



Open Mental Health

Press Release 30th June 2022

Community Mental Health Transformation in Somerset

[Rethink Mental Illness](#) are the accountable body for the Voluntary and Community Sector within [Open Mental Health](#) (OMH). Three years into the Open Mental Health collaboration [Rethink Mental Illness's](#) Chief Executive Mark Winstanley has been in Somerset to meet with partners and see the community mental health transformation in Somerset up close.

Mark visited [Eastleigh Court](#) in Taunton on Wednesday 29th June meeting Jonathan Higman, Andrew Keefe ([Somerset CCG](#)), Laura Perry, Jo Poole ([OMH](#)) and Paula Blight ([SWEDA UK](#)).

Winstanley said: ***“Open Mental Health in Somerset is offering people with mental illness joined up support. Rethink’s Communities that Care model sets out a long-term vision for mental health care and outlines what good community support looks like. We want a system that’s easier for people to navigate.”***

In 2019 [Rethink Mental Illness](#) published their '[Communities that Care](#)' report which sets out a blueprint for supporting people severely affected by mental illness in their local communities. A key principle of the Open Mental Health approach has been to work with experts by experience to co-produce services, helping to transform social care and health provision.

Jo Poole an expert by experience for OMH said: ***“Co-production is at the heart of Open Mental Health and key to making sure services are designed to meet people’s needs.”***

In the afternoon Mark also joined OMH partners from [Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership](#) (SASP) in Wellington to hear about an exciting new Open Mental Health project for young people aged 16-25. New OMH partners [2BU](#), [Minehead Eye](#), [Fuse Performance](#), [Conquest](#) and [Young Somerset](#) are all part of this new project which is coming soon.



On the following day Mark met with Will Higham ([Rethink Mental Illness](#)) Andrew Keefe ([Somerset CCG](#)) and Paula Blight ([SWEDA UK](#)) at [Bridgwater Rugby Club](#), in Taunton to discuss the successes and challenges Open Mental Health partners have all faced together and to plan for the future. Open Mental Health recently won an [NHS Improvement Award Winner in Collaborating for Improvement](#).

Mark then joined partners from the [Somerset Mental Health Hub](#). The steering group behind the Hub is made up of organisations active in the field of mental health in Somerset. Current members include [The Balsam Centre](#), [Heads up Somerset](#), [Mind in Somerset](#), [Open Mental Health](#), the [Watch Project](#), [Young Somerset](#) and [Spark Somerset](#).

The visit concluded in Bridgwater with an opportunity to meet Peter Lewis, Dan Meron and Jane Yeandle from [Somerset NHS Trust](#).

After the visit, Jane Yeandle said: ***"It was lovely to be able to welcome Mark and showcase the work we have done in Somerset. The partnership approach that has been developed is a credit to all involved. We have had the opportunity in Somerset to be bold and transformational and it is great to be able to share this as a model for future service development."***

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Editors Notes

Somerset NHS Foundation Trust wins HSJ Mental Health Trust of the Year

<https://www.somersetft.nhs.uk/?news=somerset-nhs-foundation-trust-wins-hsj-mental-health-trust-of-the-year>

Rethink Mental Illness's Communities that Care Model

<https://www.rethink.org/get-involved/campaign-with-us/resources-and-reports/communities-that-care/>

Contact:

Zoë Ryan - Comms Officer | 07483 368726 | zoe.ryan@rethink.org