

Barking and Dagenham – A one team approach to supporting residents

BACKGROUND

Social prescribing is delivered in Barking and Dagenham as a service embedded within the local authority, with link workers working in close partnership with other statutory service within the council. Link workers act as ‘relationship managers’, with each allocated to one primary care network so that they are closely connected with clinical services and practice teams.

The [Homes and Money Hub \(HaMH\)](#) also sits within the local authority and supports residents with issues relating to housing and money issues. The team work closely with colleagues in other council teams for fast resolution of issues.

THE APPROACH

The two teams work closely together to ensure smooth client journeys from social prescribing to social welfare advice. Some key elements of the approach are:

Cross-team collaboration

Within the council and these two teams in particular, collaboration is a key part of ensuring services work effectively. Training is provided by the HaMH to equip link workers with the skills needed to address low-level issues that don’t need to be held as cases by the hub and day-to-day collaborative working also helps to build skills and knowledge.

Meanwhile, the interconnection between the HaMH and other council teams such as housing and housing benefit means that issues can often be resolved rapidly through access to resident records which enables fast identification of issues, and the best ways of resolving them. Both teams also work closely with other teams such as the Job Shop to maximise income, as well as to community projects to combat social isolation and children’s services for support for families.

TOP TIPS

- **Put data sharing agreements in place** to maximise the potential for a range of teams and organisations to work together to get the best outcomes for individuals.
- **Upskill link workers and other frontline staff** to identify issues and resolve more straightforward problems themselves.
- **Build strong systems to record data**, including levels of demand, categories of issue and outcomes. Complementing this with illustrative customer journeys and case studies helps to bring the impact of support to life.

Multi-agency working

Collaborative working isn’t limited to teams within the council, with broader partnerships enabling effective resolution of issues clients are facing. DWP staff are embedded within the HaMH, meaning that Universal Credit issues can be resolved quickly, and there is also a close partnership with [Citizens Advice Barking and Dagenham](#) who take onward referrals for complex benefit appeal and housing cases, as well as areas not covered by HaMH such as immigration.

Case reviews are held weekly, using robust data sharing protocols, with representatives from multiple organisations including Citizens Advice, the [Independent Living Agency](#) who provide support to disabled residents to work together to resolve complex cases, including those who may not fully engage with support.

“
It doesn’t feel like lots of different
teams, we’re all pulling together in
the same direction to get the best
outcome for residents.

- Jacquie Hutchinson, Service Manager

CASE STUDY CONTACT

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ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This case study has been produced by the [Bromley by Bow Centre](#) and [Greater London Authority](#) who are working together to support the development of social prescribing in London.

THE APPROACH (continued)**Driven by data**

Both teams record significant amounts of data as a matter of course in their work and are able to track journeys of residents through their systems, with both the social prescribing team able to track numbers and categories or referrals, and the HaMH being able to disaggregate the cases referred from social prescribing using a reporting button in their case management system. Outcomes including sustained tenancies, improved financial stability and maximised income are also recorded to show the impact of engagement with the services, with [illustrative customer journeys](#) produced to demonstrate how a range of issues can be resolved by teams working together.

When social prescribing began in December 2019, there were 11 referrals to the HaMH during the month. This has risen substantially to 26-27 in recent months. At the same time, the Hub has seen a significant increase in direct contacts from residents, as their phonenumber, previously a secondary service primarily for existing cases, has been in the public domain, receiving 6,188 calls since from the 6th of April 2020 to 19th of March 2021.

THE BENEFITS

The key benefits of the approach have been that:

- Through collaborative working between teams and organisations, residents are able to see their issues resolved quickly and without the need to be bounced around between too many services.
- Services have access to high-quality information on service demand and impact with reports being easily generated.

THE CHALLENGES

The key challenges in this area are primarily external, with ongoing challenges in relation to capacity for the HaMH to address the extent of difficulty being faced by residents. During the pandemic the team has been expanded with 31 additional staff being redeployed to the Hub to meet increased demand. However there is significant concern that as the furlough scheme and moratorium on evictions come to an end, at a similar time to planned reductions in funds available for local authorities to support residents directly e.g. through Discretionary Housing Payments, there may be a further significant increase in demand.

THE OUTCOME

The approach is viewed as having been hugely beneficial by both the social prescribing team and the HaMH. By taking a 'one team' approach to the challenges faced by residents, Barking and Dagenham has been able to increase the volume of people supported and generate and demonstrate the outcomes and impact it is able to achieve for them.

RESOURCES**Social Prescribing**

To read more about social prescribing in Barking and Dagenham, click [here](#).



For information supporting the voluntary and community sector to deliver on social prescribing please click [here](#).

Homes and Money Hub

To find out more about the Homes and Money Hub, click [here](#).



For information on support for social prescribing schemes offered by the Bromley by Bow Centre, please visit: <https://www.bbbc.org.uk/insights/>

Client Privacy Statement

For the privacy statement used to get consent for data sharing, click [here](#).



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

Customer Journeys

For customer journeys, click [here](#).

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