

1. Background

Name of organisation: HAGAM (Hillingdon Action Group for Addiction Management)

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Purpose of the grant: The Community Link and Assertive Outreach Project supporting communities and most vulnerable people within them including homeless people, beggars and street drinkers.

Grant amount: £111,128

Amount spent: £111,128

2. The work undertaken with the funding to date:

Who has benefited

Since the inception of the Community Outreach Project, the following activities have been carried out.

The data below refers to work carried out within the areas of HCT: Botwell, Townfield, Pinkwell, West Drayton, Heathrow Villages & Yiewsley.

Table 1. below shows the performance of the Outreach Team between February 2011 and September 2014:

Activity	TOTAL	HCT area	OUTSIDE HCT area
Number of drop in sessions conducted	954	400	554
Number of assertive outreach sessions conducted	994	590	404
Number face- to- face contacts	2479	1530	949
Number of clients engaged	1029	546	483
Number of client who were homeless having at least one face to face contact	160	94	66
Number of clients give housing advice	196	123	73
Number of clients referred into housing support services	63	46	17
Number of clients referred to the GP	33	28	5
Number of clients referred to structured treatment	463	202	261
Number of clients referred into other services	219	122	97

The target number of beneficiaries from the six wards of the HCT area is **230**. The project exceeded this target and had seen a total of **546** people from the HCT area who engaged with our services.

1. What has changed as a result of the project:

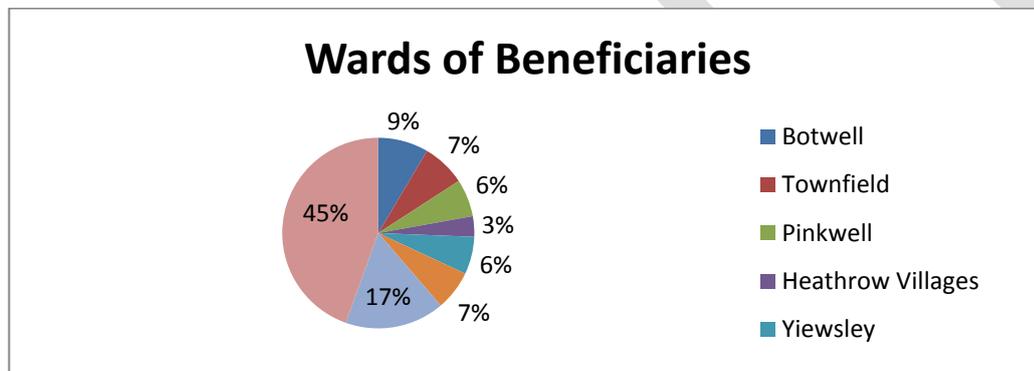
Through regular contact and feedback from clients seen during community outreach and satellite drop in sessions, we were able to access local knowledge in identifying the harder to reach clients in Hillingdon. This information has enabled us to target our response and develop outreach functions within the identified localities.

The recent independent survey of HAGAM clients, in which 244 people partook, reported the following;

- 95% of clients who were surveyed reported being satisfied with the service they have received from HAGAM
- 98% felt HAGAM staff were knowledgeable and appropriately skilled in supporting them
- 99% said the support they have received so far has made a positive difference to their recovery
- 99% reported they would return if they needed help in the future
- 99% would recommend the service to a friend or family member who needed this kind of help

For further information about the benefits of the project to individuals please refer to client case studies *Appendix 1*

Breakdown of beneficiaries by ward

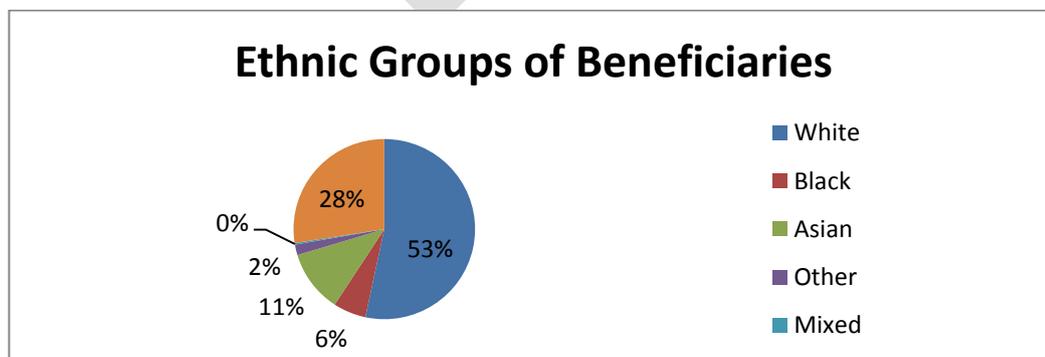


45% of clients did not disclose their postcode or ward

Age profile

The average age of those who were engaged by the service was 41yrs. The overall age ranged from 18 to 80 years. Those who came into contact with the outreach team who were under the age of 18 years were signposted to local young person's services.

Ethnicity breakdown



The ethnic breakdown is comparable to the population breakdown of the local area. 28% of clients seen did not disclose their ethnicity.

Working in Partnership:

We have established strong links with local stakeholders within the London Borough of Hillingdon and with colleagues from our neighbouring boroughs that include: Hillingdon Community Safety Team, Hayes Town Partnership, Yiewsley Safer Neighbourhood Team, West Drayton Police Station and Hayes One Stop Shop. We have established information sharing and fast-track referral procedures to meet the needs of those who present with general and urgent housing needs and substance misuse including Khat use. We have conducted joint targeted outreach sessions with 40 organisations and services including Hillingdon Housing Needs (Civic Centre), Hillingdon Homeless Persons Unit (Civic Centre), Police, PCSO's, Thames Reach (Homeless Outreach Project), EACH, Botwell and Townfield Safer Neighbourhood Teams and London Street Rescue. This joint outreach partnership has enabled us to provide a coordinated service to meet the varying needs of service users. Please refer to testimonials *Appendix 2*

Referral Pathways -The outreach project has implemented referral pathways for easy access into treatment providers for those who require specialist treatment including psychological and medical interventions. HAGAM has increased the duration and the frequency of drop-in sessions in the HCT areas in order to meet this demand. As a result of this service extension, we are now seeing an increase in self referrals and professional referrals from; GP surgeries, local churches, Food Bank, HDAS, London Street Rescue, CAB, One Stop Shop, local Safer Neighbourhood Team, YMCA, Job Centre Plus, Probation Service, A&E at Hillingdon Hospital and the Occupational Health Department at Heathrow Airport.

Hot Spots - Newly identified locations and existing hot spot locations identified by the partnership has enabled us to target, make contact with, and sign post into local services those people performing illegal activities, illicit drug use and other forms of anti-social behaviour. Local data suggests that hot spot areas have increased from 10 to 60 over previous years. Please refer to Hot Spots in *Appendix 3*

Identified barriers and challenges

Targeting and engaging with Eastern European and Somalian community has been challenging because of the language barrier. In order to meet this need, HAGAM has invested in translated literature with various languages that we distribute when making contact. We are also continuously promoting our volunteer service to these communities, which resulted in recruiting volunteers who speak these languages.

Accommodation– There is a shortage of accommodation, emergency shelters and hostels for the homeless in the Borough for clients with 'high support needs' or mental health diagnosis. We currently work closely with Thames Reach homeless hub and Mead House Mental Health Service in supporting this client group.

Service changes and re-adjustments

The project first began as an all-male outreach appointment. This has changed over time and we now employ a mixed gender team. We have learned that this equal balance within the team has encouraged and engaged with more clients, both male and female. During outreach sessions it has been evident that female clients have been more open about issues that they would not necessarily share with a male worker, such as how to access nearest GUM clinics.

We adjusted our working timetable to meet the needs of the population we serve by including unsociable working hours (11am-8pm). Frequently, we conduct earlier (5am) joint outreach operations with the local Police. This is usually carried out when street homeless people have been identified by the Police and enables us to engage with them before they leave their sleeping spot as it is often challenging to engage with a mobile client group.

We are an organisation that invests heavily in the development of volunteers. We have increased our volunteer capacity to complement our staff resources, currently the outreach team has 4 volunteers. We have reviewed our health and safety policy in order to make volunteers more active in the participation of outreach. As a result, we are able to carry out two daily outreach sessions as opposed to one session we were able to staff previously.

It is evident through our data collation system that more people are accessing HAGAM's drop-in service on both sites-Uxbridge and Hayes. We believe that our extensive advertising when on outreach and our joint partnership approach has facilitated this additional traffic.

Continuation of service beyond the lifetime of the grant:

The HCT grant enabled us to establish an effective service and to evidence the ongoing local need for an assertive outreach intervention. London Borough of Hillingdon is in the process of tendering all substance misuse service contracts in Hillingdon. The outreach service is expected to be built into the new service specification, ensuring longer-term sustainability of the service. The service continues to operate in the interim in order to avoid a break in provision and potential loss of contacts and pathways.

Organisational and external factors which have influenced the development and the challenges faced with the work of the project:

- Staffing and capacity issues- Assertive outreach is a challenging role, and naturally we have experienced higher turnover of staff. We were able to recruit to vacancies swiftly and minimise disruption to service provision. We currently have two full time paid staff and several volunteers working with the outreach team
- Accessibility of other services – Continuously building on partnership and joint working to ensure that referral pathways are constantly updated, whilst setting up drop in services at several partner organisations.
- Operational flexibility - Introducing flexible staff working hours and extension of project activity to unsociable hours.
- Joint approach to outreach – Utilising the resources of local organisations and stakeholders to drive further value from limited resources.
- More permanent police officers assigned to the area has assisted collaborative working and quicker response to local concerns including the closure of premises that have been identified as 'drug dens'
- The most significant issue facing the project is the lack of immediate emergency shelter and facilities for the homeless and rough sleepers and the acute shortage of housing in the borough.

Suggestions to further developments:

- The use of motor vehicle to increase the response times of the service and to improve engagement of clients with services by transporting homeless street drinkers to services.
- Establishment of a year-round shelter in the local area, so the target group can be supported to address their substance misuse and other health and care concerns without their urgent accommodation needs getting in the way.
- A similar assertive outreach service to target people under the age of 18.
- Introduction of a mobile needle exchange scheme through outreach workers to distribute safer injecting paraphernalia and to collect used works for safe disposal

