



Press release

Date: 11 December 2017

Charity to deliver complementary support service at Homerton A&E to help with increased winter demand faced by hospital

To help alleviate the extra pressure experienced by the A & E Department at Homerton Hospital, Hackney, due to increased demand during the winter, the charity Family Action, in collaboration with the Healthy London Partnership, will be providing an exciting new Social Prescribing Service at the hospital from December 2017 until March 2018.

The aim of the service, which will be based within the A&E Department, is to support patients with their discharge process and introduce them to support within the community. It is hoped that in turn this additional support will help reduce readmissions and inappropriate use of A&E.

Social prescribing works to link people with community resources and non-medical services. It helps to build self-management skills that can prevent people returning to hospital for reasons that are neither urgent nor medical. We can link people to services that will support them with a wide range of practical and emotional challenges, especially over the winter period – from help with welfare benefits, housing, food vouchers, grants and counselling services, to help with arranging practical support, such as collecting medications and clothing that may be a barrier to someone being discharged from hospital and going home. We are able to refer people to over 130 non-medical services so that we can match people with other available sources of help and support. The social prescribing service can work particularly well with people who are disadvantaged, isolated, vulnerable or marginalised.

When appropriate, health professionals will refer patients to the Social Prescribing Service where they will be allocated a link worker or, alternatively, patients can refer themselves. All link workers will have a background in counselling, social care or health and will carry out a holistic assessment with the patient. Together they will agree a health and wellbeing plan which will include options of activities and services within their local community that can support the patient's health, wellbeing and continued recovery.

Depending on the complexity of their needs, patients will also be offered between two and eight one-to-one sessions with their link worker and, if necessary, the patient can be partnered with a wellbeing volunteer to help them access these services and activities.

David Holmes CBE, Family Action's Chief Executive said:

"We are delighted to be able to offer Social Prescribing support to patients at Homerton's A&E over the busy winter period. This practical and people-focused service will have a positive impact on patients' health and wellbeing and will enable them to access a raft of support in the local community. It will also help the Homerton A&E team with the extra demand they face during this most busy time of the year."

For further information please contact homertonsocialprescribing@family-action.org.uk or ring 020 3327 3841.

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For further information and interviews please contact:

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Notes to Editors:-

About Family Action

Family Action is a charity committed to building stronger families by delivering innovative and effective services and support that reaches out to many of the UK's most vulnerable people.

We seek to empower people and communities to address their issues and challenges through practical, financial and emotional help.

Our work is wide-ranging and includes help for parents-to-be, the provision of many Children's Centres in local communities, intensive family support, emotional health and wellbeing services, counselling, mediation and therapies, support in schools and financial grants programmes. Family Action is also recognised as a leading provider of training.

Registered Charity Number: 264 713

Website: www.family-action.org.uk

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