



Kent & Medway FoodBank Forum Newsletter



Welcome to your October newsletter!

We hope you are all ok?

It's been a busy few months for everyone so we wanted to update you with what we've been up to.

How are your clients coping? What issues are they currently facing?

Every fortnight, we're sharing feedback directly with decision makers about how people are coping. We really want to make sure that people who are using a Foodbanks are being heard.

Sophie, from Trussell Trust and Ian, from Fareshare Kent, have both shared feedback with us recently. We'd love to hear from you, and your clients too. What are the stories that you are hearing? What are the challenges that people are telling you about?

Rheanna is here and ready to capture any feedback you have. Can she ring you and arrange a time to chat? Rheanna is on Rheanna.egleton@engagingkent.co.uk



What have we heard so far?

We've been working alongside the other Forums in Kent and both Healthwatch Kent & Healthwatch Medway to bring everything we have heard together throughout the pandemic. You can read our joint monthly reports [here](#).

Unsurprisingly, we've heard a lot about mental health. We also support the Mental Health Forums across Kent. You will have a Mental Health Forum local to you and they all have trained people who can offer advice and an understanding ear for people who are having trouble getting the help they want for their mental health. Do get in touch with your local Forum as they may be able to help you and your clients.

You can find all their details at the bottom of this page [here](#).



What can we learn from peoples' experiences?

We're looking for people who are relying on foodbanks as a result of Covid to take part in a group discussion about how they have found life since the pandemic started. The feedback from the discussion will be shared with Kent County Council and other organisations, to help them understand and learn from peoples' experiences.

Do you have a foodbank user who might be willing to be involved? It will be very informal and friendly but we will want to record the conversation so we can refer to it later. It will be an important way for people living in poverty to be heard by decision makers. We plan to hold the sessions online during October. Can you let Eve know on eve@engagingkent.co.uk if you are willing to take part?

New BAME and Health Inequalities Forum

As we all know, Covid disproportionately affects people from BAME communities. We also know that many health inequalities exist within Kent & Medway and that divide may be getting bigger due to the pandemic.

The Forums which are supported by Engaging Kent, together with Healthwatch Kent and other local voluntary organisations, have been working together to explore how we could progress the conversation about ethnicity and health inequalities. As a result, a new cross sector working group has evolved, including organisations working with disabled people and mental health. This group will look at the very real impacts of ethnicity and health inequalities.

This working group is currently exploring its potential scope: from Covid related disproportionate illness and death in key groups, to institutional racism, to representation, power and decision making. It will also be mapping what else is

happening across Kent and Medway and how should this work link to avoid duplication? Is there a need to balance a 'bottom up' and a 'top down' led agenda? The group has already contacted NHS employers and Social Care employers in Kent and Medway to raise questions about support for BAME employees during Covid.

If you would like to keep in touch with this group and follow its progress and development, let Rheanna know on rheanna.egleton@engagingkent.co.uk



When should I get a Covid test?

With testing hitting the headlines and increasing numbers of people trying to get a Covid test, it can be confusing to know when you should, or shouldn't, seek a Covid test

The latest advice from Public Health England is simple;

- If you have Covid symptoms, you must get a test
- If you don't have symptoms, don't get a test

A recent survey states that a quarter of people arriving at testing sites don't have any symptoms.

We've got all the latest [information](#) about testing including what to do if you are contact with someone who has a positive test



National Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week

This year, Kent and Medway are teaming up with the Ann Craft Trust to promote National Safeguarding Adults Awareness Week, which is taking place 16th – 22nd November.

The aim of the week is to create a time for all of us to focus on safeguarding adults.

In Kent & Medway, the Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board, will be running briefing sessions which will include topics such as "What is Adult Safeguarding and why do we need to ensure we do this?" and "What are the different types of abuse, can we recognise this and what is the prevalence in our area?"

The week will help all of us to understand that we have a role to prevent abuse. We should all know how to spot the signs of abuse, and the actions we should take if we spot any signs so sign up for some sessions if you're not 100% sure what you should do.

Click the link [here](#) to sign up!



Please continue to send your news and updates so that we can share it through our newsletters. Email Rheanna anytime on Rheanna.egleton@engagingkent.co.uk

Don't forget we have created a closed Facebook group for you so that you can communicate with each other. Click [here](#) to join the group.

That's all for now, take care

Rheanna, Adam and Mick