

PATHWAY

Pathway is the UK's leading homeless and inclusion health charity. They exist to improve the health of people experiencing homelessness and other forms of severe social exclusion.

Pathway's Partnership Programme supports the NHS to set up and run specialist teams to support patients facing homelessness when they are admitted to hospital. The multi-disciplinary teams work with patients holistically, drawing in other services to make sure their stay in hospital goes well, and that they receive support and accommodation on discharge. This helps to end the revolving door of hospital admission, and sets patients on the path to health and stability. The teams reduce patients' rough sleeping by 40% on average.

As well as this, Pathway work alongside partners at every level of the health service to:

- develop, test and share evidence-based models of care across the NHS, like the Pathway hospital teams;
- support specialist homeless and inclusion health professionals, by developing and hosting training and good practice resources;
- influence public policy, commissioning and drive wider system change;
- change attitudes and challenge the stigma people experiencing multiple exclusion face too often when they seek help for their health.

Case study of Pathway Hospital Team

Rosie* was a 62-year-old lady who had been sleeping rough in London parks with her husband for several months – with only a duvet for cover. She had chronic, serious health conditions, including Type 2 diabetes and heart failure. Due to a major deterioration in her health as a result of being homeless, had attended A&E as many as 24 times in nine months before being referred to the Pathway Hospital Homelessness Team.

On receiving the referral, the Pathway Team carried out a holistic assessment and identified that Rosie and her husband had been evicted by an abusive landlord. The team contacted the council to make an urgent referral for emergency housing. The application was initially rejected, but through expert, persistent advocacy, the team were eventually successful in getting this decision reversed.

During the wait for housing, the hospital team monitored Rosie's health carefully and provided ongoing advice and support through daily phone calls. They also referred Rosie and her husband to a homeless day centre, enabling them to maintain their nutrition, hygiene and more positive mental health for the first time in many months. A referral was also made to a community health nurse who treated Rosie at the centre every week.

Rosie and her husband have now been housed. With access to holistic, expert care both in hospital and the community, Rosie and her husband were able to move out of homelessness and Rosie's health has stabilised. She is no longer relying on frequent visits to A&E and no longer experiencing the catastrophic impact of homelessness on her health.

(*name changed)