

Barnet – Community Embedded Social Prescribing

BACKGROUND

The Barnet Wellbeing Hub is the “front door” of the [Barnet Wellbeing Service](#), where individuals are supported and guided to appropriate mental health services. It arose out of Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group’s [Reimagining Mental Health Programme](#) and workshops that were part of that process. Formally launched in April 2017, it is delivered by a partnership of community and statutory services and provides community-based services to residents experiencing mental health conditions. The service is managed by [CommUNITY Barnet](#), a community development and infrastructure charity for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Barnet. While the service is funded by Barnet CCG, the Wellbeing Steering Group includes charity partners, Barnet CCG, Barnet Council and those with lived experience.

THE APPROACH

The Barnet Wellbeing Service aims to empower residents to self-manage their emotional well-being, remain independent and reduce their reliance on emergency health and social care services. It is a safe and welcoming facility for Barnet residents to access a range of community-based mental health support services. A robust early intervention/prevention programme, some of its key elements are:

- Support to people 16+ to improve their wellbeing through talking therapies, advocacy, information and community services/activities
- Delivery by community groups of a range of services through a formalised social prescribing process
- Joint partnerships across community service providers, linking with the statutory sector
- An integrated whole system model, ensuring the “right service is delivered from the first point of contact for the individual” and is easily accessible to people who fall in “gaps” between services
- Delays, reduces, or prevents the need for formal health and social care intervention
- Develops a case for future joined up delivery and funding, creating efficiencies and clearer pathways to care in the future.

CASE STUDY CONTACT

Name: Fehintola Kolawole, Head of Wellbeing

Organisation: CommUNITY Barnet

Website: <https://www.communitybarnet.org.uk/>

TOP TIPS

- **Utilise existing partnerships** to ensure as integrated an approach as possible
- While the partnerships may be complex, **try to ensure the experience for individuals using the service feels as coherent as possible**
- **Every partner has something to bring** and identifying this early will help to maximise impact and potential for collaboration

Single point of access

GPs and other health and social care professionals refer into the Barnet Wellbeing Hub, delivered by [Meridian Wellbeing](#) who engage with each person accessing the service. The Emotional Health Check, an engagement tool developed locally with Barnet CCG, is supplemented, if needed, with clinical assessments. GPs, and other health and social care professionals refer into the Hub.

Integrated support

A range of needs are met, from personalised support at the Barnet Wellbeing Hub, therapeutic support through IAPT workshops and additional assistance through the local Mental Health Trust. For users with complex needs, Meridian Wellbeing participate in a multi-agency joint case management group to fast-track and refer to statutory services. [Barnet Refugee Service](#) deliver community IAPT services to refugees experiencing PTSD. A young adults’ service was also delivered during lockdown, focussing initially on students. As part of the Wellbeing Service’s inclusive offer, [Barnet Mencap](#) supports and assesses people who may need an autism assessment from the NHS and [Mind in Barnet](#) will support older adults who have been admitted to psychiatric wards for cognitive impairment and are being discharged.

Collaboration and partnership

The partnership between CommUNITY Barnet and other local organisations including Meridian Wellbeing, [Inclusion Barnet](#), [Jewish Volunteering Network](#), Barnet Refugee Service, Barnet Mencap and Mind in Barnet ensures that a wide range of holistic support is accessible for residents facing difficulties with their mental and emotional health. As part of its commitment to destigmatising mental health and promoting mental health awareness it has delivered eight Hub Connection network events.

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This case study has been produced by the [Bromley by Bow Centre](#) and [Healthy London Partnership](#) who are working together to support the development of social prescribing in London. For more information or to put forward your scheme as a potential case study, please contact hlp.socialprescribing@nhs.net

THE BENEFITS

Key benefits of the approach have included:

- CommUNITY Barnet in their position within the local VCS already had strong relationships with community organisations and services which have been beneficial in shaping the service, ensuring robust referral networks and maximising use of the service.
- Drawing in a range of expertise and perspectives has increased the effectiveness and appropriateness of the service and this has been a key factor in seeing over 5,000 people referred for wellbeing support.
- Network events have enabled stakeholders, residents, commissioners and people with lived experience to come together, share experiences, learn from local and national good practice, review current activities and plan for the future.

THE CHALLENGES

The key challenge has been ensuring a joined-up experience for those accessing the service despite the complexity of the partnership arrangements involved. This has been addressed through clarity on the distinct roles of each partner.

THE OUTCOME

To date the service has been highly effective and well-received and now supports an average of 190 individuals each month. The strength of partnership-working has enabled fast adaptation to remote delivery ensuring no reduction in the level of support provided to those accessing the service.

Adapting to Covid-19

During Covid-19 all services were transferred online, through telephone and WhatsApp engagement. To support shielded and vulnerable residents, Barnet Council's [Adults and Health Directorate](#) commissioned CommUNITY Barnet to deliver a Wellbeing Response Service of shopping and medicine pick-up for 18-55 year olds and [Age UK Barnet](#) to support residents over 55 years of age. The Wellbeing Response Service is transitioning to delivering telephone befriending and a partnership bereavement counselling service commissioned by Barnet Public Health. Following the easing of lockdown restrictions, it is expected that the service will move to providing a blended set of therapeutic interventions going forward. CommUNITY Barnet is clear that the Barnet Wellbeing Service has played an instrumental part in supporting residents to remain mentally well, emotionally resilient and buoyant by working in partnership with charitable, statutory and local stakeholders to deliver quality outcomes for residents.

In Barnet, we've shown what's possible by taking a partnership first approach and this is having great impact for our community

- Fehintola Kolawole, Head of Wellbeing

RESOURCES**CommUNITY Barnet**

For more information on CommUNITY Barnet, click [here](#).

Barnet Wellbeing Service

For more information on the Barnet Wellbeing Service, click [here](#).

London Case Studies Database

For more case studies and great examples of best practice, click [here](#).

London Social Prescribing Toolkit

Join the FutureNHS Collaboration platform, click [here](#).

London Social Prescribing Film Series

Watch inspiring films with Social Prescribing colleagues from across London sharing their experiences, ways of working and how they support their communities, click [here](#).

Regional Facilitators – London

Support is available to help you connect with social prescribing networks across London and your local area, for more information please contact: suzi.griffiths@nhs.net and dan.hopewell@bbbc.org.uk



For information and resources to support social prescribing schemes across London, please visit: [Healthy London Partnership](#) and [Bromley by Bow Centre](#).

For information on how to join the London Plus social prescribing network [click here](#).

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