

# EVERY INTERACTION MATTERS: THE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE USER JOURNEY



PEOPLE-FIRST FM



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# FOREWORD

Building upon our ‘Partnering for Seamless Healthcare’ playbook, which aligns with the ambitious vision set out in the ‘Fit for the Future: 10 Year Health Plan for England,’ this specialised playbook examines the ISS Service User Journey within mental health settings.

It builds on the foundational principles of empathy, alignment, and delivery to map the nuanced path of service users – from pre-admission preparation to safe departure – addressing unique pressures like vulnerability, environmental safety, and therapeutic support amidst resource constraints and evolving care models.

Every day, we witness the dedication of mental health teams guiding service users through high-stakes journeys in environments like forensic wards and older adult units, where each touchpoint, from nutrition and hydration to therapy spaces, profoundly influences recovery and wellbeing. At ISS Healthcare, we’ve partnered with mental health services for decades, tailoring our support to enhance these journeys: from bespoke menus combating obesity and undernutrition, to ligature minimisation audits ensuring safety, adapted cleaning protocols fostering a sense of normalcy and reassurance,

and specialised training programmes equipping staff with essential skills for safe, compassionate interactions.

This playbook should be read in conjunction with ‘Partnering for Seamless Healthcare’ to provide a comprehensive view. It reflects our shared commitment to mental health Trusts, proving our value by centring on the service user journey — optimising experiences, liberating clinical time, and delivering safe, compassionate care at every stage. Whether facilitating harmonious dining experiences or protecting privacy in therapy areas, our role is clear.

We are people who care — for your teams and every service user. Because in mental health, the difference between good care and exceptional care is how every single interaction feels.

Every day, we help shape service user journeys, from arrival to recovery, keeping therapeutic environments supportive – quietly and reliably.

## 2. OUR CUSTOMER

Our customer is the NHS in mental health settings. More than a client, the NHS is a national institution charged with delivering compassionate, recovery-focused care in environments defined by complexity, vulnerability, and continuous adaptation.

We serve mental health Trusts – organisations responsible for estates, facilities, and infrastructure across 93 buildings with 1,940 in-patient beds. These are teams navigating tight budgets, high obesogenic risks, and unique needs like ligature minimisation, all whilst transforming care to meet national guidance and local demands. Crucially, whilst operating within national frameworks, each Trust retains autonomy in decision making. This means our engagements must reflect both overarching strategy and site-specific context.

We listen deeply. We act with purpose. And we bring the right capabilities, in the right way, at the right time.



### 3. OUR COMMITMENT



Personally and passionately dedicated to the success of mental health outcomes; at the heart of the communities that we're part of. People who care make all the difference to service user experience.



Our commitment is to empower mental health teams through tailored programmes, products, and services that address the distinct challenges of these settings. From co-authoring guidance on nutrition and hydration for mental health and learning disability environments, to leading ligature minimisation audits and developing anti-ligature cleaning protocols, we collaborate to create safe, therapeutic spaces.

We invest in training like mental health inductions and boundaries awareness, ensuring our placemakers support clinical care without disruption. By focusing on details – like fruit-based desserts to reduce constipation risks or residential-feel isometric images in cleaning cards – we contribute to holistic wellness, aligning with the unique needs of service users and Trusts.

Personally & passionately dedicated to the success of mental health outcomes; at the heart of the communities that we're part of.

4.  
**OUR VISION**

A proactive partner in the creation of seamless mental health care, valued and admired not just by those who receive support, but also by those who dedicate their lives to delivering it.

Our Vision is not a marketing line. It's a reflection of our lived partnership with mental health services, shaped by frontline experience and guided by ambitions for integrated, person-centred care.

We describe ourselves as a **proactive partner** because we don't wait for issues to arise – we anticipate them, from obesity comorbidities to environmental risks, and work shoulder to shoulder with Trusts to solve them.

With deep expertise in mental health, we've learned that real partnership means shared stakes, shared purpose, and showing up with capability, consistency, and care.

We refer to “the creation of seamless mental health care” because we recognise the sector is evolving – integrating nutrition, hydration, and safety to support recovery. The phrase “creation” signals that this transformation is active, ongoing, and something we are part of. “Seamless” reflects our role in eliminating fragmentation, so that services work more smoothly for both service users and providers.

And we aspire to be **“valued and admired”** not just for what we deliver, but for how we deliver it. When services are provided with precision, empathy, and purpose, they raise standards, reinforce trust, and improve the lived experience of staff and service users.

**OUR VISION SPEAKS TO THREE GUIDING PRINCIPLES:**

**Empathy  
for Staff**



We recognise the immense physical, emotional, and logistical pressures that mental health staff face every day. We invest in supporting those who support others – through specialised training, wellbeing initiatives, and team culture.

**Alignment  
with Mental  
Health  
Objectives**



Mental health services focus on reducing risks like undernutrition or ligature points while promoting balanced diets and hygienic environments. Our offerings reinforce this – helping to connect care elements, reduce friction, and streamline performance for better journeys.

**Focus on  
Service  
User Care**



Everything we do – from healthier eating menus to pure space protocols – is aimed at supporting the quality, dignity, and experience of mental health care. We never lose sight of that end purpose.

A proactive partner in the creation of seamless mental health care, valued and admired by those who receive and deliver it

## 5. OUR MISSION

Empower and support those who drive mental health services; striving to perfect the service user journey, liberate clinical staff, and improve recovery and wellbeing for all.

Our Mission is more than an expression of intent. It is a practical commitment grounded in our experience and in alignment with ambitions for responsive, efficient, and joined-up mental health care.

We start with **empowerment and support** because that's what both NHS and ISS teams need – not just tools, but the trust, training, and encouragement to make decisions and solve problems on the ground. Empowerment is active, deliberate, and sustained.

We refer to **“those who drive mental health services”** to acknowledge the full ecosystem – from clinicians and dietitians to placemakers, caterers, and risk teams. These are the individuals who keep wards running, even under pressure – and our role is to uplift and enable them.

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Empower those who drive mental health services; perfect the service user journey, liberate clinical staff, and improve recovery for all

Our **striving to perfect the service user journey** is aspirational, yes, but deeply practical. We map touchpoints, from pre-admission collaboration to therapeutic environments, and design improvements that reduce stress, eliminate risks, and enhance overall experiences.

We aim to **liberate clinical staff** because time is a precious resource. By handling non-clinical tasks – nutrition planning, cleaning, ligature audits – we free up staff to focus on what only they can do: deliver expert, compassionate support.

And we commit to **improving recovery and wellbeing for all**, because the environments we support must promote safety, nutrition, and healing. Even when our work is indirect, its impact is real: better surroundings lead to better outcomes.

### CASE STUDY

#### Advancing nutrition in Mental Health: ISS's contribution to BDA supplement

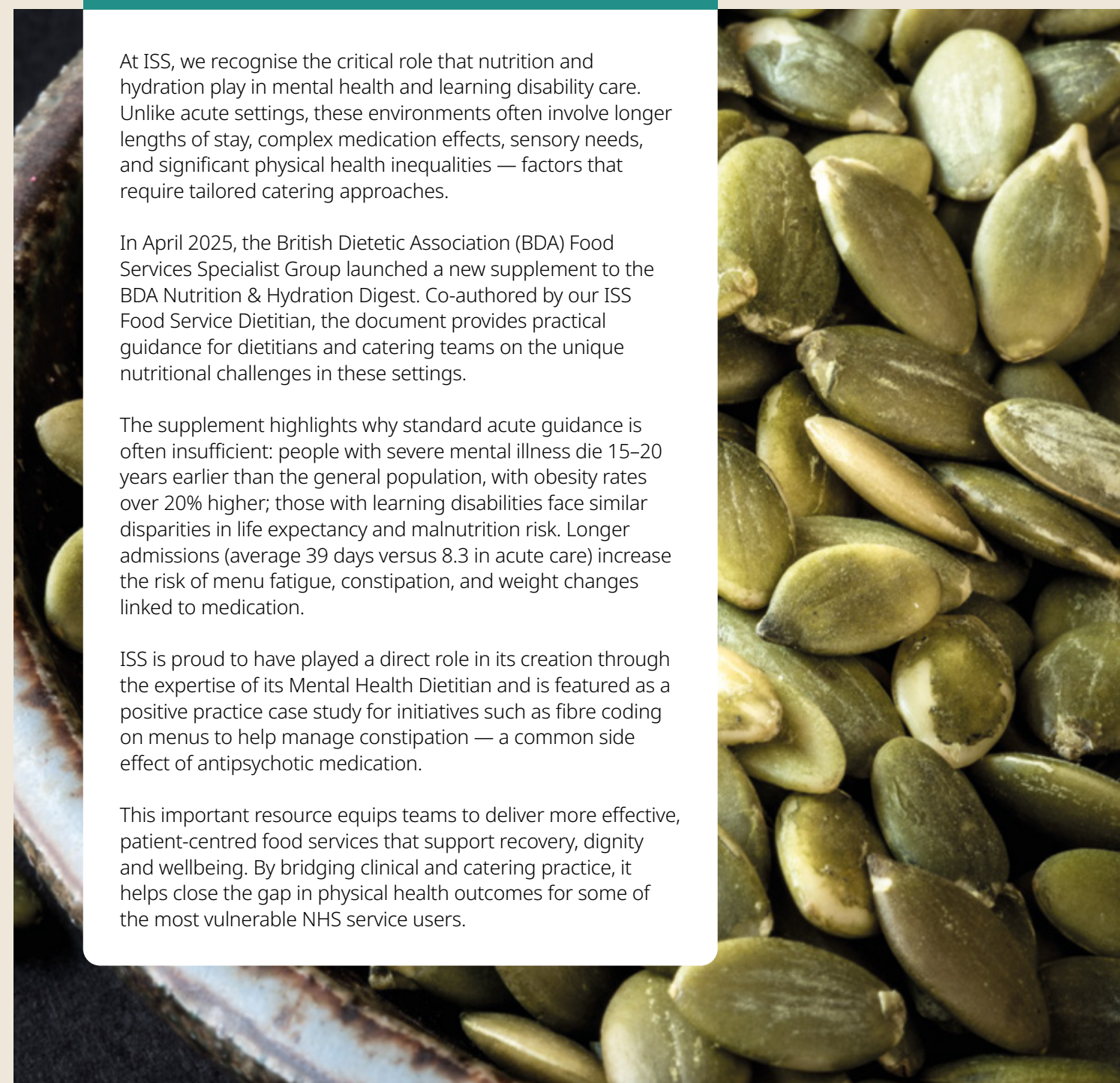
At ISS, we recognise the critical role that nutrition and hydration play in mental health and learning disability care. Unlike acute settings, these environments often involve longer lengths of stay, complex medication effects, sensory needs, and significant physical health inequalities — factors that require tailored catering approaches.

In April 2025, the British Dietetic Association (BDA) Food Services Specialist Group launched a new supplement to the BDA Nutrition & Hydration Digest. Co-authored by our ISS Food Service Dietitian, the document provides practical guidance for dietitians and catering teams on the unique nutritional challenges in these settings.

The supplement highlights why standard acute guidance is often insufficient: people with severe mental illness die 15–20 years earlier than the general population, with obesity rates over 20% higher; those with learning disabilities face similar disparities in life expectancy and malnutrition risk. Longer admissions (average 39 days versus 8.3 in acute care) increase the risk of menu fatigue, constipation, and weight changes linked to medication.

ISS is proud to have played a direct role in its creation through the expertise of its Mental Health Dietitian and is featured as a positive practice case study for initiatives such as fibre coding on menus to help manage constipation — a common side effect of antipsychotic medication.

This important resource equips teams to deliver more effective, patient-centred food services that support recovery, dignity and wellbeing. By bridging clinical and catering practice, it helps close the gap in physical health outcomes for some of the most vulnerable NHS service users.



6.

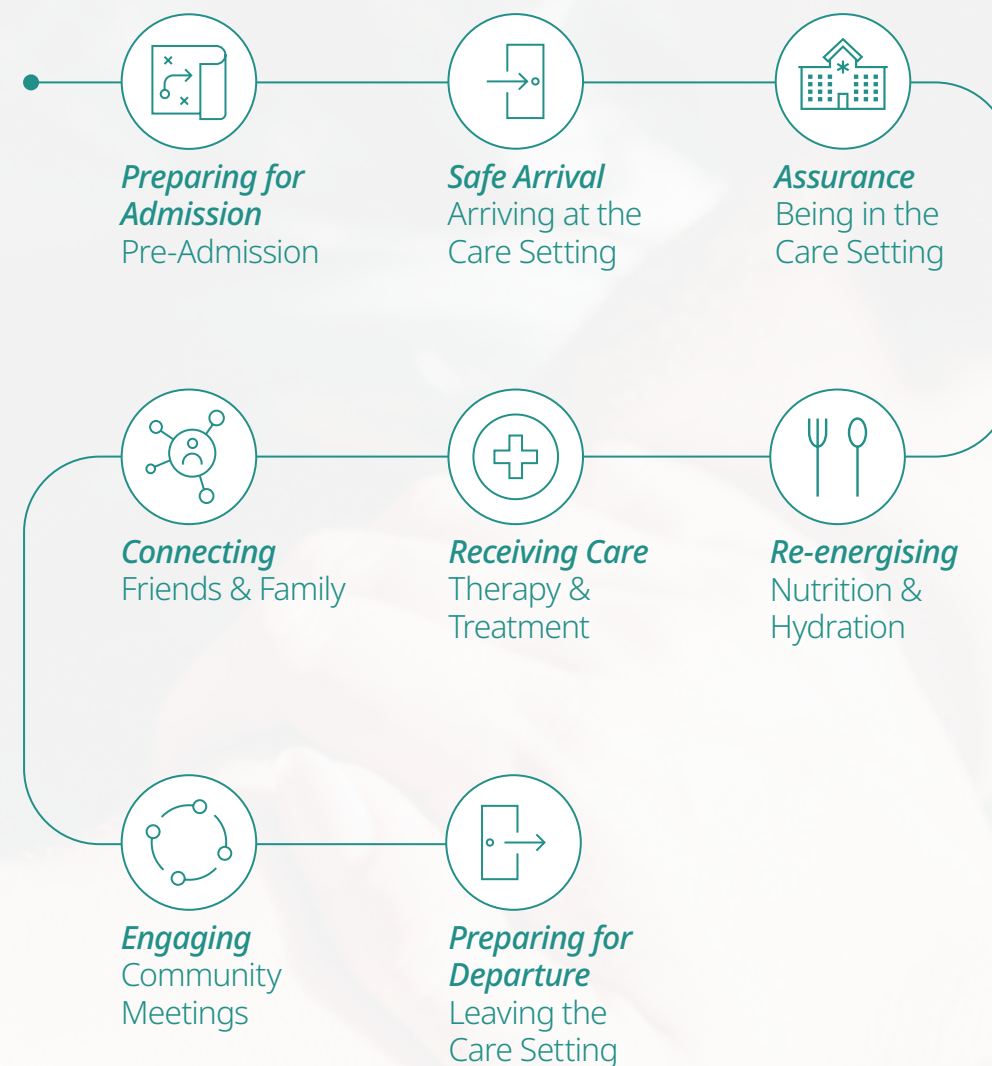
## ISS SERVICE USER JOURNEY

At the heart of our approach to seamless mental health care lies the ISS Service User Journey, a framework that maps the key interactions service users experience throughout their time in a care setting environment.

In ISS, we deeply understand the nuances of a mental health journey – from vulnerability and therapeutic needs to recovery and reintegration – and the profound impact our services have on these moments.

Our teams and services are an integral element of holistic care provision, working in close partnership with care setting teams to deliver patient-centred solutions that are carefully curated, caring, and effective, ensuring every touchpoint supports dignity, wellbeing, and positive outcomes.

### ISS SERVICE USER JOURNEY



## 6.1

## PREPARING FOR ADMISSION/ PRE-ADMISSION

‘Pre-admission’ is the first ISS Service User Impact Point in the inpatient journey. Consistent collaboration with the care setting teams, bespoke SLAs, and effective communication systems assist the care setting teams in their preparation for a service user’s arrival.

We have identified four sub-points to support the care setting teams with meeting the new service user’s pre-admission and arrival needs.



### ADMISSION PROCESS

Care setting teams undertake numerous preparation steps before receiving a new service user. It is our responsibility, as a member of this team, to understand the pre-admission process and be ready to respond to authorised requests. Whether it is wayfinding or a dietary requirement, our service teams respond to a service request in a timely manner.

### INPATIENT CARE SETTING

Each inpatient care setting is unique, as are the specialty units within each setting. It is crucial that our supervisory teams, placemakers and sub-contractors understand the nature of the settings, comply with its specific rules and procedures, and fulfil the needs and requirements of the new admissions.

### LIAISON WITH CARE SETTING TEAMS

Care setting teams respond to the service user’s needs and requirements in line with their care plans. Our role is to support their stay, take directions within the care framework whilst seeking clarity from the care setting provider, if in doubt. This enables us to collectively provide service users with effective, safe and caring services commensurate with their needs.

### ASSISTANCE/ INFORMATION

Care settings establish robust Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with service providers to ensure safe, timely, and effective care consistent with their mental health strategies. Our responsibility is to adhere to the SLAs, maintain robust task management systems and processes for effective monitoring, actioning and reporting.

## 6.2

## SAFE ARRIVAL/ ARRIVING AT THE CARE SETTING

This part of our process prioritises service user safety and comfort from the moment of their arrival at the facility.

We have identified five sub-points to support these important first moments and create a positive welcoming space.



### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The first impression of the care setting environment is very significant. Our service teams are proactive in maintaining an environment that is clean, free of safety hazards such as broken equipment or damage. Where cleaning or maintenance incidents are observed they are reported to the relevant teams to make safe or respond to any service requirement to prevent harm.

### EXTERNAL & INTERNAL WAYFINDING

Clear signage and wayfinding information enables service users and visitors to safely navigate their way around the care setting. It is our collective responsibility to ensure they can access authorised areas smoothly and the passage is unhindered. The restricted spaces are efficiently signed and kept locked. Our service teams are familiar with the access routes to direct service users and visitors to their required locations and report any concerns to the relevant teams.

### ENTRANCE AREA

A safe arrival and admission process is facilitated by an entrance area and security protocols consistent with the levels appropriate to the individual care setting. Our service teams are trained in, and follow, the relevant safety procedures and protocols, and remain vigilant when closing or opening doors to prevent unauthorised access or absconding. Any security concerns are reported immediately.

### WELCOME/COMMUNICATION

Appropriate greeting and communication on service user or visitor arrival is vital for creating a welcoming and supportive atmosphere. Our teams are trained to respond effectively, understand boundaries, use only the common language, and tailor communication to individual needs, including keeping a neutral tone, facial expressions, and body language.

### ASSISTANCE ON HAND

It is everyone's responsibility, as appropriate, to provide assistance and support. Our service teams are always prepared to assist in responding to a new admission's service needs as per the care setting team's specified guidance. If in doubt, our service teams consult a manager. Each service line contact details are kept up to date, accurate and communicated to the care setting teams.

## 6.3

## ASSURANCE/BEING IN THE CARE SETTING

At this stage of the inpatient journey, we focus on delivering service in a safe, clean and supportive environment for service users, visitors and staff.

We have identified six sub-points to ensure an effective service offer in partnership with the care setting teams.

### ENVIRONMENT

The care setting environment is designed to be therapeutic and understanding, supporting the service users' focus on healing/ recovery by minimising external interruptions. Our services are delivered in a way that promotes and facilitates a therapeutic atmosphere. A safe space that provides reassurance and encourages rehabilitation.

### COMMUNAL AREAS/ FACILITIES

Communal areas in care settings facilitate therapeutic and recreational activities, encourage social interactions, and provide a sense of normalcy. We spot check these widely used areas more often, are respectful to others of any noise, and remain alert and immediately report any safety and safeguarding concerns.

### CLEANING & HYGIENE

Clean and hygienic surroundings are critical in any care setting. It reduces the risks of infection transmission, potential injuries due to slips and trips, and provides a comfortable space to receive therapy/ treatment or simply for rest and relaxation. It is our responsibility to ensure that our cleaning teams consistently perform to required standards, use the approved cleaning products and work to agreed schedules.

### INTERACTIONS

All interactions with the service users must adhere to the specific rules established by the care settings. Our service teams are trained in mental health awareness, safeguarding, communication and disengagement skills, and other appropriate skills commensurate with the care setting environment. Placemakers receive training for personal safety and escalation methods should they have concerns or need guidance from the care setting teams. They must always refrain from sharing any personal information.

### PRIVATE SPACE

Private rooms, quiet spaces, and secure outside areas provide a sanctuary to the service users to rest and relax. Our service teams are respectful when entering these spaces. They must always knock on the door and seek permission before looking through or entering preserving the individual's right to privacy. Personal items and belongings are always treated respectfully and with care.

### USING DEVICES

Restrictions on using electronic devices are established to protect service user privacy and endorse a safe and therapeutic environment. Unauthorised use of such devices can result in safety hazards and confidentiality breaches, and interference with medical/ security equipment. Our service teams follow the local protocols and do not use cameras, personal mobiles, or headphones when working in the care setting.

### CASE STUDY

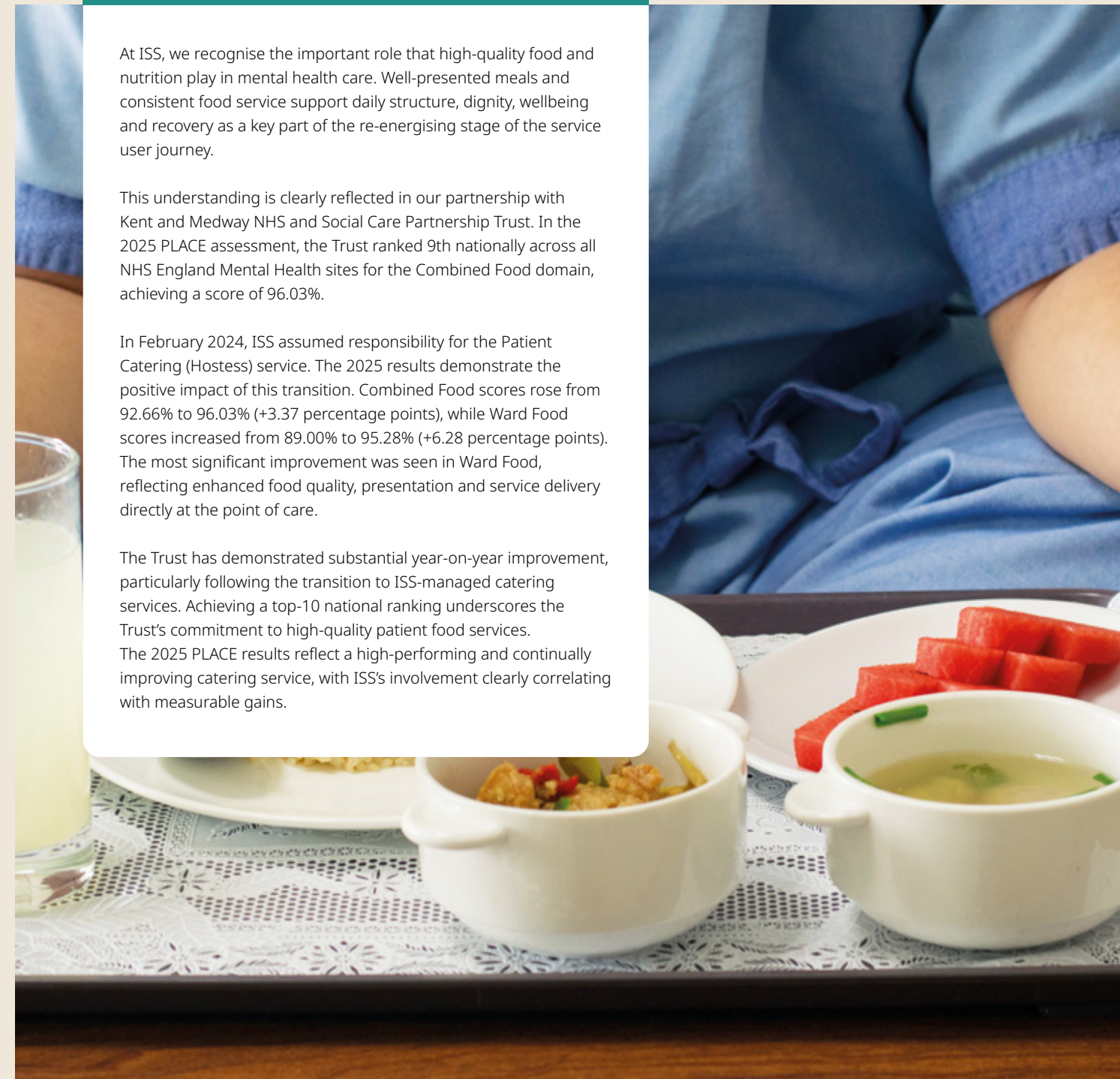
#### Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust: 2025 PLACE Assessment

At ISS, we recognise the important role that high-quality food and nutrition play in mental health care. Well-presented meals and consistent food service support daily structure, dignity, wellbeing and recovery as a key part of the re-energising stage of the service user journey.

This understanding is clearly reflected in our partnership with Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust. In the 2025 PLACE assessment, the Trust ranked 9th nationally across all NHS England Mental Health sites for the Combined Food domain, achieving a score of 96.03%.

In February 2024, ISS assumed responsibility for the Patient Catering (Hostess) service. The 2025 results demonstrate the positive impact of this transition. Combined Food scores rose from 92.66% to 96.03% (+3.37 percentage points), while Ward Food scores increased from 89.00% to 95.28% (+6.28 percentage points). The most significant improvement was seen in Ward Food, reflecting enhanced food quality, presentation and service delivery directly at the point of care.

The Trust has demonstrated substantial year-on-year improvement, particularly following the transition to ISS-managed catering services. Achieving a top-10 national ranking underscores the Trust's commitment to high-quality patient food services. The 2025 PLACE results reflect a high-performing and continually improving catering service, with ISS's involvement clearly correlating with measurable gains.



## 6.4

## RE-ENERGISING/ NUTRITION & HYDRATION

At this stage of the inpatient journey, we focus on service users' catering experience, which forms a vital part of daily structure and inpatient care.

We have identified seven sub-points centred around the provision of high quality, nutritionally balanced food and beverages to support service users' wellness journey.

### MENU CHOICE & PLANNING

The provision of meals with high nutritional quality and variety, complemented with effective hydration are essential for enhancing a service user's overall health and wellbeing. We have a team of dietetic experts that work with the care setting teams to develop menus that are varied and balanced. Our procurement and supply chain source sustainable products.

### PLACING THE ORDER

Service user involvement in placing their own orders is encouraged in care settings. When making their selections, service users can liaise with the care setting team and feel confident in making an informed decision. Engagement with the menu planning process can ensure that their culture and menu preferences are considered to create a home like experience that makes their dining experience more enjoyable. This includes options for snacks and drinks.



### SPECIAL DIETS & ALLERGENS

The food and beverage offer must be safe, and appropriate for the diverse requirements of the service users. We work closely with specialists within the care setting and our supply chain to ensure our offer can meet the requirements of all service users and their respective medical and/or cultural requirements. Our service teams are trained in food safety and allergen control and our food safety team ensure appropriate controls and procedures are in place to comply with relevant standards and regulations.

### MEAL SERVICE

The service experience delivered by our teams is an integral aspect of enhancing a service user stay, facilitating a harmonious dining experience as part of their journey to wellness. Our meal service, including procurement through to delivery, storage and production is provided in accordance with all legislative requirements to ensure food safety and quality. Our qualified placemakers oversee the meal service ensuring that the correct orders are served to the service users in a polite and helpful manner.

### BEVERAGES/ SNACKS & CELEBRATIONS

Accessibility to snacks, beverages and catering for special occasions is an integral part of holistic care. This curated experience extends to the provision of celebratory cakes, party food or national meals to reflect individual or cultural celebration events. We collaborate with care setting teams to ensure service users have access to approved items whenever they need them. Whether it is a snack, barbecue, or birthday celebration, our teams are ready to support and deliver a personalised offer.

### DINING AREA

Care settings provide designated dining areas for protected mealtimes. Our service teams ensure that these areas are safe and functional for the service user catering experience. Dining rooms are thoroughly cleaned after each service with food safe cleaning/disinfection products and equipment. All the appliances within rooms are carefully checked for damages to prevent accidents, and all the utensils and condiments are provided in accordance with the care setting instructions.

### FEEDBACK

Service user feedback is paramount for continuous improvement of their catering experience. We use every opportunity to gather feedback, including asking service users about their experience during mealtimes, discussing service at community meetings, providing feedback forms, and conducting mealtime service audits to ensure that service evolves and remains responsive to service user needs and preferences.



## 6.5

## RECEIVING CARE/ THERAPY & TREATMENT

At this stage of the inpatient journey, we focus on supporting service users' clinical care by ensuring that services are always received in a clean, inviting and comfortable space and their privacy is always guarded.

We have identified three sub-points to support this important aspect of care.

### TREATMENT/ THERAPY AREA

Service users receive a wide range of therapeutic interventions during their inpatient stay. Our role is to ensure that our teams are flexible with their cleaning and support service schedules to ensure the availability of treatment rooms and therapy zones to prevent disruption to clinical care. All such rooms must be clean, aired, and arranged by our placemakers before interventions begin. It is important our teams understand and comply with the regulations and controls relating to storage/disposal of medication and escalate any concerns or perceived breaches.

### MEDICATION TIME

Care setting teams administer medication to the service users in the designated rooms at specific times each day. Our teams must always be aware of the medication times and keep the appropriate distance from the medication rooms at these times to uphold the clinical safety protocols.

### PRIVACY & DIGNITY

Respecting a service user's privacy and preserving their dignity are essential parts of providing a service user centred service. We liaise closely with care setting teams to protect the sanctity of designated quiet spaces, bedrooms and therapy locations. Any concerns or breaches within care settings are immediately reported to the relevant teams.



## 6.6

## CONNECTING/ FRIENDS & FAMILY

At this stage of the inpatient journey, we focus on enhancing service users' interactions with their family and friends.

We have identified five sub-points to support these important moments.

### CALLING FRIENDS & FAMILY

Everyone's collaboration is important for facilitating the service users' calls with friends and family. Private rooms are never accessed by our service teams during calls. When calls are arranged in dedicated spaces, our teams ensure such spaces are available to the required standard with no interruptions caused by noisy cleaning or service activities. To respect confidentiality, our teams maintain distance from the call areas.

### REFRESHMENTS

Refreshment options for service users and their visitors make the experience more welcoming and comfortable, enhancing their shared time. Our role is to always liaise with the care setting teams to ensure that supplied hospitality items are safe.

### VISITOR AREA

To ensure privacy and security, designated visitor areas are typically situated within the care setting, separate from a service user's private rooms and communal areas. Our service teams are aware of the visiting times and ensure that these spaces are provided in a clean and welcoming manner.

### RETAIL OFFERS

Retail services aim to provide convenience and an alternative option to the care setting offer. We collaborate with care setting teams to understand the service users and visitors' needs and ensure that our offerings are appropriate and retail spaces are inviting. Our retail service teams are informative, attentive, and supportive of the service users and visitors' social interactions.

### ASSISTANCE

Assisting the service user's family and friends when visiting care settings is always a high priority. Our teams are prepared to guide visitors through the facility, provide information, and direct them to the care setting teams as needed.



6.7

## ENGAGING/ COMMUNITY MEETINGS

At this stage of the inpatient journey, we focus on providing a safe environment for service users and care setting teams to share their feedback and proposals for service improvements.

We have identified five sub-points to ensure our teams are receptive to feedback, listen to suggestions and liaise with the care setting teams to approve and implement ideas that demonstrate effective methods of continuous service improvement.

### ENGAGEMENT

Community meetings create a reflective forum for both service users and care setting teams to listen, discuss and address any concerns about the service delivery. Our service teams ensure that the representatives are aware of the community meeting schedules, actively participate in all sessions in line with the meeting protocols, and follow the meeting lead's instructions.

### DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Diversity and inclusion awareness is essential when participating in the community meetings. Our representatives communicate and conduct themselves in accordance with the training to ensure that everyone is included, respected and supported.

### MEETING SPACE

Meeting space is designed to be safe, comfortable, and supportive to encourage open discussions. Our role is to ensure that such spaces are welcoming, clean and set up in the required format with refreshments provided as permitted.

### GOALS/ACTION PLAN

Community meetings produce clear goals and actions for service adjustments and improvements. Maintaining a record of discussion points and actions is important to track progress, debrief service teams, request service variations, measure progress, and demonstrate improvements. Our teams establish an effective system to manage the meeting records and make them accessible as required.

### FOLLOW UP UPDATE

Follow up updates on the agreed actions and progress are essential in maintaining community meeting momentum and fulfilling its purpose. Our service team representatives are ready to update the meeting attendees in every session and provide feedback of steps taken and completed actions, as requested.

6.8

## LEAVING THE CARE SETTING/ PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

'Leaving the Care Setting', the final step in the service user journey, acknowledges that whilst it may be comforting for some to return home or move to another care setting, others may find change daunting.

We have identified three sub-points to provide service users with assistance and essential care and/or a food package to support this transition.

### ASSISTANCE

Engaging in proactive discharge planning involves the service user, their family members and/or friends, the care setting and/or relevant healthcare professionals to identify and meet all necessary needs. Our service teams are ready to offer the most suitable assistance to support a service user leaving the care setting.

### CARE PACKAGE

Upon discharge service users are likely to receive a collection of information, medication and supplies. The contents of the care package may vary but our role is to ensure the service user has everything they need when leaving the care setting, as advised by the care setting teams.

### FOOD/ DRINK TO GO

Our farewell is as important as our welcome. We offer a selection of fresh food and drinks to take away, as well as a variety of core grocery options and other essential items to support the service users no matter the time of their discharge, making their departure easier and facilitating their transition to the next setting.

At the heart of our approach lies the ISS Service User Journey, mapping key interactions in mental health care settings.



## 7. MENTAL HEALTH SPECIALISTS: PROGRAMMES, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Underpinning the delivery of the ISS Service User Journey is a suite of specialised programmes designed to address the distinct challenges of mental health environments.

From ensuring hygienic, therapeutic spaces to providing nutritious, bespoke meals, minimising environmental risks, and empowering staff through targeted training, these initiatives empower Trusts to deliver safer, more supportive care across every stage of the journey.

Drawing on decades of partnership with the NHS, our Mental Health Specialists integrate expertise in dietetics, cleaning protocols, risk reduction, and workforce development to enhance service user outcomes, liberate clinical staff, and foster holistic recovery.



In the following sections, we explore our tailored offerings: Pure Space Mental Health, which adapts cleaning standards for safety and reassurance; Food Programmes, focusing on balanced nutrition to combat obesity and undernutrition; Ligature Minimisation, delivering audits and solutions to mitigate critical risks; and Training, equipping teams with essential skills for effective, compassionate interactions. Together, these programmes reflect our proactive approach – anticipating needs, fostering collaboration, and driving real-world impact in mental health settings.

7.1

## PURE SPACE MENTAL HEALTH

In mental health settings, clean and hygienic surroundings are critical to reducing infection risks, preventing injuries, and providing comfortable spaces for therapy, rest, and recovery. Our Pure Space programme has been meticulously adapted for mental health environments to prioritise safety, anti-ligature features, and a residential feel that supports therapeutic atmospheres.



These adaptations ensure our cleaning protocols align with the unique needs of mental health care, minimising disruptions while enhancing reassurance and normalcy for service users and staff.

The Pure Space Mental Health cleaning cards have been fully redesigned to reflect the specific requirements of mental health settings. The universal green ribbon has been adopted as the new logo, and all key awareness points now focus strongly on safety. Room and area names have been updated to match those commonly used in mental health environments, while isometric images have been refreshed to deliver a more residential, calming feel. Task icons have been replaced where necessary (for example, standard handwash basins with taps have been removed as they are not anti-ligature compliant). Task order has been revised by removing or adjusting steps that are not required in mental health wards, such as separate bed-space cleaning. Activity flow descriptions, important reminders, and terminology have all been rewritten to suit mental health settings, with unsuitable terms such as “isolation” removed entirely.

The Method Cards have undergone equally important updates to maintain full compliance and safety. New method codes have been introduced for all revised procedures, and card titles have been amended to eliminate inappropriate terminology. Step-by-step instruction graphics and category images have been replaced throughout, removing any visuals of standard fixtures such as handwash basins, baths, showers, or toilets that are not suitable for mental health environments. Detailed instruction text has been updated to reference the new method codes, include additional safety-sign removal steps on floor cards, and change all height references from 1.8 m to 2.0 m. Finally, all cabled machinery cards have been removed entirely as they are not appropriate for mental health settings.

Together, these purpose-built adaptations make Pure Space the safest, most effective, and most reassuring cleaning solution for mental health environments.

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Our Pure Space programme is adapted for mental health environments to prioritise safety, anti-ligature features, and therapeutic atmospheres.

## 7.2

## MENTAL HEALTH FOOD PROGRAMMES

In mental health settings, nutrition plays a pivotal role in addressing the heightened risks of obesity, undernutrition, and related comorbidities among service users, who often face premature mortality from preventable conditions like cardiovascular disease and diabetes – exacerbated by factors such as antipsychotic medication side effects.

ISS Healthcare's food programmes are designed to promote healthier outcomes through tailored menus that emphasise balanced, sustainable choices, supporting overall wellbeing and recovery in high-risk environments like forensic and older adult wards.

The healthier eating menu prioritises dishes low in salt, fat, and sugar, incorporating wholegrain sides and fruit-based desserts to combat obesity and reduce comorbidity risks, particularly in obesogenic forensic settings. Complementing this, the balanced menu caters to varied nutritional needs, offering both higher-

energy and healthier options to mitigate undernutrition risks from reduced appetite or self-neglect, with daily hot desserts limited in sugar and focused on fruit, ideal for older adult wards prone to malnutrition. These menus are bespoke to mental health services, featuring four-week cycles to prevent fatigue, theme nights, a 'source of fibre' code to address constipation from inactivity and poor diet, maximum sugar targets for desserts, and specialised options for eating disorder patients developed in partnership with trust dietitians.

Nutrition and hydration services extend beyond menus to encompass comprehensive planning, where dietetic experts collaborate on varied, sustainable offerings. Service users are empowered through order placement, engaging with teams to incorporate cultural preferences for a home-like dining experience, including snacks and drinks. Special diets and allergens are managed safely, with trained teams ensuring compliance for medical and cultural needs. Meal service fosters harmonious wellness journeys, with placemakers delivering correct, polite orders in line with legislative standards for safety and quality.

Holistic care includes accessible beverages, snacks, and celebratory provisions like cakes or barbecues for personal or cultural events, curated in collaboration to meet approved needs. Dining areas are maintained as safe, functional spaces with protected mealtimes, thorough post-service cleaning, appliance checks, and utensil provision per instructions. Continuous improvement is driven by feedback gathered at

mealtimes, community meetings, forms, and audits, ensuring responsiveness to service user preferences and evolving needs.

New guidance co-authored by ISS experts, released as a supplement to the BDA Nutrition and Hydration Digest, highlights distinctions from acute settings, empowering dietitians and catering teams to deliver unique inpatient care in mental health and learning disability environments.

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**ISS Healthcare's food programmes promote healthier outcomes through tailored menus for wellbeing and recovery in high-risk wards**

7.3

# LIGATURE MINIMISATION

In mental health settings, ligature minimisation is essential for reducing clinical and environmental risks, ensuring service user safety, and supporting therapeutic environments. ISS Healthcare’s programmes focus on comprehensive strategies to identify and mitigate potential ligature points, drawing on specialised expertise to address these critical challenges across diverse wards and facilities.

The approach centres on leading audit processes and collaborating with teams to develop tailored operational and technical solutions, with a primary emphasis on Berkshire Healthcare but designed for broader application. This includes proactive assessments to minimise risks in high-vulnerability areas, fostering safer spaces that align with regulatory standards and promote recovery.

At the core is the ligature specialist, an experienced clinician with deep knowledge in ligature minimisation, clinical risk reduction, and environmental adaptations. This role ensures evidence-based interventions that integrate both medical and infrastructural perspectives, enhancing overall safety protocols.

In mental health settings, ligature minimisation reduces risks, ensures safety, and supports therapeutic environments.

Collaboration is key, involving a wide range of stakeholders such as the CQC, NHSE, clinicians, risk teams, property teams, and divisional leadership. This multi-disciplinary partnership facilitates holistic ligature minimisation efforts, from initial audits to implementation and ongoing monitoring.

Lessons learned from these initiatives are leveraged across the healthcare sector, promoting best practices and continuous improvement to benefit mental health services nationwide.

 CASE STUDY

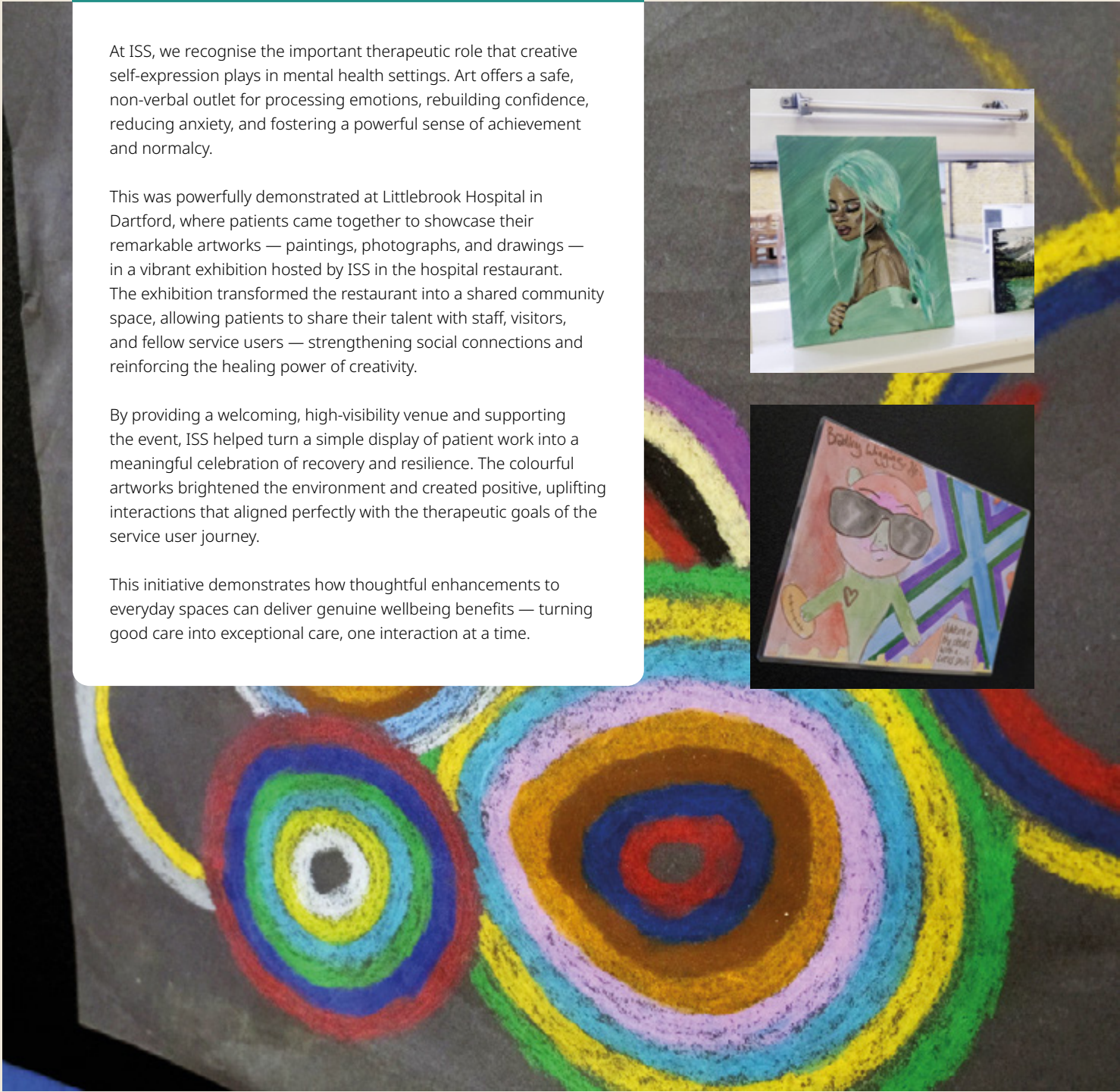
## Littlebrook Hospital: Celebrating creativity and connection through art

At ISS, we recognise the important therapeutic role that creative self-expression plays in mental health settings. Art offers a safe, non-verbal outlet for processing emotions, rebuilding confidence, reducing anxiety, and fostering a powerful sense of achievement and normalcy.

This was powerfully demonstrated at Littlebrook Hospital in Dartford, where patients came together to showcase their remarkable artworks — paintings, photographs, and drawings — in a vibrant exhibition hosted by ISS in the hospital restaurant. The exhibition transformed the restaurant into a shared community space, allowing patients to share their talent with staff, visitors, and fellow service users — strengthening social connections and reinforcing the healing power of creativity.

By providing a welcoming, high-visibility venue and supporting the event, ISS helped turn a simple display of patient work into a meaningful celebration of recovery and resilience. The colourful artworks brightened the environment and created positive, uplifting interactions that aligned perfectly with the therapeutic goals of the service user journey.

This initiative demonstrates how thoughtful enhancements to everyday spaces can deliver genuine wellbeing benefits — turning good care into exceptional care, one interaction at a time.



## 7.4

## MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

Empowering staff with specialised knowledge is fundamental to delivering safe, compassionate care in mental health settings, where understanding boundaries, awareness, and personal safety are crucial for effective interactions and risk management.

ISS Healthcare's training programmes, part of the Reimagining Healthcare Strategy Steering Group initiatives, focus on equipping teams with the skills to navigate these unique environments, enhancing both service user outcomes and staff wellbeing through structured, practical learning.

The Healthcare Training Library provides comprehensive induction options tailored for working in mental health, including a 3-day and 1-day Mental Health Induction Training to build foundational awareness and preparedness. Additional modules cover Working in a Mental Health Environment Training, which addresses the nuances of daily operations in these settings, and Boundaries Training to ensure appropriate professional interactions that respect service user dignity and autonomy.



Further programmes include Mental Health & Well-Being Training to support staff in managing their own mental health while aiding others, and Breakaway Training, which offers practical techniques for personal safety and de-escalation, with a streamlined booking process to facilitate access. These resources are designed to foster a skilled, resilient workforce, aligning with broader goals of holistic care and continuous professional development in mental health services.

Empowering staff with specialised knowledge is fundamental to safe, compassionate care in mental health settings.

### CASE STUDY

#### Silverwood, St Peter's Hospital, Chertsey: delivering a new 64-bed inpatient mental health facility

At ISS, we recognise the vital role that well-designed, therapeutic environments play in mental health care. Safe, welcoming and non-institutional spaces support dignity, recovery and positive patient experience as a core part of the Assurance and Re-energising stages of the service user journey.

In partnership with Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SABP), ISS successfully mobilised and delivered the full range of soft facilities management services for Silverwood, a new 64-bed inpatient mental health hospital at St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey, meeting demanding deadlines in line with the hospital's opening in March 2025.

##### Our approach

From the earliest stages, ISS worked closely with SABP through structured collaboration. This included joint site surveys, functional risk assessments, and direct input into building design to ensure safe and efficient cleaning workflows, catering logistics aligned with patient needs, and full compliance with infection prevention and control standards.

##### Service Design & operational planning

ISS developed a full service delivery model tailored to Silverwood's mental health environment. This incorporated healthcare cleaning services aligned to rigorous safety standards, patient catering that supports nutrition, dignity and therapeutic recovery, and portering services for the efficient movement of medical equipment, post and deliveries. Comprehensive cleaning schedules, standard operating procedures (SOPs), risk assessments and safe systems of work were established to ensure consistent, high-quality delivery from day one.

##### Recruitment and onboarding

Recruitment presented particular challenges given Chertsey's location outside major urban centres and its more limited transport links. Despite this, and the need to fill 42 roles (30 WTE) within a tight mobilisation timeframe, the team successfully recruited approximately 80% of staff from within a 5–10 mile radius. All new team members received comprehensive induction and mental health-specific training.

##### Conclusion

Today, services at Silverwood are fully embedded and delivered to a consistently high standard across all FM functions. The team is stable and locally connected, clinical integration is strong, and standards of cleanliness, safety and patient catering remain consistently high.

This successful partnership highlights ISS's ability to deliver complex mental health projects through early collaboration, specialist expertise and a shared focus on patient-centred environments.



## WHY ISS HEALTHCARE?

What truly sets ISS apart in mental health care is our unwavering focus on the service user. The ISS Service User Journey is a complete pathway from pre-admission to safe departure. We don't deliver isolated services — we map every touchpoint, understand its emotional and clinical impact, and design our support to enhance dignity, safety, and recovery at every stage.

This journey-led approach is embedded in everything we do. Our specialist programmes — Pure Space Mental Health, tailored Food Programmes, Ligature Minimisation, and targeted Training — are not add-ons. They are purpose-built to strengthen each moment of the journey. By actively shaping therapeutic environments that feel safe, supportive, and truly human, our teams free clinical colleagues to focus on care.

**We are people who care — for your teams and every service user. Because in mental health, the difference between good care and exceptional care is how every single interaction feels.**



## ABOUT ISS

ISS is a leading workplace experience and facilities management company. With a presence in more than 30 countries worldwide, and with more than 27,000 employees across the UK and Ireland alone, ISS provides innovative workplace solutions that contribute to better business performance aimed at making life easier, more productive, and enjoyable for all – delivered to high standards by people who care.

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