

HEALTH STARTS IN COMMUNITY: HOW NIGHT SHELTERS & DAY CENTRES CAN INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

With Firm Foundation, Bromley
Homeless & Light Project Peterborough

BREAKOUT SESSION

FLOW OF THE SESSION

- Projects will share with us their best practice for embedding health work in their shelters and centres, how they got started, and what challenges they have faced
- We'll end with questions to the panel



Who we are

- Light Project Peterborough(LPP) started in 2009 and became a registered charity in 2015.
- The Garden House opened in October 2018, and its origins came from the Peterborough Night Shelter project.
- We received our Health Outreach Bus in September 2023.
- Providing access to health services both at the Garden House and wider homeless community. (Hub and spoke model)
- Utilising and sharing an online data management platform called 'In-form'



Our motivations

- We wanted to rebalance inequality across the county (Cambridge v Peterborough).
- Receiving feedback from our guests.
- The health barriers we have seen with our guests
- ourselves.
- Existing health partner relationships in 2018.



What helps us

- Partnerships, and lots of them.
- Facilities – we have the resources that health outreach services need and want.
- We are Peterborough's 'Homeless Hub'.
- Support of a partnership "Homeless Health Hub Board" and "Homeless Health Hub Operational Group".
- Homeless Link evaluation.



Barriers we've faced

- Partnerships.
- Ongoing costs.
- Short term (year on year funding).
- Recruitment and staff retention.





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Humble Beginnings to Holistic Health



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Bromley Homeless Health Hub Where it all began

- What started as a simple idea to bring health and housing support together under one roof has grown into a lifeline for people experiencing homelessness in Bromley. The vision was clear from the outset: no one should be left without access to healthcare because they don't have a home.
- In its early days, the Hub was little more than a small partnership between Bromley Homeless Charity, volunteers, and local health professionals who shared a determination to remove barriers and build trust. Over time, this collaborative approach laid the foundation for a service that is now central to local homelessness prevention and health inclusion work.

It started with one simple but powerful idea:

everyone deserves access to healthcare, no matter their housing situation.

Kim Sutton spent three years tirelessly knocking on doors speaking to health professionals, community leaders, and local organisations asking for help to make that vision a reality. Many times the answer was “not yet,” but she never stopped trying.

Then one day, Dr Hasib Rub of Bromley GP Alliance said the words that changed everything: *“Let’s have a meeting.”*

That meeting became the turning point. From those first conversations grew a unique, stand-alone service designed specifically for people experiencing homelessness. Today, the Bromley Homeless Health Hub offers an on-site prescribing nurse, dental care, chiropody, and one of its most effective services counselling.

What began with persistence and partnership has become a trusted place where people can access care, rebuild trust, and begin to recover. It’s more than a health hub it’s proof of what happens when a community comes together and refuses to give up.

What does the Health Team Offer alongside the charity?

- Holistic Care – the team – NP, Advisors, Counselling, Dentistry, Opticians, Nail cutting.
 - Same day appointments - Mon-Fri.
 - Same day tests (bloods, swabs).
 - Support with GP registration.
 - Direct referral into secondary care.
 - Follow up care.
 - Advocacy.
 - Seasonal vaccinations.
 - And more.....
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- Before any client goes into the shelter, charity advisors assess/triage and the NP provides a holistic health check. This helps ensure safeguarding – safety for volunteers, staff and the client. This document is in the event of an emergency i.e. An ambulance. Paramedics will have relevant information easily to hand.



Best Practice

- Clients are better safeguarded.
- Timely access to health information (clients & professionals).
- Reducing unnecessary UTC and A+E attendances.
- Preventing avoidable deaths.
- Successfully bridged services.

Barriers

- Staffing cover - health team.
- Housing availability.
- Accountability from local authority
- Challenges in communication with Drugs and Alcohol Team (GDPR)
- Awareness of key processes (e.g. registering individuals without ID/ fixed address)
- Insufficient training around Homeless and Inclusion Health (IH) across partner services.
- Funding



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The Bromley Homeless Health Hub: A lifeline in the Community

- What began as a small idea has grown into a life-saving service. The **Bromley Homeless Health Hub** now reaches some of the most vulnerable people in the community - individuals who might otherwise fall through every gap in the system.
- Every week, people walk through its doors with **no GP, no stable home, and often no one else to turn to**. Here, they can access **immediate health support, compassionate counselling, dental and foot care**, and crucially, **trusted professionals who treat them with dignity and respect**.
- The Hub has helped **hundreds of people** stabilise their health, move away from rough sleeping, reconnect with essential services and rebuild their lives. More importantly, it has **saved lives**; providing timely treatment, mental health support and ongoing care that would not have been available elsewhere.
- Today, the Bromley Homeless Health Hub stands as a **beacon of what persistence, partnership, and community can achieve**: a place where health care isn't a privilege, but a lifeline.



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18+, Single
& Homeless with a
Local Connection to
Harrow.

FirmFoundation: on average
houses someone every

10 Days



Services



Day Service
3 Days a Week
4hr Sessions



Supported Accommodation
2 Year Move On



Winter Night Shelter
Mixed 15 Beds

Overview

Someone housed every 10 days on average

18% of those housed had drug or alcohol issues

Over 2,500 visits to our Day Service By 186 people

There are approximately 50 clients connected with FirmFoundation at any one time



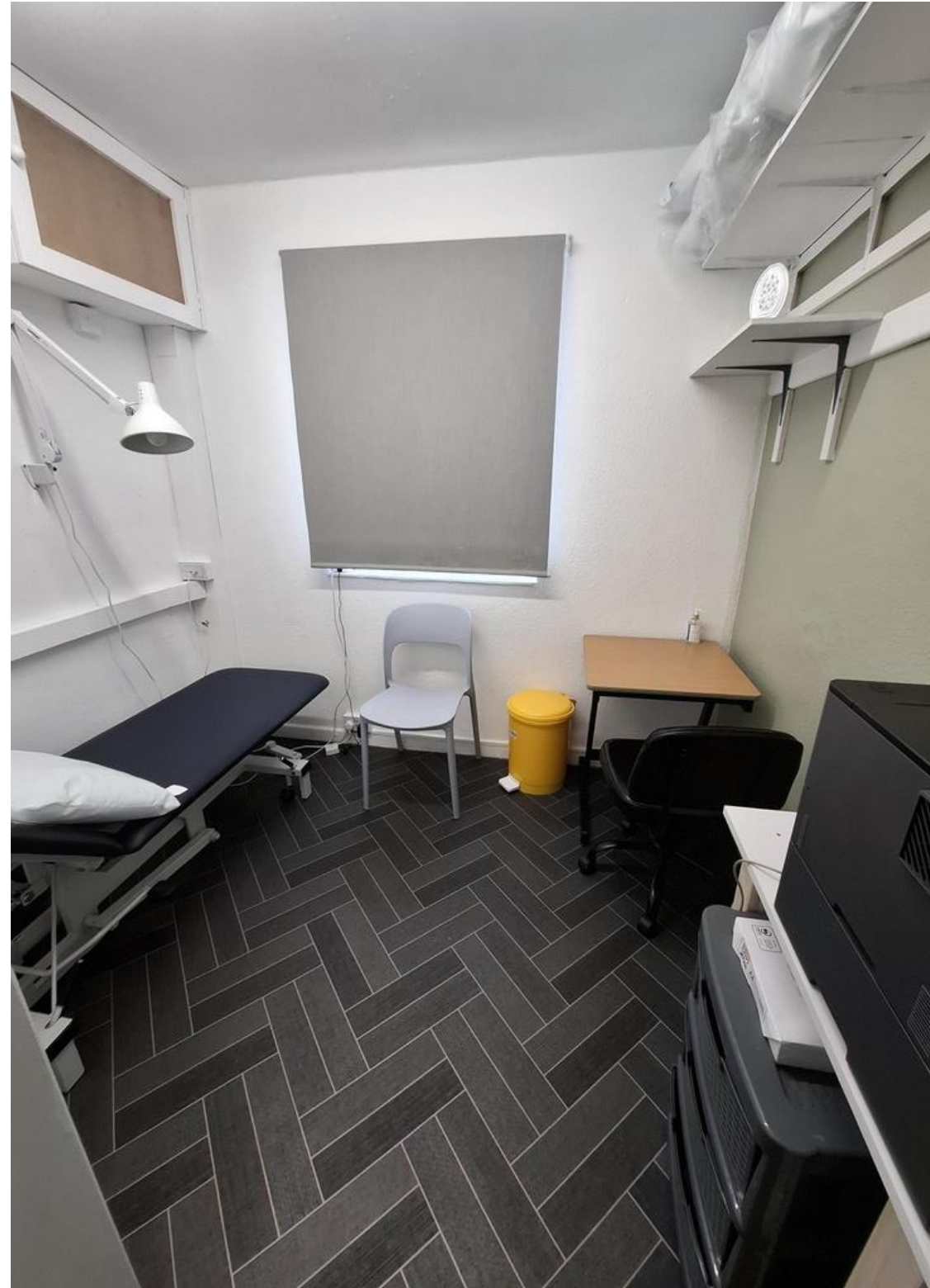


Dr David Bourne



Nurse & GP

Clinic



Why a Nurse & GP Clinic

- Health Checks
- Blood tests
- Blood Pressure
- Mental Health
- Prescriptions
- Referrals



Clients having difficulty registering with a GP

Delayed medical help Poor health outcomes

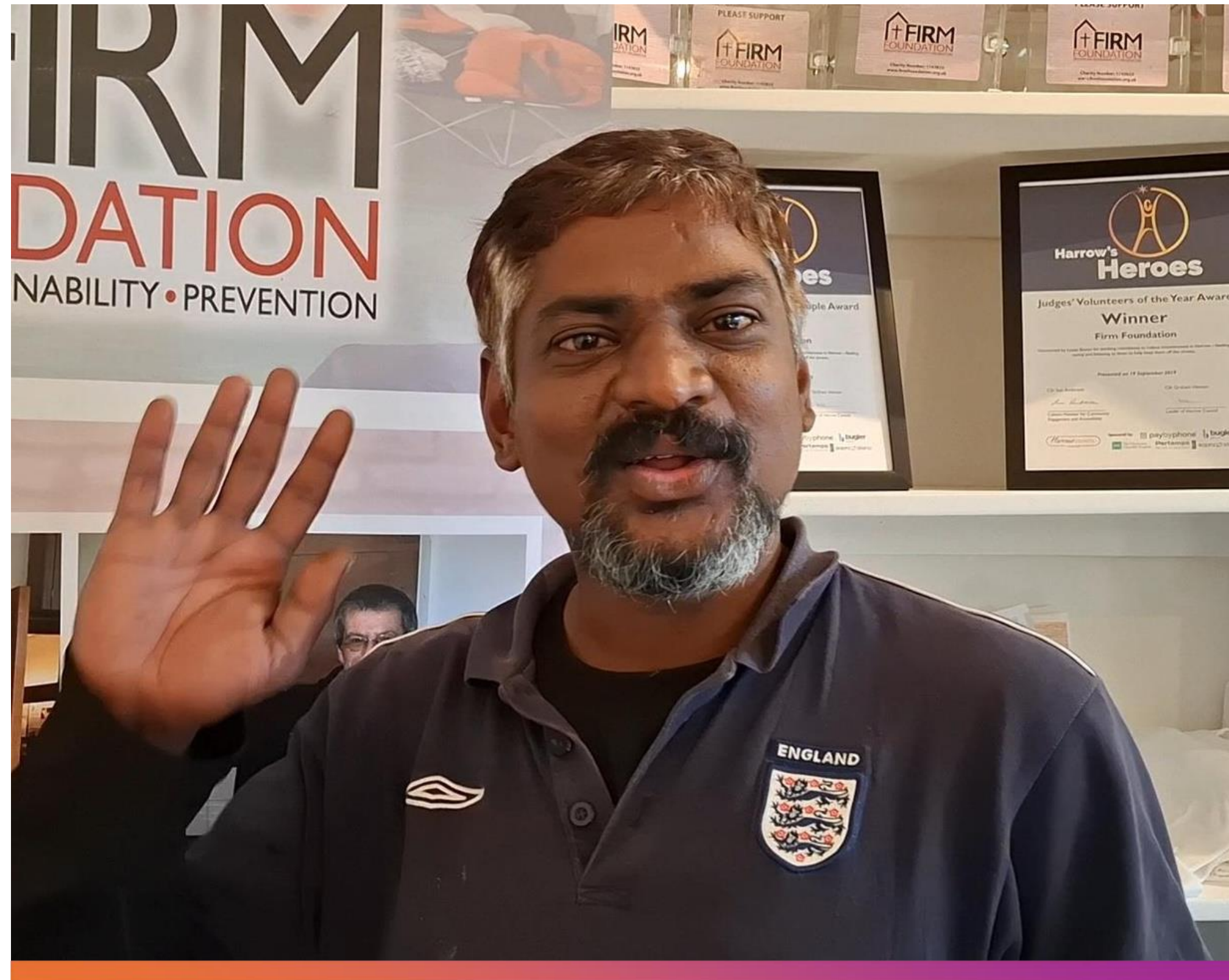
for rough sleepers Building trust with clients

Increased engagement

Over a 4-month period

- 87 appointments
- 31 Potential A&E Avoidance
- 4 A&E Avoidance
- 1 Definite Admission





Muthu gets
to benefit

.



How did we get here?

Partnerships with Local GP

Borough Involvement Homeless

Reduction Board Integrated Care

Board Find the decision maker

Be clear what you are asking for



QUESTIONS AND REFLECTIONS