

Email sent to MP July 2025

Dear Mr Tomlinson,

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. Barnet Council has part-funded us for 27 of our 28 years, but we have been told that funding will cease next year due to financial constraints and because our work is not “evidence-based” – something we strongly dispute.

We believe that our group provides a valuable service. 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 your support to persuade the council to reconsider their 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 of 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.

I should be very grateful if you would let me know if you would support our request for continued funding.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss this request; all our contact information is detailed in the attached document.

With thanks in advance

Group Organiser, Barnet Depression Alliance

Tel: 0754 118 7907

www.barnetdepressionalliance.org

Barnet Depression Alliance is an independent not-for-profit voluntary organisation and peer-led self-help group established in 1997. It is a member of the Hub of Hope (formerly Mind’s Community and Peer Support Network) and is financially assisted by Barnet Council.