



CHANGING FUTURES

What is 'Bridge the Gap'?

Bridge the Gap is a relational model of long-term specialist community outreach, offering up to 8 hours of bespoke support to people experiencing multiple disadvantage across all areas of Surrey from 10:00 to 20:00 Monday – Friday, and 09:00 to 12:00 at weekends.

Bridge the Gap is provided by trauma informed specialist workers employed through an alliance of Surrey's voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations.

What is Multiple Disadvantage?

People facing 'multiple disadvantage' experience a combination of problems. For many, their current circumstances are shaped by long-term experiences of poverty, deprivation, trauma, abuse, and neglect. Many also face racism, sexism, and homophobia. These inequalities intersect in different ways, manifesting in a combination of experiences including homelessness, substance use, domestic abuse, contact with the criminal justice system and mental ill health. The health inequalities and challenges this population face substantially increases their risk of the early onset of chronic health issues, shortened healthy life expectancy and premature death. ([About Multiple Disadvantage - MEAM](#)).

The Changing Futures programme works to support adults experiencing three or more of the following complexities:

- Mental health and/or neurodivergent challenges
- Substance use
- Domestic abuse
- Criminal justice involvement
- Homelessness

Changing Futures: changing systems to support adults experiencing multiple disadvantage - prospectus - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

What makes Bridge the Gap different to other outreach services?

Bridge the Gap is a relational model of long-term specialist community outreach, offering bespoke support to each beneficiary. It focuses upon a persons' strengths rather than their issues and complexities. Taking a trauma informed approach, the service sees beyond a client's presentation and supports them towards their own personal goals. Many clients with substance use issues are also living with mental



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health challenges. Clients do not have to be abstinent from substances to receive support. Workers continually assess dynamic risks, offering a service which is risk aware, whilst providing a co-occurring conditions support pathway and timely access to mainstream substance use and mental health treatment services. Our specialist outreach workers are skilled to offer harm reduction advice and motivate individuals to engage and benefit from, wider social care support, healthcare, benefits, housing, and other services as well as connecting people with their communities. Workers keep small caseloads and shape relationships built on trust and understanding that complex multiple disadvantage takes time to address, supporting people to make positive life changes whilst making sure they don't fall through gaps between services. Bridge the Gap outreach workers are supervised by a Consultant Clinical Psychologist who is a specialist trauma informed mental health professional.

Which local Surrey VCSE organisations provide the Bridge the Gap outreach support?

The following VCSE organisations work together as an alliance to provide the Bridge the Gap specialist outreach support in the community:



How do I refer to Bridge the Gap?

To refer to Bridge the Gap specialist outreach services follow the link below on the Healthy Surrey website:

- [Changing Futures - Bridge the Gap | Healthy Surrey /RMM - Public Form \(ecdesk.org\)](https://www.healthy-surrey.org/healthy-surrey/rmm-public-form)

What happens after I submit a referral?

Once a referral is received, a trauma informed multi-agency panel convene to consider each person's needs holistically. The New Directions Team assessment (NDTA) score is used to assess a beneficiaries' priority of needs, safeguarding and risk. The New Directions Team Assessment is an evidence-based tool that focuses upon behaviour across a range of areas to build up a holistic picture of complexity producing a score that identifies those in our communities with multiple needs who require specialist targeted support.

On acceptance to the service, the panel make a considered onward referral to one of the Bridge the Gap VCSE organisations where the beneficiary will be matched to a specialist worker. With ongoing supervision from the consultant clinical psychologist, the worker assigned will begin the process of working with the client focussing upon engagement, client choice, and strengths. The worker and their client begin to co-produce a personal care plan called "My Story Strengths and Hopes". This strength-based psychological formulation process will guide each beneficiaries' journey and be regularly reviewed by the Bridge the Gap multi-agency panel to reflect upon progress and challenges and ensure a genuine trauma informed approach is taken throughout.

'Bridge the Gap' is a dedicated specialist offer of trauma informed frontline support. This support can be supplemented with the interrelated 'Surrey Adults Matter' offer of multi-agency facilitation using a 'team around the person' approach. ([Surrey Adults Matter | Healthy Surrey](#))

How is Bridge the Gap funded?

Bridge the Gap is one of several interrelated projects funded by the Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), and the National Lottery under a programme called 'Changing Futures' to achieve improved outcomes for people experiencing multiple disadvantage at individual, system, and service levels. A dedicated Programme team work to support the system change strategic ambitions of the Changing Futures programme in partnership with a network of 'experts by experience'.