

FAQ for service users

Stay length and duration

Why am I at the Crisis House? How can it help me?

Do I have to stay here?

No, there is no pressure to remain at the Crisis House for the whole duration of your stay, although it is recommended. Sometimes it's not for everyone, and people can decide they'd rather be supported at home for various reasons. We would always advise people try the Crisis House due to the availability of support and the therapeutic environment. This being said, we understand it can feel overwhelming and daunting. Crisis House staff will do anything we can to help you feel comfortable.

The Crisis House is not 'secured' in the same way a psychiatric ward would be, which means service users are free to leave as and when they like. However, if staff have reason to believe you may be vulnerable, or have intentions to harm yourself, we will try our best to dissuade you from leaving in order to protect you.

How long will I be staying for?

Crisis House stays are short-term and always 5 nights to begin with, unless otherwise stated at the point of referral. During your stay, you will be assessed on a continual basis by both Crisis House staff and the Home Treatment Team (HTT) to ensure your needs and risks are managed appropriately. This means the length of your stay is not always fixed and can be changed or extended, depending on what is appropriate for you. You should always feel able to express how you feel, and what you would like to happen.

Can I have visitors?

Of course! All we ask is:

- We know who the visitor is/your relationship to them
- What time approximately they will be coming

Support available

When is support available?

The Crisis House is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. There are 2 members of staff on at all times, so you can seek support from staff at any time. The service operates on an 'open door policy', so you can come into the office for a chat whenever you like if you haven't already seen staff walking around the house. The only times the office door is closed is during staff handover, and when we may be having a confidential discussion about something else.

Who are the staff?

Service staff are a friendly and professional team of both male and female 'mental health recovery workers'. We all have different experiences and interests, but have all either studied something relating to mental health, or worked in a similar relevant field. The majority of staff have their own lived experience of mental health, either

directly, or with a loved one, so we can assure you we understand how tough it can be.

You can see all of our names and faces on the welcome board in the reception area, and see who is on shift at any given time by looking at the board just outside the staff office!

What do you mean by 'emotional support?'

Staff strive to create a safe environment for you to feel comfortable to discuss your thoughts, emotions and experiences in a healthy and supported way. We will listen to you, help you try to and navigate what you're going through, and help you identify things that can be done to improve your wellbeing. We are able to help you re-engage with existing coping strategies, or develop new ones. We carry out regular welfare checks to see how you're doing, which can be day and night. We take a person-centred approach, especially as recovery can look different for everyone. We're led by you and what you want/need. We strive to be a listening ear and a source of advice, support, and put your needs first.

What do you mean by 'practical support?'

Alongside supporting you emotionally, we can support you to access your medication, tend to your dietary needs, develop healthier sleeping patterns, and improve your personal care. On a day-to-day basis, staff can act as a liaison between you and your GP, Home Treatment Team or other professional agency. Other common things we may do can include supporting you to write letters, make phone-calls, use a computer/laptop, find information and so on. If there's something we're not experienced enough in, we regularly signpost people to specialist agencies or charities who can help more. For example, benefits support, housing, employment, activities and leisure. We will complete a support plan with you when you arrive to help figure out what might help you.

What can't Crisis House staff do?

- Prescribe medication, or give medication that has not been prescribed
 - Diagnose or 'cure' mental illness
- Carry out bathing, dressing, or other physical 'care'
 - Transport you to appointments* or shopping
 - Visit or support you at home
- Arrange for you to go to hospital, unless otherwise planned or stated
 - Search through bags or belongings
 - Physically stop someone leaving the building

*Home Treatment Team can sometimes facilitate taxis

Medication management

How is medication kept safe at the service?

Each bedroom at the Crisis House has its own safe for service users to keep their medication in. It is kept locked at all times, aside from when you are actively taking your tablets. It can be accessed by a key, or with a keycode, depending on what you'd prefer. The service also has a medication fridge for any drugs that need to be kept refrigerated. Any medication that is not labelled clearly, boxed, or prescribed is not permitted, to minimise the risk of any incidents or harm to yourself or others.

How can you support me with my medication?

Staff will prompt you to take your medication at the specified times. We will ensure it's taken correctly and help keep on top of the quantity; in case any additional medication needs to be dropped off for you. We can advise basic things regarding potential side effects, when they should be taken, and general information which can be found in the British National Formulary (BNF).

Belongings & Packing

Each bedroom in the service has a bed, a bedside table, a sink, and a wardrobe unit with enough space for you to place your bags and clothes. It does not have hangers for safety reasons. We recommend bring a few comfortable bits of clothing to wear throughout your stay, as well as your medication (if you take any), and any belongings that will help you to feel comfortable. For example, people tend to bring their laptop or iPad, earphones, puzzle books and so on.

There is also a washing machine and tumble drier which are free to use.

What food do I need?

The service provides basic food items such as milk, bread, soup, cereals etc. There is a fully operational kitchen with utensils, stove, microwave and fridge freezer. We recommend you bring a few bits and bobs to eat throughout your stay, particularly if you have a particular dietary requirement. Tea, coffee, and sugar is also provided. There is also a Tesco, a Sainsburys and an Aldi located within a 25-minute walk away from the service.

What toiletries should I bring?

The service provides towels, shampoo, conditioner, shower gel and a hairdryer. Any additional toiletries that may be desired, such as a facial cleanser or moisturiser, should be brought if possible as these are not readily available. The service can also provide toothbrush, toothpaste, and sanitary products if you have forgotten yours.

*Shaving razors are also not provided. You are welcome to bring your own, but to manage risk, they may be locked in the service user safe when not in use.

Coronavirus

How will COVID impact me during my stay?

The safety of our service users is always top priority. We want to reassure everyone and anyone involved with our service that we are following the government guidelines for safe practice.

Before coming to the service, you will be asked to complete a Lateral Flow Test prior to arrival, which would be facilitated by the home treatment team. A second test would then be given after arriving at the house.

As well as this, you can be assured that staff are vaccinated against coronavirus and complete regular covid testing throughout the week.