

## Enfield – Dedicated advice capacity for health referrals

### BACKGROUND

Social prescribing is delivered in Enfield by a combination of link workers employed by [Enfield Voluntary Action \(EVA\)](#), and others directly employed by primary care networks (PCNs) with training and support from EVA. There is dedicated capacity for referrals to Enfield Citizens Advice as part of a broader National Lottery-funded Health Champions project, which social prescribing link workers are able to utilise for referrals relating to social welfare issues.

### THE APPROACH

The approach taken to integrating social prescribing and social welfare advice in the borough is characterised by:

#### Building system-wide capacity and relationships

Integration of advice capacity into the health system operates at a broader level than purely social prescribing, with a range of Health Champions sitting in organisations across the borough able to tap into this resource. The Health Champion programme more broadly aims to build knowledge and capacity to improve health literacy and influence behavioural change, with a joined-up approach to advice needs built into this model, demonstrating a broader conceptualisation of health and care.

#### Fast track referrals

Link workers and others are able to benefit from a fast track referral system to a social welfare adviser, enabling issues to be dealt with quickly. As well as increasing the speed of referrals, this approach also helps to avoid the risk of drop-off that can come with signposting.

### TOP TIPS

- Consider working across the system rather than looking only at the interrelationship with social prescribing.
- Look for opportunities to build capacity amongst frontline workers within a range of organisations to tackle the challenges facing the community.
- Consider seeking grant funding to kickstart activity and test out approaches in the first instance.

#### Specialist areas of knowledge for link workers

Each social prescribing link worker in the EVA team has one or more specialism e.g. housing, mental health, and acts as the lead for the team on mapping services and managing relationships in this area. This helps to ensure the wider team are able to tap into the full range of local services to support patients and avoid individual link workers becoming overwhelmed.

### THE BENEFITS

The key benefits of the approach have been:

- Fast and appropriate referrals for advice, particularly in relation to welfare benefits, debt and housing.
- Developing community intelligence to help engage with local statutory bodies to create change e.g. advocating to the local council regarding housing challenges faced by residents.

“  
Link workers have become a key part of our wider approach to population health which looks across the system to address health inequalities

- Helen Price, Service Manager

”

### CASE STUDY CONTACT

**Name:** Helen Price, Manager, Social Prescribing  
**Organisation:** Enfield Voluntary Action  
**Website:** [Enfield Voluntary Action \(EVA\)](#)

### 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 CHALLENGES

The main challenges to the approach have been around limitations in capacity. This has particularly been the case in relation to advocacy services which are able to support with welfare benefit form filling which sees a high level of demand in the borough. This has meant that social prescribing link workers have needed to support directly with this in some cases where there is no onward referral pathway, though it is hoped that by offering this support it will be possible to demonstrate the demand and need for investment in local services.

There are also some systemic challenges, which can be incredibly difficult to resolve even with access to advice. This is particularly the case with some housing cases, due to the extent of the shortage of affordable accommodation supply in the borough. The service has however been able to develop community intelligence which has enabled it to feed information in to inform policymaking and service delivery in the borough.

### THE OUTCOME

The approach has worked well for referrers across the system and had a positive impact for patients who have had fast access to advice when needed. There has also been an improvement in skills and knowledge for staff across the system including social prescribing link workers.

Citizens Advice have been able to ensure that they are receiving referrals for some of the most vulnerable clients via social prescribing link workers as well as others across the borough, and that there is clearly allocated capacity for these referrals.

Having built evidence of the impact of this approach, EVA hope to be able to secure funding to sustain and build on the approach beyond its current funded period which is due to come to an end in 2022. This would help to ensure that a more holistic approach to health and wellbeing becomes an embedded long-term part of the system.

### RESOURCES

#### Enfield Voluntary Action

To find out more about the work of Enfield Voluntary Action, click [here](#).



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

#### Health Champions Programme

To find out more about the Health Champions programme, click [here](#).



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



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

### CASE STUDY CONTACT

**Name:** Helen Price, Manager, Social Prescribing  
**Organisation:** Enfield Voluntary Action  
**Website:** [Enfield Voluntary Action \(EVA\)](#)

### 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.