

Question from Councillor Philippa Shimmin:

“Considering the pressure on mental health services and the need for patients to access them promptly, why has there not been a single referral to the Mary Francis Trust, by a G.P. in Surrey? SCC and the CCG have already bought the services, so there is no financial commitment for the practices. Mental health patients need this, Surrey tax payers have paid for it. How will SCC ensure that referrals are made and the patients promptly receive the services they need?”

Joint Surrey County Council Adult Social Care and North East Hampshire CCG response:

The Community Connections Service was established as an outcome of a public value review on adult mental health services in October 2012. The service is jointly commissioned by the six clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and Surrey County Council. It is an outcome based preventative service. Mary Francis Trust is the lead provider for delivering this service in Mole Valley and Epsom & Ewell, and is one of five lead providers across the county.

The services started in April 2013 and have made a difference by giving individuals universal access to local preventative services. However, we recognise there are challenges in the referral uptake, particularly from general practitioners (GPs). To date there have been 107 referrals from GPs to the Community Connections service across the county and five referrals to the Mary Francis Trust from GPs. The table below shows the numbers of general practitioner referrals across the county alongside the total number of referrals to the Community Connections services to date. This illustrates that general practitioner referrals across the county are generally low.

	Total GP referrals across the community connections service	GP referrals to Mary Francis Trust	Total referrals across the community connections service
Q1 2013/14	21	0	449
Q2 2013/14	20	4	589
Q3 2013/14	25	1	631
Q4 2013/14	22	0	814
Q1 2014/15	19	0	677
Total	107	5	3160

Lead commissioners for adult mental health services in the clinical commissioning groups, Surrey Downs CCG, have confirmed that they would like to promote a refreshed presentation about Mary Francis Trust to local GPs. In addition they would discuss with the lead GPs for mental health an initiative that will increase referrals to local Community Connections Services across the county, and locally to Mary Francis Trust.

The clinical commissioning groups are aware of the valuable work of the Mary Francis Trust and Patrick Walter (Chief Executive) has given local presentations on the range of services they offer. The GPs do refer to ‘First Steps’ as an accessible source of information and self-help support for mental health and well-being. ‘First Steps’ are aware of Mary Francis Trust and do signpost people onwards. These referrals would however not necessarily be sourced as a GP referral.

As a county council we will also promote referrals to Mary Francis Trust from our general practitioner colleagues as part of our commitment to delivering preventive services.