

## Brent Hubs

*In-person access to community-based information, welfare advice and digital support*

### BACKGROUND

Brent Hubs offer face-to-face support for vulnerable residents to address a range of social welfare problems affecting their health and well-being. Brent Council recognized in 2019 that many vulnerable residents struggled to navigate support services, and that earlier intervention targeted at this client group would prevent problems escalating to a crisis stage. Over 50 partners support in the delivery of the service.

### HOW IT WORKS

- Advisors from voluntary sector advice organisations, the council and other local statutory organisations deliver the core advice component in local libraries, community centres and the civic centre.
- Brent Hub Management Team alongside Brent Council Customer Service provides triage
- The Hub Partners Reference Group (steering group) oversee strategic direction and development. All services and activities are delivered under the Brent Hubs brand to ensure they are seamless and recognised as an impartial community resource

### IMPACT

#### 1. Resolving enquires at first contact

The hubs are currently resolving 70% of enquiries at the point of contact

#### 2. Improved access of services

Enables access by minoritised groups who might not otherwise access statutory services

#### 3. Enables effective sharing of client information

#### 4. Supports early intervention

Cooperation over referrals, and good communication and information sharing meant that people can receive help before the issues they face became more serious.

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### AT A GLANCE

- The Hubs work with residents who find it difficult to access the support they need through mainstream services. The focus is on supporting people to help themselves and each other, working with them to solve their problems and build knowledge, understanding and resilience.
- The Hubs provide local residents with support and advice in matters relating to benefits, employment, money management and debt advice, housing and related issues
- Residents presenting needs at the hubs in 2023 were food and fuel enquires (30%), housing and homelessness (14%), council tax support (12%), form filling (12%), welfare benefits (8%), housing benefit (8%), money and debt advice (8%), digital support (5%), skills and employment (2%), and immigration (1%).
- Relationships between the statutory and VCS partners have been strengthened through joint working and colocation. There is buy in from housing and council tax departments and key points of contact in the relevant local authority teams have been identified for problem escalation

### KEY FACTORS TO SUCCESS

- Strong digital agenda that enables residents to access online support and empowers people “to do things for themselves”
- Buy-in from the partner organisations ensured local accessible impartial and effective services for local residents are delivered.
- Regular meetings and escalation contacts with housing council tax etc to resolve complex cases
- Each hub has its own operational group with representatives from the delivery partners who coordinate the front facing offers and takes responsibility for, service quality, expanding and modifying services and influencing direction
- The ongoing work of the steering group is critical in managing the hubs growth and development

#### About this document

This case study has been developed by [Bromley by Bow Insights](#) and [Transformation Partners in Health and Care](#) who are working together to support the integration of social welfare advice into the health and social care system.