill:** Wingfield Resource Centre, St Anne's Drive, RH1 1AU
- **Woking:** The Prop, 30 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6JT

These services are provided by a partnership between the NHS and third sector mental health organisations: Catalyst, CornerHouse, Mary Frances Trust, Mind: Andover, Oakleaf Enterprise, Reigate Stepping Stones, Richmond Fellowship.

Visit: www.sabp.nhs.uk/safehaven

CYP Havens

CYP Havens are a safe space where you can talk about your worries and mental health and in a confidential and friendly, supportive environment.

There are drop-ins at four different locations, provided by Surrey County Council youth services, NHS mental health services and peer support.

- **Epsom:** The Focus Youth Centre, 9 Depot Road, KT17 4RJ
- **Guildford:** 7 Ward Street, GU1 4LH
- **Redhill:** The Annex, The Redhill Centre, 132-138 Station Road, RH1 1ET
- **Staines:** Leacroft Youth Centre, Raleigh Court, TW18 4PB

Visit www.cyphaven.net