

About women's dignity. Period.

20 July 2023



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) have launched an initiative aimed at fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for women and girls across Surrey.

Following a recent menstrual health education session, the SFRS Community Safety Partnership team is now equipped to provide support and period products to women and girls who need them when they are on duty in local communities.

The initiative is a joint collaboration between SFRS and **Binti** – a charity that provides menstrual dignity to girls and women worldwide.

Bernie Beckett, SFRS Chief of Staff, said: *“Addressing the topic of periods and menstruation can be challenging. However, by launching this initiative we aim to break the stigma and, most importantly, provide period products to those who face challenges in accessing them.”*

“We know that many women and girls lack access to the necessary support and education surrounding menstrual health. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service can provide a vital role in ensuring that women and girls in our communities have access to period products when they need them. We’re delighted to be playing our part in Binti’s menstrual dignity mission, contributing to a more inclusive and supportive environment for women and girls in Surrey.”

Manjit K. Gill, CEO and founder of Binti said: *“Manjit K. Gill MBE CEO and Founder of Binti said: “Working with a forward-thinking organisation like Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, especially in a traditionally male-dominated sector, is truly inspiring.”*

“Their commitment to inclusion for their workforce and their willingness to tackle the issue of period dignity head-on sets a remarkable example for others to follow. By breaking down barriers and fostering a more inclusive environment, we are not only empowering women and girls but also challenging societal norms. It is a privilege to collaborate with such a visionary organisation and collectively drive positive change in the pursuit of gender equality.”

The service will be storing period products on some of its Community and Partnership vehicles. An ‘Ask me for period products’ magnet will indicate to members of the public that period products are available when out in the community or attending events.

Related reports:

Lighting up for menstrual dignity

Surrey supports mental health projects

20 July 2023



The Surrey All Age Mental Health Investment Fund (MHIF) has awarded funding to 10 projects providing innovative, community-focused programmes to support the prevention of mental ill health and improvement of emotional well-being across the county.

Established in 2022, the MHIF is an integrated funding programme with a total budget of £10.5m. This allocation consists of a £6.5m contribution from Surrey County Council from the specific **1% precept on Council Tax collected from 2022/2023** and £4m from Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board. Additionally, the Council has partnered with the Community Foundation for Surrey and secured just under £1m via a match funding arrangement.

Funding is used to support services which are non-statutory; developed by local, community-based groups. The MHIF is aligned to meeting the outcomes of Priority 2 of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which focuses on prevention, removing barriers, and supporting people to become proactive in improving their emotional health and wellbeing.

Round 1 of applications took place in December 2022. There were 55 bids submitted of which 10 were successfully awarded funding totally approximately £530,000.

The projects awarded funding include a gardening space to increase access to nature-based therapy, providing support to life-limited children and their families and expanding the provision of a hub that uses drama to support people with mental health challenges.

All bids were assessed by a panel which represents the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Surrey County Council, Cabinet members, the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE), integrated commissioning representatives and Public Health.

Mark Nuti, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, said: *“I’m delighted that the first round of funding has been allocated to a range of different organisations, all working to tackle mental ill-health with innovative, community-focused projects.”*

“The successful bids cover a broad age range and are spread across the 11 districts and boroughs of Surrey. We have also approved funding a large bid investing in primary schools across Surrey as part of Round 1, and I’m pleased to say we have already had significant interest in Round 2 of the fund after going live at the beginning of June.”

Round 2 of funding has just closed and bids are currently being evaluated. Information regarding any future rounds of funding will be communicated via our webpage.

Find out more about the MHIF: **Surrey Mental Health Investment Fund – Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)**

Round 1 Awards:

- **Merstham Community Facility Trust** – support groups for adults, and for children in Merstham, as well as supporting the recruitment and training of 16 further Health and Wellbeing Community Champions in the local community
- **The Lucy Rayner Foundation** – Counselling service to reach people (14-39 years) preventing them from reaching crisis.
- **Catalyst Wellbeing Garden** – Providing a project co-ordinator and a project assistant to develop the gardening space; establish, programme, and run nature-based therapy sessions, providing time and space for holistic support.
- **Prospero Theatre Community Wellbeing Company** – Prospero is an inclusive theatre company, that uses drama to improve the quality of life for adults and young people with disabilities and mental health challenges.
- **Shooting Star Children’s Hospice** – Aiding the provision of mental health support for life-limited children, their family members (including parents

and siblings)

- **Emergence Advocacy** – Community-based support following an A&E attendance to catch young people who have recently been in emotional or mental health crisis.
- **Peer Production** – Two full tours of each of Peer Production’s mental health plays (Masking and The Space Between).
- **A2 Dominion** – Provision of ‘Mind My Home’ an online solutions-based therapy project, targeted at low income/social housing tenants.
- **Appeer Community Interest Company** – A project which aims to address the social isolation of young autistics girls, provide early help and resources and support parents and care givers of autistic daughters.

Further information about the awards: <https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/news/community-projects-500k-mental-health-investment-fund>

Image: Appeer Community Interest, Peer Productions, Prospero Friday Club.

Change at the top at Epsom’s University

20 July 2023



Professor Nick Foscett has been named as the interim President & Vice-Chancellor of the University for the Creative Arts. This includes the campus in Ashley Road, Epsom.

Prof. Foscett, currently an independent member of UCA’s Board of Governors, will take over from outgoing President & Vice-Chancellor, Professor **Bashir Makhoul**, upon his retirement from UK higher education in September.

“Having served on the Board of Governors, it was an honour to be asked to cover this interim period,” said Prof. Foscett. “UCA is a wonderful university with endless potential and under Prof. Makhoul’s leadership is in a fantastic position. I will ensure his legacy continues and is built on so that UCA can continue its impressive trajectory.”

Prof. Foscett is a graduate of Oxford and Southampton universities and has had a long and diverse relationship with higher education, working at some of the UK’s leading universities. He was Vice-Chancellor of Keele University from 2010 to 2015, and Interim Vice-Chancellor of Bath Spa University from 2017 to 2018. For around 20 years he held several positions at the University of Southampton, latterly as Professor of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Law, Arts and Social Sciences. Prior to that his first foray into higher education was at Aston University, working in school engagement and external relations.

An expert in education policy and management, Prof. Foscett has sat on and continues to sit on several boards in the UK and globally and has also made a huge contribution to the development of governance frameworks within the higher education sector.

Prof. Makhoul announced his retirement from UCA and from UK higher education in March of this year, after more than six years as President & Vice-Chancellor. Since joining, Prof. Makhoul has steered the University towards its aim of becoming a global authority on the creative industries, forging significant partnerships at home and abroad. He has overseen a five-fold increase in international students studying at the University’s UK campuses and spearheading the opening of the Institute of Creativity and Innovation in Xiamen, China, along with the establishment of the UK’s first Business School for the Creative Industries.

External recognition of these achievements includes being named Modern University of the Year by The Times and The Sunday Times Good University Guide in 2019 and being granted Research Degree Awarding Powers by the Office for Students.

Prof. Makhoul said: *“I am delighted Prof. Foscett will be overseeing operations while my permanent replacement is found. He has a fantastic track record and understands UCA’s unique position as a champion of the creative industries. I wish him all the best for his interim tenure.”*

Jeremy Sandelson, Chair of the Board of Governors, said: *“We are delighted Prof. Foscett has agreed to be our interim President & Vice-Chancellor at UCA. We couldn’t think of a safer pair of hands to take the helm, and we offer him every support as he leads the University during this time.”*

Emma Cook UCA

Contractors occupying the high-ground

20 July 2023



Ewell school benefits from local highway contractors’ social value activities.

Milestone Infrastructure, a part of M Group Services, is committed to supporting the communities in which it operates and was delighted to volunteer its services to **West Ewell Primary School** recently by helping to clear a large, abandoned area of the school playground containing a disused swimming pool and outbuildings.

Milestone Infrastructure is the street lighting contractor for Surrey County Council and, as part of its commitment to undertaking social value activities and events throughout the year, the team formed a Social Value Alliance with the council and other highways contractors including Yunex, Atkins, Ringway and Surrey Skill Mill.

A team of 36 volunteers representing the Alliance met onsite to help remove the old swimming pool and outbuildings surrounding it and cut back overgrown foliage to make the area safe and accessible for the school children to use in future.

Once the ground has been cleared and the overgrown vegetation removed, the area will provide an accessible space for the children to use and enjoy in future.

Vikki Kelly, Strategic Improvement Manager at Milestone Infrastructure, said: *“Building social value into what we do and giving back to the local communities where we work is a large part of what we do. It was a rewarding day and, together with our alliance partners, we managed to achieve everything we needed to onsite and more.”*

James Joyce, Business Manager at West Ewell school, said: “We would like to thank Milestone Infrastructure who organised the event but also the other companies that attended: Surrey County Council, Yunex Traffic, Atkins, Surrey Skill Mill and Ringway. On the day they achieved more than you could expect for a day volunteer event and transformed the area, giving the school a regenerated space that can now be used.”

Mia Bennett, Head teacher at West Ewell school, added: “We really appreciate the time, effort and resources your teams invested in making this project a reality. The cleared area is now a blank canvas which we plan to transform into a flourishing wildlife area and outdoor classroom which all our pupils can enjoy, while learning about nature, biodiversity and developing a deep appreciation for our environment.”

Milestone’s focus on social value is an essential element of M Group Services’ environmental, social and governance (ESG) commitments.

Zoë Johnston Corporate Communications Manager | M Group Services

Surrey’s triple contribution towards net zero

20 July 2023



The **University of Surrey** is playing a role in three new national energy research centres which will boost knowledge, create innovative green technologies and reduce demand for energy to achieve greener, cleaner domestic, industrial and transport energy systems.

Academics at Surrey will help fairly reduce the energy used in the UK, develop hydrogen and ammonia as alternative fuels, and boost bioenergy production.

Professor **Jin Xuan**, Associate Dean (Research and Innovation) in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, said:

“There’s no single route to net zero so at the University of Surrey we’re involved with a wide range of interdisciplinary projects to find a portfolio of sustainable solutions. This latest funding shows we’re at the forefront of creating a sustainable future for everyone.”

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has today announced a £53 million investment in six research centres which will lead innovation towards a fully sustainable energy sector. Surrey is involved with half of them:

A new national **Energy Demand Research Centre**. Reducing energy use could help meet half of the required reductions we need to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and the University of Surrey is helping ensure that disadvantaged people aren’t left behind as the UK’s energy demands are reduced. The project is being led by **Dr Lirong Liu** who will use AI to create models to help communities make scientifically informed decisions.

Dr Lirong Liu said: “Our new optimisation model will incorporate multiple objectives to balance society’s many needs so we can maximise equity while minimising cost and greenhouse gases. To achieve this, we need to understand technology, economics, environment and behaviour and to recognise different parts of society. It’s not just about technological developments, but also about creating a better, more equitable world.”

The **Hub for Research Challenges in Hydrogen and Alternative Liquid Fuels**, known as the UK-HyRES Hydrogen Hub. **Dr Qiong Cai**, a research leader in sustainable energy and materials, is working with industrial and academic partners to identify how we can decarbonise transportation and heavy industry by using green hydrogen and hydrogen-based, low-carbon liquid fuels, such as ammonia.

Dr Qiong Cai said: “Hydrogen and alternative liquid fuels, through combustion, can provide clean heat and power sources for decarbonizing heavy industry, aviation, maritime, and haulage sectors that are difficult to decarbonize using electric batteries. We’re developing durable and low-cost catalysts to promote ammonia combustion and to enable zero-emission of hydrogen and ammonia combustion. Together with industry partners and academic collaborators, we’ll develop innovative solutions that are safe, acceptable, and environmentally and economically sustainable.”

The **Supergen Bioenergy Hub**. Surrey’s **Dr Michael Short**, one of the technical project leads, will work on the rapid digitalisation of bioenergy, creating a collection of open-source models for enhanced decision-making across the biowaste sector. This will be informed by his work using artificial intelligence to boost biogas production in anaerobic digestors.

Dr Michael Short said: “We can make so much more of bioenergy, particularly if we can develop better predictive models of the complex reactions in bioenergy systems. If we can increase digitalisation and leverage advances in AI and optimisation, we can have more efficient sustainable energy generation from renewable sources, as well as improved energy security and boosted profits for the companies involved.”

Katherine Ingram – Surrey University

Respite for carers in Surrey to increase?

20 July 2023



The chronic shortage of overnight respite places in Surrey could improve if plans to increase the number of available beds by almost 50 per cent are given the go-ahead.

Surrey County Council has submitted two sets of plans for short-stay centres – one in Woking and the other in **Banstead**.

This week, the county council launched its bids to the respective local authorities as part of the consultation process in order to address a care system that is “under significant strain and is facing long and sustained operational and financial challenges”.

The plans are to build two sets of eight en-suite bedrooms for short-break accommodation together sensory rooms, living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, and supporting staff facilities.

Councillor **Mark Nuti**, Surrey County Council’s cabinet member for adults and health, said: “These two new centres will enable us to increase considerably the number of carers benefiting from short breaks, which help them recharge their batteries and get a bit of break. We value what carers do incredibly highly, so it’s really important we offer our residents these types of facilities. These will be modern places. They will be flexible, adaptable and able to accommodate people with many different disabilities and needs.

“They won’t be institutionalised places. They will be comfortable and fit for purpose, and able to accommodate more people than we can at the moment. This is a

scheme we can be very proud of.”

The Woking site will be on the former Lakers youth centre in Goldsworth Park, Denton Way, with the Banstead site replacing The Squirrels, in the Horseshoe, Bolters Lane.

Currently there are seven registered bed-based short breaks services in Surrey but only five are operational, council documents show. At present they provide a maximum of 33 beds – but this can often be lower if needed by people with “increasingly complex needs”, the council said.

Those beds, which are clustered in the centre and east of the county, cover the 1,345 people in Surrey living with family carers.

Council figures show that fewer than 8 per cent of those eligible currently access provision. There is also the problem of increasing demand, with the council predicting a 10 per cent rise in users over the next decade as well as an increasingly “ageing” and “inappropriate service”. Combined, the new sites would offer 16 additional places, bringing the total overnight short-break places available to families from 33 up to 49.

Once they are both built, the council said, “the two centres will meet Surrey’s accommodation needs, Lakers meeting the needs within the west of Surrey, Squirrels continuing to serve the east”.

Image: Short Breaks – Visualisation for the Banstead site (Image Surrey County Council)

Doctors’ strike: advice

20 July 2023



A wave of back-to-back strikes will severely impact hospital services over the coming week – and will follow the busiest month of 2023 for one hospital group.

St George’s, Epsom and St Helier hospitals have faced significant pressure in recent weeks, with emergency attendances in June ramping up. Last month about 880 people visited one of the Group’s three emergency departments (EDs) daily – about 10% more than is usual.

The emergency departments also saw extraordinary demand some days – including one record-breaking Monday when they had their busiest day ever. Now, ahead of this week’s junior doctors’ strikes, which get underway at 7 am on Thursday and continue until 7 am the following Tuesday (18 July), members of the public have been warned to expect disruption and longer waits, and to avoid visiting the ED when it’s not an emergency.

There will also be an additional challenge when hospital consultants go on strike just days after the junior doctors’ action ends. That walk-out is due to take place on Thursday 20 July and Friday 21 July.

Dr Richard Jennings, Group Chief Medical Officer for St George’s, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: “June was very busy and that’s also continued into July – which makes it more difficult when we’re trying to prepare for the inevitable challenges strike action brings. Ahead of each round of strikes I’ve urged the public to take steps to help us and to come to our EDs in an emergency only – and I am making the same request again now when it is more important than ever. We have a very tough week ahead and we need your support to ensure we can prioritise care for our sickest and most seriously ill patients.”

The hospital group recognise that it’s going to be the first time this year that a junior doctors’ strike has taken place over the weekend and into a Monday. This has prompted further concern, as Monday is normally the busiest day of the week in the Group’s EDs. This was even more pronounced last month, with 1,000-plus average daily attendances on Mondays – significantly higher than a typical day of 800.

Dr Jennings added: “If people need medical help – during the strikes or at any other time – we would encourage them to contact NHS 111 online for 24/7 advice on where to go and what to do if they have an illness or injury. When it’s a real emergency or life-threatening, of course, people should always call 999 or go to an emergency department.”

Strikes will also impact other services at the hospitals, and will mean that some appointments, procedures and operations may be postponed to ensure emergency care can be prioritised. Patients will be contacted directly if their appointments are rescheduled, and should continue to come forward for care as normal unless they hear otherwise.

NHS 111 online should always be the first port of call when you have a health need that’s not an emergency, as it will direct you to the best place to get help for your symptoms.

Pharmacies, meanwhile, can offer advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, and aches and pains. Some pharmacies will be open at weekends, and you can find your nearest one here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy>

In a life-threatening emergency, you should always call 999 or go to an emergency department.

If you need mental health support in a crisis, and live in Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton or Wandsworth you can call South West London’s 24/7 Mental Health Crisis Line on 0800 028 8000. There’s more information about this service here:

<https://www.swlstg.nhs.uk/patients-carers/crisis-support/mental-health-support-line>

For adults, young people, and children in Surrey and North East Hampshire, 24-hour support is available by calling: 0800 915 4644. There’s more information here:

<https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services>

St George’s, Epsom and St Helier hospitals press.

Epsom medics sky-dive for babies

20 July 2023



A team of obstetricians, gynaecologists, neonatologists and nurses who work at **Epsom and St Helier NHS Trust** have raised nearly £10,000 for **Bliss**, the UK's leading charity for babies born premature or sick.

Radhika Viswanatha, Nina Underwood, Ramesh Ganapathy, Demetri Panayi, Salim Yasin, Charlotte Pearse, Vicky Minns, Cristina Arias-Rey and Sharon Young took part in a skydive on 28 May 2023 at the Old Sarum Park in Salisbury.

1 in every 7 babies born in the UK will need specialist care and the group have a special link to Bliss, as they each look after women and their babies during pregnancy and delivery and beyond at Epsom and St Helier Hospital.

Some of the babies they deliver are more vulnerable than others, so are looked after by the hospital's neonatal team.

Demetri Panayi said: "Our charity skydive was born out of moments of madness, midlife crises and irrational personal desire! But it gave us the opportunity to raise money for a cause close to our hearts, and to our patients."

Donations to their skydive are helping Bliss to drive improvements in neonatal care, to ensure that the needs of babies are at the heart of policy and planning for the future, and to provide information and support to all families with a baby born premature or sick.

Richard Moody, Director of Fundraising at Bliss, said: "We are so grateful for the exceptional fundraising efforts of Demetri and his colleagues. Each donation to Bliss is going towards our mission of helping all babies born premature or sick in the UK have the best chance of survival and quality of life.

"This is a great example of how a perinatal team can come together to raise awareness and money for Bliss."

You can find more information and donate here: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/skydive2023>

Molly Gorman

Epsom and Ewell High getting fitter

20 July 2023



Lifestyle Fitness and Bourne Education Trust have announced they will be working together to provide the leading sports facilities at **Epsom & Ewell High School** to the local community.

Lifestyle Fitness will begin operations at the site from 1st September. Development of this facility will see Lifestyle Fitness take over management of the existing sports amenities, which include outdoor pitches, tennis courts, a brand-new sports hall, and even a sprinting track, whilst also developing a Lifestyle Fitness gym, studio space, and group fitness classes. This combination of sports facilities, fitness suite and group exercise studios will make the club the perfect hub for fitness and wellbeing for students, teachers, and the community.

"We're so thrilled to be opening our 25th site and working in partnership with the Academy to provide these facilities to the community" said Lifestyle Fitness Managing Director, **James Lawrence**. "The facility will be the perfect location for the town's fitness needs, whether it be to play football or tennis outdoors, or to take a group exercise class or get a workout in at the gym."

The facility, which is situated within Epsom & Ewell High School, forms part of the planned growth and development of both Lifestyle Fitness and the Bourne Education Trust, who currently have a partnership at another school site, located at The Matthew Arnold School in Staines. Students of all ages will benefit from use of the facility during the school day, with the gym floor and sports facilities opening from 4:30pm for the wider community on weekdays, and 9:30am to 5:00pm on weekends.

"After working with Lifestyle Fitness for many years at The Matthew Arnold School in Staines, I am delighted to welcome them to Epsom & Ewell High School to manage the sports facilities on our behalf." said **R. Davey**, Bourne Education Trust Sports Director. "I look forward to seeing the benefit this will have on the local community and surrounding areas in the coming months. We have collaborated with numerous schools and educational trusts over the last forty years."

James continued. "Their positions as vital hubs in the local community that connect students, teachers, parents, and the wider town allow us to do what we do best: create healthier and more active communities, with a focus on well-being. With facilities like these, we can take fitness and wellness to an even wider audience in the local area."

You can follow lifestylefitness.co.uk/club/epsom for any more information and updates on the club's progress. Anyone wishing to join the club ahead of its opening can also do so now online, with memberships from as low as £14.99 per month when using the promotional code 'EARLYBIRD'.

Morgan Kimbel

Epsom's University challenges for graduates

20 July 2023



Students from the Class of '23 at the **University for the Creative Arts (UCA) in Epsom** descended upon London's Royal Festival Hall for their graduation ceremony on Tuesday 4 July. This year over 700 students graduated from the Epsom campus of UCA.

Opening the ceremonies, **Professor Bashir Makhoul**, President and Vice-Chancellor of UCA, told graduating students: *"You are stepping out today into a world of great promise – the thriving creative industries – and the opportunities for creative graduates are endless. Be ready to seize them, and to embrace challenges, with an open mind.*

"I am confident of your drive, unrelenting ambition, and passion for creativity, and I am eager to see how you will apply your talents and make a difference around the world."

During the ceremonies, UCA Chancellor and renowned ceramicist, **Magdalene Odundo OBE** offered this piece of advice: *"Commit wholeheartedly to your goals and trust that your talent will enable you to achieve them. I've had the pleasure of working with some of the world's greatest designers and artists, and they all share a common value: staying true to their vision."*

In the presence of families, friends and staff across two days of ceremonies, graduates came up to the stage and collected their degree certificates – the culmination of their journey at UCA. Graduating students will now take their place in the global creative community as they embark on the next stage in their creative careers.