

PRIMARY CARE MENTAL HEALTH LIAISON NURSE PROJECT

Mental Health Liaison Nurses (MHLNs) were introduced into General Practice during the Primary Care & Mental Health Transformation Programme (PCMHT), to close the gap that exists in relation to supporting our GP and primary care colleagues in meeting the needs of patients' with mild to moderate mental health issues.

The concept was tested with six MHLNs based in five GP surgeries in both North and South Lanarkshire. They offered advice/triage, signposting or supported self-help to the people referred to them. The main aim was to improve and enhance the interface between primary care and community mental health services by providing a practice based timely response to individuals experiencing mild mental health difficulties.

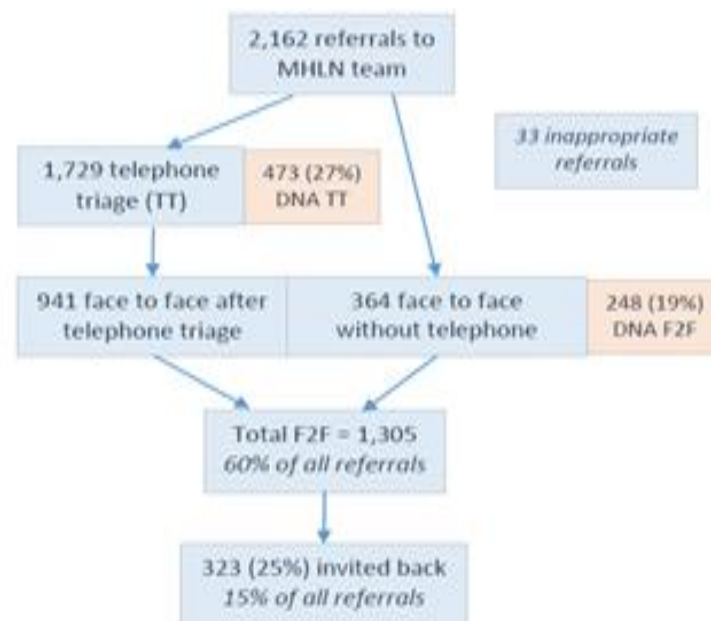
Progress and activity

The MHLN Team Leader worked with the Improvement Support Team to ensure that the necessary service data was gathered from the outset to record and measure what improvements were achieved.

A structured questionnaire was developed in partnership with the evaluation team to gather feedback from service users which went live in March 2018.

Achievements

85% of those referred to the service were either signposted on without needing to see the nurse, or given the right advice and support to avoid needing any more than one appointment. 60% of all the referrals went on to see the MHLN in person, only 15% of those referred needed more than a single appointment. Once all the six practices had started with referrals there was an average of 58 patients referred per week.



Key learning so far

Almost half of those who were triaged by telephone were able to be signposted on without needing a face to face appointment. In total 68% of people referred were signposted on to some form of self-help, which is what the service set out to do.

Only 13% were referred back to the practice, either to see a GP, Practice Nurse or had a related medication issue.

Next steps

This service has increased the capacity of Primary Care to manage people with mild mental health difficulties. The evaluation will be included in the planning for future development of the Action 15: Mental Health Strategy Lanarkshire Health & Social Care Partnerships

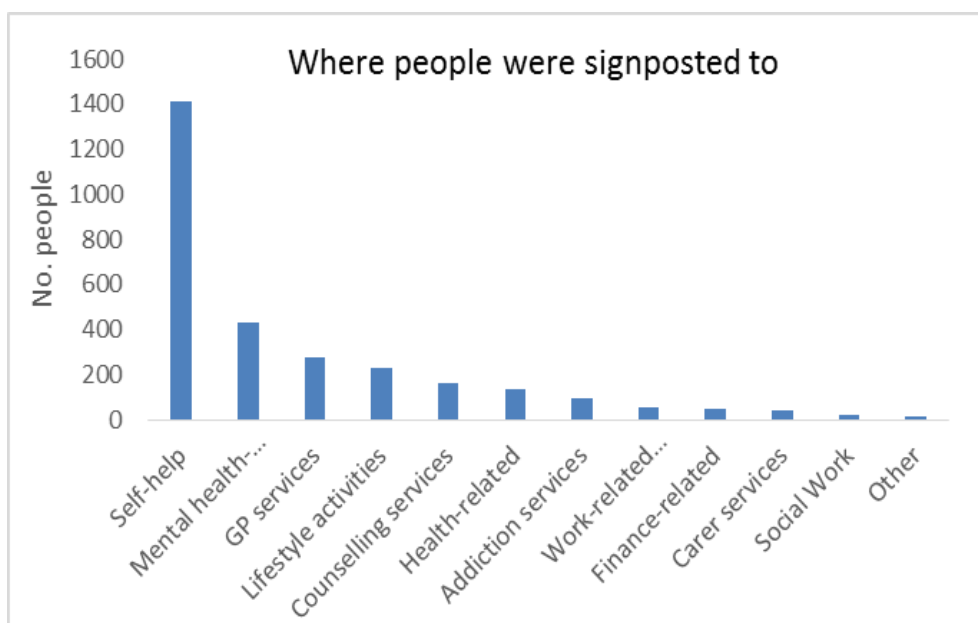


Figure 2 shows the flow of total numbers for the entire 44 week period, although not all practices were live the whole time.