

City & Hackney Mental Health in the Neighbourhoods

Community Connector Proposed Job Outline— April 2020 Covid-19 Version

Introduction

East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) working with Mind CHWF and other voluntary sector partners is delighted to offer a secondment as a community connector to support the mental well-being of people with complex mental health and social needs in the Neighbourhoods in City & Hackney.

This is a new role and we are looking to work with individuals from the voluntary sector to help us co-design and test out the role. You will help to shape the role, working closely with people in Neighbourhoods to reflect their strengths, interests and ideas for what matters to them about good mental well-being.

You will be a welcome member of the multi-disciplinary (MDT) mental health team, with day-to-day managerial and professional supervision provided within the team. You will also be able to access training and other staff support within ELFT during this time.

Background

In the autumn of 2019 ELFT was successful in securing funding from NHS England (NHSE) for community mental health transformation. It is one of 12 national pilot sites. City and Hackney, Newham and Tower Hamlets are all part of the ELFT pilot. The aim of the transformation is to develop a model of support for people with serious mental illness (SMI) that recognises complexity and social determinants over and above diagnosis, and supports them through a blended team of voluntary sector, mental health and primary care staff to connect better into a range of activities in their neighbourhoods. The new teams are organised around City & Hackney Primary care networks (PCNs) / Neighbourhoods, and will provide wraparound support for people with varying levels of need. These teams will develop a rich understanding of population mental health need, and work with individuals, families, and communities to develop capacity for self-management, and provide local treatment and support for individuals when they need it.

The teams include the new community connector role. This will be someone from the voluntary sector, well connected in the neighbourhoods and bringing expertise in wider social support and well-being. We are working with voluntary sector partners to design and test this role.

Responding to Covid 19

Since the Covid 19 emergency began in mid-March much of the transformation programme has had to be adapted. ELFT is keen that where the transformation can support the Covid 19 response it should continue. In particular the role of the community connector could be valuable during the Covid 19 emergency and recovery.

The role obviously needs to be different and we will work closely with the connectors and the voluntary sector to design and test out the role. The description here is intended as a starter for ten to give some idea about the shape the role might take.

During the Covid pandemic, the community connectors will be part of the ELFT community MDT team, making links to specific Neighbourhoods. Also the face to face work in terms of assessments, interventions, group work, partnership working may need to be carried out differently. The role will now include:

- providing support to service users by phone/virtually
- connecting service users to the fast developing range of Covid 19 resources in each neighbourhood and keeping the mental health and primary care teams up to date about these resources and how to refer people to the/access them. Including supporting the new Neighbourhood MDTs as these develop.
- developing a good knowledge of all the online resources in each neighbourhood and connecting service users and staff to these
- we will keep the option for face to face work and group work under review, depending on the government guidance on social distancing. As lockdowns are lifted there may be some possibility to offer this type of support

The following five design principles have guided our model development to date:

1. ***Service users and citizens will be active, equal partners:*** leading the design, implementation, governance, and delivery of our new mode
2. ***We will integrate mental and physical health, wellbeing and social care:*** our services will feel fully integrated to service users and carers
3. ***The right support in the right place and the right time:*** services will be delivered in the PCN footprint, and service users will not be “bounced around” services
4. ***A focus on what matters to service users:*** care planning will look beyond health goals to life goals and wider determinants of health; and we will work to connect people to each other and their communities
5. ***Evidence-based interventions:*** Service users will be confident that our services provide the latest evidence-based care, treatment and support.

The role

The Community Connectors will support individuals to connect within neighbourhoods, and use local assets to self-organise.

Who you will support

The post-holder will work closely with individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) and/or personality disorders (PD), developing an understanding of complexity in order to provide the most appropriate support. Some of the service users you will work with will have been supported by community mental health recovery teams, seen in outpatients and are not care co-ordinated, so could be better supported by their local neighbourhood team. Other service users will be on primary care SMI registers and likely to benefit from additional support, but do not meet the thresholds for traditional secondary care. Other people might not be known to our services currently, and could benefit from the more personalised, local, holistic offer you will be developing.

Your approach

The ethos of this work will be recovery focused, move away from a traditional referral model, blur the boundaries between primary and secondary care, explore needs through complexity (rather than diagnosis), focus on a person's strengths and assets, and focus on the wider determinants of health and wellbeing. This approach is as important as your experience and expertise. You will develop a strengths based biopsychosocial assessment, and supportive approach, and work with colleagues and local people to develop the MDT approach in its infancy.

Although not exhaustive, below is a list of the skills and responsibilities that may be required:

Individual Support

- Strong interpersonal and communication skills. It is important that you listen to service users and carers to find out what is important to them, and that you build open, supportive and trusting relationships (working with the challenges of not meeting face-to-face, at least initially, due to the current Covid-19 public health crisis. We will keep the option for face to face work and group work under review, depending on the government guidance on social distancing. As lockdowns are lifted there may be some possibility to offer this type of support.)
- A strong sense of what factors influence health and wellbeing.
- The ability to assist service users in setting goals and making changes that are meaningful to them.
- You will conduct regular innovative and engaging sessions (currently with individuals, over the phone) in order to work towards support plan goals.
- You will ensure ongoing assessment and management of risks within an attitude of 'positive risk taking'.
- You will give people time to tell their stories and focus on 'what matters to me', build trust, providing non-judgemental support, respecting diversity and lifestyle choices.
- You will use health coaching and motivational interviewing techniques, identify barriers to people accessing services, and work with service users to overcome these. You will support people to identify the wider issues that impact on their health and wellbeing, such as debt, poor housing, employment circumstances and unemployment, loneliness, isolation and caring responsibilities.
- Where people may be eligible for a personal health budget, help them to explore this option as a way of providing funded, personalised support to be independent, including helping people to gain skills for meaningful employment, where appropriate.

Community Development

- You will act as the 'glue', linking people in with experts and local assets, and undertaking support work in partnership with external stakeholders to complement their interventions.
- You will stay up to date with the constantly developing environment, local offer, and national policies, during the Covid-19 pandemic. Significant experience in local statutory and/or voluntary sector services.
- You will have a deep knowledge of City & Hackney (or a specific local area or demographic), what is available locally and how to signpost and support people (network creation, mapping).
- You will develop productive relationships with local partner organisations to improve service outcomes, and involve service users and carers in the design, development and delivery of the service.
- You will need to triage referrals and signpost to specialist support quickly where necessary, and deal with general queries to contribute to the overall smooth running of the neighbourhood team.
- Where appropriate, introduce people to community groups, activities and statutory services, ensuring they are comfortable. Follow up to ensure they are happy, able to engage, included and receiving good support.
- Where appropriate you will connect people to each other through shared common interests and the need for mutual support.
- You will have the ability and drive to build networks with local community resources such as activities and services that may have an impact on health and wellbeing, and support individuals to access these. To be proactive in encouraging self-referrals, and connecting with all local communities.
- You will work in partnership with existing community navigation roles in City & Hackney.

Project Management

- You will monitor and record outcomes of all those accessing the service through the use of recognised assessment tools and outcome measures. With the wider team, you will gather and collate statistical and other information and data as required, reporting on activity and outcomes and ensuring effective qualitative and quantitative monitoring and evaluation of the services.
- You will help to develop and adapt this role as the societal circumstances we are operating under change (as the Covid-19 public health situation develops and/or social distancing is relaxed).

General

- You will reflect on practice and participate in team meetings, practice development forums and peer supervision. You will identify own training and development needs in conjunction with your Line Manager and participate in training opportunities.
- You will develop an awareness of local and national developments and best practice in this area of work and to attend relevant conferences, meetings and training events as required.
- You will adhere to organisational policies and procedures relating to risk and personal safety. You will refer all safeguarding issues in line with local policy.
- You will manage volunteers and other team members as required.
- You will identify issues relating to systemic challenges and disconnects, and report these to the Programme Manager, developing an eye for service improvement opportunities.

Person Specification

As a community connector, you will become a local expert, gathering and sharing information about local opportunities, activities, and support, bringing people together and supporting them to remain confident and independent in their everyday lives.

We are looking for community connectors with experience supporting people with their mental health, with significant experience in statutory and/or voluntary sector services, knowledge of City & Hackney (or a specific local area or demographic), and strong interpersonal skills.

Skills and experience:

Person Centred

- Enjoys social interaction and the company of others.
- Exudes a warm friendly presence and open behaviour. Is approachable and open-minded.
- Prefers working as part of a group or team.
- Has a practical and logical mind.
- **Well organised and knows how to prioritise tasks. Able to plan own workload.**
- **Thrives on change and enjoys dynamic diverse environments.**
- Is respectful, articulate and sensitive in style of communication.
- Ability to listen, empathise with people and provide person-centred support in a non-judgmental.
- Able to support people in a way that inspires trust and confidence, motivating others to reach their potential.
- Experience of supporting people, families and care in a related role (including unpaid work).
- Experience of supporting people with their mental health, either in a paid, unpaid or informal capacity.

Community Development

- Commitment to reducing health inequalities and proactively working to reach people from all communities.
- Able to work from an asset-based approach, building on existing community and personal assets.
- Ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and in writing, with people, their families, carers, community groups, partner agencies and stakeholders.

- Ability to identify risk and assess/manage risk when working with individuals.
- Able to get along with people from all backgrounds and communities, respecting lifestyles and diversity.
- Is motivated towards excellence and improvement of personal performance with a can do attitude.
- Ability to cope positively with challenging and diverse behaviour.
- Demonstrates a desire for continuous professional development.
- Experience of working directly in a community development context, adult health and social care, learning support or public health/health improvement (including unpaid work).
- Experience of partnership/collaborative working and of building relationships across a variety of organisations.

Knowledge:

- Understanding of the wider determinants of health, including social, economic and environmental factors and their impact on communities and how adverse circumstances and structural barriers can affect people's relationships
- An understanding of the experiences of people who live with significant mental distress.
- Knowledge of community development approaches.
- Knowledge of IT systems, including ability to use word processing skills, emails and the internet to create simple plans and reports.
- Knowledge of motivational coaching and interview skills.
- Knowledge of voluntary and community services in the local neighbourhood.

Essential:

- Educated to GCSE level (or equivalent by experience).
- NVQ Level 2/3 or equivalent.
- Significant experience in statutory or voluntary sector services.
- IT literate.

Desirable:

- Mental Health First Aid or willingness to work towards the qualification.
- Training in motivational coaching and interviewing or equivalent experience.
- University degree and/or professional qualification.
- Experience of delivering peer support groups.