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Recovery College Ethos and Principles

What do we do?

The Recovery & Wellbeing College provides health related educational courses, free of charge, in supportive and accessible learning environments. Through education, people can make sense of their own experiences and learn how to take care of themselves and others. We believe that by recognising resourcefulness, talents and skills, people become experts in their own health and wellbeing, make informed choices and achieve the things they want in life.

We bring people together to realise and inspire individual and collective aspirations, recognising and sharing experiences, strengths, hope and successes. This allows people to take back control and become experts in their own wellbeing and recovery and live the life that they wish to live.

How do we do it?

We are committed to promoting hope, opportunity and control for all students. We ensure an empowering, strengths based and innovative learning approach to health and wellbeing. We work together in partnership to provide educational health & wellbeing courses,

delivered in welcoming community venues. All our courses are co-designed and co-facilitated by people with lived and learned expertise of health challenges. We continually review and develop courses in response to the changing needs of our local communities.

Who is it for?

All our courses and workshops are provided free of charge and are open to all Kent and Medway residents, over 18 years of age and not in compulsory education. We provide educational courses to promote health & wellbeing in safe, compassionate and welcoming community and virtual learning spaces.

Everyone is welcome at Recovery College. Maybe you are experiencing, or have experienced health and wellbeing challenges yourself, are a family member, friend, carer, or work in associated services – whatever your situation, there are learning opportunities for everyone.

Our values

- We value people as experts in their own lives.
- We value that everyone has strengths and skills.
- We value that people can make their own life choices.
- We value that people can share their expertise for the benefit of others.
- We value connectedness, collaboration and co-production.

How did Recovery College begin?

We didn't invent the Recovery College concept (we wished we had). We were a group of individuals, working in various areas of Kent & Medway NHS & Partnership Trust and heard of Recovery Colleges (RC) in other areas of the UK. We visited RCs in London, Sussex, Belfast and Oxford to find out more, and researched evidence papers written by other RCs. We were so inspired by what people were saying about the difference RCs were making, we made a commitment to set one up in Kent & Medway.

We gained permission to set up a short RC pilot project in Thanet. After the success of this, we extended the pilot for a full academic year. This gave us lots more evaluation information that further proved how helpful people found Recovery College. We used this evaluation to seek approval and funding commitment for a five-year roll-out plan across the whole of Kent & Medway between 2020 and 2025.

We are so incredibly grateful to everyone who encouraged, helped and supported us on this journey so far – we are eternally grateful.

Where are we now?

The Covid-19 pandemic changed everyone's lives and this included how we provided Recovery College learning in a safe way. We wanted to keep helping people feel connected in meaningful ways when they needed it most.

Since May 2020 we have run Virtual Recovery College (VRC). This has proved to be beneficial in so many ways (ease of access, travel, confidence) that we will continue VRC, as well as re-opening Face to Face courses in new localities.

What are our plans for the future?

- We are continuing Virtual Recovery College (Kent & Medway wide).
- We have funding to provide face-to-face RC in nine locations across Kent & Medway (with a phased roll-out, see appendices).
- We are establishing Student Voice and holding elections for Student Representatives so there are better ways for our students to have a say in the quality of our service and provisions as well as RC development.

What volunteer roles are available?

- Learning Assistant (Face to Face Courses)
- Student Representative
- Student Facilitator (supernumerary)
- Student Moderator

What is expected of volunteers?

- To complete an electronic DBS check
- To attend our RC courses before you volunteer (minimum 4)
- To engage in full induction and training.
- To engage in regular supervisions
- Attend at least one team meeting per term
- To uphold RC principles at all times.
- To ideally provide 4 weeks' notice if you cannot participate in agreed activities
- To review role and participation within supervision every six months.

Benefits of volunteering with RC

- Feeling good by helping others
- Access to training programmes
- Work experience
- Building on knowledge and skills

How do I find out more?

- Please register your interest here:
<https://surveys.kmpt.org/index.php/961924?lang=en> or contact our administrator on
kmpt.recoverycollegeadmin@nhs.net

Role of the Student Representative

Expectations:

We hope this role will enable greater communication channels between students and RC team members, so that positive changes can be developed.

To respectfully listen, gather and communicate the views of Recovery College students, so that their voices can be represented and brought to the college.

Attend meetings/forums that will improve communications between students and college.

Review and agree Recovery College documents and publications.

Role of the Learning Assistant

Expectations:

In this role you will act as a learning assistant for any student needing one-to-one support with their learning or confidence. This might include helping a student take notes or assist them with written exercises, or share coping techniques to help them engage with the material (for example, breathing exercises).

You will be required to engage with a wide range of people, be friendly and welcoming, have good verbal and written communication skills, be able to demonstrate empathy, patience, good listening skills and have a non-judgemental approach.

Role of Volunteer Facilitator

Expectations:

Our Recovery College facilitators work in permanent employed NHS roles. However, you may be able to support our course delivery, as a student or a partner organisation.

Review our 'facilitator agreement'

Attend and complete Facilitator training

Review material and content before delivery

Support the delivery and facilitation of RC courses

Debrief after delivery

Support co-facilitators to evaluate the course

(PLEASE NOTE: student volunteer facilitators should be classed as a 'supernumerary' - meaning they will be classed as an extra co-facilitator).

Role of Student Moderator

Expectations:

Discuss any training requirements with supervisor

Discuss availability and ways of communication with supervisor and administrator

Review new course proposals prior to 'Moderation panel' meetings

Attend Moderation meetings

Provide constructive feedback through documentation

Kent & Medway Roll-out Plan

The table below outlines the proposed roll out of Recovery College across Kent and Medway as per the approved business case (March 2020).

Recovery College Delivery Sites Timeline					
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Thanet	Running	Running	Running	Running	Running
Virtual RC		Running	Running	Running	Running
Canterbury		Preparation Activities	Running	Running	Running
Ashford		Preparation Activities	Running	Running	Running
South Kent Coast			Preparation Activities	Running	Running
Medway			Preparation Activities	Running	Running
Maidstone				Preparation Activities	Running
Tunbridge Wells				Preparation Activities	Running
Sevenoaks				Preparation Activities	Running
Dartford					Preparation Activities

Key	
	Preparation Activities
	Running