

Edinburgh Crisis Centre

Who runs the service?

The Edinburgh Crisis Centre is governed by a formal partnership between NHS Lothian, City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Carers Council, Edinburgh Users Forum, and Penumbra. This entails shared planning, development and decision-making involving all the partners.

What does the service do?

The Edinburgh Crisis Centre is a 24 hour service that provides short term community based emotional and practical support at times of crisis. It is a service for people who are aged 16 and over who are experiencing mental health difficulties and are an Edinburgh resident. This service is also available to carers of people experiencing a mental health crisis.

How are people referred to the service?

We are a self-referral service. People can initially access the Centre via our free 24 hour helpline, text and email service. The person will be asked some questions to help determine what options of support may be the best resource for the person at that time. People will usually be offered face to face support at the Centre within a few hours of contacting us.

Once a person comes into the Centre, there may be options for staying at the Centre overnight if they need additional support. The Centre has facilities for a maximum of 4 people to stay for up to seven nights. This is reviewed on a daily basis.

What mental health difficulties might people be facing?

There are a variety of difficulties that people might be facing that could be impacting on their mental health and wellbeing that may lead to a crisis including:-

- Anxiety
- Panic attacks

- Low mood
- Feeling suicidal
- Actively self harming
- Having psychotic experiences
- Reacting to extreme stress such as physical, mental, emotional and sexual abuse
- Disturbed sleep/eating patterns
- Isolation
- Trauma
- Financial worries
- Relationship problems, i.e. with family, friends or neighbour
- Housing issues
- Substance misuse

What type of support does the service provide?

At the Centre we believe people have strengths and can develop ways to deal with crisis. People using the service are experts in their own lives and staff listen to them to understand why they are having a crisis. We are a non-medical service and are not diagnosis driven. We use a 'person centered' approach and are 'recovery' focused. Staff are also trained to use ASIST (Applied suicide intervention skills training) when working with people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide.

Trained staff can give emotional support and work with people to find ways of dealing with difficult thoughts and feelings in order to reduce distress. Where risks are identified, staff can work with people to do safe planning.

Staff can support people to identify strategies they may already have to help them with the crisis and to develop a short-term crisis plan identifying informal support and local community based formal support. Where unmet needs are identified staff can signpost people to relevant community and statutory services. Staff can provide information to assist people to make informed choices in order to remain independent and empowered.

Staff at the Edinburgh Crisis Centre

The team comprises of a Service Manager, Assistant Manager, Administrator, Project Workers, Crisis Center Workers, a Volunteer Development Worker and volunteers.

Volunteer development

We are very excited about incorporating volunteers into our existing team. This is a new aspect of our service and we hope we can make volunteers feel welcome and valued.

We see volunteers making a vital contribution to the support we deliver. We recognize that the roles of volunteers will compliment and not replace the roles of paid staff. It is our hope that by involving volunteers in our helpline support, this will enable other staff to have more time available with service users for face to face support.

The time, energy and skills offered by our volunteers benefit our work and help us achieve our aims. Volunteers can add a variety of skills, experience and qualities to the team making it more a diverse resource for the service users to tap into. Experience has shown that volunteering also brings benefits to the volunteers themselves and to those with whom they work.

We believe that our relationship with our volunteers is one of mutual responsibility and commitment. We hope that volunteers will enjoy their involvement with us and gain from it in terms of their own personal objectives.