

## Hammersmith and Fulham – A holistic and integrated approach

### BACKGROUND

Social prescribing in Hammersmith and Fulham is overseen by the borough's [GP Federation](#). The first primary care network (PCN)-based DES-funded link worker was in post in October 2019, with services beginning in December. The team has steadily grown since, with a total of 12 team members now in post, spread across the five PCNs in the borough. Funding is derived from multiple sources including the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Macmillan Cancer Support and the PCNs via DES funding, but the services largely operate as a single team.

### THE APPROACH

The approach combines a balance of borough-level systems and more localised tailored elements at PCN level:

#### Central systems and support

Most link workers are employed by the Hammersmith and Fulham GP Federation, with a small number directly employed by PCNs and practices. The governance and infrastructure for the social prescribing programme is delivered centrally by the Federation. This includes operation of the steering group, the development of assessment tools, systems and shared files and resources. Fortnightly meetings are held with link workers from across the borough, incorporating training and external speakers.

“  
By providing appropriate support systems and infrastructure, we're able to give the PCNs and link workers the space to focus on how they can achieve maximum impact for patients.

- Val Chaggar, Programme Support Manager

### TOP TIPS

- Make things as straightforward as possible for team members by providing **central resources and systems** which are applicable across all Primary Care Networks.
- **Balance this with enabling flexibility**, with adaptations to the approach being possible at a local level to ensure maximum integration within teams.
- **Maximise the benefits of having a wider team** to reduce staff isolation and provide peer support and learning opportunities through regular team meetings and training sessions.

#### Localised tailoring

Despite the service being managed at a borough-wide level, link workers are also embedded within PCNs and work closely with clinical directors to establish the best way of working with the practices within each network. This includes ensuring they are proactively targeting the patients that the practice is most concerned about and connecting in with local services and other activity within the PCN.

Day-to-day oversight is provided by the clinical director in each PCN with flexibility given to link workers to establish a way of working that fits well within the PCN rather than imposing a fixed approach across the borough.

#### Integration within PCN teams

Link workers attend weekly PCN meetings and are integrated within multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs). This enables link workers to be part of an integrated and holistic approach to supporting vulnerable patients, complementing other team members by offering another perspective focusing on broader avenues for support within the community and consideration of social determinants of health. This helps to cement their role and expertise as vital to the effective support of patients and a critical part of PCN teams.

### CASE STUDY CONTACT

**Name:** Val Chaggar, Programme Support Manager  
**Organisation:** Hammersmith and Fulham GP Federation  
**Website:** <https://www.hfgpfed.co.uk/>

### 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](mailto:hlp.socialprescribing@nhs.net)

## THE BENEFITS

The approach has been found to have a number of key advantages:

- Being within the GP Federation/PCNs enables easy integration into NHS systems.
- Having a borough-wide team who meet regularly helps to ensure that link workers feel like one team and are able to share their respective knowledge and support each other as needed e.g. if a link worker speaks a different community language, they can help a colleague based within another PCN.
- With individual link workers firmly embedded within PCNs, they are able to adapt their approach to ensure it works well for the practices they are working with.

## THE CHALLENGES

The main challenges have related to building the service in the time of Covid-19. Roughly half of the team was in post prior to the onset of the pandemic and had the benefit of being able to spend at least some time within the GP practices and start building up relationships, while others have had to build these relationships remotely.

## THE OUTCOME

The service continues to go from strength to strength. Having borough-level support and a network of link workers means that each PCN doesn't have to reinvent the wheel and link workers are able to support each other, while the localised approach has enabled services to become firmly embedded within practices and PCNs.

### Integration within South Fulham Primary Care Network

Social prescribing link workers in South Fulham are closely embedded within the operations of the PCN and the practices within it. Link workers are a crucial part of the multi-disciplinary team and attend daily frailty meetings alongside GPs and the clinical director as well as other partners who rotate dependant on cases, but can include community matrons, the community independence service, heads of council services e.g. the reablement team and hospital representatives. They are able to bring a broader perspective to these meetings and ensure consideration of social determinants of health and wider support available within the community is included in discussions. Link workers receive regular clinical supervision from the PCN clinical director.

## RESOURCES

### Hammersmith and Fulham GP Federation

For more information on the work of Hammersmith and Fulham GP Federation, click [here](#).

### Multi-disciplinary team working

For more information on multi-disciplinary team working within the NHS, click [here](#).

### Voluntary sector information

For more information on voluntary sector services in Hammersmith and Fulham, 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](#).

### London Case Studies Database

For more case studies and great examples of best practice, 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](mailto:suzi.griffiths@nhs.net) and [dan.hopewell@bbbc.org.uk](mailto: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](#).

## CASE STUDY CONTACT

**Name:** Val Chaggar, Programme Support Manager  
**Organisation:** Hammersmith and Fulham GP Federation  
**Website:** <https://www.hfgpfed.co.uk/>

## 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](mailto:hlp.socialprescribing@nhs.net)