

Help on Your Doorstep







Celebrating Five Years



2009 – 2014



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Foreword



The London Borough of Islington is one of the most deprived areas in the UK, with poverty hidden by a more visible minority of wealthy residents. In the early 2000s, piloting work supported by the Government's New Deal for Communities programme demonstrated the need for a holistic outreach model, to connect disadvantaged people with existing local services that can help them.

Ever since Help on Your Doorstep was established in 2009, our Connect services have been meeting this need through comprehensive outreach and engagement with local residents. Our success is based around our unique approach of taking a wide ranging, comprehensive package of 140 referral options to each and every doorstep in the most deprived neighbourhoods across the borough. This enables us to help resolve interconnected, often complex needs effectively and efficiently.

In 2014, we celebrate the fifth anniversary of Help on Your Doorstep. The need for our work over that time remains as strong as ever. We were delighted to open our new office in Archway in 2014. This marks an important milestone in the history of the organisation. We now operate our Connect services in all 16 wards across the borough for the first time. This brings challenges for us an organisation, but immense benefit to our clients who have the local support they need on their doorsteps.

Ken Kanu, Director

Help on Your Doorstep



Executive summary

Help on Your Doorstep was established as a charitable organisation in 2009. Its core activity is a service called Connect, that operates in areas of Islington with high levels of deprivation. Islington is the 14th most deprived local authority area in England, and the 5th most deprived borough in London. Connect aims to empower these isolated and vulnerable residents to improve their lives.

Connect advisers identify the most deprived neighbourhoods in Islington, and knock on every door to ensure comprehensive outreach. Connect is unique in that, whereas most outreach models are single issue, this proactive outreach model brings a wide ranging, holistic package of multiple referral options to the doorstep. This enables advisers to respond to the multiple and complex issues people talk to them about.

In five years Connect has grown from a small pilot project run by the New Deal for Communities, to being established as an independent charity. It has grown from three to seventeen staff. Evaluation has shown that Connect is an effective model for reaching those often described as 'hard to reach', with 50% of our clients having not previously accessed local services.

In 2013 we helped our 5,000th resident, and in 2014 we are approaching our 7,000th resident. Connect helps 1,600 people per year in Islington, making 3,600 referrals to our 140 partner organisations. Connect also delivers 1,100 cases of its own direct support to residents each year.

Most important of all are our client outcomes. Within three months of knocking on their door, 95% of clients say their issue has been resolved, improved or is receiving ongoing support.

Introduction

Our mission

Help on Your Doorstep was established in 2009 with the primary mission of making a difference to the health and wellbeing of isolated and vulnerable residents in Islington. Help on Your Doorstep aims to empower individuals to overcome the barriers they face and improve their lives.

Client facing objectives

We aim to link people with opportunities and support that will:

- Improve their physical and mental health
- Secure employment and maximise their income
- Help manage any debts, improve financial capability and financial hardship
- Improve their housing situation i.e. making it sustainable, safe and secure
- Enhance community participation and eliminate isolation
- Engage young people in learning and development

Partnerships objectives

In addition to the outcomes sought for individuals, we aim to exert positive influence through working with others on the development and delivery of services in our

borough. Our key objectives in this area are to:

- Contribute to the reach of statutory and non statutory agencies concerned with delivering advice and support services to deprived communities
- Contribute to the effectiveness of existing services in our communities through the provision of evidence on the needs of clients and feedback on the responses of services to these needs
- Support the development and implementation of policy and strategy relating to deprived communities through the provision of local intelligence

Deprivation in Islington

The London Borough of Islington is the 14th most deprived area in England with poverty hidden by a more visible minority of wealthy residents.

- Of the 40,000 children and young people in Islington, 13,000 live below the poverty line, the fourth highest rate in England and second highest rate in London
- Islington has the fourth highest level of older people living in poverty in England
- Social rented housing accounts for 44% of all homes in the borough
- In 2012 there were 7 to 8 people chasing each job vacancy in Islington

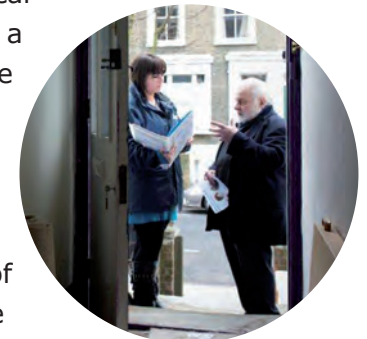
(Sources: Islington Giving and Islington Evidence Hub)

What assistance does Help on Your Doorstep offer?

Assistance is offered in a wide range of areas that impact directly on individual wellbeing. These areas include financial hardship, physical and mental health, employment and learning opportunities, and access to specialist advice on housing, debt and welfare rights.

The Service Model

Help on Your Doorstep's core work, our outreach and referral model, is called Connect. We identify the most deprived neighbourhoods, and knock on every door to ensure comprehensive outreach. We are unique in that, whereas most outreach models are single issue, our proactive outreach brings a wide ranging, holistic package of multiple referral options to the doorstep. This enables us to respond to the multiple and complex issues people talk to us about on their doorsteps. This is far more cost effective than each referral partner setting up their own proactive outreach initiatives. Our advisers arrive on local residents' doorsteps with a solution focussed package of 140 referral partners. Many of these partners are not set up for proactive outreach, and recognise the efficiency of using Connect's expertise





and local knowledge. We are independent and have no vested interest in which partner our client is referred to. We talk to residents, identify issues and make referrals on their doorsteps when appropriate, connecting them with relevant local support services. We then work with our client and referral partners all the way through to resolution.

Three Week Callbacks

After three weeks, the advisor checks back with the client to see how things are going, and to make sure that they are getting the support they need. At this point the adviser invites the client to an appointment at the Connect offices to discuss what other needs they might have, and plan how these can be addressed.

Twelve Week Callbacks

After twelve weeks, a further call is made to follow up and establish whether the issue has been resolved.

We have found that over 50% of our clients have not accessed support services in the past, while a significant proportion of those who have accessed support services report negative experiences.

Help on Your Doorstep’s three month follow up feedback suggests that 75% of clients report an improvement in their situation within that time frame. A further 20% report that they are in receipt of ongoing support within three months of our first knock on their door.

Why is Connect successful?

The key elements that contribute to the success of the model are:

- Intensive repeat door to door outreach: enabling service solutions to be brought to the front door of those less likely to proactively seek support
- The range of service solutions: our directory of 140 partners offers the opportunity to provide holistic solutions to complex problems

- Our local focus: our five offices are all situated at the heart of the communities that we serve and are predominantly staffed by local employees and volunteers – as a result, they are seen as welcoming and easily accessible
- Our independence: as an independent charity our local communities trust us and recognise that it is our priority to help them realise their priorities
- The quality and strength of our partnerships: we strive to collaborate with high quality partners and represent their offers accurately and appropriately – all partners work to a single referral system and share information on every client using the Help on Your Doorstep database
- Our commitment to supporting clients to gain confidence and knowledge to access and navigate future services themselves.

A team of advisers and volunteers each work in their own designated area of the borough, knocking on the door of every household to identify residents that need support.



Calum

Former volunteer and client

Calum started out as a volunteer for Connect, before realising we could also help him as a client. Connect referred Calum to an employment partner, which helped him secure an engineering apprenticeship.

There'd been quite a few times when we'd been out door knocking and found people in distress. But I found it miles more exciting that there was an organisation that did this. Other than Jehovah's witnesses or Labour knocking on your door trying to get your vote, it's not often that you get someone trying to start a conversation on your doorstep asking you if you genuinely need any kind of assistance. Through Help on Your Doorstep I also secured a massive opportunity, possibly life changing, I'm sure it is.

John

Connect Team Leader



John has been working with Connect since it began in 2009, having been involved with the pilot project in EC1 since 2005. He has seen how the service has grown and changed over the past five years.

When Connect began we were only operating in EC1, a relatively small area of Islington. The Connect model is so simple and replicable that there's no reason why it can't be rolled out in other areas. We're considering expanding beyond Islington in the longer term.

Jodie

Recent graduate and volunteer



Jodie is a recent graduate who is volunteering with our Archway team in order to gain experience for her chosen career of social work.

Volunteering has provided me with key skills, which will prepare me for employment in the future. As a Help on Your Doorstep volunteer, I am able to network, work with a variety of organisations and build good relationships with clients. The most rewarding element for me is seeing the transition of a vulnerable client into a more confident person who is able to manage their affairs.



Nicola

Connect Adviser and former client

Nicola started out as a client of Connect, before joining the team as a member of staff. As a result of her first-hand experience of the difference that Connect can make to people's lives, Nicola is ideally placed to understand the needs of our clients.

A lot of people get into debt because they're trying to support their families, and they're on very minimal income. They don't know that there's a whole range of services that can support them. If they are supported and understand that they're not alone, and that there are services out there that can support them, then we will make a difference. It will give more hope to the future generations coming up.

Serena*

Serena had never heard of Connect before they knocked on her door about four months ago. Serena describes how when Connect 'found' her she was in a 'very stressful state' as she was due to be evicted from her home later that week.

Serena had been receiving jobseekers allowance but the 'shame' that she felt for receiving the allowance led her to 'sign off' and look for work herself.

Unfortunately, Serena hadn't known this would affect her housing benefit and soon found herself in financial difficulties, unable to pay the rent. The stress of the impending eviction was affecting her mental state and she felt totally alone, afraid and helpless. Having just come from a homeless shelter she did not want to go back to that situation.

Serena was very happy to be contacted via Connect's 'door knocking' because she did not feel she could go out and seek help for herself as she was too overwhelmed by her problems.

During the first meeting the Connect staff were very helpful: they offered compassion and care as well as practical advice. When she talked through all of her issues she soon felt confident that they had the right skills, contacts and knowledge to be able to help her. It was very important to her that they did all of this with a very personal human approach.

Connect set up an emergency meeting with a housing solicitor and consequently, it was arranged for Serena to stay in the house. This made her 'so relieved and happy, that I cried on the phone.' In the 4 months that followed, Serena soon learnt about the other services Connect offer and has been able to make use of them with things such as getting financial assistance with buying her daughter's school uniform and sorting out overdue gas bills.

Serena says:

Sometimes you feel so overwhelmed by your problems and you might know services are out there but you can't think straight and you don't know how to make best use of them so by having Connect to offer a personal touch it's really helpful. They're just so human, you can tell they're doing it because they want to help and they really care.

*Please note that names have been changed to preserve interviewees' anonymity. As such, we have not specified which Connect service the client used.

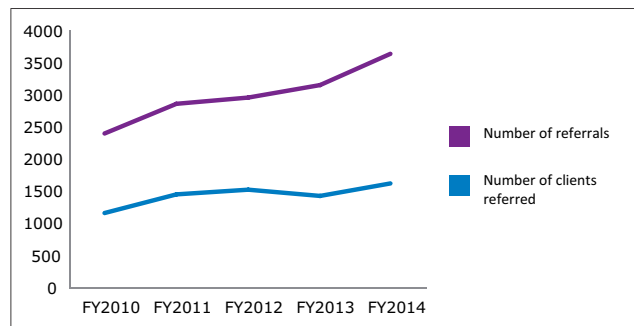
Reach and Outcomes

Our increasing reach

Evaluation has shown that Connect is an effective model for reaching those most in need, with 50% of our clients having not previously accessed local services.

The total number of **doors knocked** has grown from just over **19,000** in **2010-11** to over **26,000** in **2013-14**.

As the graph below shows, the number of clients we help has increased from **1,025** in **2009-10** to **1,555** in **2013-14**.



Similarly, the number of referrals has increased from 2,105 in 2009-10 to 3,506 in 2013-14.

Help on Your Doorstep's activity is undertaken and coordinated by 12.8 full-time equivalent

staff, 9 of whom are front-line staff involved in door-knocking, 2 of whom are office staff and 1 of whom is involved in special projects. Since **2011**, we have seen a significant increase in volunteering, from **3 volunteers** in **2011** to **21** in **2014**.

Who do we help?

Our clients are from all 16 wards across the borough.

Our Connect model enables us to reach the most excluded and disadvantaged people in Islington. A typical person we help may be living in poverty, isolated, out of work, or in work on low income. They are usually not accessing local services, often due to barriers such as:

- Lack of knowledge that support services exist; they think it's normal to struggle alone, without support
- Negative past experiences, confusion or low confidence in accessing services
- Language barriers
- Physical and mental health issues

There are particular groups that are statistically more likely to be affected by poverty, and that we have been effective in helping:

Ethnicity

60% of our clients are from black and minority ethnic (BME) communities, compared to the population of **52%** BME in Islington overall. This suggests, as is often the case, that BME communities tend to be more disadvantaged and more affected by poverty than the non BME population.

Age

80% of our clients are working age adults, reflecting our ability to reach those who are unemployed due to sickness, disability, lack of skills or other factors.

20% of our clients are over 60 years old. Their top presenting issues tend to be welfare rights and financial hardship, housing issues and disability and mobility issues.

Gender

65% of our clients are female, reflecting our ability to reach the gender that tends to experience more disadvantages in society.

From 2009 to 2014 HOYD has been helping residents in Islington with the issues outlined in the table on the right.



Which issues do we help resolve?

From 2009 to 2014, Help on Your Doorstep has been helping residents in Islington with the issues outlined in the table below:

Primary Issue 2009-14 (ranked by number of referrals)	Total Referrals	Total Clients	% of all referrals
Employment support	2514	1190	20.8%
Welfare benefits	2003	945	16.6%
Housing	1910	954	15.8%
Financial hardship	1029	439	8.5%
Skills and learning	976	499	8.1%
Debt	866	417	7.2%
Disability / mobility	557	278	4.6%
Fuel Costs	453	186	3.8%
Volunteering	361	146	3.0%
Parenting and family support	293	134	2.4%
Physical health	233	117	1.9%
Other	208	83	1.7%
Home safety	170	100	1.4%
Mental health	159	56	1.3%
Self employment	106	50	0.9%
Other legal problems	101	50	0.8%
Meeting people	51	22	0.4%
Youth or play activities	51	26	0.4%
Drug or alcohol use	20	10	0.2%
Domestic Violence	7	4	0.1%
TOTAL	12,068	5,707	100%

We have more referrals than clients, as over 50% of the 1,600 people we help each year have multiple issues. We make around 4,700 referrals and provisions of direct support each year.

As shown in the table on the left, the top three issues where we have an impact are:

- Employability issues - connecting people with local training providers and employers
- Welfare rights and financial hardship – connecting people with individual grants and the Credit Union
- Housing issues - connecting people with independent legal advice and Registered Social Landlords

Connect has grown its network of referral partners, having engaged 204 agencies since 2009. We currently have 140 active referral partners, and in 2013-14 we made use of 108 of these. This reflects the variety and range of issues where Connect has an impact and contributes to resolving.

From 2009 to 2014, the largest number of referrals were made to the following eight agencies:

Referral Partner	Number of referrals, 2009 -14
Islington Law Centre – specialist legal advice	2355
Income Maximisation team at Islington Council – benefits entitlements assessments	1447
Cripplegate Foundation – individual grants supporting those in financial hardship	614
Peabody – Reconnect – employment support	598
SHINE – support and advice to address fuel poverty	549
Age UK Islington – support for older people	471
Disability Action in Islington – support for disabled people	402
Finsbury Park Homeless Families Project – advice on social welfare and legal issues	386

While the table on the previous page shows the most commonly used referral partners, the majority of our referral partners received fewer than 50 referrals. This is testament to the detailed knowledge of our staff, referring beneficiaries to the very best placed agencies to help resolve their individual issues. We carefully consider tailoring the referral to any one of our 140 active partners, even if it's relatively rare for us to refer someone to that particular agency.

What outcomes do we achieve?

For each referral made, our staff follow up after three months to check the status of the referral. It is after this three month review period that we can assess our outcomes.

Over 75% of beneficiaries report an improvement in their situation within three months of us knocking on their door. A further 20% are receiving ongoing, longer term support. This means that within three months of a Connect adviser knocking on a door, 95% of issues are resolved, improved or are receiving ongoing support.



Future priorities and plans

Help on Your Doorstep has made a significant impact over the last five years, and we aim to build on these achievements in the years to come. Through a constant process of feedback and self-evaluation, we strive for continual improvements in our capacity to make a difference in the communities we serve.

Our future plans are centred around:

1. continuing to engage proactively with local people
2. building our capacity to provide professional advice, guidance and information
3. expanding our partnerships with local service providers

More specifically, we will focus on the following priorities:

- Develop our offering for residents requiring employment support
- Evaluate and continue the Good Neighbours Scheme
- Expand and enhance our structured user involvement initiatives to better enable clients to influence service delivery
- Develop our knowledge management capacity to support our objective of sharing evidence and experience more broadly
- Continue expanding our door knocking operations into new areas adjacent to existing borders
- Launch additional Connect services in other parts of Islington
- Investigate the feasibility of expanding the Connect service beyond Islington

Vince*

Vince came into contact with Connect when they knocked on his door and made him aware of the help he could get through local services. This offer of support was vital for Vince because at that time he had accrued some large debts through being unable to work and therefore unable to pay some of his bills. All of this was causing Vince a lot of stress and making him unhappy.

Since their initial meeting Connect has put him in touch with services which have helped him in a number of other ways including: getting support in tackling a legal battle; getting the equipment he needs to get in and out of the bath; getting a new bed to replace his old one (which had been stacked up on old milk crates) and helping him claim Disability Living Allowance when he started to lose his hearing and required an operation.

For Vince, one of Connect's biggest merits is the fact that they were able to offer continued support in different areas of his life, and rather than just telling him where to get help they actually enabled him to make significant changes in his life.

Vince says:

I feel a lot better having met Connect, it's taken away a lot of stress from my life and I'm now much more aware of my rights and where I can go to access services.

Miriam*

Miriam admits that she was reluctant to engage with the service at first and was quite sceptical of what Connect were offering. She also didn't feel up to talking to strangers at that point. It was about a week later when Miriam rang Connect to make an appointment with them, having read the information leaflet the advisor had left behind. Having been busy caring for her husband Miriam had accrued a number of debts and was in need of some financial assistance.

Connect were able to help her with this and they 'put me in touch with the right people.' Miriam says that she was and still is in need of emotional support which she consistently gets from the Connect advisors. She says that she has come to rely on their support during tough times. Miriam appreciates that this service is local and says this is a 'real bonus' for her because she can't leave her husband in the house alone, as she is his primary carer.

Miriam says:

Connect have always been really supportive towards me and had their door open at any time which is really vital for me at the moment.

*Please note that names have been changed to preserve interviewees' anonymity. As such, we have not specified which Connect service the client used.

George*

Before George met Connect he was homeless, in a violent relationship and depressed. On the whole he felt like he was 'in a really bad way'. George says that things got so bad that his friends finally made him realise that he couldn't continue his life the way he was living.

One of George's friends recommended Connect to him (based on her own positive experiences with them) and booked an appointment for him to visit Connect. During their first meeting Connect worked with George to identify the sort of help he needed and since then, he tells of how his life has turned around completely. He is now in temporary accommodation, is waiting for and looking forward to having treatment for his liver, is seeing a psychologist who is helping him with his depression and is now hoping that he'll be better enough to start doing other things next year such as a computer course.

Through his contact with Connect and the organisations they referred him to he feels he is in a much better, more positive position to cope with his situation and challenges that come his way in the future.

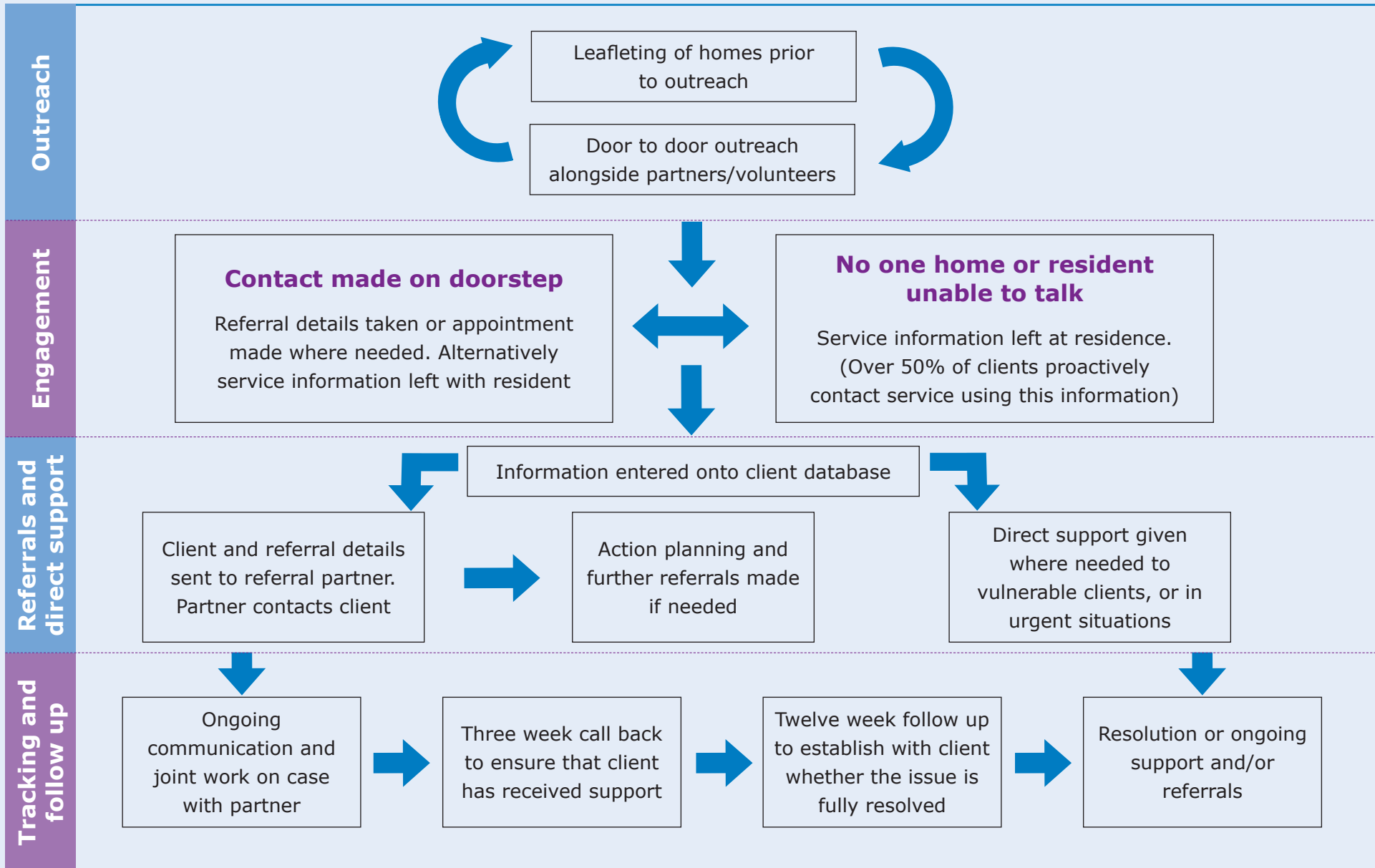
In addition to the practical help George has been given, he has also received a great deal of moral support which has given him a much more positive outlook on life and the opportunities that are available to him such as being able to educate himself and learn new languages.

George says:

If I hadn't seen them, I'd still be depressed. My life's far from perfect but I really do feel a lot better now: more positive, more focused and looking forward to more changes.

*Please note that names have been changed to preserve interviewees' anonymity. As such, we have not specified which Connect service the client used.

Connect outreach and referral model - how it works





The service is extremely customer focused serving the most deprived and disadvantaged people in Islington and does so with empathy and outcome focused, targeted help through a range of statutory and non-statutory partners using advisor skills of Information, Advice and Guidance to good effect.

The Connect service model is unique in Islington in incorporating a series of elements designed to reach vulnerable individuals and families and improve their life opportunities.

Customer Service Excellence Report, 2014

Help on Your Doorstep's clients are benefiting positively from contact with the service and its partners across a range of support areas, notably in improved mental health and wellbeing, increased community involvement and access to education and training opportunities.

Forster Evaluation Report, 2011

A word from our trustees

Life is very tough for those who live on the margins, in Islington and elsewhere. Poverty is often accompanied by ill-health, mental and physical, fundamental needs unmet, and a disconnectedness from employment, services and the local community, rendering people largely invisible. Help on Your Doorstep seeks out the invisible and supports their reconnection to the services and opportunities they need.

The trustees of Help on Your Doorstep are proud to have steered and supported the organisation as it has expanded its reach across the borough and established its role and value in the pattern of statutory and voluntary services in Islington. Building on the innovative Connect service piloted in EC1 as part of the New Deal for Communities, the organisation has built a borough-wide offer, growing and nurturing our network of partner agencies, and ensuring our service model is responsive to changes in legislation, regulation, the challenges and opportunities of employment market and the severity of changes in benefits and legal aid. We have also developed new services and new partnership projects.

As trustees we are proud that we have managed to sustain our key principles which make our offer unique and enable us to win the trust of the people we serve: our independence, our holistic approach and offer, our local bases and largely local staff and volunteers, and the fact that we stay with our clients through the process of referral and resolution.

In reaching those who are unable to access services they need without support, we have been able to ensure that thousands of the local people who most need services are getting them and are

supported to move towards taking greater control of their lives. We know that the credit for these achievements must go to the people who work for us and, as trustees, we thank them for their passion, commitment, expertise and success in meeting every new challenge. We also thank all our funders and partners who have enabled us to achieve this success.

Frances Carter
Chair of Trustees





Acknowledgements

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A special mention must go to all of our partner services who have worked with us to ensure that vital support and advice gets to those residents of Islington who need it most. We recognise that none of the achievements that we have highlighted in this report would have been possible without your knowledge, expertise and endeavour.

We would also like to thank all those who have supported us in the production of this publication, in particular Chris Wilkins and Cosmo Anderson from Slaughter and May and Maia Mathieson and Ewan MacLeod from Macquarie Bank.

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