

# The Bridge Club



The Bridge social club connects people with mutual interests.

## THE BRIDGE CLUB

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### Background

This project was inspired by service users in Wolfson House, a low secure forensic psychiatry unit. Typically discharged after long periods of institutional care, people reported experiencing severe social isolation at the point of discharge from hospital. Our initiative seeks to reduce the impact of social isolation on our service users' lives. Through it, we hope to 'bridge the gap' between hospital and the community by supporting aspirations for independence alongside self-directed recovery focussed activity.

### Aim

To reduce social isolation for service users in Wolfson House, as evidenced by an increase in activities supporting community re-integration to 3h per week by the end of March 2016 for those participating in the Bridge Club.

This will be achieved by promoting and enabling the continuation of significant relationships formed in hospital, thereby capitalising on previously unexploited opportunities for developing and sustaining networks of social support.

The Bridge Club meeting is open to all former and current service users at Wolfson House. It provides a 'social space' where service users can be supported to plan and engage in social activities with friends.

### Measures

Outcome: Number of hours spent engaged in community integration activities (average per week for 'Bridge Club' participants)

Process: Attendance at monthly Bridge Club event  
Service user satisfaction/feedback

Balancing: During the past year patients involved in Bridge Club have not been found to have had any of the following associated with this initiative:

- Incidents of violence/aggression
- Positive urine drug screening tests
- Positive alcohol breath tests
- Absent without leave

### Acknowledgements and thanks to:

- Hackney Council (funding boxercise classes)
- Hannah Mellor (Health and Development Coordinator East London Foundation Trust)
- Motivate East (funding football at the Sobell Leisure Centre)
- John Wilson (funding Redmond Centre)

### Weekly Events

The Bridge Club has been running since 25 February 2015. All Bridge Club events take place during the evening or weekend, and there are now 20 members who attend at least one 3 hour event every week.

Every other Friday members meet to play football at the Sobell Leisure Centre and every Thursday attend boxercise training with former European and British Super Middle Weight Champion James Cook at the Pedro Youth and Community Centre. We also run a fortnightly club night at the Redmond Community Centre café where service users catch up over a affordable cheap but nutritious meal.

Service users with unescorted leave are granted additional leave to attend these events which are believed to offer additional therapeutic potential. Others have accessed the Club to support their initial application for unescorted leave. Three members have been discharged and travel from Leyton twice weekly to attend. Another member travels from his hostel in Surrey.

### Special Events

In our first year we have attended the Under the Stars Music Festival starring Maxi Priest, Aswad, and Janet Kay, and the free Fireworks Display at Wanstead Flats in Newham. The club also held its first 'Christmas Do' at Nando's. These events were all well attended. It is hoped that this year the Bridge Club will have its own summer trip.

