

## **FAQs for friends, families, and carers**

### **Stay duration & discharge**

#### **How long will my loved one stay with you?**

*Crisis House stays are short-term and therefore always 5 nights to begin with, unless otherwise stated. However, your loved one will be assessed on a continual basis by both Crisis House staff and the Home Treatment Team (HTT) to ensure their needs and risks are managed appropriately. This means the length of a person's stay is not always fixed and can be extended or changed depending on what is appropriate for the individual.*

#### **Can I visit my relative?**

Of course! However, we politely ask that you let us know in advance when you are planning to arrive, so that we can stagger any other visitors for other service users.

#### **What happens when my loved one comes home?**

Discharge from the Crisis House can be anxiety-provoking for both you and your loved one. All discharges are planned, with our staff and guidance from Home Treatment Team, and your loved one will be informed and supported through the process. Home Treatment Team will provide a period of support at home to guide your loved one. All service users are provided with the **Rethink - Sheffield Helpline** number upon discharge, and encouraged to ring it, to receive telephone support from the staff who may have supported them during their stay.

#### **Can my loved one come back to you if they need it?**

In short – yes. Ideally, the support from Crisis House staff and Community Mental Health Team will have helped your loved one to recover from crisis, however this isn't always the case. If an individual is still really struggling, and Home Treatment Team think it is appropriate, sometimes service users return to us not long after discharging. Other times, individuals have long periods of 'wellness' without requiring support but come to us in future (maybe after months or years). We regularly support individuals at the Crisis House who have stayed before, and welcome providing support whenever it is required at any point in someone's journey.

### **Emotional support available**

#### **How can Crisis House staff support my loved one?**

The Crisis House predominantly provides intensive emotional support, accompanied with some practical support in achieving everyday tasks and responsibilities. Staff are available to talk to service users 24/7, providing a safe space for individuals to express how they feel, their thoughts, and what

they want to do. We aim to help provide coping strategies to deal with their crisis, as well as prevent them in future. We strive to be a listening ear and a source of advice, support and put your loved one's needs first.

### **Practical support available**

#### ***What is meant by practical support?***

Alongside supporting a service user's mental health, a large proportion of our work is supporting people to access their medication, prompt people to tend to their personal hygiene, dietary needs and develop healthier sleeping patterns. We regularly signpost individuals to specialist agencies or charities for things such as: benefits support, housing, employment, activities and leisure to ensure the needs and goals of your loved one can be continued beyond the Crisis House. On a day-to-day basis, staff can act as a liaison between your loved one and their GP, Home Treatment Team or other professional agency.

#### ***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 your loved one to appointments\* or shopping
  - Visit or support your loved one at home
- Arrange for someone 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**

#### ***How is medication kept safe at the service?***

All service user bedrooms are equipped with a lockable safe, which can be accessed by a key or keycode. Service users should be asked on admission which option they prefer to use, and this will be implemented. Any medication issues can usually be resolved by contacting the individual's GP or local Home Treatment Team.

#### ***How is medication managed safely?***

If the service user has been identified as needing support to access their medication, staff will aid them to do this safely by logging and recording what medication is taken. Service users are not permitted to take any

medication that is not labelled clearly, boxed, or prescribed whilst in the service, to minimise the risk of any incidents.

For some service users however, taking medication is not a risk and therefore they can access medication independently. In our service, this means they can access their own medication from their safe using the keycode. Staff can always gain access to safes even when a keycode is used, by using the key.

***My loved one says that their medication isn't working, or that they need more. What can you do?***

Unfortunately, we do not have medication readily on site, and must only give a person the medication they are currently prescribed. We can help the individual to express their concerns with medications to the relevant group, whether it be their GP or Home Treatment Team. If your loved one has been on medication for a while, it is common that these are reviewed during their stay. If someone has never taken medication for their mental health before, this may be recommended by a qualified person. Crisis House provides a safe space for trialling medication, as staff can provide basic information and information, as well as observe an individual for any side effects.

**Belongings and packing**

***What should someone pack?***

Clothing, any medication, and anything that helps someone feel well or comfortable are the **musts**. There is a limited supply of spare clothing to tide people over during their stay, but their own belongings will help someone to feel more comfortable and at ease. People usually bring along things like earphones, colouring books, iPads or laptops, or anything relating to an activity they enjoy.

We have a supply of basic food and toiletries available also.

***My loved one often doesn't know what to do with themselves. Is there anything to keep them occupied?***

For sure – when service users aren't speaking with staff, or want some time to themselves, there are a number of things they can do. The service has a full bookshelf, art and crafts supply, a TV in the communal lounge, a mini snooker table, a relaxing garden, and a laptop or iPad that may be available to borrow. There are some lovely walks surrounding the area, as well as cafes and restaurants. The town centre is only a 25-minute walk or short bus journey away from the service.

***What food does my loved one 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 that the service users come with enough food to last their stay length, particularly if someone has a specific dietary requirement. Tea, coffee, and sugar is also provided.

### ***What toiletries should someone 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 they have been forgotten.

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

## **Family support**

### ***I'm really struggling to cope with all this. What can I do?***

Supporting a loved one through a crisis is difficult for both the person, and for those around them. It's completely normal to feel scared, overwhelmed, anxious or exhausted around this time. *Crisis House staff and Home Treatment Team* can provide signposting if there is significant carer stress.

**Respite** – please don't be afraid to take a backseat whilst your loved one is at the Crisis House – they are in good hands. If you'd like some time to yourself, staff can keep you in the know, without you directly having to be involved.

**Online resources** - there are a range of services, resources, and forums for people who are unpaid carers for the people with mental health, physical health or addiction issues. A good place to start is *Sheffield Carers Centre*.

**Helpline** - as our helpline is anonymous, you may speak to the staff without disclosing your personal details if you wish. We will support you to talk through the impact that caring for a loved one is having on your mental health.