



# MENTAL HEALTH

Calendar year 2022

Citizens Advice Guernsey: Update

February 2024



## MENTAL HEALTH IN GUERNSEY

This report reflects lived experience of clients referencing mental health issues when consulting Citizens Advice Guernsey (CAG)<sup>1</sup> during the calendar year 2022.

### Introduction

In most instances mental health was not the prime reason for clients contacting CAG. Mental Health issues are identified from the advisors coding all issues raised by a client. This report represents lived experience and provides an **indication** of mental health levels in Guernsey during 2022 rather than an accurate assessment. There were only 10 cases in which one or more mental health issues were the primary reason for clients seeking advice.

### Context

In September 2023 the States of Guernsey published the **Bailiwick of Guernsey Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2029 Investing in mental health**<sup>2</sup>.

The main pillars of the Strategy are:

- 1 Understanding and collating Bailiwick datasets
- 2 Awareness, access and early intervention
- 3 Service improvements
- 4 Responding to recommendations of external reviews

This CAG report can contribute to Pillars 1 and 3 within the Wellbeing Strategy:

- The data set is analysed and presented in the same format as in previous CAG reports and hence can contribute to Pillar 1.
- The lived experience of clients may inform Pillar 3 Service Improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> \*About Citizens Advice Guernsey see note at the end of the report

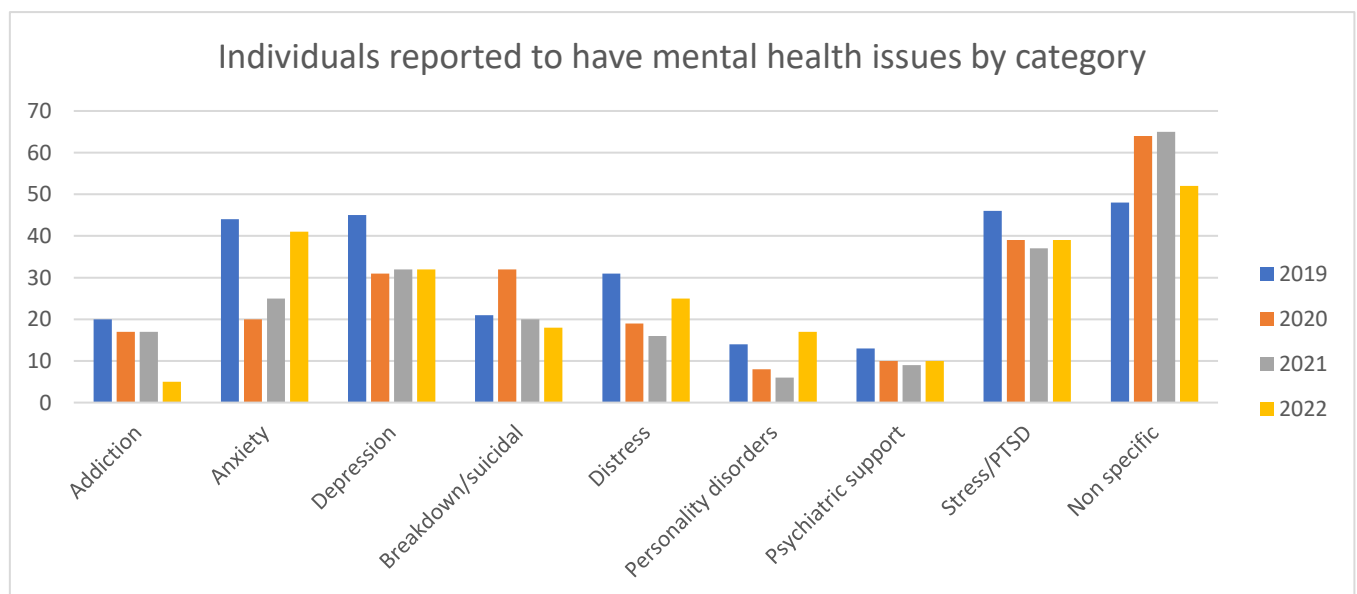
<sup>2</sup> **Bailiwick of Guernsey Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2029 Investing in mental health**  
[Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2029 - States of Guernsey \(gov.gg\)](https://www.gov.gg/mental-health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2023-2029)

## Analysis

There were 196 case sheets marked as including one or more mental health issues during the calendar year 2022, two of which were found to be not relevant to this enquiry. Within these case sheets, 40 were follow-up contacts for cases in which mental health issues had already been identified. The number of separate cases therefore totalled 154.

### Key statistics over the 4 years 2019 – 2022

- Number of **cases** referencing mental health
  - 2019: 195 cases
  - 2020: 162 cases
  - 2021: 159 cases
  - **2022: 154 cases**
- Number of **individuals** within these cases described as having mental health issues:
  - 2019: 195+ (*the exact number of individuals within these cases was not reported*)
  - 2020: 176
  - 2021: 165
  - **2022: 162**
- Number of **references to mental health issues** (some individuals reported multiple mental health issues):
  - 2019: 289
  - 2020: 247
  - 2021: 215
  - **2022: 243**



## Mental Health Conditions identified analysed by percentage 2019-2022

Mental Health Condition	Percentage of Individuals			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Addictive behaviors	7%	7%	7%	2%
Anxiety (including low esteem/confidence)	16%	8%	11%	17%
Depression	16%	13%	14%	13%
Mental breakdown and/or suicidal thoughts/attempts	7%	13%	9%	8%
'Distressed', 'Upset', 'Emotional'	11%	8%	7%	10%
Personality Disorders	5%	3%	3%	7%
Psychosis/receiving psychiatric support	5%	4%	4%	4%
Stress (including PTSD)	16%	16%	16%	16%
Unspecified/other: 'Mental health issues/problems', 'vulnerable adult', 'struggling mentally', 'not in a good place', 'low mental health.	17%	27%	29%	22%

### Notes:

1. As in the reports of previous years, this detailed analysis includes individuals who described themselves or were described by others as feeling distressed, upset, or emotional, sometimes without any other mental health issues specified. These descriptions are not by themselves classed as a mental health condition by the specialist charity MIND but are included in this report as a description of distress that could perhaps contribute to the development of mental ill-health if the underlying cause is not addressed.

2. As in previous CAG reports on mental health, dementia, Alzheimer's and memory loss are **not** included in this analysis, following the MIND definition of mental health which regards these as physical conditions that affect the function of the brain, rather than mental ill-health disorders.
3. Care is required in the interpretation because there are small numbers in each category and hence subject to variation year-on-year. The period represented in this report includes the 'Covid-19' pandemic of the year 2020, when restrictions were imposed on people's movements and activities for some considerable time. This may have contributed to the comparative drop in the numbers of clients contacting CAG and referencing mental health.

## Presenting Issues (frequently not mental health)

The primary reasons for the clients contacting CAG in cases referencing mental health are varied.

Presenting issues in cases referencing mental health in percentage of cases	2019	2020	2021	2022
Bereavement	4%	1%	2%	3.2%
Bullying / harassment	4%	5%	4%	4.7%
Criminal behavior or charge	3%	4%	4%	2.2%
Domestic abuse /sexual harassment (victim)	3%	5%	2%	4%
Domestic abuse (alleged perpetrator)	2%	2%	2%	1.5%
Education	0%	0.5%	0%	0.3%
Financial	21%	22%	21%	14.6%
Guardianship / Power of Attorney	4.5%	0.5%	2%	1.2%
Housing, care home costs and residency issues	7%	8%	9%	9.1%
Medical condition	4%	3%	3%	10.5%
Medical care / diagnosis	4%	5%	3%	4.7%
Neighbours / tenancy issues	3%	5%	3%	2.2%
Physical health issues	4%	4%	4%	5.4%
Relationship / family issues	15.5%	14%	14%	9.9%
Special needs	2%	1%	1%	1.5%
Work / unemployment	16%	13%	18%	14.6%
Wills / inheritance	3%	2%	2%	0
Other issues	0%	3%	6%	11.6%

Most categories have remained relatively static over the four years. Perhaps unexpectedly, given the cost-of-living crisis, the percentage of cases initially presenting with “financial issues” has dropped from 21%/22% to 14.6% in 2022. The category that has increased most notably is “medical condition” rising from 3-4% to 10.5% in 2022.

## Findings

- Notable **increases** in 2022 over the previous 3 years (in terms of percentages of reports):
  - **Specific descriptions of anxiety, low self-esteem, and lack of confidence** were higher in proportion than in the previous 3 years.
  - **Bi-polar / schizophrenia/ personality disorders** were also higher in proportion than in the previous 3 years (but note that the numbers of cases in this category are generally small)
  - Cases reporting symptoms such as **‘Distressed’, ‘Upset’, ‘Emotional’** were proportionately higher than in the past two years.
- Notable **decreases** in 2022 figures over the figures recorded in the 3 previous years:
  - Fewer cases referenced **addictive behaviours** linked to mental health issues, although the number of client reports for this category was low (as in previous years).
  - Individuals described as having a **mental breakdown and/or suicidal thoughts**, including attempted suicides, were lower in proportion than in the previous 2 years.
- **Similar to** previous years
  - **Non-specific descriptions** (such as ‘mental health issues’, ‘struggling mentally’, ‘low mental health’, ‘vulnerable’, ‘not in a good place’). Within the Bailiwick there are organisations such as Guernsey MIND or referral systems such as Healthy Minds, that are most likely to be the first stop for people seeking support for mental health.



## Other issues identified from analysis of the casesheet narrative

From the reading of case sheets, there is some reported dissatisfaction with the services provided at the Oberlands Centre, which accommodates the Adult Mental Health Service and provides secondary care assessment, intervention, treatment and support to people with mental ill health within the Bailiwick of Guernsey.

It is not possible or appropriate for CAG to offer any understanding of this result as it may be caused by the nature of the client's medical condition, patients' dissatisfaction over waiting times, the treatments experienced, inadequate communications or overall adequacy of service. This is beyond the scope of this report but may inform the Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy Pillar 4 *Responding to recommendations of external reviews*.

## Conclusion

- Overall, there were **few discernible trends** during the period 2019-2022. It could have been expected that there would be an increase in numbers reporting specific mental health issues, following the Covid pandemic and the more recent cost of living crisis.
- There was, however, an **increase** in the number of individuals describing themselves or being described in general terms such as having 'mental health issues', 'poor mental health', 'struggling mentally', 'vulnerable' or 'not in a good place'.

One final point, it will be interesting to see if the new anti-discrimination legislation which came in to force in October 2023 will have an impact on the number of people reporting mental health issues in future years.

## February

2024

### \*About Citizens Advice Guernsey

Citizens Advice Guernsey is a local resource available to all and covers a diverse range of issues. At the point of access, it provides free independent local advice about any subject. We have built up a large depository of information to help assist with the issues that affect clients. This body of information and practical application enable Citizens Advice Guernsey to assess the trends that may arise in specific areas of interest for a broad range of external bodies.

## Additional Notes:

**N.B.** CAG is unlikely to be the first port of call for people experiencing mental health issues because other organisations are specialist and have greater expertise. **For most CAG clients a mental health code has been captured as a secondary factor to the main presenting issue.** The total number of clients in this analysis who experienced mental health issues is relatively few. Furthermore, the categories within the total are diffuse, making each subcategory very small and hence vulnerable to annual fluctuations.

### 1. Bailiwick of Guernsey Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2029 Investing in mental health<sup>3</sup>.

**Pillar 1** of the Bailiwick of Guernsey Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2029 is *Understanding and collating Bailiwick datasets*. Overall, within this analysis there were few discernible trends during the period 2019-2022. (There was an expectation that the legacy of the Covid pandemic and the current cost of living crisis would result in higher numbers of people reporting mental health issues.)

**Pillar 3** Bailiwick of Guernsey Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2029 is *Service improvements*. A theme within some recorded narratives, that does not form part of the statistical analysis, was some dissatisfaction with the services provided by the Adult Mental Health Service at the Oberlands Centre during 2022.

**Young people:** Relatively few young people seek support from Citizens Advice Guernsey and hence are frequently absent from the CAG data. Within the Bailiwick of Guernsey there are organisations such as Guernsey MIND or referral systems such as Healthy Minds, that are most likely to be the first stop for people seeking support for mental health, rather than Citizens Advice Guernsey.

[In November 2023 NHS Digital issued a report on the occurrence of mental health issues, reporting that ***'in 2023, about 1 in 5 children and young people aged 8 to 25 years had a probable mental disorder. This was 20.3% of 8 to 16 year olds, 23.3% of 17 to 19 year olds and 21.7% of 20 to 25 year olds.'*** The report presented findings from the fourth (wave 4) in a series of follow up reports to the 2017 Mental Health of Children and Young People

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<sup>3</sup> **Bailiwick of Guernsey Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2029 Investing in mental health**  
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(MHCYP) survey, conducted in 2023. <sup>4</sup>[Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 - wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey - NHS Digital](#) ]

## 2. Definitions

“In many ways, mental health is just like physical health: everybody has it and we need to take care of it. Good mental health means being generally able to think, feel and react in the ways that you need and want to live your life. But if you go through a period of poor mental health, you might find the ways you’re frequently thinking, feeling or reacting become difficult, or even impossible, to cope with. This can feel just as bad as a physical illness, or even worse. Mental health problems affect around one in four people in any given year. They range from common problems, such as depression and anxiety, to rarer problems such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder...”<sup>5</sup>.

## 3. Dementia

It should be noted that any client reference to dementia and associated issues are not included in this data as this is **not** defined as a mental health issue.

## 4. Time frame

A 2022 comparison is made with the datasets from 2019, 2020 & 2021 which used the descriptions of the organisation MIND, the UK mental health charity, to define mental health disorders. It should be noted that the process for identifying relevant case-sheets changed after 2019 with updated technology, so that a direct comparison between the 2019 data and that of the following years may be flawed.

## 5. Context

In total, the number of clients in this analysis is relatively small, covering a very diverse range of presenting causes and conditions, so the data is diffuse. Many of the presenting situations are complex and multifaceted. To drawing patterns and interpret this relatively small number is therefore problematic.

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<sup>4</sup> [Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2023 - wave 4 follow up to the 2017 survey - NHS Digital](#)

<sup>5</sup> What are mental health problems? (Mind)

Relatively few young people seek support from CAG, so they are frequently absent from the CAG data.

## 6. Methodology

This report is based on a **detailed analysis** of cases<sup>6</sup> coded by advisors as mentioning a mental health issue in the calendar year 2022, with reference to, and comparison with, previous analyses covering the years 2019 to 2021 to identify any significant trends over these years.

Between 2019 and 2020 there were technical changes to the software programs and approaches to analysis of the coded data at CAG. The 2019 data has been retained, but it must be noted that the wider general analysis is not entirely compatible. The 2019 data has been included as it represented a pre-pandemic base line and was previously reported. Care must be taken in interpretation. Analyses of the years 2020, 2021 and 2022 were all made on a consistent basis.

The report identifies the types of mental health issues represented within these case records, as well as the presenting issues that prompted clients to contact CAG. In many cases clients described more than one issue. Repeat contacts relating to a specific case are **not** double counted, but additional information regarding mental health is noted.

## 7. Implications for the community

Poor mental health impacts the individual, their families and has ramifications for the whole community.

- a. The Guernsey Mortality Report 2023 shows an increase in the number of suicides and injuries of undetermined intent over a period of 20 years (2002 to 2021), with a consistent pattern of more cases among males than females.
- b. The Guernsey rate of deaths from suicide and injury of undetermined intent has increased (in average per years) from 7 per 100,000 in 2013/2015 to **15 per 100,000 in 2019-21**. This is higher than the most recent rate for England & Wales, which was

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<sup>6</sup> All cases are logged in our database with specific category numbers relating to the issues raised during the client interview. Many cases therefore have more than one category number.

calculated as 11 per 100,000 for the year 2022 ([Guernsey and Alderney mortality trends - States of Guernsey \(gov.gg\)](#)).

- c. The Mental Health Strategy established that there are links between mental and physical health. Further it says that: *'Building blocks for health, often called the wider determinants of health, include things such as stable jobs, good pay, quality and secure housing, education and skills and meaningful community connections (p.16).'*
- d. Reference can be made to other CAG reports on these wider determinants for example Homelessness (2023) and Affordable Housing (May 2023). These reports show that some of the building blocks for good mental health are not available to all islanders.
- e. There are costs to the individual and to the whole community of poor mental health. The Mental Health Strategy states that 35% of local social security sickness benefit payments are mental health related. *(Source Mental Health Strategy Exec summary).*