

# Chelsea and Westminster Psychiatry Liaison and British Red Cross Partnership

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## Introduction

In October 2020 Chelsea and Westminster Hospital (C&WH) Psychiatry Liaison Team (PLT) formed a partnership with the British Red Cross (BRC) in an innovative model where a humanitarian organisation sits within a PLT. The aim of this project is to enhance social and practical support for patients thus helping patients to live independently, connect with appropriate community services and reduce distressing crisis hospital attendances.

## Methods

Suitable patients are identified during psychiatric assessment and consented for referral to BRC Liaison. The team works collaboratively with the patient to define the areas of need and identify strategies to address these. The initial impact of the project has been evaluated through retrospective data collection by review of electronic medical records and the BRC referral system.

## Results

- 37 patients were referred to BRC Liaison between October 2020 and January 2021. Of these 30 referrals were accepted, 6 failed due to lack of communication and 1 declined as inappropriate.
- Fig 1. illustrates the demographics of referred patients with regards to their gender, age and living arrangements.
- On average each patient had 23.8 interactions with the team majority of which consisted of phone calls (47.6%) followed by writing letters (20%) and face to face appointments (18.9%).
- Addressed areas of need varied widely with the 3 most common ones being befriending/volunteering opportunities, housing and access to medical services (Fig 2.).
- Individual interviews post interventions have shown high level of patient satisfaction and positive feedback (see Fig 3).
- Cumulative number of referrals to C&WH PLT for these patients in the year prior to the BRC involvement was 46. After the intervention only 3 patients were re-referred so far.

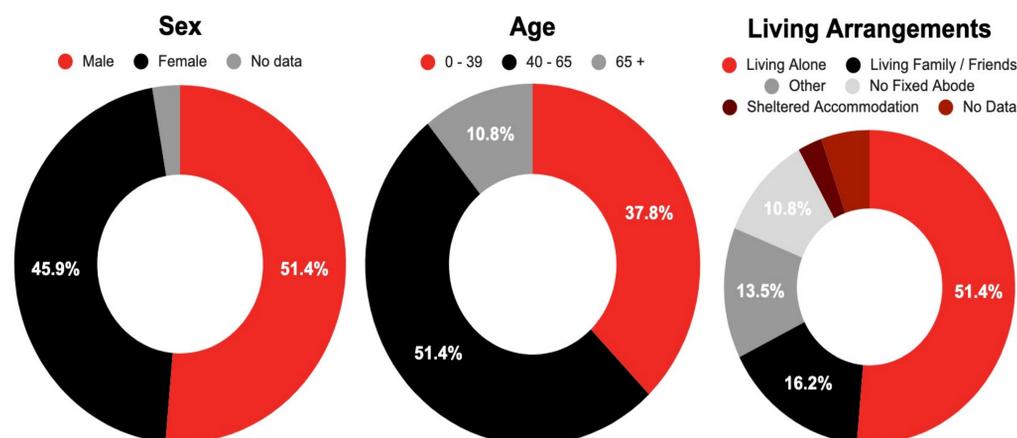


Fig 1. Demographic background of referred patients - sex, age and living arrangements

## Addressed areas of need

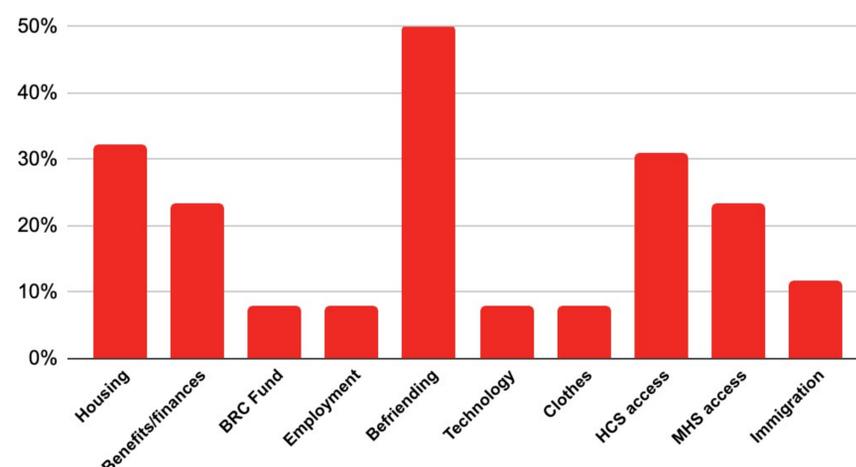


Fig 2. Percentage of referrals where particular areas of need were addressed by the team. Abbreviations: HCS = Health Care Services, MHS = Mental Health Services

*Thanks so much for all your help! So glad things are turning around for me and I was able to find help from you guys when I needed it.*

*I'd like to thank you for your help and also thank the staff member who referred me to your service. It helps to have someone to refer into when you have those moments (attending A&E). It's like you're their little brother or sister and you work together.*

Fig 3. Quotes from closing interview surveys.

## Discussion

- The partnership contributes to achieving the sustainability principles of Royal College of Psychiatrists: prioritising prevention, empowering individuals and communities and improving value of services by providing the right intervention at the right time.<sup>1</sup>
- Middle-aged men formed a large portion of referrals allowing to target a population, which underutilises mental health services.<sup>2</sup>
- The generalisability of our conclusions is limited by short follow up period and relatively small sample. Next steps in impact evaluation would include analysis of all A&E attendances.
- With 17 local BRC teams and over 20 London Psychiatry Liaison teams, there is a high local scalability potential.

## Conclusions

- Close collaboration of psychiatric services with a humanitarian organisation can help bridge the gaps in social care and provide practical support in community extending beyond the date of discharge.
- It can lead to improved patient satisfaction, help patients maintain their independence and reduce the overall number of distressing crisis attendances to hospital.
- There is a high scalability potential of the project by replicating the model in other London hospitals and nationwide.

## References

1. Royal College of Psychiatrists Psychiatric Liaison Accreditation Network (2020) Quality Standards for Liason Psychiatry Services, Sixth Edition.
2. Sagar-Ouriaghi I., Godfrey E., Bridge L. et al. (2019) Improving Mental Health Service Utilization Among Men: A Systematic Review and Synthesis of Behaviour Change Techniques Within Interventions Targeting Help-Seeking. American Journal of Men's Health 13(3)

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