

Third Sector Mental Health Organisations



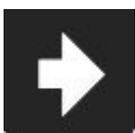
'Third sector' describes non-governmental organisations including voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises. They work in partnership with statutory agencies, such as those in health and social care or Jobcentre Plus to provide specialist services to support people with experience of mental health problems. Many, but not all, services provided are commissioned by the public sector, and eligibility criteria may apply in relation to who is able to access commissioned services.



There are many national, regional and local agencies offering a wide range of opportunities. Sometimes these are for a particular population group (for example people with a shared experience, such as a history of offending, or those who identify as lesbian, gay bisexual or transsexual). Sometimes services are restricted to people with a particular mental health condition (such as people who have personality disorder or dual diagnosis) and sometimes the service itself is very specific, such as women's counselling or advocacy. Other services may or may not be mental health specific but offered to a broader population group such as those that support Black and Minority Ethnic communities, or refugees and asylum seekers.



Third sector organisations can provide a safe and secure non-judgmental refuge, and later intermittent or continuous support, as well as opportunities that can help individuals to develop their employability skills. Examples might include: self-help information; advocacy; peer support; developing self-management strategies; counselling; informal learning; courses; training and skills development; research; volunteering; opportunities to become involved in the governance, planning and decision-making structures and process of the organisation, and to become employed by the organisation.



- The government plans to involve the voluntary and community sector in all of its public service reforms. Representatives of the sector will sit on regional Health and Wellbeing Boards and be able to influence commissioning of mental health services.

