

Neighbourhood Mental Health Café Scheme Induction



Neighbourhood
Mental Health
Cafés

For times when you're struggling to cope

Aims of today's session

- To understand the background and purpose of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafe Scheme
- To clarify who the service is for
- To explain how the scheme operates in practice
- To outline good practice principles
- To understand safeguarding, incident reporting and data requirements
- To ensure everyone feels confident and supported in their role



Background to Cafe Scheme



Crisis Café Schemes were developed as part of the wider transformation of urgent and emergency mental health care under the NHS England programme, aligned with the NHS Long Term Plan.

Why Crisis Cafés were created:

- Rising demand on A&E and police for mental health crises
- Service gaps outside of traditional 9-5 hours
- Need for community-based, non-clinical alternatives
- Feedback from people with lived experience

Crisis Cafés provide:

- Early intervention
- Prevention of escalation
- A safe, welcoming, non-clinical environment
- An alternative to hospital admission where appropriate

What is a Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafe?



A Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafe is:

- A community based, non-clinical, safe space for adults in mental health crisis
- Provides immediate emotional support and de-escalation
- Non-judgemental and recovery-focused
- Some open evenings/weekends when other services are closed
- Face to face support, no waiting lists, can be accessed without an appointment

It is not:

- A replacement for emergency services
- A long-term therapy service
- An inpatient or medical setting
- A social cafe

Designed to support people before crisis becomes an emergency

Who are Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafes for?



- Adults (18+) experiencing emotional distress
- Individuals feeling overwhelmed, anxious, low or in crisis
- People at risk of escalation who do not require immediate medical intervention
- Individuals who are will willing & able to work with staff & make informed decisions regarding their support

May include:

- People with diagnosed mental health conditions
- Individuals not currently known to services
- People experiencing situational crises (bereavement, housing, financial, stress)

When Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafes are not appropriate:

- When immediate risk to life
- Individuals requires urgent medical treatment
- Immediate high risk suicide attempts requiring emergency response
- People under the influence where risk cannot be safely managed
- When individuals pose a threat to staff or others using the service
- Under 18s

In these cases, follow existing emergency pathways.

What support do the cafes offer?

Warm, welcoming,
non judgemental
environment



One to one
support emotional
support



Group / Peer
Support



Practical
Support and
Signposting



Active listening
& de-escalation



Risk & Safety
Planning



Coping
Techniques



Referrals to
Mental Health Hub

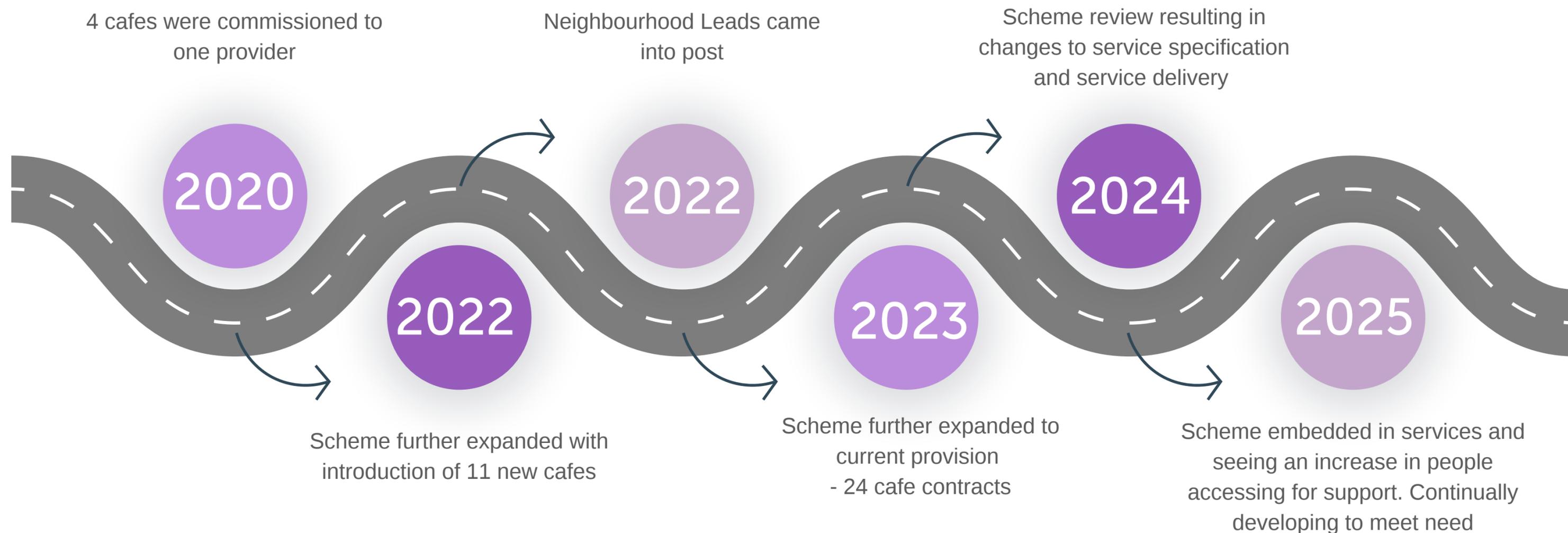


How are the Cafes delivered?



- Delivered by 16 trusted VCSE organisations
- Work closely with Mental Health Neighbourhood Leads
- Providers are experts in their neighbourhoods
- Chosen for their community knowledge and how embedded they are
- Flexible delivery tailored to local needs

Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Cafe Scheme



Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafes

16 different VCSE providers, delivering 40 cafe sessions per week



Monday**Tuesday****Wednesday****Thursday****Friday****Saturday****Sunday****Beaumont Leys***Barley Croft Community Centre*

9am – 12 noon

Wigston*LSFB Community Hub*

9.30am – 12.30pm

Melton*Gloucester House*

10am – 1pm

University of Leicester*Leicester Student Union**University students & staff only*

11am - 2pm

Earl Shilton*The Stute*

10am - 1pm

1.30 - 4.30pm

Lutterworth*The Family Hub*

1pm – 4pm

Loughborough University*Loughborough Students Union*

6pm - 9pm

Highfields*Merlyn Vaz Centre*

9.30am – 12.30pm

Saffron*Saff Caff*

10am – 4pm

De Montfort Uni*Student Union*

11am - 2pm

Leicester City*St Martins House*

12 noon – 6pm

Coalville*Marlene Reid Centre*

10am – 1pm

Braunstone*The Grove*

1 – 4pm

Measham*Age UK Measham*

4pm – 7pm

Thurnby Lodge*Thurnby Lodge Community Centre*

10.30am – 1.30pm

Hinckley*Hinckley Baptist Church*

1pm – 7pm

Belgrave*The Peepul Centre*

2pm – 7pm

Lutterworth*The Family Hub*

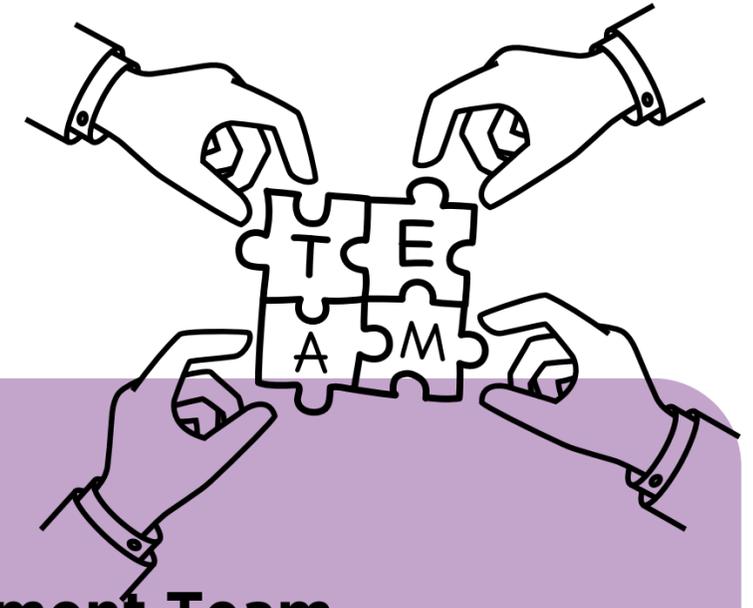
4.30pm – 7.30pm

Eyres Monsell*Eyres Monsell Young Peoples Club*

5.45pm – 8.45pm

Market Harborough
Congregational Church Centre
10.30am - 4.30pm**University of Leicester**
Leicester Student Union
University students & staff only
11am - 2pm**Syston**
Syston Community Centre
12 noon – 6pm**Eyres Monsell**
Eyres Monsell Young Peoples Club
12 noon - 3pm**New Parks**
Team Hub
12.30 – 5.30pm**Blaby Village**
Blaby Drop In Centre
1pm - 4pm**Enderby**
Enderby Adult Learning Centre
4.30pm – 7.30pm**Highfields**
Highfields Library
2pm - 5pm**Coalville**
Marlene Reid Centre
3pm – 6pm**Melton**
Gloucester House
5pm – 8pm**Oakham**
Peppers A Safe Space
5.30pm – 8.30pm**Loughborough University**
Bridgeman Building
6pm – 9pm**Wigston**
LSFB Community Hub
9.30am - 12.30pm**De Montfort Uni**
Student Union
11am - 2pm**Measham**
Age UK Measham
1pm – 4pm**Uppingham**
Uppingham Town Council
1pm – 4pm**Thurnby Lodge**
Thurnby Lodge Community Centre
3pm - 6pm**Loughborough**
Loughborough Wellbeing Centre
4.30pm – 10.30pm**Beaumont Leys**
Christ The King Church
6pm - 9pm**New Parks**
Team Hub
11.30am – 4.30pm**Braunstone**
The Grove
4 – 7pm

How is Scheme managed?



Funded by Integrated Care Board (ICB)

Managed by Leicestershire Partnership Trust (LPT) Transformation & Improvement Team

Rob Melling – Mental Health Improvement & Transformation Lead

Sarah Jones – Mental Health Neighbourhood Lead / Scheme Lead

Birju Vaja – Mental Health Neighbourhood Lead / Scheme Lead

Hannah Williams – Blaby District Mental Health Neighbourhood Lead

Teresa Spilsbury – Harborough & Lutterworth Mental Health Neighbourhood Lead

Georgina Kelly – Business Support Officer

Alex Palmer – Business Administrator

Louise O'Reilly – Communications & Engagement Manager

Ellie Pratt – Design & Digital Media Co-ordinator

Trauma Informed Environment

The cafes operate under trauma informed principles:

Key principles:

Safety - Physical and emotional safety

Trustworthiness - Clear boundaries and transparency

Choice - Empowering the individual

Collaboration - Working alongside not “doing to”

Empowerment - Strengths-based approach

In practice this means:

- Calm, welcoming space (lighting, seating, privacy)
- Respectful language
- Avoiding re-traumatisation
- Allowing control wherever possible (where to sit, pacing of conversation)



Good Practice in Crisis Support

Active Listening

Non-judgemental stance
Reflective response
Validation of emotion

Risk assessment

Clear but sensitive questioning
Collaborative safety planning
Documentation of risk and protective factors

Boundaries

Clear session timeframes
Appropriate professional distance
No dual relationships

Cultural Competency

Awareness of diversity
Inclusive language
Understanding barriers to access



The Requirements:

- ✓ Registered as Mental Health Friendly Places
- ✓ All staff attended Suicide Awareness training & Samaritans Active Listening Workshop
- ✓ Follow LPT's Mental Health Hub referral pathway to gain additional support for people in crisis and/or at risk of harm
- ✓ All staff trained in Decider Skills

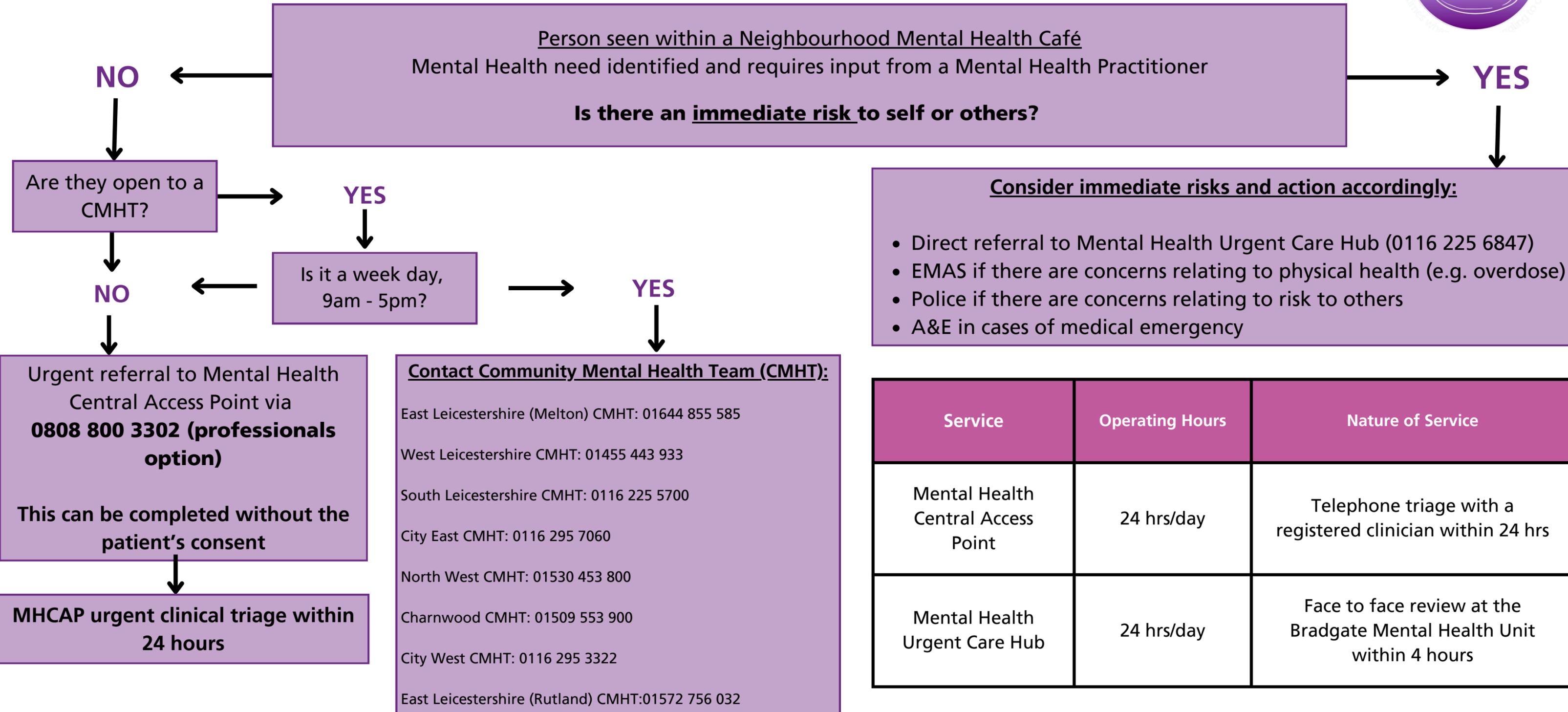
A white line-art illustration of two women sitting on the floor and talking. The woman on the left is wearing a long-sleeved top and pants, and the woman on the right is wearing a short-sleeved top and pants. They are both holding small cups, possibly coffee or tea. The background is a solid light purple color.

Crisis support is about compassion, containment, and safety.

Risk assessment is about understanding the level of risk, supporting the individual, and knowing when to escalate.

When done well, it prevents escalation, builds trust, and ensures safety for everyone.

Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafe Referral Flowchart



Service	Operating Hours	Nature of Service
Mental Health Central Access Point	24 hrs/day	Telephone triage with a registered clinician within 24 hrs
Mental Health Urgent Care Hub	24 hrs/day	Face to face review at the Bradgate Mental Health Unit within 4 hours

Safeguarding Responsibilities

- All staff and volunteers trained and DBS-checked
- Named safeguarding lead in each organisation
- Clear policies, reporting & escalation pathways
- Equitable recruitment and safe vetting
- Accurate documentation and record keeping
- Alignment with venue & local safeguarding boards
- Ongoing monitoring, supervision, and audit

Safeguarding isn't just a policy — it's everyone's responsibility. Providers must ensure staff are trained, competent, supported, and clear on processes. A strong safeguarding framework protects service users, staff, and the organisation, and is essential for a safe, trustworthy Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafe.



The Requirements:

- ✓ All staff and volunteers must complete mandatory safeguarding training before starting, including:
 - Adult safeguarding
 - Child safeguarding
 - Prevent
- ✓ Providers must have formal safeguarding policies in place.
- ✓ Each provider must have a named safeguarding lead
- ✓ Recruitment must follow an equitable, transparent process, including reference & DBS checks.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

We aim to:

- Reduce health inequalities
- Improve access for marginalised communities
- Offer culturally appropriate support

Consider:

- Language barriers
- Neurodiversity
- LGBTQ+ inclusion
- Disability access
- Rural access (if relevant to your cafe)



The Requirements:

- ✓ Providers must have a formal, written Equality, Diversity & Inclusion policy.
- ✓ Deliver services in a way that respects cultural, religious, and social differences.
- ✓ Ensure the café environment and services are physically and socially accessible for people with disabilities, neurodiversity, or other barriers.
- ✓ Provide services free from discrimination, bias, or prejudice of any kind.
- ✓ Involve people with lived experience in service design, delivery, and evaluation wherever possible.
- ✓ Ensure staff are trained in equality, diversity, and inclusion principles, including unconscious bias.

Delivering the Cafe from a Suitable Venue

Venue Requirements & Partnership Approach:

- Delivered from a safe, suitable venue
- Health & safety compliance followed
- Clear signage for service users
- Work collaboratively with venue staff
- Follow venue processes and due diligence
- Respect the venue as a partnership arrangement



The Requirements:

- ✓ Risk assessment in place
- ✓ Signs displayed outside of venue
- ✓ Clear, accessible information about directions & access to the building, information about facilities to be provided prior to visit
- ✓ Follow venue processes and due diligence

Pathways & Referral Routes

Referrals into the Cafe:

- Self-referral (walk-in)
- GP
- Community mental health teams
- Crisis teams
- Police
- A&E
- Voluntary sector partners
- Bradgate Mental Health Unit

Onward Referrals from the Cafe:

- Voluntary/community organisations
- Community mental health team - via CAP
- Social Prescribing
- Joy
- Talking Therapy
- Safeguarding referrals
- Emergency services if escalated



Incident Reporting

- Report all incidents affecting service users, staff, or the service
- Examples: self-harm, aggression, safeguarding concerns, near misses
- Follow internal reporting and escalation procedures
- Document factual, clear, and timely records
- Reporting is for learning and improvement, not blame
- Support and supervision provided after incidents



Cafe Closures & Contingency Planning

Closures may occur due to:

- Staffing shortages
- Severe weather
- Building issues
- Public health incidents

Closure Protocol:

- Inform Neighbourhood Leads
- Update website / social media
- Notify referring agencies
- Update voicemail message
- Follow cafe contingency plan
- Ensure clear alternative crisis pathways communicated
- Always provide alternative crisis contact information

The Cafés are a vital part of the urgent care pathway and must remain open whenever possible. Closures should only happen in extreme emergencies, as closing can put people in crisis at risk.



The Requirements:

- ✓ Each cafe provides 6 hours of support per week
- ✓ Cafes are open for 52 weeks a year - only closed on Bank Holidays
- ✓ Each cafe to have a contingency plan in place stating how to continue providing support with reduced staff and when venues are closed.
- ✓ If unable to physically open, telephone or virtual support must be provided.
- ✓ Days, times & venues cannot be changed without consultation & approval from LPT & ICB

Staff Team Expectations

- 3 staff on duty at all times
- Staff must be trained, DBS-checked, and meet minimum training requirements
- All staff trained in Decider Skills
- Equitable recruitment process
- Follow scheme Volunteer Framework
- Inclusion of people with lived experience
- Regular supervision and support



Folk
add

Professional Conduct & Wellbeing

Working in crisis settings can be emotionally demanding

Expectations:

- Professional boundaries
- Confidentiality
- Respect for colleagues
- Clear communication

Staff Wellbeing:

- Regular supervision
- Team debriefs
- Reflective practice
- Access to support if needed

We cannot pour from an empty cup!



The Requirements:

- ✓ Regular supervision sessions for all staff and volunteers
- ✓ Hold debrief sessions after each cafe session
- ✓ Attend reflective practice sessions
- ✓ Attend Cafe Provider meetings

Data Collection & Reporting

Data collection is not just administrative - it demonstrates impact and support service sustainability

Why we collect data:

- Monitor demand and outcomes
- Identify trends and unmet need
- Support commissioning decisions
- Demonstrate reduction in A&E / GP attendance
- Support future funding

Typical Data Captured:

- Demographics
- Presenting issues
- Referral source
- Outcome
- Repeat attendance
- Support provided
- Time/date of visit

Accurate, timely data is the cafe Providers responsibility



The Requirements:

- ✓ Data forms submitted by the 4th of the month (at the latest)
- ✓ 1 Case Study per cafe submitted by the 4th of the month (at the latest)
- ✓ Providers to attend catch up meeting with Neighbourhood Leads
- ✓ Actively participate in cafe review and audit processes
- ✓ Providers to attend quarterly Provider meetings

Measuring Impact & Outcomes

Success may look like:

- Reduced distress during visit
- Avoided A&E attendance
- Increased connection to community support
- Improved coping strategies
- Repeat attendance for early support (preventative)

Every interaction matters



Marketing & Promoting the Cafe Offer

- Let people know support is available
- Reach those who may struggle to leave home or access services
- Build community awareness and trust
- Work with partners, local networks & VCSE organisations
- Use accessible channels: social media, local outreach, leaflets

How we promote:

- GP & partner engagement
- Community outreach
- Social media & digital platforms
- Local networks & voluntary sector
- Word of mouth



The Requirements:

- ✓ Engagement plan in place to reach key stakeholders & increase cafe promotion
- ✓ Distribute marketing materials
- ✓ Cafe has own webpage and is on Joy
- ✓ Social media in place
- ✓ Different ways for people to make contact



Café impact....

Last April through a mixture of burnout from work which led to a lack of sleep which then impacted on being able to carry out my OCD compulsions which skyrocketed my anxiety, I found myself in a very difficult place with my mental health.

I desperately needed immediate support and fortunately my sister walked past the mental health cafe sign on her way to work one morning and passed on this information. Little did I know what a lifeline this would turn out to be.

In a time of crisis, I attended the mental health cafe and over a number of weeks and months was supported by friendly faces welcoming with a cup of tea and even more importantly had the chance to speak one to one through some of my issues. I was also supported on recommendations for getting more support which I used to access private therapy.

I just wanted to say a HUGE thank you to James, Cat and Rachel who were often working at the cafe at the time and were a great support in such a difficult time.

Whilst I was waiting to be able to access private therapy they were the support I needed to help me through those difficult days in my life. I owe them a lot for their help and I hope you can pass on my sincere thanks to them. With such pressure on NHS services, I believe this service is vital in providing immediate support when people need it most. I know this from my own experience.

Today, I find myself in a much better place mentally and looking to use my own experiences to go back to university to study a masters in counselling and psychotherapy so I can support people in the same way I was supported at life's most difficult moments. Without the support of the cafe, I am not sure I would be in such a positive place in my life and so again please thank those involved.

Café impact....

Sally* visited the café because she was experiencing active suicidal thoughts and was in search of help. This distress stemmed from her journey from Bournemouth to Leicester to meet her ex-boyfriend, with whom she had recently ended a relationship and was seeking closure. She had planned to take her own life if he refused to talk to her and happened to find herself at the café by chance, as she was sitting on a wall when we placed the opening sign outside. She interpreted this as a “sign” that support was available to her.

We immediately arranged for her to have a one-on-one session. During the initial assessment, as she disclosed her suicidal thoughts, we determined that it was essential for her to undergo an assessment at the Mental Health Hub.

To help support her while we arranged transportation to the Hub, we worked through some grounding techniques.

We coordinated with the taxi company to ensure she arrived directly at the Hub without any detours. She expressed deep gratitude for our support and was relieved to be receiving further support from the Mental Health Hub.

**named changed*



Key Messages & Summary

- Neighbourhood Mental Health Cafés provide early, compassionate support
- Safety is central — for service users and staff
- Boundaries and processes protect everyone
- Trauma-informed and inclusive approaches underpin all practice
- Documentation, supervision, and escalation are essential
- Staff wellbeing and teamwork are priorities
- You are supported, not alone in your role



A minimalist line-art illustration in white on a light purple background. Two women are depicted sitting on the floor, facing each other. The woman on the left has long hair and is wearing a sleeveless top and pants. The woman on the right has her hair in a ponytail and is wearing a long-sleeved top and pants. Both are holding small cups, suggesting they are having a conversation over coffee or tea. The text 'Any questions?' is centered over the illustration in a dark purple font.

Any questions?