

# In the community for the community

Better mental health care for Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington

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## Happy New Year!

### We are looking ahead to exciting changes in 2022

This time last year the NCL Community Mental Health Transformation Programme had not even started; now it is well underway with the appointment of more than 150 staff to new roles across our five boroughs. Our services have been changing, becoming more holistic, addressing issues such as problems with benefits, physical health and accommodation.

This work will continue in 2022 as we continue to roll out the changes and embed them in all areas of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington - and we are asking service users and community groups to help us shape these exciting new services. We are working with GPs, local authorities, voluntary groups and others to improve the mental health and wellbeing of residents. This means working collaboratively to tackle social and economic factors that can impact wellbeing.

Among many recent developments, 18 members of staff across Barnet, Enfield and Haringey are taking up exciting new roles as mental health practitioners in GP surgeries. These posts, created under the Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS), are funded 50% by the GPs.

The new staff sit within the GP surgeries but are managed by BEH. This partnership is another example of our closer collaboration and new ways of working between Primary Care Networks (PCNs) and Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs), to form core community teams, as outlined in the NHS Long Term Plan. The focus of the roles is likely to evolve however, the initial priorities will include:

- Advise GPs with diagnosis, medication, and referrals
- Hold caseloads and clinics for lower-need people with mental health issues.
- Work closely with primary care link working and core community teams to provide more support in the

**Dr Ian Prenelle was interviewed about the NCL transformation programme on London Live TV.**

**[See the full interview here](#)**



- Create a care plan with people using strength-based assessment supported with reflective practice and trauma informed care approaches.

Dr Thomas Spary, is a GP partner at Lawrence House Surgery, Haringey, where one of the AARS staff is based. He said: “By having mental health practitioners working more closely with primary care in the community, we are hoping that this provides better referral pathways, shorter waiting times and faster assessments closer to home for our patients who are struggling from the effects of mental health problems, which we know have increased over the last 18 months with the pressures of lockdown.”

More of these posts will be created in future across all five boroughs. We are also transforming the culture of care and the way we work with our service users to plan and deliver their treatment. We have great plans for 2022; follow our progress on the [BEH website](#) and the [C&I website](#).

### New Year Resolutions – ideas for a healthier lifestyle and tips to keep you on track



[Ideas for improving mental wellbeing](#)



[Tips for healthy eating](#)



[Exercise workouts to get you moving](#)

# Instilling a trauma-informed approach

**Sally Hurcomb is Practice Development Lead, working with BEH in Barnet as part of the NCL community mental health transformation programme and is helping teams to develop a trauma-informed approach. Here she explains what that is and why it is being rolled out.**



It is important to start by saying that the development of a trauma approach is part of the NHS Long Term Plan; “to understand and respond to the impact of trauma on people’s lives”.

The approach emphasises physical, psychological and emotional safety for everyone and aims to empower individuals to re-establish control of their lives. Trauma informed care is fundamentally concerned with creating conditions that reduce harm and promote healing.

This principle sits at the core of the transformation where new roles and community provisions are being developed to support the needs of our service users.

As part of the programme, we are rolling out the use of DIALOG+. This is a system which acknowledges and addresses the life domains and health needs of our clients with an overarching arm of personal safety and practical help. The DIALOG+ framework is numerically rated by the client and their experiences measured along their enablement/recovery journey. This tool is a live document that sits with the client and travels with them. It functions as a collaborative conversation where the client is able to prioritise their needs and then work with those involved with their care to support them to meet their goals. This is, in itself, a trauma informed approach, as it works with the individual’s context and all plans are made and agreed with the person.

The narrative of a trauma informed approach is very much understanding what has happened in a person’s life to cause distress as opposed to thinking “what is wrong and what is the diagnosis”. The approach is not anti-diagnosis, but is client-centered, and strength based.

This new approach challenges the power dynamic and places the client as the specialist and empowers them to take control of their lives. What services offer, is support on the way.

The transformation programme offers us the opportunity to be brave and reflect on the areas that continue to work and to challenge the areas that no longer work and do not meet the trauma informed approach. This involves having different conversations and working in new ways.

We are collaborating with the voluntary sector and integral to this are our peer workers, who are embedded within teams. Having mental health practitioners within GP surgeries (as outlined on Page 1) will enable specialist mental health support to be offered from the outset. This will change our service users’ experience and, with the DIALOG+ framework, assess the individual’s specific needs. Once assessed, the need can be met in mental health services if appropriate, or within mainstream community provisions where possible.

This is just a snapshot of one aspect of the transformation programme. I am very excited to be part of this change and look forward to sharing our next chapter.

## More New Year tips for a healthy lifestyle ...



[Keeping to a healthy weight](#)



[Tiredness and sleeping well](#)



[The benefits of stopping smoking](#)

# Reaching out to seldom-heard groups

Mental Health Practitioner,  
Deborah Brown (left) with  
Community Development  
Worker Ruth Hislop-Gill



As part of our transformation of community mental health services across north London, we are getting in touch with seldom-heard groups to discover how we can best serve them.

Clinical staff are working with voluntary sector organisations to contact community groups, to ask about their concerns, listen to their thoughts and ask for their suggestions on how we can tailor our services to suit their needs. This is a new concept in mental health care – which sees Community Development Workers working alongside clinical staff.

In the Kentish Town core team, Community Development Worker Ruth Hislop-Gill is employed by the charity Likewise, working alongside Mental Health Practitioner, Deborah Brown, who is employed by C&I. Together they are forming new relationships and developing trust, encouraging groups to open up and express what they would like mental health services to look like in the future.

Ruth said: “The role is quite transformative in itself, just having someone there who's dedicated to thinking about who the community is, who the local populations are, what are their needs. We are working with communities that have traditionally been marginalised or have found it difficult to come through services because they don't feel understood. People who work in these services seem invisible to these communities, so quite a lot of the work we're trying to do is to identify those particular populations and really ground us into the local communities so that people know who we are.”

They have been working with the [British Somali Community](#) group and, a youth community based organisation for Somali young people in Camden and neighbouring areas, the [Somali Youth Development Resource Centre \(SYDRC\)](#).

Ruth said: “There's a huge Somali population in Kentish Town and it felt really relevant for us to be part of that conversation. We're also seeing this work as a pilot, to see how we can interact with other communities around Kentish Town, and we're hoping to do something similar with the Bengali community.”

As these relationships become established, Deborah and Ruth plan to start working with other organisations across their area and, when new core teams are launched in April 2022, as part of the Community Transformation Programme, community workers will be doing similar work in those teams too.

Deborah said: “This has enabled us to work with the community, in ways that we've not tried before. You can appreciate the NHS is very structured. We have very clinical ways of doing things, and I think this is actually much more creative and involves a partnership. I really appreciate having a partnership with somebody who's not directly part of the NHS, so the way she thinks about things is very different to the way I do, that means I get to see things from a very different perspective.”

Deborah said she regularly attends the Network for Change (NfC) support meetings at C&I, which give people a chance to speak about the things that they are concerned about with others who listen and understand. She said: “One week, I actually broke down in tears because I got to speak to people that “got it”. They understood me. And that's how I know that the work that we're doing now is the right way to do things, because we're making an effort to listen and understand what other people need.”

## All in a day's work

Every month we introduce you to someone helping to transform mental health care. For many service users, employment is a challenge, but Mark John Stevens is helping to change that. He was a Senior Employment Specialist based at Southwood Smith Centre and is now team lead for the Islington Mental Health Individual Placement and Support Team



*If you are a client of either Islington North or South Rehab and Recovery teams, or Islington Early Intervention Service and want a referral, please discuss with your mental health clinician.*

*If you would like to find out more about the service, please contact Mark John Stevens on 07507 514681 or [Mark.Stevens@Candi.nhs.uk](mailto:Mark.Stevens@Candi.nhs.uk)*

### How do you start your day?

I'd like to say it's with a list of daily duties and tasks to be completed. But actually, I enjoy talking to colleagues, having a nice cup of tea, and thinking about the day ahead.

### How are you helping to transform care?

We enable our service users to find a job. Our clients understand the value of full or part-time work, of being included, of having extra money, of how it can impact upon their health. Our role is also to help an individual to sustain that role. Often that's a straightforward process, but it is also about ensuring that the individual feels safe at work and understands how their health might impact upon their ability to do their job. We work with their employment specialists and clinical support to ensure they keep their job. We promote better understanding of mental health within the workplace; ensuring there is support at work for clients and that this support continues to evolve according to need. Our care is also about ensuring that the workplace can respond effectively to anyone who experiences mental ill health at work.

### Where did you work previously?

I've worked in employment support since the mid-1990s with people with a range of health conditions, and in the last 16 years within mental health. During that time I've seen many changes and most recently, the current approach to supporting people, called [Individual Placement and Support](#). This approach offers a route to sustained employment for people with severe mental health conditions and aims to standardise the approach to employment across the country.

### Why are you passionate about mental health?

I enjoy the enthusiasm of my clinical colleagues who, over the years, have embraced employment for the service users in their care. I still get a kick when a client tells me they have been offered a job. Employment doesn't work for everyone, but those service users who have started work have been vocal on how having a job has changed their lives; for anyone working in employment support, that drives our enthusiasm and energy to do the best we can.

### What are you looking forward to most after the pandemic?

I'm looking forward to face-to-face meetings with everyone. COVID restrictions on the way we work have been challenging but Mental Health Working Islington has continued throughout. Pop along to any of Islington's secondary mental health services and you'll see our banner with quotes from service users saying what employment has meant to them.

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