

# Healthy Futures

A social prescribing service providing tailored interventions that meet a broad range of needs

Healthy Futures was devised in partnership with SDS MyHealthcare GP Federation.

The aim of the service is to support patients and address their social needs, but also to assist GPs in freeing up valuable time, by providing a direct referral route for anyone who needs non-medical support. This includes help with issues such as:

- isolation and social support
- benefits, debt and housing
- low mood and wellbeing
- management of long term conditions

Whether someone just needs a cup of tea and a friendly chat to get through the day, or has complex needs that require a range of specialist help, Healthy Futures is a "one stop shop" into which south Birmingham GPs can refer patients.

*"I think this service is great especially for the community I work within. Many of the patients have financial/housing issues and it has been great to re-direct them to you to help."*

**Dr Jessica Agarwal,  
Greet Medical Centre**



## Case Study: Alia

- unsuitable accommodation
- social isolation
- disabled two-year-old son
- low wellbeing
- domestic abuse

### "Ralph helped Alia and her son to put down roots"

When Wellbeing Navigator Ralph first met Alia\*, she and her young disabled son were living in a homeless centre after moving away from her abusive partner. Socially, they were very isolated, with no local family and few friends. Alia cared for her son 24/7 with very little respite, and told Ralph she was suffering from depression and anxiety.

Alia told Ralph she was looking for social activities so that she and her son, nearly two, could make some friends – important not just for her, but for her son's development. And of course, she was keen to move out of the homeless centre. With support from Shelter, she had applied to move into social housing and was waiting for a decision.

Ralph was in the office one evening when he received a frantic call from Alia: her housing application had been rejected. Extremely upset, she hadn't been able to speak to anyone. They talked and Ralph changed his plans so he could meet her the next day.

The following day, Ralph found Alia feeling very low. He explained that the next step would be to appeal against the decision, then called Shelter to arrange a visit from her support worker for the following week. Worried about her mental and physical health, he asked her to consider going to her GP. When he left, he told the Centre staff his concerns and told Alia that he would be available over the weekend if she needed him. (Later, Alia admitted to Ralph just how ill she'd felt that day, and that she had been considering self-harm, but that his friendly advice encouraged her to seek help.)

Since then, things have started to look up. Alia's Shelter support worker and their legal team made the appeal against the social housing decision, and Ralph helped to arrange an Occupational Therapy assessment for her son as part of that appeal.

Ralph also found lots of activities for them to get out and meet people. Alia's son likes animals, so he told them about the local nature centre and farms, which they have since enjoyed visiting. He referred them to their local Children's Centre, and a support team helped them access free nursery care and activities. Alia's GP surgery offered her a stress management course which she took up and really enjoyed. And, although Alia had originally refused Home-Start support, she changed her mind and began to receive support from volunteers providing temporary at-home respite.

Three months on, Ralph was overjoyed when Alia called to say the appeal had been successful. Now, they live in their own temporary accommodation. Alia's making new friends and her son's doing really well at nursery. They still have a long road ahead, but they're happier and healthier – thanks to Ralph, Shelter, and her new support networks.

\*Alia's name has been changed.

Healthy Futures is provided by Gateway Family Services, a community interest company with over a decade of experience providing one-to-one support to vulnerable people in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands.

Call Gateway Family Services to find out more: 0121 456 7820

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