

**Fulfilling
Lives in
Islington &
Camden**



LOTTERY FUNDED



**preventing homelessness
transforming lives**



**Fulfilling Lives in Islington
and Camden (FLIC)**

Annual report executive summary

Contents

Introduction p 1

Key themes in Year Three

1. Mental Health p 2-3

2. Housing and homelessness p 3-5

3. Domestic Abuse and Violence p 6-7

4. Complex needs p 7

5. Offending p 8

6. Client voice and engagement p 9

7. Substance use p 10

8. Use of personal budget p 11

This report summarises the key outcomes and achievements of FLIC in year three of the project.

We have focused on eight priority areas, all of which have seen significant progress over the past year: mental health, housing and homelessness, domestic abuse and violence, complex needs, offending, client voice and engagement, substance use and physical health.

We continue to see major improvements in our clients' wellbeing and levels of engagement, and are increasingly able to draw on our learning to collaborate with other agencies in key areas of strategic influence, in order to affect system change. In particular, we have seen great developments in our peer engagement and peer mentoring work streams, with both projects invigorated this year. Our work with the FLIC psychologist is making a tangible difference to our clients' wellbeing, while demonstrating that people living 'chaotic lives' with backgrounds of complex trauma are not only able to engage with, but see a real benefit from, flexible and tailored therapeutic interventions.

We have also seen the beginnings of real system change in key areas such as Housing First and domestic violence, and we continue to work in partnership with the London Borough of Islington to develop a multiple disadvantage programme.

As ever, the year has not been without its challenges. The limited capacity of the management team has meant that the programme has been overstretched at times. In response, we have restructured and brought in additional resources, and we hope this additional capacity will help us to take forward FLIC's strategic ambitions into year four.



Key themes in year three

1. Mental Health

Access to appropriate mental health interventions and support has been a major challenge for our clients. All too often, the people we work with are told that they are not ready or unable to access psychological help.

In particular, people with co-existing substance misuse and mental health issues (or 'dual diagnosis') face significant barriers accessing services, and their overlapping needs mean this group is in most need of support but often receive the least.

A high proportion of our clients have complex trauma going back to childhood, and until working with FLIC have not started to unpack these experiences. All too often, they find themselves locked out of services, unable to access the help and support they need to start their recovery.

Our impact

Prior to receiving help from FLIC, 95 per cent of clients described their mental health as 'very bad' or 'bad'.

Through direct clinical work with clients, our dedicated in-house psychologist has brought treatment to people who have never had it before, as well as opening doors so they can access other services.

This has been successful in terms of supporting clients previously deemed 'not ready' for therapeutic work to engage with therapeutic interventions. It has also highlighted significant barriers and challenges to clients accessing mental health support, which we will explore and take forward in year four.

In addition to this specialist mental health support, the wider benefits of our holistic approach to working with clients have also paid dividends for their mental health.

By working with people in a psychologically-informed way, encouraging meaningful use of time and the building of strong relationships, we have been able to have a positive impact on our clients mental health, despite still facing challenges linking our clients into services.



As a result, at the end of year three 70 per of clients reported that their mental health was 'very good' or 'good' after receiving FLIC support, compared to none before.

"Being able to build up a level of trust to open up a little bit, developing a personal relationship – I have been able to rely on it. I have been at my wits end, and they have stepped in. If you become stressed, or whatever, there will be somebody for you to talk to." FLIC Client.

Our strategic influence

Year three has seen ongoing development on FLIC's psychological work across Camden and Islington, including rolling out a Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) pilot in one hostel and our work offering clients one to one support.

PIE pilot in Endsleigh Gardens

Over the past year, FLIC psychologist Dr Sonia Borghino has been working with Camden Council to roll out a PIE approach in one hostel, Endsleigh Gardens. This includes a programme of training for staff, setting up reflective practice, evaluating the impact of the service's physical environment and working with residents in one on one sessions.

The pilot has now ended and been passed over to the Camden Pathways Psychologist, a new role created by Camden Council with a view to rolling out this approach across the entire pathway.

This is significant development which should lead to a far greater understanding of the needs of people with experience of multiple disadvantage, particularly in the area of trauma-informed care.

One to one clinical work

A major part of Dr Borghino's work over year three has been to work directly with clients. Many of our clients are labelled as 'not treatment ready' – however, working in a flexible and holistic manner has meant they are able to take the first steps towards recovery. FLIC are now using these outcomes to demonstrate the effectiveness of working with this client group without imposing unrealistic preconditions, and making the case for appropriate mental health services to accept referrals.

2. Housing and homelessness

Housing remains one of the biggest challenges for our clients. Lack of access to the Private Rented Sector (PRS), an acute shortage of social housing, lack of tenancy sustainment skills and difficulties in engaging with the hostel environment all contribute to entrenched homelessness.

Our impact

Implementing the Housing First model

Housing First - which sees people with complex needs placed in a stable home with no pre-conditions or expectations of abstinence - is an evidence based model which has been proven to benefit clients with complex and multiple needs. Our application of the model has proven highly effective with FLIC clients, many of whom would not respond well to the hostel environment but would also struggle to access or maintain PRS accommodation without intensive support. To date, FLIC has housed 14 clients in this way, with a further five currently preparing to enter PRS properties.

To date, more than 90 per cent of clients have sustained their tenancies. For the majority whose tenancies have succeeded, it is the longest they have ever lived at a stable address. All have experienced improvements in physical and mental health, which is likely to be because they are now registered with a GP. Most have reported a reduction in drug and alcohol use. Two individuals have made significant changes in their drug and alcohol abuse – with one client, alcohol dependent since the age of 12, now abstinent.



To date, more than 90 per cent of clients have sustained their tenancies

Clients also spoke of how being responsible for maintaining a home had increased their sense of purpose, with benefits for their overall wellbeing:

“I am interested in things again, and I have a bit of a life now – I am doing things that normal people do. I like cacti. I have five now, and a Venus flytrap – I know it sounds really weird, but they depend on me, those plants, I have got responsibility again. Especially the Venus, he needs to be watered all the time.” *FLIC Client.*

Our strategic influence

Housing First

FLIC have been working alongside Housing First England to provide evidence of change, and over the past year we have fed into a number of high level and strategic events, reports and conferences. These include:

- Providing evidence and a case study story for the Centre for Social Justice Report *Housing First: Housing-Led solutions to rough sleeping and homelessness*. This report was launched in parliament, where a client also spoke about his experiences in front of a packed room of sector leaders, and the Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), Savid Javid. Our client was also interviewed along with his support worker on BBC Breakfast ahead of the launch of the report.
- Presenting at Homeless Link's conference *Under One Roof*
- Presenting at Eastbourne Fulfilling Lives' networking and learning event
- Assisting with, and providing a case study for, a short film on Housing First.
- Co-delivering a seminar with Homeless Link's Housing First England lead at the Second National Summit on Tackling Multiple Disadvantage
- Presenting at a lunchtime seminar for the London Borough of Islington, *Housing First: A transformative approach to homelessness*.

We have also been making the case for other London boroughs to adopt the Housing First approach. We have spoken to commissioners for rough sleeping for Hammersmith and Fulham council, the aim of which is to produce proposals, which would support the borough's ambition to reduce rough sleeping significantly in their borough. FLIC also contributed to Watford's Strategic Homelessness Forum.

Camden hostel pathway

FLIC's work has influenced both local and national policy, practice and commissioning throughout year three. We have been working with Camden Council to improve the experiences of people with multiple and complex needs in the Camden pathway. Many have been stuck in a 'revolving door' and have had multiple stays in different hostels in the borough. Our key achievements include:

- Rolling out a PIE pilot in one Camden hostel, which will deliver training to staff and give residents access to therapeutic treatments previously unavailable.
- Advising on the creation of a Camden specialist high support 'complex needs' hostel (Southampton Row). The hostel will now support people with high level complex needs around substance misuse, mental health, personality disorders and offending – and is the first of its kind in the borough. This is a major step and shows the commitment of the Camden hostel pathway commissioners to address the needs of clients with complex needs.
- Contributing to a project group that evaluated the use of beds for women at risk of domestic violence. Thanks to this work, a 'women's safe space' approach will be rolled out, with an emphasis on gender sensitive interventions.

Rough sleeping

Many FLIC clients have experience of rough sleeping. FLIC contributed to a workshop in May 2017 hosted by Islington Council, which sought to explore the options available for rough sleepers and 'street population' individuals with complex needs (including those not engaging with current provision).

3. Domestic Abuse and Violence

Throughout years one to three, domestic violence and abuse (DVA) has been a prevalent issue. Half of FLIC clients are women and of these, around 85 per cent have experienced, or are experiencing, domestic violence and abuse and/or sexual violence, in addition to their other needs. Caught between homelessness or living with an abusive partner, many people experiencing domestic violence feel trapped and isolated, which can in turn exacerbate other issues, such as substance use and mental health.

Our strategic influence

Following a day long learning event attended by fifty managers and commissioners from across the sector, FLIC was asked to deliver training to 200 council employees, and to feed into the design and delivery of a bid for additional resources for women with complex needs experiencing domestic abuse.

DCLG funding bid

Most notably, FLIC's work has led to the design and development of FLIC's Domestic Violence and Abuse (DVA) demonstration pilot, which has been a collaborative process with local services, commissioners and clients. FLIC were approached by the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) lead for Camden to contribute to a bid to secure Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Rough Sleepers funding. The bid - which featured FLIC's recommendations and supporting evidence - was successful and will result in the creation of an intensive, robust, wraparound support service focusing on women at risk of homelessness due to domestic abuse and severe multiple disadvantage.

Improving joint working

FLIC now sits on a new 'Task and Finish' group lead by DVA specialists Standing Together, which aims to improve joint working between sectors and improve safety planning for rough sleepers experiencing DVA.

Since March 2017, FLIC have been part of a multi-agency 'complex sub group' headed by the VAWG lead for Islington. This has resulted in FLIC leading on drafting a protocol/partnership agreement between mental health, DVA and substance misuse agencies in Islington, which will cover recommendations for partnership working for complex cases including case management, record keeping, info/data sharing, how services work with both survivors and perpetrators of DVA, and how to address gaps in provision.

Improving the experience of women with complex needs experiencing abuse

FLIC have worked with the Head of Housing Needs for Islington to discuss ways to improve the response to women with complex needs experiencing DVA who present at Housing Options with an urgent housing need.

Alongside Women's Solace Aid, FLIC also provided a half-day training course for 200 Housing Directorate council staff.



Research

FLIC were involved in a piece of research conducted by Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) in partnership with Agenda, AVA and St Mungo's, on how women with multiple needs are being supported in local areas that have developed coordinated interventions.

4. Complex needs

People with multiple and complex needs tend to fall through the gaps between services because no one takes overall responsibility for helping them to break the cycle they are in. Stuck in a 'revolving door' of care, their problems become ever more entrenched. As well as providing one to one support we are working collaboratively with stakeholders to develop multi-agency approaches to this problem.

Our Impact

Upon a FLIC referral, clients were assessed using two nationally recognised tools – the New Direction Team (NDT) tool which measures levels of chaos & risk in a person's life, and the Outcome Star, which measures levels of motivation & independence (across a ten domains).

At the end of year three, we once again measured clients' scores on each of these frameworks, and discovered significant progress:

- Outcomes Star scores, from point of entry to the service to the end of Year Three, show an average improvement of 30 per cent across each area assessed.
- Motivation, offending and anti social behaviour saw the most significant progress, with managing accommodation and physical health showing notable increases
- The NDT score showed on average a 20 per cent reduction in level of need across each domain, the biggest decreases being in the areas of intentional self-harm

and housing. Social effectiveness also saw a notable improvement.

“They are linking me in with drugs and alcohol services. My confidence is improving; I can talk how I want to talk now. Before, I was too scared to say anything.” *FLIC Client.*

Our strategic influence

The main problem highlighted by FLIC's work is the lack of joint working across services in the same borough. The environment we are working in is not conducive to system change; austerity, under resourcing, commissioning in silos and poor provision in dual diagnosis are all difficult barriers to break down. A large majority of FLIC's work in future years of the programme will focus on breaking down these silos, and encouraging cross cutting work among services and teams.

Islington multiple disadvantage programme

FLIC are now members of the multiple disadvantage steering group, which has representation from Social Care, Public Health, the CCG and commissioning teams. This will enable us to be at the heart of shaping the London Borough of Islington's long-term strategy regarding multiple disadvantage.

There is a commitment to incorporate FLIC's work-streams and test and learn initiatives (including our work on PIE, DVA and Housing First) into Islington's multiple disadvantage programme.

Finally, FLIC has started to explore the way in which local authority services tend to be commissioned in 'silos' with a view to aligning different commissioning streams.

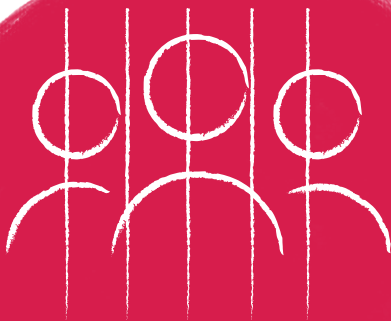
5. Offending

Many FLIC clients have described themselves as stuck in a cycle of offending. Some FLIC clients tell us they that would re-offend simply in order to get back into prison, so that they would have somewhere safe to sleep and to get clean from substances. FLIC has been working closely with the police, the probation service and clients to break this cycle and reduce offending.

“If it weren’t for FLIC I would be in prison.” *FLIC Client.*

Our impact

Offending has more than halved among our clients, with the proportion of individuals reporting recent arrests falling from 95 per cent to 40 percent since they engaged with the service.



Offending has fallen by more than 50 per cent among our clients

We have seen the biggest decrease in offending among clients who are housed through the Housing First approach, with 80 per cent of clients not re-offending since being housed in independent accommodation with support.

This reduction in offending behaviour is demonstrative of a large part of

FLIC’s frontline work, which includes direct support with criminal justice issues, such as accompanying clients to probation, and other work which indirectly reduces offending, or example, supporting clients into drug treatment.

Our strategic influence

This year FLIC was shortlisted (from over a hundred applications) for the Howard League Justice for Penal Reform Organisation of the Year, in recognition of our work with the police, probation service and other services across Camden and Islington. We were informed that we had made the shortlist due to our creative approach to working with a client group that typically ‘falls between the gaps’ of other services.

“I want to stay out of prison and live with my cat. That’s a wonderful life for me. It might not sound great to many people, but when you’ve done 35 years behind the door, it’s just great.” *FLIC Client.*



6. Client voice and engagement

All too often, people with complex needs feel that they don't have a say in matters that affect them. A large part of FLIC's work this year has been to capture case studies and client voices and to help clients influence the way that services are designed and commissioned.

Strategic influence:

This year has seen substantial developments in both FLIC's peer mentoring programme and peer engagement programme, and the steps taken will enable us to capture client voices and use their input to make a case for change.

Peer mentoring

FLIC have successfully restarted the Peer Mentoring programme, which has seen nine peer mentors trained through an accredited training course. Mentors have been paired with mentees, and the work is ongoing.

The initial feedback provided by the Peers has generally been positive, with participants stating that, "The content of the training was well tailored around the Peer Mentor role", that the training was "absorbing and very informative" and "delivered in a way that suited me down to the ground and made me feel at ease... It was clear and precise and easy to understand".

FLIC Advisory Board (FAB)

After a period of consultation, the FLIC Advisory Board (FAB) has been re-established and has meeting on a regular fortnightly basis since April. The Board is comprised of people with first hand experience of living with complex needs, and will help ensure that FLIC's strategy and working practices are informed directly by the perspectives of service users.

With a core group to support its development in the initial stages, members have elected to focus on three areas: Strategy, Engagement and Operational development, both internally and externally at services across boroughs. FAB has conducted initial research with FLIC clients exploring access to support, taken part in NECG activities and identified a number of aims to improve working with clients, mentors and paid staff.

Films

In order to ensure the client voice is at the forefront of the strategic development of the project, we have made a number of films exploring particular themes and client journeys. This has allowed us to develop learning resources to be used at conferences and training sessions (both internally and externally). It enables us to bring the thoughts and ideas of the client into the influencing of the design and delivery of support work. Please see: <http://bit.ly/2gC4xab>

Creative Pack and capturing case studies

Creative packs are another way for clients to express themselves and have their voice heard,. The creative pack provides opportunities for feedback in a variety of forms, including postcards, diaries and titled stories. So far seven FLIC clients have filled in and returned their packs. We are measuring the impact of the FLIC Link working model on clients by obtaining regular qualitative feedback.

Nearly 30 per cent of FLIC clients participated in the end of year evaluation interviews, which, for a client group often seen as 'disengaged' demonstrates that, with the right support, people are very keen to have their voices heard.

7. Substance use

All of our clients were experiencing substance misuse at the point of referral. While our support work has resulted in significant reductions in substance misuse among clients, we have also drawn on our learning to shape and enhance the commissioning of services.

Our impact

Prior to being supported by FLIC, three quarters of clients reported street drinking, compared to just 20 per cent after engaging with the service.

Half reported taking illegal drugs at the point of referral, compared to just one in seven afterwards, and 65 per cent of clients are now engaged with some sort of substance misuse treatment.



This could in part be down to some clients experiencing greater stability in their lives, possibly due to the Housing First approach, and others feeling ready to begin their recovery journey.

“I had been begging, I don’t actually remember what it was like because I can’t understand how I did it – the shame and embarrassment. I had to get drunk to do it. It is crazy, as you are doing something completely against your will, to survive. It is a vicious circle. I am so glad I got help.”

FLIC Client.

Our strategic influence

FLIC Board member Emma Stubbs facilitated consultation with FLIC regarding Islington’s new substance use pathway and service, which is due to commence in April 2018. This gave us the opportunity to feed into and shape the new model and service specification, including the following:

- One worker to follow the client through the treatment pathways to ensure consistency of support
- An emphasis on peer-led models of support
- An assertive outreach approach for people who find it hard to engage with treatment, including those with multiple needs

During the course of Year Three, FLIC also continued to feed into a variety of other strategic groups:

- Camden strategic substance misuse group
- Camden’s drug related deaths and ‘near misses’ strategic group
- Crisis Concordat strategy group

8. Use of personal budget

A personal budget is incorporated into the service, and is offered to all clients as a means of enabling self-directed support. The original intention was for the budgets to be used to purchase care services and interventions that are not readily available, such as intensive psychological input or specialised training courses. There was also an emphasis on giving the client more choice and control over their recovery.

However, despite the vast majority of FLIC clients accessing their budgets, we are instead seeing the money spent on addressing gaps in service provision.

Our impact

So far, 90 per cent of clients are using their personal budget, which is a positive step. However, the budgets are being used in ways that depart from traditional approaches to self-directed support:

- 23 per cent spent on emergency housing
- 20 per cent on food
- 9 per cent on clothes
- 9 per cent on travel

Where the budgets are being used for their intended purposes, we are seeing significant change and value to this. For example, one client decided to go on a trip to the seaside, and one client took his daughter on a theatre trip – something that he had never done before, which helped to repair his relationship with his family.

“One chap went to the seaside with two of our staff members. He never had the opportunity to as a kid, so for him that was a thing that put him back on a straight path.”

FLIC Link worker.

Strategic influence

A large proportion of clients' personal budgets has been spent on welfare and crisis items, which was not the original intention of the budget. The current use of the budget has highlighted gaps in the system, which is in turn helping FLIC to build a case for change.

Challenging exclusion, enabling change, building futures – Fulfilling Lives

The Fulfilling Lives Islington and Camden project supports people with multiple and complex needs relating to drug and alcohol use, homelessness, offending and mental ill health to build positive, fulfilling futures. We work in partnership with our clients, stakeholders and services across both boroughs to navigate recovery pathways, enable access, challenge exclusion, and change systems.

Get in touch

SHP, 245 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8QY

T 0207 520 8660

W www.shp.org.uk

E flicteam@shp.org.uk

 facebook.com/singlehomelessproject

 twitter.com/SHPcharity

**Fulfilling
Lives in
Islington &
Camden**



LOTTERY FUNDED

