



Strategic Plan 2026–2029

 **Mind**
Northamptonshire
To improve mental health

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An Introduction from the Chief Executive and Chair



This strategy comes at an important moment for mental health, both locally and nationally.

Across Northamptonshire, we are seeing growing demand for support alongside a system that can often feel difficult to navigate. Too many people are waiting too long, reaching crisis before they are able to access the help they need, or unsure where to turn in the first place.

We see the reality of this every day. We meet people at some of the most difficult points in their lives, but we also see what's possible when the right support is there. People reconnect, rebuild confidence, find purpose and begin to feel like themselves again.

This strategy reflects what we have learned from those experiences. It sets out our commitment to making support easier to access, more person-centred, and more connected to the communities we serve.

It also recognises that we cannot do this alone. Real change happens when organisations work together, when systems listen, and when lived experience is at the heart of decisions.

We are proud of the role we play across the county: as a community-based charity, as a partner within the wider system and as a place where people feel safe, welcomed and heard. But we also know there is more to do.

Over the next three years, we will continue to strengthen our services, deepen our partnerships, and ensure that our work is shaped by the people and communities we exist to support. Ultimately, what matters most is that anyone who needs support with their mental health knows where to turn, feels able to reach out, and is met with compassion, understanding and the right help at the right time.

For more than 60 years, we have stood alongside people experiencing poor mental health and mental illness. From our beginnings as a small voluntary group in 1964, we have grown into a trusted local organisation supporting people across the county.

While much has changed over six decades, our purpose remains the same: To improve mental health in Northamptonshire.

Today, the context in which we operate is increasingly complex. Demand continues to rise. Financial pressures across the public and voluntary sectors are significant. Workforce challenges and system constraints affect every part of the mental health pathway.

These realities require honesty, resilience and, at times, difficult decisions. Yet they also reinforce why our work matters.

Our community hubs, open 365 days a year, provide places of safety, connection and recovery. We bridge the gap between primary and secondary care, offering support when people might otherwise fall through it.

We work not only with individuals, but alongside communities and partners, helping to strengthen local systems and reduce inequality.

As a Local Mind, we are independent and rooted in Northamptonshire while also part of a wider national network. This allows us to combine deep local understanding with shared learning and influence.

This strategy sets out how we will build on these foundations over the next three years. It reflects our belief that mental health is shaped in communities, that lived experience must inform services, and that strong, sustainable organisations are essential to lasting impact.

The challenges ahead are real, but so is our confidence in the role we play. By staying compassionate, inclusive, courageous, honest and person-centred, we will continue to adapt, collaborate, and stand alongside the people and communities who rely on us.



Sarah Hillier
CEO

Raj Rajani
Chair



Who We Are

Northamptonshire Mind is rooted in communities across the county, providing local mental health support, where it's needed most. Through our network of community hubs, we offer safe, welcoming spaces where people can access support they need, close to where they live. Open 365 days a year, we are here for people when they need us, including at times when other services may not be available.

We support people experiencing poor mental health and mental illness, offering consistent, community-based support that helps people stay well, prevent crisis and remain part of their communities. Our work sits between primary and secondary care, helping to bridge gaps in the system, ensuring people receive the right level of support at the right time.

A safe place where you meet people and make good friends

OUR COMMUNITY

 **mind**
Northamptonshire



Northamptonshire Mind is my safe place and every single member of staff is welcoming. I can talk to any of them and feel listened to



Our services include our crisis pathway, counselling and 1:1 support, group work, peer support and psycho-educational programmes. We provide volunteering opportunities that offer a sense of purpose and a pathway to recovery.

Our Northants Working Minds programme supports employers to improve mental health in the workplace, creating healthier, happier environments.

Being a local organisation means we understand the communities we serve. We listen, we learn, and we adapt our support based on what people tell us. This enables us to respond to local need while contributing to wider system change across Northamptonshire. Our approach reflects a broader shift towards prevention, early intervention and community-based support, aligning with the direction of travel set out in the NHS 10-Year Plan.

Our VISION is to improve mental health in Northamptonshire
Our PURPOSE is to work alongside people and communities to improve mental health, reduce inequality and strengthen systems and support across Northamptonshire.

Values

Compassion

Compassionate, leading with empathy, care and understanding

Inclusion

Inclusive, championing fairness and placing lived experience at the heart of our work.

Courage

Courageous, challenging stigma and speaking up for better mental health.

Honesty

Honest, doing the right thing even when it is difficult.

Person-Centred

Person-centred, putting every individual at the centre of their support and recovery.

We Are



Our Communities

Northamptonshire Mind exists to support people across a diverse and changing county. We know that mental health is shaped by where people live, their experiences, and the barriers they face in accessing support. For many, getting help is not straightforward, whether due to stigma, access, culture, or wider life circumstances.

Our approach is shaped by listening to the people and communities we serve. We do not believe in one-size-fits-all solutions. Instead, we work to understand local need, respond to lived experience, recognising the impact that inequality can have on mental health outcomes. This includes a continued commitment to becoming an anti-racist and fully inclusive organisation.

Since our last strategy, we have taken steps to move closer to communities; shifting services into local areas, strengthening our focus on people experiencing more enduring and complex mental health challenges, and working more flexibly with partners to respond to need as it emerges.

We also recognise that some needs remain hidden. Insight from local data and reports, alongside what people tell us directly, highlights that many individuals are not accessing support until they reach crisis point. Through initiatives such as our Community Connectors programme, we are working to reach people earlier, build trust within communities, and connect people to the right support before their mental health worsens.

We believe mental health support works best when it is rooted in the communities it serves. By continuing to listen, adapt and work alongside others, we aim to reduce inequality, improve access, and ensure that more people can get the support they need, in a way that works for them.



Working Together to Create Change

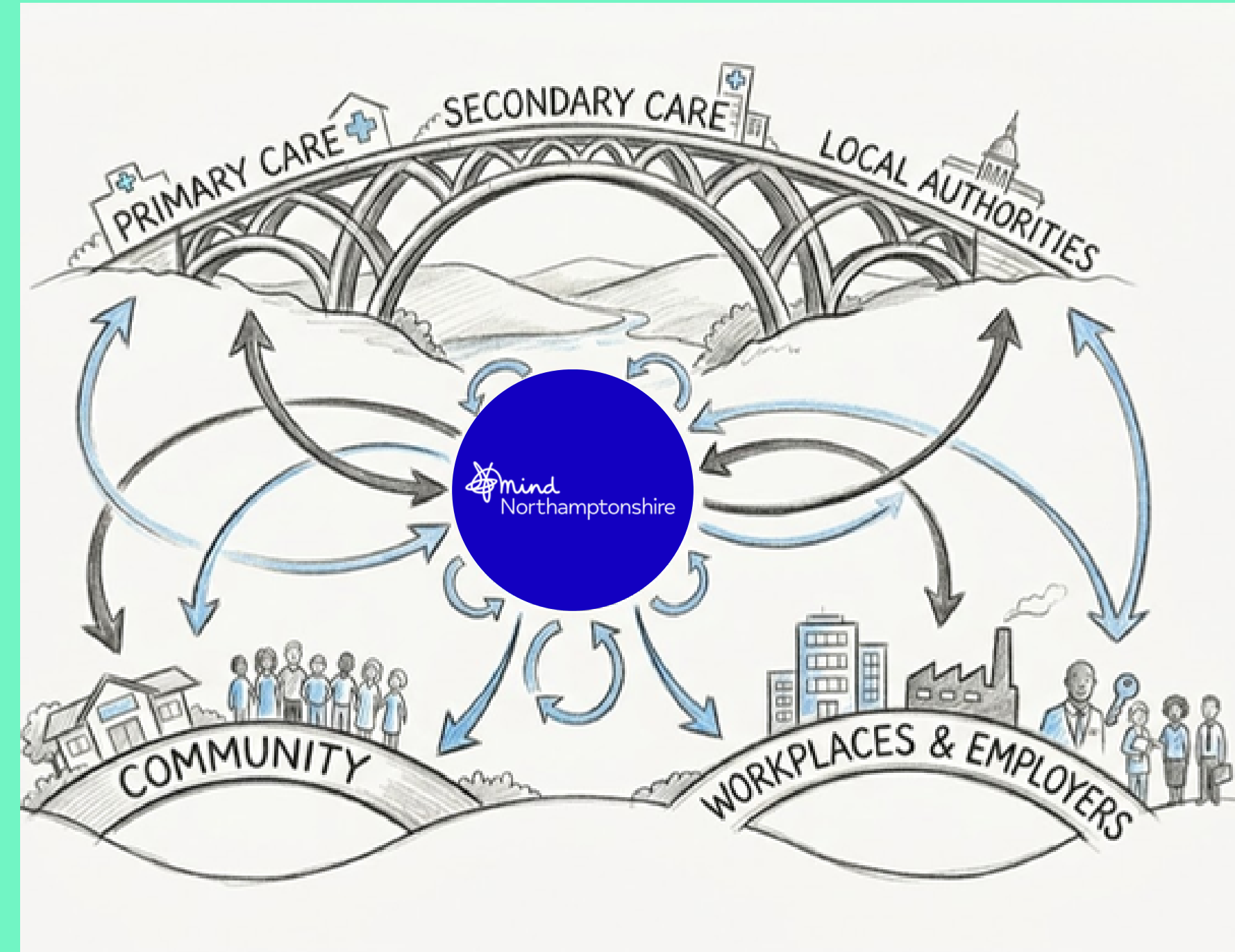
No single organisation can meet mental health need alone. Lasting change happens when services, communities and systems work together.

Northamptonshire Mind plays a distinctive role within the local mental health system. We bridge primary and secondary care, connect statutory services with VCFSE organisations and community support, and ensure lived experience informs system conversations. We also challenge gaps, duplication and inequality when we see them.

We work in partnership with NHS services and commissioners, local authorities, VCFSE organisations, community groups, employers and workplaces. We lead countywide collaborations such as MHNC and the Voluntary Sector Assembly. Through these partnerships we help strengthen pathways, improve access and reduce pressure on statutory and emergency services.

By working collaboratively, we can reach people earlier, provide support at the right level, and help prevent unnecessary escalation. Our insight from frontline delivery also enables us to influence how mental health support is designed and delivered across Northamptonshire.

Our role is not only to deliver services. It is to help shape a more joined-up, responsive and community-based mental health system for the county.



Our Strategic Goals





Our Strategic goals

1 Easier Access to the Right Support

We will make it simpler, faster and fairer for people to find and access mental health support in Northamptonshire. Our community hubs and partnerships will provide welcoming places of safety and connection across Northamptonshire, while helping people understand where they can turn when they need support.

We are succeeding when more people are accessing support earlier, people tell us it is easier to find and use our services, and we see greater engagement from communities who have historically faced barriers to support.

2 Person Centred Support & Recovery

We will deliver compassionate, person-centred support that helps people manage their mental health, recover and live well in their communities. Our services will be shaped by feedback, learning and lived experience so that support continues to improve and respond to people's needs.

We are succeeding when people report improvements in their mental health, service users are actively involved in shaping services, and the quality of support is consistently recognised through positive feedback and outcomes.



Our Strategic goals

3 Stronger Voice & Influence

We will amplify the voices of people with lived experience and play an active role in shaping how mental health support is designed and delivered across Northamptonshire. By working with partners and challenging stigma, we will ensure that community insight informs system decisions.

We are succeeding when Northamptonshire Mind is recognised as a trusted voice in local mental health discussions, lived experience influences decisions in the system, and our insight contributes to improvements in services and support.

4 Community-Led Connection

We will work with communities and partners to shape support around local needs and reduce inequality. By strengthening our place-based approach, we will connect people with support close to where they live and collaborate with organisations that understand the needs of local residents.

We are succeeding when more community-based projects and partnerships are in place, grassroots organisations are working alongside us to deliver support, and people are increasingly connected to help within their own communities.





Our Strategic goals

5 Valued & Supported Workforce

We will create a healthy and inclusive culture where staff and volunteers feel valued, supported and able to do their best work. We will invest in wellbeing, development and opportunities so that people feel proud to be part of Northamptonshire Mind.

We are succeeding when staff and volunteers report feeling supported and valued, retention improves, and people are able to develop their skills.

6 Sustainable & Effective Organisation

We will strengthen governance, use resources wisely and build a resilient organisation that can continue supporting people across Northamptonshire for years to come. By diversifying income and maintaining strong oversight, we will ensure the organisation remains stable and effective.

We are succeeding when the organisation is financially resilient, income is more diversified, and we are able to sustain and grow support for people who need it.



Our People

Our staff and volunteers are at the heart of Northamptonshire Mind. They bring compassion, skill and commitment to everything we do. Every day, they support people through difficult moments and help build stronger, more connected communities.

We also recognise that the past few years has been challenging. Like many organisations, we have had to navigate change and difficult decisions, and we know this has had an impact on our people. As we move forward, we are committed to rebuilding trust, strengthening our culture, and creating an environment where people feel safe, supported and able to do their best work.

Over the next three years, we will place a stronger focus on wellbeing, development and inclusion. This means creating a psychologically safe workplace, where people feel able to speak openly, contribute ideas, and raise concerns. It also means investing in training, support and opportunities so that staff and volunteers can continue to grow and develop.

The people who work here are purpose and values driven and are passionate about providing the best possible services for our communities



The staff here are absolutely brilliant — they are compassionate, dedicated, and genuinely care about the people they support

We know that burnout is a real risk in mental health services, and we want to be more explicit in our commitment to staff wellbeing and self-care. Supporting those who support others is essential if we are to continue delivering high-quality, sustainable services.

Volunteers will continue to play a central role in our organisation. We will strengthen how we support, train and recognise their contribution, ensuring that volunteering remains a meaningful and valued experience, as well as a pathway for connection, confidence and recovery.

By investing in our people, we are investing in the future of Northamptonshire Mind — building a culture where people feel valued, appreciated and proud to be part of the organisation.

A strong, supported workforce is essential to delivering good mental health support. This is an area where we are committed to continuous improvement.

Our Communities in Action

In 2024, as part of our 60th anniversary, we invited people who use our services to design a logo that reflected what Northamptonshire Mind means to them. The winning design, created by Rachael, tells a powerful story of recovery, growth and hope. Her design uses colour and nature to represent that journey, from darkness to light, from isolation to connection.



Feedback from people accessing our services continues to highlight the importance of support that is rooted in communities



Before I came to Northamptonshire Mind, my world had become a small, dark place. Over time, with support, my world has grown. I have grown, and the times I feel warmth and see colour have grown too.



Counselling created a safe space where I could talk honestly, with no judgement.



It has completely changed my life. Having someone to talk to has been immeasurable.



Our Partnerships In Action

Partnership working is central to how we support people across Northamptonshire. By working alongside NHS services, local authorities and community organisations, we are able to connect support and help people access the right help at the right time. Our Mental Health Navigator role is one example of this in practice.

Navigators work across both NHS and community services, supporting people at different points in their mental health journey. Embedded within Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT)'s Integrated Response Hub and Community Mental Health Teams, they help create a more joined-up experience for the people we support.

Navigators are often a first point of contact for people seeking help. They listen to people's experiences, help them understand the support available, and connect them to the most appropriate services. In many cases, this means people can access support earlier, before reaching crisis point or requiring more intensive intervention.

By working across organisational boundaries, Navigators help bring together clinical support, community knowledge and lived experience, ensuring people are seen as individuals rather than simply referrals or diagnoses.

We are proud of the strong partnerships we have built across Northamptonshire, particularly with Northamptonshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (NHFT), Mental Health Northants Collaboration (MHNC), local authorities, community organisations and funders. These relationships help us create a more connected, responsive and community-based mental health system for the county.

This collaborative approach will remain central to our strategy over the next three years.



As one Navigator described:

My role sits in that in-between space - working alongside the NHS while also being rooted in the community, trying to piece together a pathway that makes sense for real people with real lives.



Call To Action

Over the next three years, we will continue working alongside communities, partners, funders and supporters to improve mental health across Northamptonshire.

Together, we can:

- **Make support easier to access**
- **Reach people earlier**
- **Reduce inequality**
- **Strengthen community-based support**
- **Ensure lived experience shapes services**

Whether through partnership, funding, volunteering, fundraising or simply starting conversations about mental health, everyone has a role to play. Together, we can create a Northamptonshire where people feel supported, connected and able to thrive

Connect with us



Get Involved

Volunteer.

Our volunteers are the backbone of our charity, offering a range of roles that cater to different interests and skills.



Partner.

A partnership with us demonstrates your company's commitment to better mental health for everyone.



Donate.

Northamptonshire Mind is an independently funded charity.



Share.

There is another way you can support the much-needed work we do and it doesn't cost you a penny only a few seconds of your time.



 **Mind**
Northamptonshire
**Improving mental health
in Northamptonshire**