



January 2023

We wish you all a very Happy and Healthy New Year.

This is a special supplement of the Community Navigator Newsletter
- we have some very exciting news to share with you for 2023!

We are joining "Connect North – Your Pathway to Wellbeing"

Connect North is an integrated social prescribing service for the Northern Trust area. Our four Community Navigators will be joining the Connect North Team as "Connect North Link Workers" and continue to work within the community and voluntary sector. There will be eight Connect North Link Workers covering the Northern Trust area.

The service was given the name "Connect North: Your Pathway to Wellbeing" by service users. We are mostly going to refer to it as "Connect North".

Between now and 1st April 2023 we will be transitioning to the role of Connect North Link Workers. There will be no gap in service provision during this time. From the 1st April 2023, the Community Navigators will have transitioned fully to the enhanced role of Connect North Link Workers.

Background

The Northern Health and Social Care Trust (NHSCT), Public Health Agency (PHA), and their community partners have been providing the Community Navigator Service to people over 50 living in the NHSCT area for a number of years now. Over this time, we have been reviewing what works well and what could be improved. We have also seen people's needs evolve and change.

The improvements you told us you needed

Since 2019 we have been gathering feedback on the experiences of service users and service providers so we can learn about what is needed to improve the service.

Here is some of the feedback we received:



The improvements we are making

The role of the Community Navigator

Many things affect our health and wellbeing. Social factors such as work, money, housing problems, the challenges of managing long-term conditions or feeling lonely or isolated are just as important to our health and wellbeing as our physical health needs.

Connecting people with the right help and support to address these social needs is called "social prescribing". The Community Navigators will become social prescribers or "Link Workers". This means we can enhance the service clients receive by not only helping them to find appropriate help and support but to better support them to be able to access and utilise these services based on their specific social needs.

A single directory for everyone

We are also creating a single directory of services for the whole of the Northern Trust area. Having all this information in one place will be easier to manage and keep up to date. It will also save us quite a bit of time! We hope to make this directory publicly available in the future, so you can find out what is available and have ready access to it too.

Ease of access to the service

Our Community Navigator ("Link Worker") service will integrate with other NHSCT navigation, signposting and social prescribing services in the area. Having these services in one place will make it easier to access and utilise the Connect North service.

What changes will I notice?

I am a Service User

You should not notice any change in how you access the service. You will notice that our role becomes "Connect North Link Workers" and we can better tailor support to your specific needs.

I am a Service Provider

The Connect North Team will be in contact to check that the details we hold on the directory about your service are correct. You can also choose to maintain your own information on the directory to ensure it is always up to date.

I am a Referrer

If you are a referrer and wish to continue to refer to the Navigator i.e. the Connect North Link Worker service, then please contact me directly to confirm your details. The Connect North Team will then contact you to update you about the referral process (don't panic.....it really is very straightforward!)

We will continue to provide updates on the transition to Connect North via this newsletter and at events etc.

Contact Details

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