



**We promise to work together  
creatively to: learn ‘what matters’  
to everyone, achieve a better  
quality of life and continuously  
improve our services.**

*We care . We respect . We are inclusive*



# Contents

<b>About the authors</b> .....	4
<b>Foreword</b> .....	5
<b>PART ONE: Introduction</b> .....	6
Background .....	6
Overview of the Framework .....	6
How this Framework was developed .....	7
How to use this Framework .....	7
<b>PART TWO: Community Connector Competency Framework</b>	
Introduction .....	9
Competence domains: .....	10
1. Formal education, knowledge, and experience .....	11
2. Supporting health and wellbeing .....	14
3. Community engagement .....	17
4. Planning and organisation .....	19
5. Safe and inclusive working .....	20
<b>PART THREE: Community Connector Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework</b> .....	22
1. Introduction .....	22
2. About the Continuing Professional Development Framework .....	23
3. CPD How we learn – learning methods and learning activities .....	26
4. Signposting and accessing training, learning and development for CPD .....	30
5. Self-Directed Learning – Resources and reading .....	34
<b>APPENDIX ONE. Developing a positive learning culture in the workplace</b> .....	38



# About the authors

**Gita Malhotra** has thirty-five years of experience in the NHS, health education, community development, further education, and health management. She has a track record in healthcare workforce development and design, partnership and networks, leadership, and research and evaluation.

She is currently an independent consultant, the strategic workforce lead for Personalised Care in north east London, has previously worked for the King's Fund, Department of Health, and as a CEPN Programme Director. She has a clinical background in nursing.

**Richard Griffin MBE** is Professor of Healthcare Management at King's Business School, King's College London. He has over thirty years' experience of NHS workforce policy, practice and research. An economist, he has previously worked for the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, The Department of Health and Social Care, and North West London Integrated Care System.

**The Bromley by Bow Centre** is an internationally acclaimed organisation that has developed a distinctive response to the complex issues facing a community with very high levels of health inequality and deprivation. Its pioneering model integrates primary care with an exceptionally comprehensive range of services that engages the community and by focusing on improving the wider social determinants of health, alongside high quality clinical services. The Bromley by Bow Centre has been at the forefront of the development and adoption of social prescribing and supporting the development of the social prescribing link worker and similar roles.

# Foreword

Since the publication of the 'Community Mental Health Framework for Adults & Older Adults' in 2019, we've had a clear belief in East London that Community Connectors would be essential to realising its vision.

The roles, which are co-designed and co-delivered with local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector (VCSE) partners, are emblematic of the person-centred and holistic care and support that we aspire to always provide. We have seen the Community Connectors working passionately to help address some of the social determinants of ill-health by better connecting people to each other and their communities, while also enabling more joined-up systems of care and support by connecting services and sectors together too.

As this professional group is becoming increasingly established as a cornerstone of our model of community mental health care in East London, now is a timely moment to reflect on how the role is developing and explore how we can best support the Community Connector workforce and their teams to flourish.

This framework is about just that. It is the culmination of a process which has brought people together to share their experiences, exploring what has been impactful, what has been challenging, and what else might be possible. Its publication allows us to learn from how the roles have developed so far, establish role competencies, and to put in place clearer, and more structured and systematic learning and professional development support around the role moving forwards so Community Connectors are able to thrive and progress.

On behalf of our local system partners, I'd like to offer a huge thank you to those that have been involved in the development of this framework, in particular the authors Gita Malhotra and Richard Griffin, and also Dan Hopewell for Bromley by Bow Centre. I would now invite you all now to support us in its delivery.



Jamie Stafford  
Programme Director  
Community Mental Health Transformation Programme  
East London NHS Foundation Trust

April 2023

# PART ONE

## Introduction

### Background

**The purpose of this framework is two-fold, to:**

- Further enhance and maximise the contribution of Community Connectors, to deliver high quality, personalised and effective care to local people across East London
- Ensure that Community Connectors have access to quality learning and development and a rewarding career

**This framework will:**

- Support consistency of roles and job descriptions
- Ensure current and future Community Connectors have equitable access to good quality standardised professional development opportunities
- Ensure service providers can address unnecessary variation in recruitment and retention practice and progression for Community Connectors
- Provide an opportunity for joint commissioning of training and learning and collaborative working
- Mean service users have access to skilled and consistently well-trained Community Connectors with clear role definition in their teams and organisations
- Support visibility and role recognition for Community Connectors amongst wider stakeholders and partners.

### Overview of the Community Connector Framework

The overall framework is made up of two parts: Competency Framework and Continuing Professional Development Framework.

This is the first iteration of Competency Framework for the Community Connector role setting out the core competencies for the role, and a Continuing Professional Development framework that will support Community Connectors, the organisations employing them and other parties to facilitate them in gaining and developing those competencies.

The Framework provides guidance on training, development, education and competencies for Community Connectors in East London and the identification of learning need. It supports the development of a coordinated and coherent approach to Community Connector service provision and workforce development and will also be of interest to Training Hubs, education and training providers in the planning and delivery of quality learning experiences.

## How the Framework was developed

East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) commissioned the Bromley by Bow Centre, Gita Malhotra, and Richard Griffin as subject expert consultants to develop this framework.

Both the Community Connector Competency Framework and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), framework have been developed through an extensive process of enquiry and consultation, working with the Community Connectors, their managers and employer organisations, wider stakeholders, and the East London Foundation Trust, who developed and commissioned the Community Connector programme.

The development of these two frameworks has also included extensive review of associated documentation such as job descriptions, personal specifications, and national frameworks relating to the Community Connector role and community based mental health services. Surveys and focus groups were undertaken with employer organisations and Community Connectors and a Project Reference Group was also established with terms of Reference and representation from service users, Community Connectors, East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) and voluntary sector employing organisations from across the ELFT footprint. This work culminated in a launch event – connecting the connectors in November 2022.

## How to use the Community Connectors Competency and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework

Given the relative newness of the Community Connector role these two frameworks have particular importance in supporting the establishment and understanding of the role, for the Community Connectors themselves, their managers and the third sector organisations employing them and the Neighbourhood mental health teams they also form part of.

The two frameworks, which cross reference each other, are intended to provide a practical reference point. Employing organisations, the workforce, education, or training providers, can utilise the framework in different ways. For example:

### Community Connectors

- Identify your current and future learning and development needs
- To support your professional development, progression and career development
- For use in supervision and appraisals

### Managers and employers

- Review of organisation job descriptions and person specifications
- To align with other employing organisations
- To review grading, banding, or skill mix requirements for changing service provision
- To shape joint commissioning of training in cost effective ways
- To inform annual appraisal and personal development plans
- Strengthen competency-based approaches to skillmix

The CPD framework sets out a guide to support the organisations employing the Community Connectors to review and strengthen the on-going culture and practice of learning and development within them.

### **Mental Health Community Transformation**

- Support standardisation for quality approach with partner organisations – for example around job descriptions and person specifications
- Encourage joint commissioning for training to support cost efficacy and partnership working
- Promote opportunities that connect Community Connectors across place-based boundaries

We would welcome feedback on the two frameworks, which will undergo periodic reviews and refreshes in future years as the Community Connector role and the transformation programme of neighbourhood based mental health provision develops.





# PART TWO

## Community Connector Competency Framework

### Introduction

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, and behaviours a postholder requires to perform the tasks and responsibilities of their job safely, efficiently, and effectively. This document sets out a competency framework for the Community Connector role. In developing the framework, the following have been considered:

- A review of five current Community Connector Job Descriptions and Personal Specifications
- Feedback from stakeholders
- A review of NHS Job Profiles (nursing)
- Insights drawn from the following documents-
  - Department of Health and Social Care, (2018). Severe Mental Illness and Physical Health Inequalities
  - The National Collaboration Centre for Mental Health, (2019). The Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults
  - NHS England and NHS Improvement, (2020). Health Coaching. Implementation and Quality Summary Guide
  - NHS England and NHS Improvement, (2022). Social Prescribing Link Worker. Competency Framework
  - NHS England and NHS Improvement, (2022). Workforce development framework: Health and Wellbeing Coaches (draft)
  - South East London Integrated Care System, (2022). Community Mental Health Competency Framework (draft)

This framework sets out the core competences required of Community Connectors. Whilst these should be common to all post holders, it is recognised that there may be specific additional requirements to meet population need and/or local service requirements, for example the requirement to speak a particular language or an understanding of the needs of a specific service user group.

The framework should be used by Community Connectors and their managers to identify any learning and development needs they might have. Examples of specific skills associated with competences are provided. An example of this is 'assisting service-users to assess whether they are eligible for a personal health budget'. It is not expected that Community Connectors will use every skill.

It is the responsibility of employers to ensure that newly recruited Community Connectors possess the necessary values, experience and desired qualifications on appointment. Following employment, Community Connectors should be supported to acquire the core competences, over time, through informal and informal learning and development opportunities.

The term “service user” is used throughout to generally describe people who use the services provided by Community Connectors. It is recognised that individual services may use different terms locally.

## The framework

The framework comprises five competency domains summarised below. Each domain contains a number of competences.

Competence domain	Description
1. Formal education, knowledge, and experience	The minimum qualifications and experience that a Community Connector would be expected to possess prior to employment and the knowledge that they should acquire following employment. This domain includes personal development.
2. Supporting health and wellbeing	The core skills and behaviours that Community Connectors require to work with service users to help them stay well and connect with activities that they consider meaningful. Competencies include verbal and non-verbal communication skills and the ability to undertake assessments
3. Community engagement	The understanding and skills needed identify and to help service users access community and place-based assets that could support improvements in their health and welfare. This includes the ability to signpost and refer.
4. Planning and organisation	An understanding of the need to maintain confidentiality. The skills required to organise work processes, manage time effectively, record conversations, write reports and use local systems including digital platforms. The ability to evaluate service delivery.
5. Safe and inclusive working	An understanding and demonstration of equality, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding and risk management

## Competency 1: Formal education, knowledge, and experience

This competency describes the desirable minimum qualifications and experience that a Community Connector would be expected to have acquired prior to employment and the knowledge they should acquire following employment. In addition to the requirements set out below, some posts may have role specific needs such as possession of a driving licence or the ability to speak a language other than English.

Why is this competency important?	Fulfilling this competence will mean that Community Connectors have the acquired the necessary underpinning understanding to perform their role safely and effectively.
1.1 Formal qualifications on appointment	It is desirable (but not essential) that newly appointed Community Connectors possess as a minimum level 2 qualification such as GCSEs. A full list of level 2 qualifications can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
1.2 Experience acquired prior to appointment	<p>It is desirable that newly appointed Community Connectors should have acquired experience, perhaps through previous employment including In health and social care, volunteering and/or lived experience, in at least one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The social services system</li><li>• Welfare</li><li>• Housing</li><li>• Mental Health</li><li>• Advice work</li><li>• The charity or voluntary sector</li><li>• Supporting people, carers, or families</li></ul> <p>It is also desirable that post holders have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital skills. (Digital skills include the ability to use devices and handle information, being able to use applications such as word processing and being safe and responsible online).</li><li>• Good organisational skills</li><li>• Knowledge of the local community</li></ul>
1.3 Formal qualification acquired following appointment	A formal coaching qualification (if not acquired prior to employment).

<p>1.4 Knowledge acquired following appointment</p>	<p>Community Connectors as part of their induction, continuing professional development and experiential learning will acquire knowledge and understanding of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The legal framework relevant to the role – The Mental Health Act, The Mental Health Capacity Act, and The Care Act</li> <li>• Severe Mental Illness including its consequences for physical health and the differences between the mental health needs of younger and older people</li> <li>• Health inequalities and the social determinants of health</li> <li>• Asset-based approach to health</li> <li>• The social welfare and housing system</li> <li>• The principles and concepts of personalised care including relevant roles such as Social Prescriber Link Workers and Health and Wellbeing Coaches, along with the importance of co-production and identifying what matters to people</li> <li>• Health literacy</li> <li>• Personal health budgets</li> <li>• The Community Mental Health Framework including terminology and concepts</li> <li>• Trauma informed care</li> <li>• Local policies</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> <li>• Mental health first aid</li> <li>• Services provided by ELFT</li> <li>• Assessment tools</li> </ul> <p><i>Note: some Community Connector roles will require an understanding of specific issues that might face the service users that they support, such as substance abuse.</i></p>
<p>1.5 Personal development</p>	<p>Community Connectors are able to demonstrate the importance of continued learning and development. They are able to show a personal commitment to their development, for example by actively participating in learning activities and opportunities, such as shadowing and seeking feedback, as well as participating in supervisory sessions and appraisals.</p> <p>Community Connectors identify and record their learning needs. This may be as a result of reflection on practice, mapping their knowledge and skills against this framework or following appraisals. They actively seek learning opportunities to meet their training needs.</p>

1.6 Supporting others to learn and develop	Community Connectors contribute to the learning and development of others. This is demonstrated, for example, by assisting newly appointed staff to orientate, by sharing constructive feedback, identifying the learning needs of others, and contributing to collective learning events and activities such as team meetings, practice development sessions or by acting as a mentor.
--	---

## Glossary

- Experiential learning**      Experiential learning is the knowledge, skills and behaviours acquired through the experience and practice of work. It is “learning by doing” and reflection (see below).
- Functional skills**              Functional (sometimes called “essential skills”) refer to proficiency in English and Mathematics. Increasingly digital skills are also included as a functional skill.
- Levels (education)**          All formal qualifications in England are placed on a framework (called the Regulated Qualifications Framework). Qualifications that are of equal academic demand are placed on the same level. GCSEs are at level 2, A Levels at level 3, foundation degrees at level 5 and degrees at level 6 for example.
- Reflection**                      In the context of work, reflection is a way of helping people learn from their experiences. For example, through thinking about an event or activity at work, or observing someone else’s practice. The most famous model of reflection is Kolb’s.



## Competency 2: Supporting health and wellbeing

The core skills and behaviours that Community Connectors require to work with service users to help them stay well and connect with activities that they consider meaningful, such as verbal and non-verbal communication skills and the ability to undertake assessments.

Why is this competency important?

The ability to assess the needs of service users, build trust and meaningful relationships with them, provide non-judgemental support, set goals, encourage people to actively participate in change are critical elements of the Community Connector role, that enable postholders to assist service users to become active participants in making change.

2.1 Engaging with service users

Community Connectors determine what the most appropriate form of engagement with service users is. This may be through a face-to-face meeting, group meetings, or on the phone or virtually.

Community Connectors identify and understand what matters to service users, and their interests. They identify any areas that may require support, for example in respect of service users' health, loneliness, finance, or housing. Following an understanding of a person's current position they collaboratively develop and agree a shared vision of appropriate interventions. This is likely to including setting goals with service users. Goal setting may involve breaking down goals into achievable steps and jointly exploring the consequences of different courses of action. (Please note Positive Risk Taking is a component of Competence 5).

Community Connectors work with service users to identify wider issues that impact on their health and wellbeing. This requires a consideration of any barriers to understanding and/or accessing services, (for instance due to a sensory impairment, transport issues or digital exclusion) as well as an assessment of service user's strengths and capabilities through strength-based working.

<p>2.2 Communication skills</p>	<p>In their interactions with service users, Community Connectors judge what is, and then uses, the most appropriate form(s) of verbal and non-verbal communication in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather and share information (some of which may be sensitive)</li> <li>• Draw conclusions</li> <li>• Set goals</li> <li>• Encourage feedback</li> <li>• Provide support and build self-efficacy</li> </ul> <p>There are several communication techniques that post holders might deploy, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open questioning</li> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Motivational interviewing</li> <li>• Affirmative listening</li> <li>• Negotiating</li> <li>• The ability to interpret non-verbal communications</li> <li>• Checking understanding, for example through 'teach back' or summarising</li> <li>• Anxiety reduction techniques</li> </ul>
<p>2.3 Building supportive and trusting relationships</p>	<p>Community Connectors build relationships with service users through demonstrating rapport and empathy. They are able, for example, to understand why service users may find it hard to discuss their mental health.</p> <p>They acknowledge service users' thoughts and feelings using affirmative statements. Community Connectors understand the importance of confidentiality. They provide reassurance.</p>
<p>2.4 Working with groups</p>	<p>Community Connectors organise and effectively run group sessions through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstration of an understanding of group dynamics and how to manage them</li> <li>• Remaining calm and focused</li> <li>• An ability to manage conflict</li> <li>• Understanding of the importance of role modelling and how to utilise it</li> <li>• Application of group-based approaches to problem solving, action planning and follow up</li> </ul>

2.5 Professional working	The postholder always acts in a professional manner, for example by demonstrating integrity and honesty, displaying the <a href="#">NHS values</a> .
--------------------------	--

## Glossary

Conflict resolution	Not all conflict is negative, but it is important that conflict is managed so that it does not escalate. This requires those running groups to remain calm and focused, to be fair and show compassion and empathy, whilst ensuring that they are not placed in danger.
Health literacy	<i>The World Health Organisation</i> defines health literacy as: “.... the personal characteristics and social resources needed for individuals and communities to access, understand, appraise and use information and services to make decisions about health”.
Motivational interviewing	A communication skill that encourages people to become active participants in change. Effective motivational interviewing requires empathy, supporting self-efficacy, affirmative listening and opening questioning.
Strength based working (sometimes described as “asset based”)	Refers to the identification of an individual’s personal strengths and capabilities, the support available to them from their social networks and the support available in their local communities





### Competency 3: Community engagement

The understanding and skills needed to help service users access community and place-based assets that can support improvements in their health and welfare. This includes the ability to signpost and refer.

Why is this competency important?

Empowering and assisting service users to access and engage with community and place-based assets, such as libraries, leisure activities and faith groups, will provide them with the support and assistance that they might require to improve their health and wellbeing.

3.1 A knowledge of community assets

Community Connectors identify and understand the role of different community assets locally. They map and record those that might benefit their service user's health and wellbeing. They seek to develop links and partnerships with local community assets. They may represent the Trust and their employing voluntary sector organisation at Neighbourhood forums and groups and will contribute to an effective multi-agency community navigation system across the borough.

3.2 Working with community and other partners

Community Connectors build good working relationships with others, particularly Neighbourhood teams and personalised care roles such as Social Prescribing Link Workers, Care Navigators and Health and Wellbeing Coaches. This requires an understanding of role boundaries. Postholders demonstrate respect, and value the role of others and work constructively with them for instance to solve problems and improve services. *(Note: other competences in these frameworks, for example communication skills such as negotiation and listening skills, effective planning and organisation and respect support effective team working).*

Community Connectors may work with service users and others to help design and develop services.

If appropriate Community Connectors identify opportunities for community assets to link and work together.

<p>3.3 Connecting, signposting and referral</p>	<p>Community Connectors are aware of access and referral routes into community and place-based assets and can signpost or arrange access in order to support service user’s priorities. This includes providing information, advice, and guidance to service users, assisting them to overcome barriers to access and helping them to navigate systems such as health and care ones. Where appropriate Community Connectors can connect people with a shared interest and need for mutual support.</p>
---	--

## Glossary

**Asset based approach** According to the Social Care Institute of Excellence, an *asset-based* approach places the emphasis on people’s and communities’ assets, alongside their needs. *Asset-based* approaches are a means to enhance people’s and communities’ health and wellbeing and promote their resilience, independence and interdependence.

**Community assets** The services, resources, agencies, systems, and networks that are available in a local community that might meet the needs of service users. Assets might include, for example, agencies supporting those with debt, appropriate healthcare services and charities.



## Competency 4: Planning and organisation

An understanding of the need to maintain confidentiality. The skills required to organise work processes, manage time effectively, record conversations, write reports and use local systems including digital platforms. The ability to evaluate service delivery.

Why is this competency important?	Respecting service user confidentiality and keeping accurate records are critical skills of Community Connectors, as is the need to organise and manage one's work and time effectively.
4.1 Confidentiality, consent, and data protection	Community Connectors are aware of the rights of service users as set out in the <a href="#">NHS Constitution</a> . They understand and gain valid consent and record this appropriately. Community Connectors understand and adhere to local guidance and legal requirements in respect of information governance, maintaining confidentiality and data protection. They report immediately any breaches of confidentiality or data.
4.2 Record keeping and reporting	<p>Community Connectors record conversations in a structured way. The postholder maintains complete, clear, accurate and timely records (utilising digital systems as required) for those accessing their service. This will include recording outcomes and gathering and collating relevant statistical data.</p> <p>Community Connectors write and present clear and concise reports and other documents, including the organisations and presentation of statistics. Presentations may be verbal.</p>
4.3 Time management	Community Connectors self-organise their work through planning and management of own workload and time, including prioritising tasks and resources, taking account of changing circumstances.
4.4 Evaluating service delivery	Community Connectors monitor their activities and outcomes. They evaluate the effectiveness of the service they provide. This may include the involvement of service users, their relatives, carers, and others. They share insights into practice with others such as Neighbourhood teams.

## Competency 5: Safe and inclusive working

An understanding and demonstration of equality, diversity, and inclusion, safeguarding and risk management including for oneself.

Why is this competency important?	Valuing everyone as an individual and treating them with dignity and respect, so that they feel valued, is a core NHS value. Effective working requires the management of risk, working safely and an awareness of safeguarding.
5.1 Equality and diversity	Community Connectors understand the principles underpinning equality and diversity and their importance. They advocate for equality and diversity and demonstrate an inclusive approach when working with others, for example by understanding that different people have different perspectives, by respecting lifestyle choices, challenging discriminatory behaviour and by acting in a sensitive and non-judgemental manner, providing support without prejudice. They are aware of how different cultural backgrounds might affect individuals including in their ability to access services
5.2 Safeguarding	Community Connectors understand and follow the principles of safeguarding and protection, complying with all legal requirements. They follow local procedures and can identify potential issues. They know how to escalate concerns and would do so in a timely manner.
5.3 Risk management	<p>Community Connectors are able to identify potential risk and harm to service users in respect of their work with them. Mindful of service user's strengths and following a careful consideration of that risk including from the perspective of families and carers, the postholder supports positive risk taking to achieve change, for example assisting a service user to use public transport.</p> <p>Community Connectors are aware of and follow organisational health and safety policies, protocols, procedures and standards. They identify and manage risks to themselves and others, for example through awareness of their working environment. They are also able to assess their own health and wellbeing.</p>

## Glossary

### Harm

According to Skills for Care harm includes ill treatment (including sexual abuse, exploitation and forms of ill treatment which are not physical); the impairment of health (physical or mental) or development (physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural); self-harm and neglect; unlawful conduct which adversely affects a person's property, rights or interests (for example, financial abuse).

### Safeguarding

Safeguarding is the prevention or stopping of risk or harm to an individual.



# PART THREE

## Community Connector Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework

### 1. Introduction

Continuing Professional Development (CPD), often described as learning and development, should benefit service users, improve the quality of service delivery, ensure that a postholder is competent and proficient in their role, and contribute to a rewarding job. There is also evidence that investing in learning and development for staff does lead to organisational benefits, such as improved engagement, reduced turnover or lower sickness absence.

This document sets out a CPD framework for the Community Connector role. Development of this framework has been informed and shaped by the following:

- Focus Groups carried out with Community Connectors across East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) footprint
- Survey data from Community Connectors
- Survey data from Community Connector provider organisations and Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams
- The Community Connectors Competency Framework (2022)
- Review of ELFT Community Connector Providers Briefing Pack (2022)
- Further insights from the following publications:
  - NHSE England (2019). Universal Personalised Care Model
  - The National Collaboration Centre for Mental Health, (2019). The Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults
  - NHS England and NHS Improvement, (2022). Social Prescribing Link Worker Competency Framework
  - NHS England (2020). Advancing mental health equalities strategy
  - North East London Health & Care Partnership (2021). NEL Guide for new SPLWs
  - NHS England (2018). Improving physical healthcare for people living with severe mental illness (SMI) in primary care.

### Purpose

The purpose of the CPD framework is two-fold:

- To align with the Community Connectors Competency Framework (Part Two) to support identified learning, training, and development needs,
- To signpost and guide Community Connectors and their managers on where and how to access learning, training, development opportunities and resources to facilitate CPD.

## CPD Framework Structure

Section 2 sets out the rationale for CPD and why it is important, as well as CPD processes. Section 3 focuses on learning methods and different types of learning activities to support CPD. Section 4 highlights the core CPD that is most relevant to Community Connectors, aligned to the Community Connector competency framework. This includes essential provision from ELFT, online learning programmes and how to access further learning. Section 5 provides resources and useful links to support self-directed learning.



## 2. About the Continuing Professional Development Framework

This framework sets out the **essential core elements of CPD**, required for **all Community Connectors** and enables a consistent and coherent approach.

This framework should be used by Community Connectors and managers, with support from wider stakeholders, including ELFT and Primary Care Networks (PCNs), to support learning and development needs.

The Competency Framework has identified what is expected in terms of knowledge, skills, and behaviours of Community Connectors to undertake the role safely and effectively. This is mapped against the five competency domains and empowers the postholder to identify skills, knowledge and experience gaps that would benefit from further development to meet the needs of local people and populations.

This CPD Framework is designed to be a practical and flexible resource for both employers and Community Connectors. Each Community Connector is uniquely placed in a local community facing organisation. In addition to core elements, each employer will adapt and tailor the framework and make additions to it to align to specific expertise or requirements.

This may include examples such as linguistic requirements, specific cultural competencies, or place-based population health needs.

Employers will use the CPD Framework to assess and identify what learning and associated infrastructure is already in place, and what more is required, such as CPD processes or additional learning events and opportunities.

CPD is a shared responsibility and a collaborative effort – for Community Connectors to develop skills and knowledge and for employers and managers to ensure access to appropriate training and learning opportunities as part of developing and investing in the workforce. What this may entail is described in the next section.

Employers and managers may choose to jointly commission training or learning opportunities. This will enable cost effectiveness and also harness and support joint learning amongst the Community Connector workforce.

No competency exists in isolation and there will be overlap and synergy across the competencies or learning activity. A single learning event or activity, for example, may be support two competencies.

### **What is CPD and why is it important?**

CPD is much more than training courses. CPD is ongoing and planned learning that can be both formal and informal. It is a process that contributes to personal and work-based development. It means planning and applying learning that increases knowledge, experience and skills, resulting in improved capability, impact, and career progression.

CPD covers all types of formal and informal learning, including:

- work-based learning
- formal training courses
- study days
- reflection on practice
- formal training
- self-directed learning
- observation – both planned and unexpected
- unplanned and informal learning experiences

### **What is informal learning?**

Informal learning can be a significant factor in contributing to knowledge in the workplace. Informal learning is unplanned, non-deliberate, often accidental, experiential, and unexpected.



By enabling the postholder to fulfil their potential, effective CPD builds confidence and competence, taking a strengths-based approach to skills and knowledge development, and that means better quality experiences for service users.

Offering the right CPD and developing a **learning culture** is key to an employers' ability to recruit and retain a workforce that is valued, and in turn values the work they do.

### **Effective and impactful learning is a partnership.**

Well-designed and relevant CPD is important, but its successful implementation is contingent on an engaged learner (postholder), a supportive workplace culture and good management to put the learning into practice.



### **CPD processes**

It is expected that employers will have appropriate policies, processes, and documentation in place to support CPD for Community Connectors. This will include personal development plan (PDP) systems to identify learning and development needs in line with the competency framework domains. The PDP forms part of wider CPD processes, including objectives, performance reviews, appraisals, and appropriate and regular supervision where the manager and the postholder will work together to agree the training required, at the appropriate stage of the postholder's role.

It is important that Community Connectors can have appropriate **protected learning time** to undertake training, maximise learning opportunities and self-directed learning.

## Recording CPD as a Community Connector

Keeping an accurate record of all CPD formal and informal activity as a Community Connector is essential. This is your personal record, and you can keep it in whatever way works best for you or follow a format provided by your employer. Wherever possible, adopt a consistent approach to CPD recording and ensure it includes the following:

- Dates of all the CPD activities you have carried out.
- Goals, objectives and action plans
- Reflections
- Learning logs
- Achievements

Maintaining a good record of your CPD activity will remind you of what you have learned and how you have developed, allow you to review your learning progress, provide examples for appraisals with your manager as well as set you in good stead for future career progression.

### 3. CPD How we learn – learning methods and learning activities

Adopting a learning culture approach means understanding that learning is a continual and constant process that recognises the workplace as a place of learning, and places value on knowledge exchange, learning together and experiential learning, through sharing experiences and engaging in reflexive practice.

The importance of fostering an expansive learning culture in the workplace cannot be underestimated.

**Appendix 1** sets out a series of useful questions that can be used by employing organisations to assess and audit the extent to which they characterise an 'expansive' or progressive learning culture.

CPD includes activities or events that deepen understanding, improve capability and skills, and contribute to a quality experience and good outcomes for service users.

A **blended model of learning** informs this CPD Framework with a range of formal and informal learning methods and activities that can support different and/or preferred learning styles.

The principle of blended learning indicates that effective learning and development is derived from a combination of:

- ✓ real-life and on-the-job experiences described as experiential learning and reflection on practice
- ✓ social learning; achieved via feedback, from observation of practice and relationships at work including in teams and with individuals
- ✓ formal training courses and programmes and self-directed study

## Learning approaches and methods to support CPD for Community Connectors

There are a range of methods that can support Community Connector learning.

Examples of learning approaches and methods include:

- ✓ e-Learning (online courses)
- ✓ formal subject specific training courses
- ✓ reflective learning
- ✓ observing and listening
- ✓ learning by doing
- ✓ meetings
- ✓ coaching from others
- ✓ case studies
- ✓ involvement in wider professional networks
- ✓ journals and articles – cited in self-directed learning and resources and important way of keeping up to date with current thinking
- ✓ online subject specific teaching session style webinars using field experts
- ✓ shadowing or buddying – as development opportunity
- ✓ use of journals and books to keep up to date with current practice
- ✓ discussion groups and informal learning
- ✓ action learning sets



## Transfer of learning

A supportive workplace culture alongside well designed CPD processes will enable good transfer of learning – putting it into practice and improved performance.

The expectation is that newly acquired knowledge, skills or experiential learning will, for example, change the way the Community Connector works with a service user, having a positive impact on service users achieving their wellbeing goals, and enabling service development by applying quality improvement approaches. This is learning transfer – the integration of acquired learning into practice.

Aim to apply new learning as soon as possible in your work. This is important to ensure retention of learning.

There are some simple things that can be done to support the transfer of learning into improved performance:

- ✓ Before going on any training or learning event consider precisely why and how it will improve your work.

*How can I do this?* Discuss with your manager

- ✓ Make sure you have time to put your new knowledge and skills into practice. Get feedback from your manager, colleagues, members of the multidisciplinary team, or the service user you are giving support coordination to, on your effectiveness and impact.

*How can I do this?* You can ask to be observed for feedback

- ✓ Think about your working practice – what's going well for you and what do you need to improve?

*How can I do this?* You can use the Reflective Practice process.

### Transfer of Learning: Reflection Questions for Community Connectors

How do I know I have made an impact?

Has the learning resulted in change of attitude or behaviour?

How has learning changed my practice?

How do I participate in knowledge exchange with other Community Connectors?

Has the learning been transferred and applied in the workplace?

## Reflective Practice

The ability to reflect as a Community Connector is part of your continuous learning and development and an important skill to perfect, especially when working in a person-centred way.

Good reflective practice improves self-awareness, benefits all Community Connector practice through sharing knowledge, enhances the quality of care and support coordination, improves interprofessional relationships and helps make sense of what can sometimes be challenging or complex situations.

## What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice is about learning from experiences and is made of three components:

- ✓ Things (experiences) that happened to a person
- ✓ The reflective processes that enable a person to learn to learn from those experiences
- ✓ The actions that result from the new perspectives that are taken

## What is reflection?

Reflection is a process of reasoned thought where you objectively think about an event or an experience, closely examine it, identify what worked, what was challenging, and gain insights and learning to take forward and improve the quality of your work. Strengths and areas for development can also be identified from reflection, enabling you to work on areas for improvement in practice.

## How to do reflection?

Reflection on practice can be undertaken on your own or as a team, or with your peers. It may be focussed on an agreed event or recent work experience.

Please also discuss with your manager how and when reflexive practice takes place in your team.

It is possible to do reflection in your head, but the best way to develop quality reflexive practice is to write it down using one of these methods:

## Reflective journal or diary:

- ✓ Used to record events, thoughts, and actions on daily events, and how this may affect future practice.
- ✓ Used to write down an event that has taken place and ask questions such as: 'What happened and why?' 'How do I feel about it?' 'What can I learn from it?' These kinds of questions will help you reflect on the issue in a deeper more thoughtful structured way.



Gibbs Reflective Cycle: developed by Graham Gibbs in 1988, this is a useful tool that enables you to systematically think about an experience and work through it to an action plan. It is easy to become 'stuck' at the stage of feelings and stay in an emotional response. Writing a short reflective piece after an episode of learning can help to put the Gibbs cycle into action.

## 4. Signposting and accessing training, learning and development for CPD

Community Connectors have different employment arrangements in different organisations. Employers are responsible for all terms and conditions, ensuring completion of mandatory induction and any other employer specific training. It is the responsibility of both the postholder and manager to ensure adherence to statutory and mandatory training requirements of your employer.

This section sets out the core training, learning and development required and how to access it to meet the five competency domains of the competency framework for Community Connectors.

This section covers:

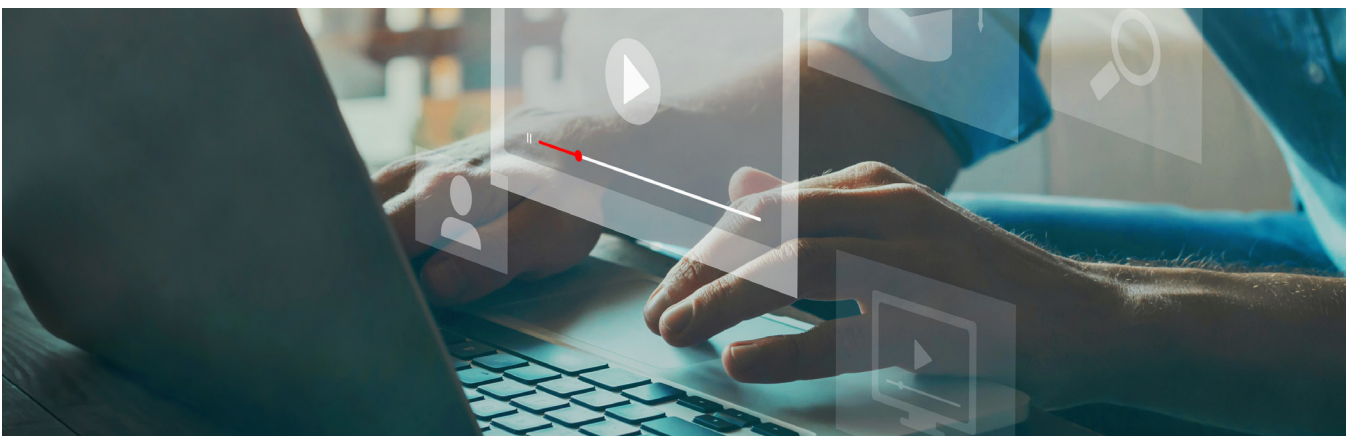
- ✓ Setting up accounts to access e-Learning
- ✓ Essential training and learning for Community Connectors via ELFT
- ✓ Core online free to access training programmes to meet competency framework domains
- ✓ Additional training and learning to meet competency domains
- ✓ Who to contact to source and access additional learning and networking opportunities?

### Setting up accounts to access e-Learning.

Digital learning platforms form a large part of the way we now learn. These can also be effective in allowing the postholder to engage in bitesize learning at their own pace.

Newly employed Community Connectors are required to create the following accounts to access training e-learning and useful materials to support CPD:

- Personalised Care Institute (PCI) - register under new learner <https://www.personalisedcareinstitute.org.uk/> The PCI offers accredited training and CPD points which may of use as you advance in your career and work life
- e-Learning for Health [register here](#)
- Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) [register here](#)
- Future Learn account <https://www.futurelearn.com/register>
- Open Learn [register here](#)



## Essential training and learning for Community Connectors via ELFT

As a Community Connector you will be provided with the following learning, training, and support by ELFT.

AT A GLANCE: ELFT & Neighbourhood Mental Health Team support for Community Connectors	
✓	RIO – login, training and reporting
✓	DIALOG+ Care planning and outcome tool training
✓	Severe Mental Illness including consequences for physical health
✓	Mental Health terminology and concepts
✓	Trauma Informed Care training
✓	Understanding the Community Mental Health Framework
✓	Supervision to support caseload management and reflection on practice
✓	Safeguarding in the workplace

## Core CPD to meet Community Connector competency framework domains

Provider	E-learning
Personalised Care Institute E-learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Core Skills</b> – Time to complete: 1 hour This module is written by three experts about personalised care, who come from backgrounds of psychology, professional education, communication skills training and personal experience. <a href="#">Core Skills Click here to complete</a></li> <li>✓ <b>Shared Decision Making (SDM)</b> – Time to complete: 30 minutes SDM covers aspects of the core capabilities to communicate and build relationships, as well as to engage, enable and support people. <a href="#">SDM Click here to complete</a></li> <li>✓ <b>Personalised Care and Support Planning (PCSP)</b> – Time to complete: 45 minutes Getting PCSP right is essential for people to gain more choice and control over their life and the support they are receiving. Personalised Care and Support Plans are also the pre requisite for accessing a Personal Health Budget.</li> </ul>

	<p>This 45min module will give a definition and overview of the criteria for a good PCS Plan and highlight - through a range of case studies - the key steps of the planning process.  <a href="#">PCSPs Click here to complete</a></p> <p>✓ <b>Personal Health Budgets</b>  Personal Health Budgets are one way to give people more choice and control over how money is spent on meeting their health and wellbeing needs.</p> <p>The modules in this programme cover a variety of topics to support the delivery of personal health budgets at a local level. People who are eligible for after-care services under section 117 of the Mental Health Act, which is the provision or arrangement of help and support for people who have been detained in hospital under sections 3, 37, 45A, 47 or 48 of the Mental Health Act 1983, when they leave hospital. For this group, a personal health budget may be considered whenever planning is taking place for section 117 mental health after-care needs during an admission to hospital, or at any assessment held to review the person's section 117 after-care package of support in the community.  <a href="#">PHBs Training Click here to complete</a></p>
e-Learning for Healthcare	✓ Supporting behavioural change <a href="#">Making Every Contact Count (MECC)</a>
e-Learning for Healthcare	✓ <a href="#">Person-Centred Approaches</a>
e-Learning for Healthcare	✓ <a href="#">Public Mental Health</a>
e-Learning for Healthcare	✓ <a href="#">Cultural Competency Training</a>
Future Learn	✓ <a href="#">Psychological First Aid Training</a>
Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA)	✓ <a href="https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training">https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training</a> 10-minute introduction and a 20-minute self-guided training session on suicide prevention
Bromley by Bow Centre	✓ Supporting vulnerable people over the phone: 100-minute virtual training session with a Samaritans phone line volunteer <a href="#">Watch the video here</a>
Future Learn	✓ <a href="#">Psychological First Aid Training</a>
e-Learning for Health All Our Health Programme	✓ <a href="#">All Our Health e-learning sessions</a> have been developed to provide a bite-sized introduction to the wide range of topics including homelessness, inclusion health and NHS health checks. Within these sessions, you'll find signposting to trusted sources of helpful evidence, guidance, and support.
FairHealth Health Equity Action & Learning	<p>✓ There is a <a href="#">wealth of free training available related to health inequalities by fairhealth</a>. It covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o What are inclusion health groups</li> <li>o Practical guide to health inequalities in primary care which will be relevant to your work with PCNs</li> <li>o Performing a health needs assessment for your local population</li> <li>o Trauma informed care.</li> </ul>



<b>Health Foundation</b>	<b>Understanding wider determinants of health</b> The Health Foundation has a rich repository of resources and briefings on wider determinants of health <a href="https://www.health.org.uk/topics/social-determinants-of-health">https://www.health.org.uk/topics/social-determinants-of-health</a>  <a href="https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/a-framework-for-nhs-action-on-social-determinants-of-health">https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/a-framework-for-nhs-action-on-social-determinants-of-health</a>
<b>Public Health England</b>	<b>Understanding wider determinants of health tool</b> Wider determinants of health tool <a href="http://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/wider-determinants">fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/wider-determinants</a>
<b>King's Fund Briefing</b>	<b>What are health inequalities?</b> <a href="http://www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities">www.kingsfund.org.uk/publications/what-are-health-inequalities</a> 2020 King's Fund briefing.
<b>SCIE Briefing</b>	<b>Mental Capacity Act Briefing (MCA)</b> <a href="https://www.scie.org.uk/mca/introduction/mental-capacity-act-2005-at-a-glance">https://www.scie.org.uk/mca/introduction/mental-capacity-act-2005-at-a-glance</a>
<b>ADASS Briefing</b>	<b>Deprivation of Liberty Briefing (DoL)</b> <a href="https://www.adass.org.uk/media/5896/quick-guide-to-deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards.pdf">https://www.adass.org.uk/media/5896/quick-guide-to-deprivation-of-liberty-safeguards.pdf</a>

### Additional training and learning to meet competency domains

<b>Training</b>	<b>Recommended / suggested providers</b>
<b>Health Coaching Training – Better Conversations (PCI Accredited)</b>	Know Your Own Health is preferred provider in North East London. 2-day Core Coaching Curriculum skills training coaching conversations with service users supporting self-management and person activation. Training is tailored to the role  <a href="https://kyoh.org/The-Coaching-Conversation">https://kyoh.org/The-Coaching-Conversation</a>  <a href="https://kyoh.org/Supporting-self-management/2-Day-Training-in-HEALTH-COACHING-SKILLS">https://kyoh.org/Supporting-self-management/2-Day-Training-in-HEALTH-COACHING-SKILLS</a>
<b>Social Welfare and Benefits Advice Training</b>	<a href="https://www.bbbc.org.uk/introduction-to-social-welfare-course/">https://www.bbbc.org.uk/introduction-to-social-welfare-course/</a>
<b>Quality Improvement Training (QI)</b>	Develop productive relationships with local partner organisations to improve service outcomes, and involve service users and carers in the design, development, and delivery of the service <a href="https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/training/introduction-to-qi-for-service-users-carers/">https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/training/introduction-to-qi-for-service-users-carers/</a> Introduction to QI for Community Connectors <a href="https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/training/introduction-to-qi-for-service-users-carers/">https://qi.elft.nhs.uk/training/introduction-to-qi-for-service-users-carers/</a>
<b>Open University Open Learn</b>	Positive Risk Taking <a href="#">Caring for Adults Positive Risk Taking</a>
<b>Gradual Exposure Training</b>	<a href="https://www.appt.ac/graded-exposure-therapy-training-course.html#teams">https://www.appt.ac/graded-exposure-therapy-training-course.html#teams</a> <a href="#">Graded exposure - an expert view</a>
<b>Mental Health First Aid Training</b>	<a href="#">Mental Health First Aid Training</a> Access via employer or Training Hub / CEPN
<b>Motivational Interview Training</b>	Access via employer or Training Hub / CEPN



### Who to contact to source and access additional learning and networking opportunities?

Community Connectors, employing organisations and managers may also want to contact the following organisations for further training or learning programmes.

- MIND covering Newham and Tower Hamlets <https://www.mithn.org.uk/training/>
- MIND covering City & Hackney <https://www.mindchwf.org.uk/training-consultancy/>
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations <https://booking.ncvo.org.uk/training>
- Hackney CVS <https://hcv.org.uk/training-and-events/>
- Tower Hamlets CVS <https://thcv.org.uk/events-2/>

Training Hubs provide and coordinate training and development and are an excellent source of support, advice, and access. Training Hubs also deliver multi-disciplinary training which means you can learn with other colleagues.

- City & Hackney Training Hub - <https://cityandhackneygpconfederation.org.uk/>
- Newham Training Hub - <https://www.newhamtraininghub.org>
- Tower Hamlets Training Hub (CEPN) - <https://thcepn.com/>
- NEL Training Hub Collaborative covers all 3 east London boroughs <https://www.newhamtraininghub.org/events/category/voluntary-sector-workers/list/>

## 5. Self-Directed Learning – Resources and reading

In this section you will find some useful information including suggested reading, sign up links and resources to support you in your self-directed learning as a Community Connector for your ongoing development. This is very much a starter for ten, distilled into themes you might find useful. It is recommended that you continue adding and tailoring it to you own local needs, building an invaluable reference and resource bank.

## Health Inequalities

The Health Foundation has a rich repository of resources and briefings on wider determinants of health <https://www.health.org.uk/topics/social-determinants-of-health>

**Evidence hub: What drives health inequalities?** [www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub](http://www.health.org.uk/evidence-hub)

Health Foundation data, insights and analysis exploring how the circumstances in which we live shape our health.

**Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review 2020.**

[www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Build-back-fairer--Exec-summary.pdf](http://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-12/Build-back-fairer--Exec-summary.pdf) Professor Michael Marmot investigates how the pandemic has affected health inequalities in England.

**Webinar: Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review 2020.**

[www.health.org.uk/build-back-fairer-webinar](http://www.health.org.uk/build-back-fairer-webinar)

Webinar hosted by Health Foundation and UCL Institute for Health Equity launching the Marmot Review

**Health and wellbeing of Londoners 2019.**

[www.centreforlondon.org/news/health-inequalities-persist/](http://www.centreforlondon.org/news/health-inequalities-persist/) Report on persistent health inequalities in London.

**Understanding inequalities in mental health**

[www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/CentreforMentalHealth\\_CovidInequalities\\_0.pdf](http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-06/CentreforMentalHealth_CovidInequalities_0.pdf)

2020 Centre for Mental Health briefing.

**Local Authority Health Profiles**

[What is population health?](#)

Fingertips search population health

Run a search on your local authority here for useful detailed population statistics [Local Authority Health Profiles](#)

**Core20plus5** An approach to reducing healthcare and health inequalities <https://www.england.nhs.uk/about/equality/equality-hub/national-healthcare-inequalities-improvement-programme/core20plus5/>

## Mental Health and Community Development

**International Mental Health Collaborating Network** on importance of community development

<https://imhcn.org/bibliography/transforming-services/community-development/>

This policy documents sets out the context for transformation of care for people living with SMIs [NHSEI Community Mental Health Framework](#)

**Article in BMJ:** Community interventions for improving adult mental health: mapping local policy and practice in England

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-11741-5>

**NESTA** Asset Based Community Development

<https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/asset-based-community-development-local-authorities/>

## **NHSE England Advancing mental health equalities strategy**

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/advancing-mental-health-equalities-strategy/>

## **Resources to support mental health in the workplace**

<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/mental-health-for-small-workplaces/>

**BMC Public Health** Community interventions for improving adult mental health: mapping local policy and practice in England

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-021-11741-5>

**Health Data Research UK**, mental health and importance of data

[https://www.hdruk.ac.uk/helping-with-health-data/data-saves-lives-mental-health/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw4omaBhDqARIsADXULuULAaEfUyLjVWpRzGeJyCnnzH0kycjNgBB1y6CKDpUZwiDik7w6XngaAlQdEALw\\_wcB](https://www.hdruk.ac.uk/helping-with-health-data/data-saves-lives-mental-health/?gclid=Cj0KCQjw4omaBhDqARIsADXULuULAaEfUyLjVWpRzGeJyCnnzH0kycjNgBB1y6CKDpUZwiDik7w6XngaAlQdEALw_wcB)

## **Practical help and resources for supporting services users**

### **Cost of Living**

[Help With the Cost-of-Living online hub](#)

[Thrive LDN: The cost-of-living-crisis: Implications for Londoner's public mental health.](#)

**Better benefits, rights and entitlements access to tackle health inequalities:** [Watch here.](#)

**Fuel Poverty:** Watch [here](#) / Download resources here: [Part 1](#), [Part 2](#).

**Anti-Tribalism Movement** Mental Health & UK Somali population <https://theatm.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ATM-Improving-Mental-Health-Support-for-the-UK-Somali-Community.pdf>

World Suicide Prevention Day (WSPD) and the #ZeroSuicideLDN campaign. [Download resources.](#)

NHS England Personalisation & Personal Health Budgets [Personal Health Budgets and Health Inequalities for minority groups](#)

A repository of resources and health related information translated into wide range of languages relevant to East London. <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/>

Bengali Mental Health and Sleep <https://www.doctorsoftheworld.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Bengali-Mental-Health-and-Sleep.pdf>

What causes wellness? Professor, Dr Harry Burns. The impact of Salutogenesis on the most vulnerable members of our communities <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEh3JG74C6s>

BBC Radio 4 The Food Programme. How food affects your mental health. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000l1wp> -

## **Peer Support Group set up and design**

**MIND - Developing peers support in the community** <https://www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4247/peer-support-toolkit-final.pdf>

National Voices & NESTA

<https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/our-work/SocialPrescribing>

[https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/sites/default/files/public/publications/peer\\_support\\_-\\_what\\_is\\_it\\_and\\_does\\_it\\_work.pdf](https://www.nationalvoices.org.uk/sites/default/files/public/publications/peer_support_-_what_is_it_and_does_it_work.pdf)

## Strengths based approaches

Strengths-based working focuses on people's strengths, including their knowledge, skills, and capabilities. By working in this way, it is possible to enable and empower individuals.

**SCIE briefing** on strengths-based approaches <https://www.scie.org.uk/strengths-based-approaches>

**Research In Practice** examples of strengths-based approaches in action (adults) <https://www.researchinpractice.org.uk/all/topics/strengths-based-working/>



# APPENDIX 1

## Developing a positive learning culture in the workplace

The table below sets out a series of questions that can be used by employers of Community Connectors to assess and audit the extent to which the organisation can be characterised as having a strong learning culture. These questions should be considered from the perspective of the Community Connector. You may wish to ask Community Connectors to answer the questions. This will give as the employer a good sense of the extent to which their learning needs are being met, and the degree to which learning opportunities are being maximised.

Question	Response
1. Are Community Connectors encouraged to take part in discussions to solve problems or improve services?	
2. Are there opportunities for staff to meet and discuss experiences?	
3. Are staff given regular supportive and constructive feedback?	
4. When Community Connectors are on training programmes, are they encouraged to set training-related goals in their work?	
5. Are Community Connector personal development discussions valued and acted upon?	
6. Is the learning of staff, including Community Connectors, celebrated?	
7. Is there adequate investment in learning for Community Connectors?	
8. Are Community Connectors given some time to reflect on their work and learning?	
9. Are managers encouraged to support the learning of Community Connectors?	
10. Are managers given support to assist Community Connector workforce learning?	
11. Are equality and diversity issues addressed in organising learning?	
12. Do Community Connectors have access to career discussions?	
13. Are Community Connectors encouraged to reflect on their learning?	
14. Are Community Connectors facilitated to record their learning, including experiential learning?	
15. Are Community Connectors aware of the progression opportunities available to them?	
16. Is the effectiveness of learning evaluated?	

## Contact us

East London NHS Foundation Trust  
Robert Dolan House  
Trust Headquarters  
9 Alie Street  
London E1 8DE

**Tel:** 020 8548 5550

**Email:** [elft.communications@nhs.net](mailto:elft.communications@nhs.net)


**Web:** [elft.nhs.uk](http://elft.nhs.uk)

 [NHS\\_ELFT](#)

 [EastLondonNHSFoundationTrust](#)

 [NHSELF](#)

 [NHSELF](#)

 [east-london-nhs-foundation-trust](#)



We promise to work together creatively to: learn  
'what matters' to everyone, achieve a better quality  
of life and continuously improve our services.

**We care . We respect . We are inclusive**