

Standard Operating Procedure Neighbourhood Mental Health Café Closure and Contingency Management



1. Purpose

The Neighbourhood Mental Health Café Scheme is a critical component of the urgent mental health care pathway. Cafés must therefore remain operational wherever possible and should only close in exceptional circumstances. This SOP sets out the required process to manage potential closures safely, minimise risk to visitors, and ensure continuity of support.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all providers delivering Neighbourhood Mental Health Café services and to the Neighbourhood Mental Health Team within Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT).

3. Principle

Unplanned or short-notice café closures can place vulnerable individuals at risk. Any decision to close must be carefully managed, supported by a robust contingency plan, and clearly communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

4. Exceptional Circumstances for Closure

4.1 Cafés must remain open unless closure is unavoidable due to significant operational risks, including but not limited to:

- **Staffing shortages** that cannot be safely covered (e.g. illness or unforeseen emergencies).
 - Providers must have a contingency plan that outlines delivery arrangements when fewer than three staff are available.
- **Serious operational or safety issues**, including building safety or security concerns.
- **Major service disruptions**, such as flooding, structural damage, loss of utilities, or critical equipment failure.

4.2 Where closure is unavoidable, providers must immediately activate the agreed contingency plan.

5. Café Contingency Plan

5.1 All café providers must develop, maintain, and regularly review a written Contingency Plan.

5.2 The Contingency Plan must include:

- Staffing Shortages
 - Adjustments to service delivery, including reduced hours, limited services, or operation with minimum staffing levels.
- Changes to Service Delivery
 - Examples include:
 - Bookable 1:1 appointments only (no walk-ins).
 - Restricted access to certain areas of the café.

- Delivery of essential services only.
 - Communication Protocols
 - How service changes or disruptions will be communicated to visitors and stakeholders.
 - Alternative Support Options
 - Information on other support available, including Central Access Point (CAP), helplines, or other mental health services.
- 5.3 A copy of the Contingency Plan must be submitted to LPT's Neighbourhood Mental Health Team.

6. Notification of Café Closure

6.1 Closure with Less than 72 Hours' Notice

- Where a closure is required within 72 hours, providers must notify stakeholders immediately.
- Providers must:
 - Contact Sarah Jones – 07887 218 521 or Birju Vaja – 07771 886 013 by telephone.
 - If neither is contactable, a Neighbourhood Lead must be contacted. Contact details are all available on LPT's Your Space Page [Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés - your space - Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust](#)
 - **Leaving a voicemail is not sufficient; direct verbal contact must be made.**
- The notification must include:
 - Reason for closure.
 - Anticipated duration.
 - Updated contingency arrangements, where applicable.
- It is the Providers responsibility to inform visitors using appropriate methods, including:
 - On-site signage.
 - Telephone contact.
 - Email communication.
- During face-to-face closure, providers must ensure access to:
 - Telephone support.
 - Online support.
 - Email support.

- Text messaging support.

6.2 Closure With More Than 72 Hours' Notice

- Where a closure is planned with more than 72 hours' notice, providers must notify stakeholders as soon as possible.
- Notification must be sent by email to:
 - Sarah Jones (sarah.jones353@nhs.net)
 - Birju Vaja (Birju.vaja2@nhs.net)
 - Ellie Pratt (ellie.pratt@nhs.net)
- If an out-of-office response is received, providers must contact lpt.transformationteam@nhs.net
- The email must include:
 - Reason for closure.
 - Dates and times affected.
 - Updated contingency arrangements, where applicable.
- Visitor communication and alternative support requirements remain as outlined in sections 6.1.4 and 6.1.5.

7. Communication Protocols for Service Changes & Disruptions

7.1 On-Site Communication

- Clear, visible signage must be displayed at entrances and within the café.
- Printed handouts should be provided where appropriate with details of where people can go for alternative support.

7.2 Staff Communication

- All staff must be briefed on contingency arrangements.
- Staff must communicate changes calmly, clearly, and empathetically.
- A staff member must be positioned at entry points to inform arriving visitors.

7.3 Digital and Remote Communication

- Where feasible, update websites and social media platforms.
- Registered visitors should receive email or SMS notifications outlining changes and alternative support options.

7.4 Local Stakeholder Communication

- Providers must notify relevant local stakeholders, including Social Prescribers and Local Area Coordinators, of closures or service changes.

7.5 Walk-In Visitors

- Walk-in visitors must be informed immediately upon arrival and supported with alternative options where services are reduced or unavailable.

7.6 Posters and Flyers

- Posters or flyers outlining service changes must be displayed in key locations.
- Where possible, key information should be available in multiple languages.

7.7 Alternative Support and Referrals

- Visitors must be provided with information on alternative mental health support, including CAP, helplines, emergency services, or other cafés.
- Staff must have access to up-to-date referral pathways.

7.8 Feedback

- A feedback mechanism (e.g. comment cards, email inbox, feedback box) must be available to capture visitor experiences during disruptions.

8. Post Closure Review

- 8.1 Following any closure, providers must undertake a review to assess:
- Cause of closure
 - Impact on visitors
 - Effectiveness of the contingency arrangements
- 8.2 Learning from the review must be used to strengthen future resilience and update contingency plans as required.

9. Neighbourhood Mental Health Team Procedure for Café Closures

9.1 Notification Responsibilities

- Sarah Jones, Birju Vaja, or Ellie Pratt are responsible for initiating system-wide communication following notification of a café closure.

9.2 Internal and Partner Notification

An email must be sent to the following teams:

- Central Access Point (CAP)
- Mental Health Hub
- Charnwood CMHT
- North West Leicestershire CMHT
- South Leicestershire CMHT
- Hinckley & Bosworth CMHT
- Melton & Rutland CMHT
- City West CMHT
- City East CMHT
- Crisis Team

The email must include:

- Reason for closure.
- Expected duration (if known).
- Alternative arrangements or open cafés.
- Request for teams to inform relevant service users.

9.3 Follow-Up

- Communication must be updated if the closure extends or circumstances change.

9.4 Website Update

- Ellie Pratt will ensure LPT's website reflects the café closure status.

9.5 Record Keeping

- Sarah Jones / Birju Vaja must update the Scheme Management café closures and contingency log with:
 - Closure details.
 - Duration.
 - Contingency measures implemented.