

Mental Health Voice insights

Local mental health network meetings

What are people telling us about mental health care?

Kent Medway Voice

Mental Health Voice

“ What did people in Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley tell us? ”



January to March 2026

We heard
57
pieces of
feedback

of which
41
were on mental
health care

Positive experience with talking therapies

"I recently completed a course of CBT with NHS Talking Therapies after struggling for years with anxiety and depression. Although I am very close to my family, they were unsure how to support me. My CBT sessions were the first time I truly felt listened to and understood. I have been provided with numerous practical techniques and resources to help manage my mental health, and I now feel hopeful and supported. For the first time in a long time, I can see a light at the end of the tunnel."

Positive experience with crisis care

"I called 111 ... for some support as I was struggling. I'd heard from others that it wasn't a great service, but I was desperate for some help and there aren't many options. I ended up talking to the person on the other end for over half an hour and they really listened to me. I don't think I could've spoken to a more helpful, comforting person. Their words were incredibly kind and really helped to relieve a lot of the stress and anxiety I was feeling. I'm so grateful to that person and I don't think they will ever know how much they helped me."

Key topics explained



Care given by staff

How professionals interacted with people when delivering care or treatment or in general interactions, e.g. giving respect or dignity, being friendly or helpful.



Communication between staff and patients

For communication, including content communicated, timeliness and lack of communication. Not including administration processes.



Coordination and continuity of care

For someone (not) having the same professionals regarding an issue, being passed from service to service, or (lack of) communication between services.



Health equities

Experiences regarding disadvantages or advantages related to:

- Socioeconomic factors, e.g. income;
- Geography, e.g. region or whether urban or rural;
- Specific characteristics including those protected in law such as sex, ethnicity or disability;
- Socially excluded groups, e.g. people experiencing homelessness.



Medication, prescriptions and dispensing

Use for issues around medication, prescriptions or vaccinations, including efficacy. Use this for healthcare professionals being willing to prescribe and pharmacies being able to dispense it.



Triage, assessment and admission

Relating to the process required to access a service or treatment, e.g. the assessment to become an inpatient within a hospital setting, including mental health, or resident within a care home or short stay bed.



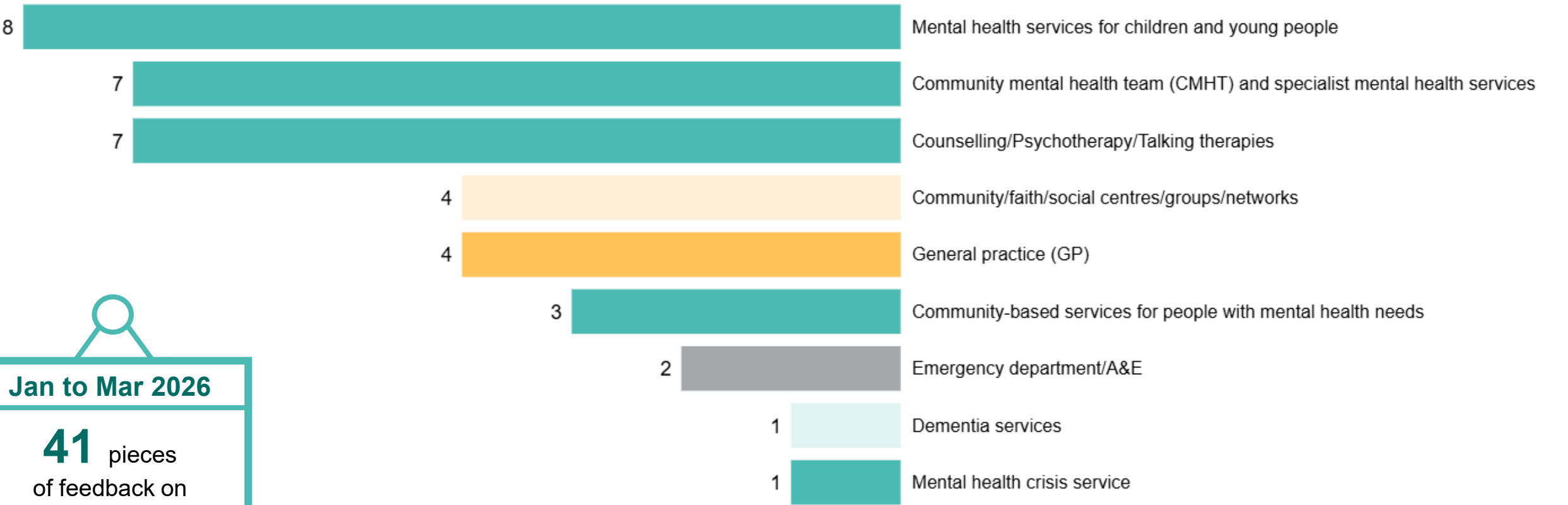
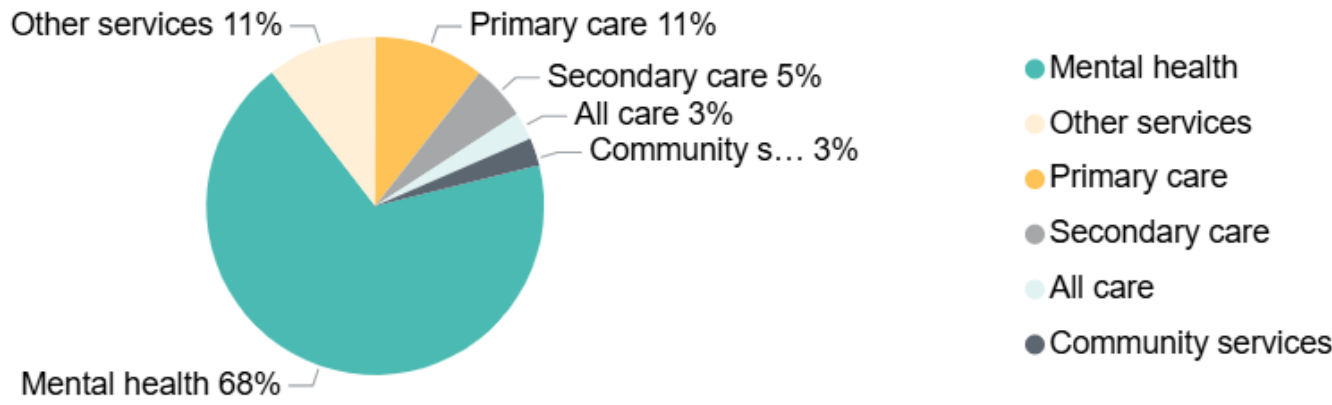
Waiting times and lists for treatment

Use for waiting times and lists to get treatment.

Which services did we hear about regarding mental health care?



- Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley Swale
- East Kent Unspecified
- Medway West Kent



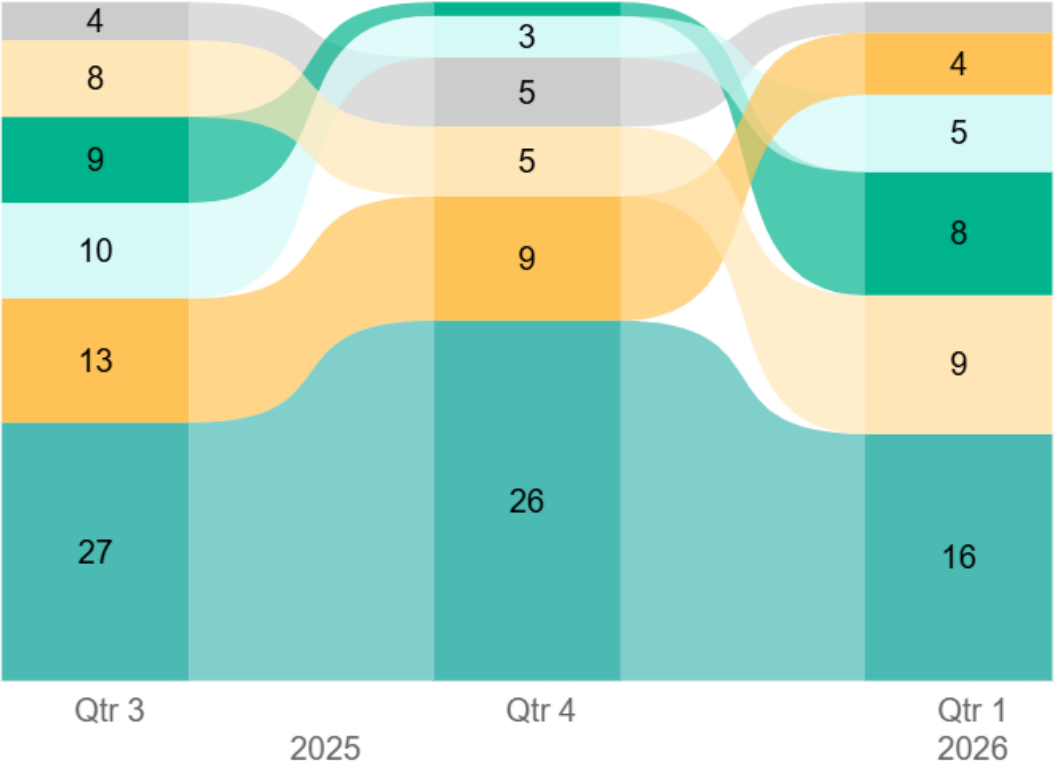
Jan to Mar 2026

41 pieces of feedback on mental health care

Number of pieces of feedback

How much did we hear about key topics in recent quarters?

Number of pieces of feedback

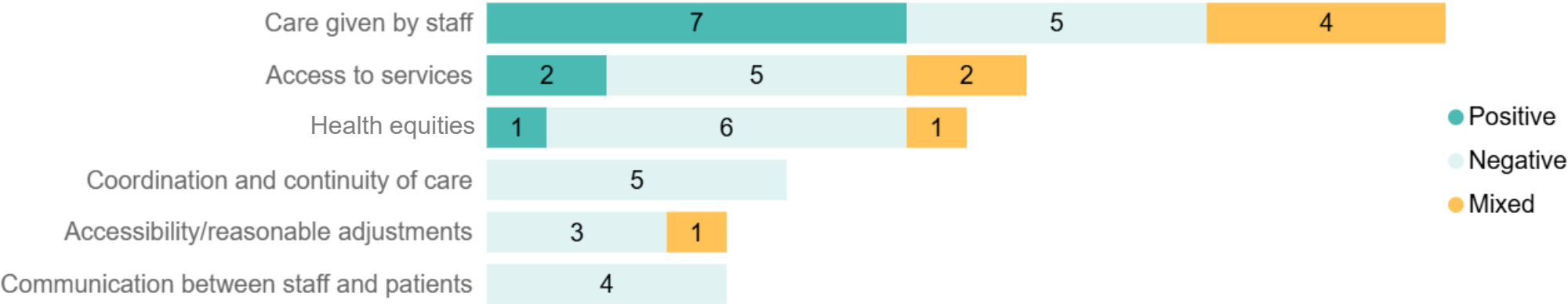


We are consistently hearing about **care given by staff**. Feedback about **access to services** and **health inequalities** increased this quarter.

- Access to services
- Care given by staff
- Communication between staff and patients
- Coordination and continuity of care
- Health equities
- Medication/prescriptions/dispensing

We heard the most positive feedback about **care given by staff** and most negative feedback about **health inequalities**.

What was the sentiment of the key topics this quarter?



Number of pieces of feedback

Jan to Mar 2026

41 pieces of feedback on mental health care

How much did key topics occur over time?

Care given by staff has consistently been a key topic over time in Kent and Medway. In Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley, positive feedback comprised 17% of all feedback in January to March 2026 compared to 12% in the rest of Kent and Medway during the same period.

Health equities emerged as a key topic in Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley this quarter, with negative feedback accounting for 15% of all feedback in January to March 2026 compared to 8% across 2025.

However, in the rest of Kent and Medway, negative feedback about health equities comprised 4% of all feedback in January to March 2026 compared to 7% across 2025.

People from ethnic minority backgrounds in Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley told us they experienced a lack of culturally sensitive care and encountered language barriers when accessing services.

What can help strengthen cultural sensitivity within services?

- 🎯 Why is this important?
- 🎯 What measures do you have in place to ensure culturally sensitive practices?
- 🎯 How do these measures promote cultural sensitivity?

Experiences of health equity



Representative example A:

"I have PTSD from past trauma. I went to A&E at [the local hospital] when I felt suicidal.

The workers seemed stressed and dismissive and seemed not to believe me. They sent me home with a leaflet in English. I felt invisible. Someone from the Veterans club in [my area] helped me. They helped me to get a mental health assessment. They spoke up for me when I did not understand."



Representative example C:

"They say I have an eating disorder and depression. At my college, the counsellor

was nice, but I couldn't find the right words in English to explain the shame I felt. I found a group online that offers online chat support in my language. It was easier to type than to speak. They gave me the courage to ask my GP for a referral, this time with an interpreter booked in advance. [How could your experience have been improved?] People need to be less judgemental. People say go back home. Where am I supposed to go?"



Representative example B:

"I was told I have depression many years ago. The Department for Work and Pensions makes things hard for me when they should be helping me. I have worked hard, very hard, too hard, this is what made me break down. ... Medical staff at [a] hospital told me I could get help out in the community. ... It may be easy for some, but when you are not like them, when you look different, speak different, it feels like they are judging you. This was what got to me at work. Being on the phone trying to get through to professionals for 20 and 30 minutes, going from one operator to the next hurts. But no-one seems to get it. [How could your experience have been improved?] Better communication between hospitals and community services. Things are different in different areas. More sensitive and less judgemental professionals.



Representative example D:

"My severe stress and worry is behind my high blood pressure. I work as a carer. My GP referred me to an NHS wellbeing service, but the only appointments were during my work hours. I couldn't afford to take time off. A friend told me about [an out-of-county] mental health support group. I travel there on my day off. It helps to talk with people who get the pressure we are under. [How could your experience have been improved?] I don't know. Everyone seems to be under too much pressure. People seem to think a Black man feels no pain, even the Black staff who you expect to know better, but it's the way people are forced to work."



What can help
strengthen cultural
sensitivity within
services?