

Email Sent to Barnet Council and Adult Social Care (our former funders) July 2025

Dear **Barnet Council / Adult Social Care**,

We are two of the facilitators for **Barnet Depression Alliance**, the longest running (28 years) mental health peer support group in Barnet and the only one supporting adults suffering from clinical depression. We are very grateful for Barnet Council's continued financial support for the past 27 years. We were therefore very shocked and disappointed to hear this year that you are going to cease funding us from next year due to financial constraints and because our work is not "evidence-based" – something we strongly dispute.

Barnet Depression Alliance has provided a valued and unbroken service to Barnet residents suffering from clinical depression and anxiety since 1997. Since that time, hundreds of people have been through our group and found much needed support. Indeed, if you look at the testimonies on our website and on our annual reports you will see that the feedback we get is uniformly positive. I can think of no other Barnet charity or community service which has kept going without a break for almost 30 years. If we are forced to close due to lack of funding, it will be a great loss to our members and prospective members as there is no other comparable service in Barnet.

Please note that clinical depression is the most common mental health condition affecting adults in the UK with one in four being affected at some point in their lives. It is the leading risk factor in suicide. Barnet's social prescribing service has identified depression and anxiety as being the main reason for referrals constituting a quarter of all referrals in 2023-2024.

We are writing to request that you reconsider your position on withdrawing funding support. The key points that constitute our application are summarised below. I also attach a document giving comprehensive information about our group, its history, services, achievements, and contribution to the community in Barnet. The document offers additional detail on each of the summary points listed here.

- **We believe that Barnet DA represents very good value for money**
For little over £900 per annum (of which just half currently comes from council funding), approximately 40 people at any one time who are diagnosed with clinical depression are receiving regular ongoing support of a type which cannot be provided by social services or the NHS. The group also provides valuable additional services including printed resources (*Low-cost counselling and other sources of support* -- all available on our website).
- **What we do is fully in line with current prevention strategies and user led involvement in social care**, as exemplified in "the big society" concept. We feel we fulfil all the recommissioning criteria identified in Barnet Council's latest funding protocol.
- **The group cannot continue if funding is discontinued or is inadequate**
- **We do not have the resources to devote to raising funds in any other way** because we are staffed entirely by volunteers who run the support group in their spare time.
- **We have always been open to inspection and provide comprehensive yearly reports of our work**
Our activities have always been closely monitored by various organisations over the years including Depression Alliance, Mind and by Barnet Council which has funded us for the past 27 years. We have been commended by Mind's Marsh Trust for excellence in peer support (2016 Award).

I should be very grateful if you would reconsider your withdrawal of funding support for our group.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With thanks in advance,

Group Organiser, **Barnet Depression Alliance**

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www.barnetdepressionalliance.org