

Community Connectors



Health Action Local Engagement
Healthy Living Project

Helping you link to your community

Welcome to the first HALE Community Connector project newsletter.

It's been a busy few months following the roll-out of the Community Connector project to all 67 GP practices in the Bradford District. Work has been underway to promote the service and continue the success of the 2017 pilot project.

This new quarterly newsletter will provide information, resources and results from the work of the project and we look forward to working with colleagues in GP practices across the district to tell the stories of how Community Connectors are helping support patients in a variety of different ways.

If you would like to share a good news story with us about your work with Community Connectors, please get in touch.



HALE, 1 Westgate, Shipley, West Yorkshire BD18 3QX
www.haleproject.org.uk info@haleproject.org.uk



Celebrating diversity during Ramadan

HALE Community Connectors organised a series of events during Ramadan to connect with new and existing patients. The activities were designed to be low-energy whilst enhancing spiritual contemplation.

Rejwan and Khalil took a group of men to Leeds Central Mosque to share prayers. The khutba (sermon) was delivered in Arabic and English, ensuring everyone attending felt welcome.

The men prayed together and were able to talk in a relaxed environment. They greatly enjoyed the experience and were able to communicate with their Connectors in a way that has helped support their progress.

Anita organised the women's events in conjunction with Fahana, the Practice Engagement Lead at Valley View. They invited women to attend a series of 1 hour workshops to talk and learn about the meaning of Ramadan.

The sessions were led by Shazia, a local Alima (Female Islamic scholar). Shazia led the women in discussion, exploring the different levels of fasting and developing their skills in zikhr (meditation)

and focussing on breathing techniques and relaxation. The sessions were attended by women of different backgrounds, including non-muslim and Sikh women. The women explored their shared experiences of faith, charity and coping with difficult experiences in life. The sessions were well attended and the feedback was fantastic. "I really enjoyed the group. The people were so understanding and I enjoyed learning more about being relaxed and calm."

Valley View Surgery Practice Manager Uzma Ahmed supported the workshops throughout the month, saying; "We recognise the many benefits of working with Community Connectors to support our patients. These sessions provided information and support for women of all backgrounds and we were happy to host them in our practice."

This programme of events during Ramadan is another example of the flexible and creative approaches undertaken by the Community Connectors to welcome and engage clients. Working in partnership with the practice delivers the best possible outcomes for patients and reduces demands on practice services.

Emma's Story

Emma was referred to the Community Connector project by her GP after suffering from agoraphobia and anxiety since 2010. She hadn't left her home for years and had got to the stage where she couldn't answer her own front door. As a mum of 2 young children with baby number three on the way Emma was desperate for help.

We are grateful to Emma for sharing her story in her own words;

"My GP suggested putting me in touch with a Community Connector. I didn't know anything about them but I was at the stage where I wanted as much help as possible and was willing to

try anything. I was taking medication and was working with other services, but I wasn't making any progress. Rebecca came to see me at I felt relaxed with her from the start. She was very calm and happy to work at my pace. She wasn't pushing me to do too much too fast. Very quickly she managed to get me out of the house and we walked up my street. She treated me like a normal person and we were so busy talking I didn't realise how far we had walked!

Now my life is completely different. I've just completed my Childcare Level 1 course and am off to the seaside with my children this week. My plan for the future is to work to help people get through the situation I was in. I've needed medication to get through this, but I know working with Rebecca as well helped make sure it worked. Being with someone who has experienced different things and has time to be with me has helped me get better. I know I have a lot to offer."



Partnerships

At the heart of the continued success and growth of the Community Connectors project are the relationships with all the stakeholders. Linking up with Equality Together, Healthy Lifestyles Solutions and the Thornbury Centre brings together targeted skills and experience, be it language, geography or specialist services. This means that from the point of referral patients have access to a personalised one to one service of the highest quality.

Relationships with GP practices are also completely crucial to the growth and impact of this work. Even in the early stages of the project, supportive, creative and collaborative working between Practices and Community Connectors is showing positive impact and we want to ensure this continues.

If you would like a visit from the Community Connector team at any of your Practice meetings or events, please contact Sarah on 01274 271088 or sarah.cartin@haleproject.org.uk

Did you know?

HALE Community Connectors work with patients across Bradford in a variety of different languages.

Our Eastern European offer includes Romani, Czech, Polish, Hungarian and Slovak.

How to Refer

Referring to the HALE Community Connectors service is simple.

Community Connectors support people with a wide range of social, emotional or practical needs. Those who could benefit from a referral include people with mild or long-term mental health problems, people who are socially isolated, and those who frequently attend either primary or secondary health care.

- We are frequently referred people who have been recently bereaved or have financial problems or low mood and anxiety, or are a new parent.
- We see people up to 6 times to assess their needs and wants, support them into activities or advocate with local services.

Once a patient has been identified as suitable and has agreed to meet a Community Connector, the referrals can be made through System 1 under the “DQT Bradford Social Prescribing” template on your organisational tree.

We are happy to receive referrals from all colleagues in practice, in accordance with your referral policies.

If you have any queries about referrals, please contact the HALE office.



Other HALE projects

HALE delivers and supports a number of other projects and activities; some across the whole district and others targeted at specific locations and communities. If you would like any further information about our work, please get in touch.

- Youth work
- Allotments
- Support Groups
- Befriending
- Volunteering
- Diabetes support

Introducing HALE's new Chief Officer

Alastair McGregor took over as the new Chief Officer of HALE at the beginning of the summer and brings with him a wealth of experience from his previous role at Citizen's advice in Calderdale.

Ali has been getting to know the HALE team and meeting the huge range of partners, networks and stakeholders involved in the delivery of HALE's work.