



Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards

kentmentalwellbeingawards.org.uk

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2025

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- Research and Evaluation
- Suicide Bereavement Service
- Suicide Prevention
- Talking Therapies

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at: mindinbexley.org.uk or eastkentmind.org.uk



Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025

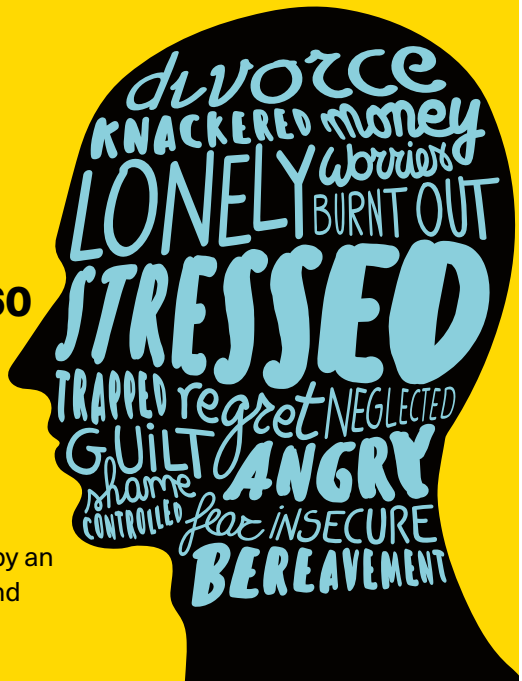


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Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025

Welcome to tonight's ceremony

Your hosts for the evening are Simon Dolby, Development Lead at Mind in Bexley and East Kent, and Nicola Everett, Head of Multimedia News at KentOnline and the KM Group.

The awards ceremony keynote speaker is Dr Kush Kanodia, a disability and race equality champion.

The special guest speaker is Alice Scutchey, Organising Committee Member of the Baton of Hope.

Local area award winners announced

Reflection by Cllr Teresa Murray, Deputy Leader of Medway Council and chair of the Medway Health and Wellbeing Board.

Overall winners revealed

Front page photo: **David Domnesoru**, 17, of Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School with his winning trophy design.

Please share photos on Facebook/Instagram and X of tonight's Awards, tag in **@KentMWAWards** and use the hashtag **#KentMWAWards**

Hosted by Mind in Bexley and East Kent, registered charity 1110130

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Ashford

Education Award: **Bodsham Primary School - Woodpecker Team**

Wellbeing School Award: **Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre**

Bexley

Community Champion Award: **Sue Petty**

Innovation Award: **Bexley Barbershop Project**

Bromley

Partnership Award: **Bromley FC Community Trust**

Canterbury

Kindness Award: **Angelica Gorman - Keep Talking Services**

Suicide Prevention Award: **Emerge Advocacy**

Active Sporting Award: **Inclusive Sport Kent CIC**

Minorities LGBTQ+ Award: **Daniel Cope**

Dartford/Gravesham

Minorities BAME Award: **Health & Wellbeing in the Sikh Community**

Wellbeing Staff Award: **North Kent Mind Men's Group**

Active Sporting Award: **Net & Natter**

Wellbeing School Award: **Milestone Academy**

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Dover

Kindness Award: **Capel Cares**

Therapy Award: **Deal Breastfeeding Support Group**

Education Award: **Woodpecker Court**

Activity Group Award: **Dover Smart Project**

Partnership Award: **Post Fire Recovery & Wellbeing Support Project**

Folkestone

Youth Project Award: **Rachel Haden**

Maidstone

Fundraising Award: **Oar Mighty Mates 2C**

Disability Award: **3D Care CIC**

Service Delivery Award: **Food and Mood**

Communications Award: **No One Here is Me**

NHS Award: **Nat Farley**

Wellbeing Space Award: **Gardens of Hope**

Business Wellbeing Award: **Bedfont Scientific Ltd**

Leadership Award: **Tim Woodhouse**

Volunteering Award: **Alice Scutchey - Baton of Hope**

Medway

Leadership Award: **Justin Bateman - North Kent Mind**

Charity Wellbeing Award: **BRAVE (Building Resilience & Validating Emotions)**

Innovation Award: **Medway Puzzles**

Veterans Award: **Oliver Aspinall**

Business Wellbeing Award: **Chatha Hygiene Limited**

Wellbeing Staff Award: **Cleopatra's Legacy CIC**

School Pastoral Care Award: **City of Rochester**

Therapy Award: **PEACE Project - Abigail's Footsteps**

Photos and video from tonight's ceremony will be available to download at: kentmentalwellbeingawards.org.uk

Winners and attendees are asked to share this content on their website and social media, using the hashtag **#KentMWAwards**

Swale

Fundraising Award: **Suzanne Louise Middleton-Elliott & Carolyne Cox**
 Communications Award: **Finn Tumber**

Thanet

Activity Group Award: **Harry Higgs - Overrun Project**
 Business Wellbeing Award: **Thanet Earth**
 Veterans Award: **Nikki Ward of Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund**
 Suicide Prevention Award: **STAK.life CIC**
 Youth Project Award: **Oasis Raise Young Peoples Team**
 Wellbeing Space Award: **Windmill Community Gardens Margate**
 Community Champion: **Sonny Dungar**
 NHS Award: **Health Records Team (Amanda & Aimee)**
 Seniors Award: **William Parr - Kensei Taiko**

West Kent

Volunteering Award: **Baby Umbrella**
 Disability Award: **Therapeutic Equines Assisting Learning CIC**
 Charity Wellbeing Award: **Community Cupboard**
 School Pastoral Care Award: **Valence**
 Charity Service Delivery Award: **Creative Minds**

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Meet our Awards hosts



Simon Dolby
Development Lead
Mind in Bexley
and East Kent

Simon has more than 20 years of experience in Chief Executive roles at charities in the education and mental health sectors. In his early career he was a journalist and News Editor for three Kent newspapers working for both Kent Messenger Group and Kent Regional Newspapers. Simon is currently leading two initiatives, our Veterans Project, and the Wellbeing Ambassador programme – which trains barbers, and salon and nail bar staff to support customers experiencing anxiety and depression.



Nicola Everett
Newsreader
kmfm

Nicola has been a familiar voice on radio in Kent for more than 20 years. She started her career at Medway FM before moving to Invicta FM (now Heart) and can be heard on kmfm reading daytime and drivetime bulletins. Nicola also regularly writes and produces the daily KentOnline podcast and has presented various programmes on kmtv. She hosts a number of ceremonies including the Kent Teacher of the Year and Medway Business awards along with the Kent and Medway Apprenticeship ceremony.



Alice Scutchey
Baton of Hope
Project Lead

Alice Scutchey is a Mental Health First Aid Instructor and volunteer for The Baton of Hope, the UK's largest suicide prevention and awareness campaign. Her passion for mental health comes from her own lived experience, which inspired her to become Project Lead for the Kent and Medway leg of the national tour. In this role, she helped bring the campaign to life locally, raising awareness, highlighting support services, and showing people in her community that they are not alone.



Teresa Murray
Deputy Leader of
Medway Council

Teresa Murray is the Deputy Leader of Medway Council and a Labour & Co-operative councillor for Rochester East and Warren Wood. She holds the Cabinet portfolio for Health & Adult Services. A councillor since 2000, she chairs the Medway Health & Wellbeing Board and sits on the Kent and Medway Adults Safeguarding Executive Board, the Integrated Care Partnership and is a partnership governor at Medway Maritime Hospital Trust. Her professional background is in Further and Higher Education as a teacher and senior manager.

Mental Health Training

 **mind**
in Bexley
and East Kent

Mind in Bexley and East Kent provides a wide-range of training, including:

- Mental Health First Aid, for Adults & Young People
- Mental Health Awareness Workshops
- Adult Suicide Prevention
- Young People's Suicide Prevention
- MoneySkills
- Mental Health for Managers



Learn More



Mind in Bexley website

www.mindinbexley.org.uk



East Kent Mind website

www.eastkentmind.org.uk



Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025



Congratulations

TO THE WINNERS OF THE KENT MENTAL WELLBEING AWARDS!

CommunityAd are proud to be part of this fantastic celebration of local success highlighting the incredible achievements and contributions made within our community and we're thrilled to support such a meaningful initiative.



Our community magazines are dedicated to delivering stories that matter right to your doorstep, showcasing the best of what Kent has to offer.

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Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025



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Ashford

Education Award: **Bodsham Primary School - Woodpecker Team**

The Woodpecker Team at Bodsham Primary School has created a supportive, inclusive environment where every child is encouraged to thrive. Teachers and teaching assistants have shown exceptional dedication to meeting the needs of pupils with additional challenges.

By combining patience, creativity and care, the team ensures children feel safe, valued and ready to learn. Their approach has built confidence and resilience, enabling pupils to overcome barriers. Through their commitment, the Woodpecker Team demonstrates how compassionate teaching can transform lives and promote wellbeing across the whole school community.

Ashford

Wellbeing School Award: **Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre**

Homewood School & Sixth Form Centre has shown real commitment to supporting student wellbeing. Each year, the PSHE Lead organises a Mental Health Awareness Day, helping to build a culture of openness and resilience.

Teachers and staff provide safe spaces where young people feel supported and able to thrive. Their work ensures pupils develop confidence and coping skills that extend beyond the classroom. Despite challenges such as time pressures, the school demonstrates how consistent, creative action can transform student wellbeing and promote emotional growth.

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Bexley

Community Champion Award: Sue Petty

Sue Petty has dedicated over 25 years to promoting equality, wellbeing and social change in Bexley. From tackling food insecurity through the Community Larder to supporting refugees and addressing period poverty, her work helps people feel safe and valued.

She has organised self-defence classes, supported dementia-friendly groups like Singing for the Brain, and influenced policy as Vice-Chair of the Safer Neighbourhood Board and as a school governor. Beyond her roles, Sue leads by example. Whether collecting food or supporting colleagues, she shows how compassion and kindness can transform lives.

Bexley

Innovation Award: Bexley Barbershop Project

The Bexley Barbershop Project, now expanded into the Wellbeing Ambassadors scheme, has transformed everyday conversations into life-saving support. Stylists, barbers, nail technicians and tattoo artists are helping people talk about their mental health, with 61 Ambassadors already signed up.

The project has sparked more than 1,800 wellbeing conversations and crucially, 43 clients have gone on to access Mind in Bexley's services - showing the scheme's real impact. With innovative tools like their conversation prompt mirror stickers, Ambassadors are breaking stigma, building trust and saving lives.



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Bromley

Partnership Award: **Bromley FC Community Trust**

Bromley FC Community Trust has made a lasting difference to the mental health of local veterans. Through its VETS Hub, the Trust provides regular opportunities for former servicemen and women to connect, share experiences and find support in a safe environment.

The hub reduces isolation and builds friendships, offering veterans the chance to regain a sense of belonging. By working closely with partners, the Trust ensures access to specialist services where needed. This initiative shows how sport and community action can bring people together, restore confidence and improve wellbeing for those who have served their country.

Canterbury

Kindness Award: **Angelica Gorman - Keep Talking Services**

Angelica Gorman of Keep Talking Services is a compassionate presence for clients in Canterbury. After originally joining the Service as a volunteer, she became Senior Wellbeing Coordinator within 18 months, reflecting her commitment to person-centred support.

She leads client feedback so every voice is heard. Each day she offers calm, empathetic listening and coordinates practical help. At Christmas she organises gift deliveries so no one is forgotten. Her work reduces isolation, builds trust and improves the service. Angelica embodies the charity's values: kindness, diligence and hope.



Canterbury

Suicide Prevention Award: **Emerge Advocacy**

Emerge Advocacy supports young people facing mental health crises, offering compassionate care when it is needed most. The team provides reassurance and practical guidance for those admitted to hospital with self-harm or suicidal thoughts.

By working closely with hospitals and mental health services, EmERGE builds trust with young people and helps them towards recovery. Their presence turns moments of fear into opportunities for hope. This vital work has reduced isolation and given countless young people the confidence to seek support. EmERGE Advocacy shows the power of kindness in transforming lives.

Canterbury

Active Sporting Award: **Inclusive Sport Kent CIC**

Inclusive Sport Kent CIC is dedicated to making sport accessible to everyone, regardless of age, ability or background. By removing barriers to participation, the organisation helps people build confidence, improve fitness and enjoy the mental health benefits of physical activity.

The team creates welcoming spaces where inclusion is at the heart of every programme. Participants are supported to achieve their personal goals while developing friendships and a sense of belonging. Through creativity and commitment, Inclusive Sport Kent CIC demonstrates how sport can reduce isolation, strengthen communities and promote lasting wellbeing.



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Interview

with Dr Kush Kanodia

Our keynote speaker Dr Kush Kanodia gave us an interview to talk about his life, work and campaigning

I often say I'm a child of the NHS. My father was a GP, and we lived above his surgery in Hackney — long before the area became fashionable. Later we moved to Chelsea, one of the most affluent parts of London. Experiencing both ends of the social spectrum gave me a rare early insight into inequality and privilege.

I was born with Multiple Epiphyseal Dysplasia, a rare genetic condition that severely affected my mobility. My hips could dislocate just from standing and walking, and I lived in constant pain throughout childhood. Only after completing my degree at the University of Kent did I have both hips replaced. For the first time, I realised how much pain had limited not only my movement but my ability to concentrate, learn and live fully.



After surgery I began to thrive, completing an MBA with Distinction at Kent Business School and entering the world of investment banking. But when Lehman Brothers collapsed, I had a moment of clarity. Profit without purpose no longer held meaning. In 2009 I left finance to found Choice International, a social enterprise guided by the Social Model of Disability and the mantra “Nothing About Us, Without Us.” Meeting Professor Mike Oliver, the pioneer of that model, confirmed my lifelong commitment to social change.

Dr Kush Kanodia interview (continued)

Lived experience has always been my driving force. Policymakers and professionals often overlook the people most affected by their decisions. That understanding inspired my campaign to abolish hospital parking charges for disabled people—a policy that contradicted the NHS principle of being free and accessible to all. The fight taught me the importance of persistence, evidence and empathy when challenging deeply embedded systems.

Speaking truth to power takes conviction. During that campaign I engaged directly with the Health Minister and the CEO of NHS England. For the Ultra Low Emission Zone exemption, I met the Mayor of London on the very day the policy changed. Confronting decision-makers can come with personal and professional risks, but it is essential if we want systems to serve everyone fairly.



Even after such successes, silence from government and mainstream media is common. Without acknowledgements such as my honorary doctorate from Kent University and the Sheila McKechnie Foundation Campaigner of the Year award, these landmark victories might have been lost. Disabled people have transformed some of the UK's biggest systems; it's our responsibility to ensure those stories are recorded and celebrated.

Technology, I believe, is one of the greatest enablers of disability inclusion — especially in health, mental wellbeing and social participation. Yet many public bodies still lag behind on accessible digital design despite clear legal duties under the Public Sector Accessibility Regulations and the European Accessibility Act, which took effect in 2025. The Act marks a turning point, requiring equal digital access for all consumers.

Continued on page 40

Canterbury

Minorities LGBTQ+ Award: **Daniel Cope**

Daniel Cope has shown outstanding dedication to supporting young people's wellbeing - particularly in the LGBTQ+ community. Despite living with multiple disabilities and facing significant health challenges, Daniel continues to dedicate his time to supporting others.

Daniel founded inclusive monthly craft markets in Whitstable and Herne Bay, raising funds for charities while creating welcoming spaces for all. He also rescues dogs – helping to support animals in distress. Alongside his advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights and tireless community support, Daniel's compassion, creativity, and resilience inspire others - proving that personal adversity can become a powerful force for inclusion, understanding and positive change.

Dartford & Gravesham

Minorities BAME Award: **Health & Wellbeing in the Sikh Community**

This initiative developed by the Gurdwara in Gravesend and Gravesham Borough Council has built trust and opened conversations about mental health within the Sikh community. Following a spike in suicides in the Sikh community, council officers and community leaders worked together on the project that has reduced stigma and encouraged people to seek support.

The team trained 10 champions to deliver activities and have supported over a 1,000 people in mental health distress. By addressing barriers and promoting inclusion, this initiative demonstrates the value of partnership in improving wellbeing and strengthening community resilience.

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Dartford & Gravesham

Wellbeing Staff Award: **North Kent Mind Men's Group**

North Kent Mind Men's Group provides a safe and supportive environment for men to talk openly about their mental health. Recognising the challenges men often face in seeking help, the group reduces stigma and help create a sense of belonging.

Sessions encourage open discussion, mutual support and the sharing of experiences. By connecting men with similar challenges, the group helps reduce isolation and build resilience. The Men's Group is a lifeline for participants, showing how peer support and understanding can make a lasting difference to mental wellbeing.

Dartford & Gravesham

Active Sporting Award: **Net & Natter**

Net & Natter offers friendly, walking netball sessions that put connection first. The group was shaped around what participants needed most: a welcoming space to move, laugh and talk. That focus on gentle activity and conversation helps reduce loneliness and lift mood.

Sessions are inclusive and flexible, with staff adapting for older adults and those with mobility challenges or recovering from illness. Each meet finishes with a cuppa and a chat, strengthening friendships and belonging. Net & Natter shows how simple, social activity can improve mental health and create a supportive community.



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Dartford & Gravesham

Wellbeing School Award: **Milestone Academy**

Milestone Academy has shown remarkable dedication to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of its students. Staff provide a safe, nurturing environment where every young person is encouraged to develop confidence, independence and resilience. The school places equal importance on emotional growth and academic achievement.

By tailoring support to individual needs, students are able to thrive both inside and outside the classroom. From Zen Dens to Forest School, Liquid Listening to volunteering in the community, the 382 SEN students on five sites can flourish. Milestone Academy demonstrates how education can transform lives and empower young people to reach their potential.

Dover

Kindness Award: **Capel Cares**

Capel Cares is a volunteer-led service that provides practical and emotional support for people in the community. From transport and shopping help to friendly visits, the group ensures no resident feels isolated or forgotten.

The range of support is impressive: mobility aids, home visits to support carers, home maintenance, installing key safes and blood pressure checks. Volunteers build trusting relationships, offering time, kindness and a listening ear. Their presence reduces loneliness, lifts spirits and provides a safety net for those in need. By combining neighbourly care with dedication, Capel Cares shows how local action can strengthen wellbeing and bring people together.



Dover

Therapy Award: **Deal Breastfeeding Support Group**

Deal Breastfeeding Support Group has provided crucial support for parents at the earliest stages of family life for two decades – in the last year alone this tiny group of volunteers have supported 143 parents and 130 babies. They offer guidance, information and a listening ear. The group helps mothers feel confident, supported and less isolated.

Volunteers create a safe space where questions can be asked openly and experiences shared. This practical and emotional support strengthens resilience and wellbeing for both parents and babies. Through dedication and compassion, Deal Breastfeeding Support Group has built a trusted network that promotes positive mental health and lasting community connections.

Dover

Education Award: **Woodpecker Court**

Woodpecker Court provides education and support for young people who may struggle in mainstream settings. Its tailored approach focuses on practical skills, emotional wellbeing and building confidence, helping students to find direction and self-belief.

The team provide a trained Counsellor and sensory room in a beautiful woodland setting. Through creative learning and strong relationships, staff encourage young people to express themselves, develop resilience and prepare for positive futures. The environment is safe, welcoming and centred on individual strengths. Woodpecker Court demonstrates how alternative provision can transform lives and nurture mental health.



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Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025



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Chatty Tuesday All Day

Meet Greet
Eat & Chat

Chatty Tuesday

Cuppa Club 10-11am



Make Mend & Motivate 10-12pm

Knit & Natter or join our mood menders as they craft sew & embroider their way to wellness. Bring a project or join ours.



Peer Support groups **Wednesday** TIME TO TALK

Women's Wellness 10-11am

Singing for Mental health CHOIR 5:15-6:45pm

MenTalk: Drop in & Unwind 7-8:30pm



Thursdays rotating monthly activities

Gatefield Sounds presents: REVIVAL SOUNDS SOCIAL 5-9pm

Music social with fundraising Bar - 1st Thursday of every month



**Young Revival
& Revival Lates**

2nd/3rd & 4th
Thursday of
the month

3:30-6:30pm Age 11-16
& 6:30-9pm Ages 16-25

Young person-led clubs & activities

Art class, (£5) Journalling
or just to write

Creative Adult space:

6-8pm the last Thursday of
the month

**Sundays
Wellbeing
Walk & Talk**

Join us as we walk out the tough stuff, meet
new friends and connect with nature

10-11:30am

Location on
FB event

Walking for
Wellbeing East
Kent Mind

#HERE FOR YOU: REVIVAL FOOD & MOOD

Dover

Activity Group Award: **Dover Smart Project**

Dover Smart Project puts kindness and wellbeing first. Looking after 275 young carers and their families, its creative groups welcome all to create, build confidence and be heard. A 'Smart Angel' helps with everyday worries so no one feels alone.

Sessions include art-making and mindfulness, with breathing exercises people can take away. Work is shown in the town centre gallery alongside professional artists, celebrating progress and pride. After moving to larger premises, the project keeps growing. Every brushstroke, conversation and cup of tea is rooted in compassion - kindness builds connection and changes lives.

Dover

Partnership Award: **Post Fire Recovery & Wellbeing Support Project**

The Project was created to help people rebuild their lives after a devastating fire at one of the Town & Country Housing sites in Dover. In collaboration with Dover Big Local and Take Off, it provides counselling and wellbeing support alongside practical assistance to those affected to rebuild their lives. The collaboration recognised the emotional as well as practical impact and ensured residents had safe spaces, guidance and reassurance.

Volunteers and staff worked side by side with those affected, offering compassion, resources and ongoing contact to ensure no one felt abandoned. The project has restored confidence, reduced isolation and shown the community how recovery is possible.

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Folkestone

Youth Project Award: **Rachel Haden**

Rachel Haden, Youth & Schools Partnership Project Manager at The Sports Trust, has made a remarkable impact on young people. She leads projects that level the playing field, promotes activity and creates spaces where everyone feels welcome. Her groundbreaking work includes the Shred Club, offering access for just £1 to a range of activity sessions which has led to a new generation of skateboarders in Folkestone.

These initiatives have proved to be an inspiration, with some young people moving into sports careers or are on their way to being professional athletes. Rachel is an unsung hero whose energy, empathy and leadership continue to transform lives and strengthen her community.

Maidstone

Fundraising Award: **Oar Mighty Mates 2C**

Andy Purvis and Tim Cox, rowing as Oar Mighty Mates 2C, took on the extraordinary challenge of rowing 3,000 miles across the Atlantic from La Gomera in the Canary Islands, Spain to Antigua. Their amazing efforts raised more than £13,500 for Abigail's Footsteps and Dementia UK, inspired by the memory of a stillborn child.

Their epic journey tested them both physically and mentally, with long nights at sea rowing in the dark, and even Christmas spent by themselves in the middle of the ocean. Through determination, fundraising and community outreach, Andy and Tim have shown remarkable resilience, compassion and dedication to supporting others.



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Maidstone

Disability Award: 3D Care CIC

3D Care CIC is a deaf-led organisation dedicated to breaking down barriers across Kent. With deaf directors and most staff also deaf, the team provides support, employment and vital role models. The communication gap suffered by the deaf community can lead to a phenomenon known as language deprivation, which can severely hinder development from a young age.

3D Care tackle this with “Deaf Together” groups offering connection where traditional deaf clubs have closed. The 3D Care Hub supports young adults with activities that reduce isolation and build confidence. By reinvesting profits into events, social groups and sponsorships, 3D Care CIC empowers individuals, strengthens pride and builds a thriving community.

Maidstone

Service Delivery Award: Food and Mood

Food and Mood is a six-week course that combines nutrition, wellbeing and practical support. Participants explore the links between food, stress, anxiety and mental health, while learning to prepare affordable, nutritious meals. Each receives a slow cooker, scales and ingredients, making healthy cooking easier at home.

The project is highly adaptable, with versions focusing on diabetes, cardiovascular health, literacy and digital skills. Volunteers play a vital role in helping deliver the programme. With 100% of attendees reporting improved wellbeing, Food and Mood shows how holistic, practical support can change lives.



Maidstone

Communications Award: **No One Here is Me**

No One Here is Me is a powerful play created by Sarah Winn after her family suffered a devastating loss to suicide in 2021. Determined to break the silence around men's mental health, Sarah and her team brought the production to communities in Kent and Medway.

Performed with professionalism and passion, the play has reached audiences in theatres, schools and football clubs, sparking vital conversations and reducing stigma. Through creativity, hard work and resilience, the project has inspired understanding, offered hope and given people the reassurance that they are not alone.

Maidstone

NHS Award: **Nat Farley**

Nat Farley is leading ground-breaking work to transform how mental health services engage with sex workers. Drawing on lived experience, she is developing KMPT's first trauma-informed engagement framework, a national first rooted in dignity and safety.

Her courage has turned huge systemic failures into a platform for change. She has secured research backing, shared her insights nationally, and inspired colleagues through her integrity, empathy and resilience. Nat's work is giving voice to those long silenced - and creating systems where inclusion and understanding replace stigma and rejection.



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Mental
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Maidstone

Wellbeing Space Award: **Gardens of Hope**

Gardens of Hope is a trauma-informed, co-created initiative that transforms outdoor spaces into healing environments for people affected by suicide. The project has created safe, inclusive gardens in Herne Bay, Maidstone and Whitstable.

Each site combines sensory design, symbolic planting and memory plaques to foster reflection, dignity and hope. Visitors are invited to share thoughts in Accountability Books, shaping future action. By embedding lived experience at every stage, Gardens of Hope challenges stigma, builds belonging and shows how compassion can create lasting change.

Maidstone

Business Wellbeing Award: **Bedfont Scientific Ltd**

Bedfont Scientific Ltd places wellbeing at the heart of its culture. The company's Wellbeing Warriors, all trained in Mental Health First Aid, organise activities including wellness talks, nutritious breakfast and lunches, wellbeing workshops, weekly walks and team step challenges.

A Wellbeing Garden, created in memory of colleagues, provides a calming space for reflection. Monthly initiatives such as Step Challenges and Bingo boost inclusion, teamwork and healthy habits across departments. With senior leadership actively involved, Bedfont has created a workplace where staff feel valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Maidstone

Leadership Award: **Tim Woodhouse**

Tim Woodhouse has led the Kent and Medway Suicide Prevention Team for more than a decade, bringing together statutory, voluntary and lived experience partners with compassion and skill.

His research on the link between domestic abuse and suicide has influenced national policy and earned him both Churchill and NIHR Fellowships to pursue further research. He also serves on the Steering Group of the National Suicide Prevention Alliance. Tim ensures every voice is valued. His leadership combines data-driven insight with humanity, creating lasting impact and saving lives across Kent and beyond.

Maidstone

Volunteering Award: **Alice Scutchey - Baton of Hope**

Alice Scutchey is a mum of three who balances full-time work with tireless commitment to mental health and wellbeing. A mental health trainer, she has been central to organising the Kent stage of the UK-wide Baton of Hope suicide awareness tour.

Her efforts saw communities across Kent and Medway unite, with the Baton carried through towns and the day culminating in a celebration at Margate Dreamland. Having faced her own struggles with depression, Alice's drive to share the message of hope is unwavering. Humble and selfless, she inspires everyone around her.



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- **Suicide Bereavement Service**
- **Suicide Prevention**
- **Talking Therapies**

For information about our services, please visit our websites at: mindinbexley.org.uk or eastkentmind.org.uk

With more than 13,000 homes across the south-east, and as one of Tunbridge Wells' biggest employers, we value individuals' wellbeing, so we are delighted to sponsor these awards.

Congratulations to everyone involved!



Find out more about our work, and career opportunities, at tch.org.uk



Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025



Mental Elf - Canterbury

FESTIVE FUN RUN

Sunday 30 November

**10am start - Toddler's Cove
Westgate Gardens, Canterbury**

**Support East Kent Mind by
taking part in our Mental Elf 5km
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Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025



**PARAMOUNT
FOUNDATION**

Proud To Present Tonight's Award!

At the Paramount Foundation, we define our purpose as:

- Work with and for communities to deliver projects that are important to them.
- Promote social cohesion through events and activities that bring people together.
- Create a community where physical and mental health are prioritised, especially for access to clubs.

We run a variety of groups across Medway, including The Bike Shed every Tuesday and regular self-defence and fitness training sessions each week.

✉ info@theparamountfoundation.org
☎ 07394 563172

Our Mission

We support and empower communities in the areas Paramount operate, with a focus on the Kent towns, working with and for communities. Our aim is to reduce economic and social inequality, improving life prospects, networks and wellbeing.

Vision

A thriving and inclusive community, where people have equal access to opportunities, resources and services that enable them to lead fulfilling lives.



Medway

Leadership Award: **Justin Bateman - North Kent Mind**

Justin Bateman has dedicated his life to North Kent Mind, retiring this year after decades of service as CEO. Under his leadership, the charity grew from a small local group into a robust organisation supporting thousands of people each year with a huge range of innovative and effective mental health projects.

Known for his kindness and compassion, Justin gave countless unpaid hours to ensure the charity's stability and success. His quiet dedication and lifetime commitment have left a lasting legacy, ensuring North Kent Mind remains strong for the future.

Medway

Charity Wellbeing Award: **BRAVE (Building Resilience & Validating Emotions)**

BRAVE stands for Building Resilience & Validating Emotions – and is a service in Medway providing early intervention short-term therapeutic support to children and young people aged 5–18. It helps with challenges such as anxiety, low mood, self-harm and emotional dysregulation.

By focusing on prevention and delivering outreach workshops, BRAVE equips young people with emotional literacy and coping strategies before crises escalate. This reduces pressure on statutory services. Despite launching only in late 2024, the team has quickly built a trusted, compassionate presence, validating emotions and creating safe spaces for growth and healing.

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Medway

Innovation Award: **Medway Puzzles**

Medway Puzzles is a grassroots autism charity providing vital mental wellbeing support to autistic people and their families. Creating safe, inclusive spaces, they tackle isolation, low self-esteem and anxiety through sensory-friendly events, peer groups and practical resources.

Volunteer-led and rooted in lived experience, they supported over 200 families in the past year alone. Monthly events and online groups are often described as a lifeline, giving people connection and hope. With compassion and resilience, Medway Puzzles empowers families and builds a more inclusive community across Kent.

Medway

Veterans Award: **Oliver Aspinall**

Oliver Aspinall has transformed his own mental health journey into a beacon for others. After living with psychotic depression and nearly taking his own life, he rebuilt his wellbeing through mindful living and stress management training with a military bomb disposal charity.

Now a qualified yoga and meditation teacher, Oliver supports soldiers, veterans and their families, growing an online stress-management community of over 6,000 people. Still serving in the military, he is training to run the 2027 London Marathon in a 36kg bomb suit, inspiring hope and resilience.



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Medway

Business Wellbeing Award: **Chatha Hygiene Limited**

Chatha Hygiene is a small, family-run company based on the Medway City Estate, providing professional hygiene services across the South East. Alongside their work, they have shown exceptional leadership in wellbeing and inclusivity through the Boys Need Bins campaign.

Recognising that men using incontinence pads, stoma bags or trans people often lack access to sanitary bins, Chatha launched a drive encouraging workplaces to install them. Each venue that joins the campaign triggers a donation to Prostate Cancer UK, combining dignity with tangible support.

Medway

Wellbeing Staff Award: **Cleopatra's Legacy CIC**

Desiree Nurse and her daughter Raine have transformed their Chatham High Street salon into a community wellbeing hub. Through Cleopatra's Legacy CIC, they provide wigs and mastectomy underwear for people living with or recovering from cancer, alongside compassionate care and practical support.

They deliver cancer awareness talks, attend staff wellbeing days and work with the Abalon Trust to offer blood pressure and diabetes checks from the salon. Dedicated ambassadors for wellbeing, Desiree and Raine continue to train, collaborate and create a welcoming safe space for all.



Medway

School Pastoral Care Award: City of Rochester

City of Rochester School has created a nurturing environment where young people with Autistic Spectrum Condition feel empowered, safe and supported. Their integrated therapeutic team delivers speech and language, play therapy, counselling and occupational therapy within daily learning.

With a “Confidence + Resilience = Success” ethos, the school combines pastoral care, family engagement and a bespoke curriculum featuring experiential opportunities like forest school, horse riding and robotics. This holistic approach reduces anxiety, builds resilience and ensures pupils flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

Medway

Therapy Award: PEACE Project - Abigail's Footsteps

The Project offers vital emotional support for parents facing pregnancy after the loss of a baby. The trauma of losing a baby often leads to heightened anxiety, fear, and stress during subsequent pregnancies, making it vital to provide targeted support. Fifty per cent of parents who experienced loss request additional counselling sessions during subsequent pregnancies.

Eight carefully timed counselling sessions, delivered by qualified specialists, help families manage the anxiety, fear and grief that often accompany this journey. By working alongside the NHS, the project provides targeted care while easing pressures on maternity staff. Through compassion, innovation and resilience, the PEACE Project ensures parents feel supported, offering hope and strength during one of the most difficult times of their lives.

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Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025



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Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards 2025



Proudly Supporting Kent's Mental Health and Wellbeing

Kent Community Foundation has been funding local charities and community groups providing vital mental health and wellbeing services in communities across Kent and Medway since 2001.

 www.kentcf.org.uk

 Kent Community Foundation (KCF) - UK

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Swale

Fundraising Award: **Suzanne Louise Middleton-Elliott & Carlyne Cox**

Sisters Suzanne and Carlyne completed an extraordinary 1,224-mile phased walk from John O'Groats to Land's End in memory of Suzanne's son, Alex, who died by suicide in 2016. Taking annual leave to finish their journey, they have raised more than £39,000 for mental health charities including Mind, CALM, Papyrus and Young Minds.

Balancing family, work and study, they have faced many obstacles - from blisters to floods - with humour and determination. They now both work in mental health, turning loss into purpose and helping to support many people through their fundraising efforts.

Swale

Communications Award: **Finn Tumber**

After losing his brother Connor to suicide in July 2019, Finn Tumber turned grief into purpose. He began hosting annual memorial football tournaments in Sittingbourne, creating safe spaces for young men to talk, connect and raise awareness around mental health. The events have raised over £15,000 for youth mental health charities.

Finn also launched a podcast (Connversations) giving young people an authentic voice on mental health and stigma, as well as an opportunity to share their own coping mechanisms. Through resilience, empathy and creativity, he continues to honour his brother while inspiring hope in others.

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Thanet

Activity Group Award: **Harry Higgs - Overrun Project**

Founded by Harry Higgs in May 2024, The OverRun Project has quickly become more than a running club – it's a movement uniting people across Thanet to improve their mental wellbeing through running.

What began with a handful of friends now attracts more than 25 runners each week alternating between the five locations of Margate, Westgate, Ramsgate, Minnis Bay and Broadstairs. Free and open to all abilities, the 5K runs encourage conversation, connection and support. Many members have improved their fitness, built friendships and even joined fundraising events for Mind – proving that running together truly boosts mental health.

Thanet

Business Wellbeing Award: **Thanet Earth**

Thanet Earth places employee mental health and wellbeing at the heart of its culture. With wellbeing built into its People Strategy, the company has created forums, campaigns and support networks to ensure every voice is heard and valued. The business offers trained Mental Health First Aiders, monthly wellbeing topics, and initiatives such as SavOUR Salads which give employees food at no cost, free virtual GP access, and staff wellbeing rooms.

They have donated 6,750 food boxes to the local community and organise staff volunteering days. Through kindness, innovation and community giving, Thanet Earth continues to grow a workplace culture where people feel supported, connected and proud to belong.



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Thanet

Veterans Award: **Nikki Ward of Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund**

Nikki Ward supports RAF veterans, widows and widowers through the Every Generation Group she runs in Birchington and Kent Reminiscence Group delivered in Maidstone for the RAF Benevolent Fund. Her kindness and commitment have transformed lives. She visits every beneficiary, offering a listening ear and ensuring those living with memory loss or hidden disabilities feel included and supported.

Her empathy, passion and commitment have helped many older veterans reconnect and rebuild social connections. By creating warm, engaging spaces filled with conversation, reminiscence and laughter, Nikki continues to make a lasting difference to the RAF family across Kent.

Thanet

Business Wellbeing Award: **STAK.life CIC**

Emma and Tristan Kluibenschadl founded STAK.life CIC in memory of their son Stefan, who died by suicide in 2022. Determined to turn tragedy into hope, they created Stefan's Acts of Kindness – STAK - to help neurodivergent children and young people reach their full potential and thrive.

Their compassionate work includes creative programmes which provide eight sessions of support for those living with complex grief, and the Speak Their Name commemorative quilt, bringing families together to remember loved ones. Through empathy and courage, Emma and Tristan have transformed personal loss into a powerful legacy of kindness and connection across Kent.



Thanet

Youth Project Award: Oasis Raise Young Peoples Team

The Oasis Raise Young Peoples Team are trauma-informed practitioners supporting children and young people affected by domestic abuse. Their kindness, empathy and skilled therapeutic work have been central to many families' recovery.

Through innovative programmes, including Recovering Together, Fishing for Wellbeing and Validating Voices, the team helps rebuild relationships and promote social connection, hope and confidence. This is emotionally demanding work but the team remain compassionate and resilient, creating a supportive culture that inspires both colleagues and the families they serve.

Thanet

Wellbeing Space Award: Windmill Community Gardens Margate

Windmill Community Gardens is a safe, inclusive and sustainable green space where wellbeing, kindness and recovery are at the heart of everything. Since 2004, the project has supported thousands to grow food, connect and enjoy nature. Activities include hosted forest bathing and Beyond the Page to share cultural vegetable growing experiences and recipes.

With 12 staff and 27 volunteers and trustees, the team delivers weekly tailored wellbeing sessions for families, asylum seekers and neurodivergent participants, helping people build skills, confidence and community. Through dedication and creativity, the team have ensured that this much-loved community garden continues to nurture wellbeing across Thanet.



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Interview

with **Dr Kush Kanodia**

A continuation of our interview with Dr Kush Kanodia:

After 12 years as a Trustee of AbilityNet, I now serve as its Ambassador. I believe every public sector body should undergo independent accessibility audits — both physical and digital — with results published for transparency. Mandatory audits are the quickest route to systemic change and to building a truly inclusive digital future.

Intersectionality is also central to my work. As a disabled person of colour and a carer for both my elderly and disabled parents, it is my daily reality. I've seen how overlapping barriers compound. At one NHS appointment, a clinician asked my mother a question without realising she had hearing loss and that English isn't her first language. They ended up talking at cross-purposes. A simple tablet transcribing speech in real time could have solved it instantly. Often the solution isn't complex — it's awareness and will.



The NHS now measures race and disability equality, yet intersectionality remains largely invisible. And what isn't measured doesn't change. If we truly want to include those most excluded, we must begin by counting and understanding their experiences.

Kent holds a special place in my heart. It's where I studied, where I received my honorary doctorate, and where I transformed pain into purpose. Returning as VIP speaker at the Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards feels like coming full circle.

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and East Kent



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Dr Kush Kanodia interview (continued)

I believe mental health and disability inclusion are deeply connected. When systems exclude people — through inaccessibility, discrimination or neglect — the harm isn't only physical; it affects confidence, dignity and wellbeing.

It's a privilege now to celebrate a new generation of changemakers. Real change is possible, even within the largest systems, but it always begins with one person brave enough to speak truth to power. Transformation happens when Me becomes We.

As Alan Turing once said:

“Sometimes it is the people no one can imagine anything of who do the things no one can imagine.”

We are those people.

Let's imagine boldly, act fearlessly — and remember, confidence is contagious.



If you would like to read the full interview with Dr Kush Kanodia, please visit the East Kent Mind website and click on the News and Events page.

Or to find out more about Dr Kush Kanodia, visit: **kushkanodia.com**

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Thanet

Community Champion: **Sonny Dungar**

At just 18, Sonny Dungar has shown remarkable compassion and maturity. As part of a team organising a Violence Against Women and Girls conference, he used his creativity and insight to help design the event logo and raise awareness through workshops and a community fashion show.

Overcoming his own anxiety, Sonny delivered a powerful speech encouraging men to be part of the solution, not the problem. His sincerity and courage deeply moved the audience. Sonny's commitment, empathy and leadership have made a lasting impact on his community, inspiring others to take a stand for change.

Thanet

NHS Award: **Health Records Team (Amanda & Aimee)**

Amanda and Aimee from the Health Records Team transformed an unused outdoor corner at East Kent Hospitals into a vibrant wellbeing garden for staff. What began as an idea between colleagues grew into a project that brought the whole team together. They surveyed staff to understand what might support them, they encouraged local biodiversity in the garden, and the wellbeing garden is now a focal social space and a beacon of positivity.

Using reclaimed materials and donations from local businesses, they created a peaceful, sensory space filled with flowers, herbs, and wildlife – a place for rest, reflection and connection. Their dedication, creativity and kindness have not only improved the hospital environment but also lifted staff morale, inspiring others to prioritise wellbeing at work.

The Kent Mental Wellbeing Awards is supported by:



Thanet

Seniors Award: **William Parr - Kensei Taiko**

William Parr leads Kensei Taiko, a Japanese martial arts drumming group that promotes wellbeing, physical fitness, and spiritual connection through rhythm and community. The group runs free workshops and performances sharing the uplifting energy of Taiko drumming at community and charity events across Thanet. Their work has supported a number of people suffering from depression and suicidal thoughts.

William's sessions foster friendship, mindfulness and joy. His inclusive approach has helped people facing isolation, mental distress, and disability reconnect through the power of sound and movement.

West Kent

Volunteering Award: **Baby Umbrella**

Baby Umbrella supports new parents through one of life's most vulnerable transitions, offering free, year-round breastfeeding and early parenting support in Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and online. Their Perinatal Listening Service provides confidential, one-to-one emotional support as well as weekly groups - a lifeline for parents experiencing anxiety, trauma or low mood. Each year the service supports more than 1,000 people.

Run by trained Lactation Consultants and Breastfeeding Counsellors, Baby Umbrella creates safe, compassionate spaces where families find connection, hope and confidence to thrive through the challenges of early parenthood.



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West Kent

Disability Award: **Therapeutic Equines Assisting Learning CIC**

Therapeutic Equines Assisting Learning CIC supports children and young adults with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, mobility issues and autism who are not in education. Using fully-trained therapy horses, as well as assistance dogs and outdoor learning, the team help clients gain confidence, communication skills and friendships in a calm, non-judgemental setting.

Accredited life-skills courses and a caring environment have transformed many lives – including one young person who went from being non-verbal to walking, speaking and now training for a college apprenticeship.

West Kent

Charity Wellbeing Award: **Community Cupboard**

Over the past five years, Community Cupboard has become a lifeline for local residents, providing food, support and hope to those in need. In 2024 alone, the charity distributed over 2,000 food parcels and 61,000 kilos of aid to families who were struggling to feed themselves. Beyond food, the team delivers community projects such as uniform swap shops, drop-in sessions and educational events - bringing people of all ages together.

The charity has gradually grown into a full community project that facilitates Duke of Edinburgh students volunteer hours, school work experience, work volunteer days and work experience for those with disabilities. Now operating two hubs across Kent, Community Cupboard continues to grow through kindness, teamwork and a shared commitment to helping others.



West Kent

School Pastoral Care Award: **Valence**

Valence School supports children and young people aged 4–19 with complex medical and physical needs, fostering a community built on compassion, resilience and care. A dedicated staff wellbeing committee leads creative initiatives such as Wellbeing Activity Afternoons and Praise Postcards – this is where colleagues can send messages of thanks, support, or recognition, either anonymously or named.

This has created a strong culture of appreciation and encouragement helping colleagues stay connected and valued. And it demonstrates a whole-school culture of care. Wellbeing is embedded into every aspect of school life, from sensory spaces and outdoor learning to inclusive student voice activities - making Valence School a truly inspiring and nurturing community.

West Kent

Charity Service Delivery Award: **Creative Minds**

Creative Minds, delivered by West Kent Mind, is transforming lives through creativity, offering art, writing, photography and even Dungeons & Dragons as tools for wellbeing. The programme helps people rebuild confidence, reduce isolation and find purpose, with 66% of participants reporting measurable improvements in mental health.

This year the charity has delivered 380 workshops to 213 people on sessions as varied as silk painting, photography, creative writing and even Dungeons & Dragons. Through its innovative peer-led model, trained “Creative Agents” now co-facilitate sessions and inspire others - creating a powerful ripple effect of hope, connection and recovery across the community.



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talking helped me to
start to take control
and put things right."*

Joe, 34, from Kent

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