

Case study: Health Improvement Practitioner in community stroke team

What is this case study about?

This case study explores the work of the Bolton Community Stroke Team following the addition of a Health Improvement Practitioner, using funding from the NHSE.

What does the approach aim to do?

- To better support secondary stroke prevention.
- To support people to reintegrate into the community and maintain a healthy lifestyle following a stroke, in order to improve quality of life.
- Decrease waiting lists, length of stay, and re-referral rate.



How does the approach work?

Bolton Community Stroke Team sees patients who have recently had a stroke. Healthcare professionals within the stroke team can refer service users to the Health Improvement Practitioner at any point in their journey. Following referral, service users can have a face-to-face or telephone appointment, where the Health Improvement Practitioner explores their needs.

The Health Improvement Practitioner will then signpost or advise (such as on diet and nutrition), following up at a later point to ensure information was understood and advice taken on board. Alternatively, the Health Improvement Practitioner has regular appointments with the service-user (weekly for a month, then after three months, and after six months) to monitor health and support accountability.

What makes this approach work?

This approach has enabled the team to build better relationships with community and sport, physical activity and leisure providers.

NHS Bolton are exploring rolling out a similar approach in their cardiac and neurological services.

Success smash



“The team and patients have felt a huge benefit from the support of a Health Improvement Practitioner and the one-to-one input they’ve had.”

Who is involved?

NHS England funded the Health Improvement Practitioner role, and the Stroke Team are the key referrers.

Opportunities for scaling up

- **Embedding Physical Activity Champions in specialised Multi-disciplinary teams:** The Health Improvement Practitioner role shows the value of embedding a specialist community connector in a multi-disciplinary team, particularly valuable in the case of a sudden neurological event where patients need advice and support at a crucial time for their recovery and rehabilitation.

Top ideas for inspiration

- Before the project starts, meet with NHS teams, patients, and VCSE organisations, to find out what they all need. Make sure you are on the same page, and share the intended aims of the project.

