

Case Study 2

Active Learning Facilitators (ALF)

– Lambeth, London

The ALF Project a small scale, local pilot project which has succeeded in engaging people with long term health conditions to become actively involved with improving the lives of other patients and service users. The core activity is a skilled conversation between a trained learning facilitator and patients and service users attending local GP surgeries. We have learned from listening to many patients on how valuable these conversations have been in helping them think about becoming actively involved in learning. key aims were to:

- Mobilize the potential of local people with long term health conditions including expert patients/service users to become expert facilitators of informal adult learning.
- Design and implement a model of self – managed learning that drew its strength from self- management and self-care in the health sector.
- Engage with people from amongst those sections in our community who experience on a daily basis, the human cost of social exclusion, health inequalities, loneliness and isolation.
- Offer help and support to patients and service users by encouraging them to become actively involved in learning of their choice and by doing so increase confidence and interest in learning and personal development.
- Recruit new cohorts of active learning facilitators from amongst patients and service users whom we were to meet in GP surgeries and other health related locations.
- Explore the potential of GP surgeries to become the organizational context for developing new learning activities in support of active patient and public involvement.

In the words of one ALF:

I now have the confidence to go to engage with patients, service users and NHS staff in GP surgeries in Lambeth. I can understand and empathize with people with long term health conditions who are caught up in dealing with their health condition. I help facilitate their learning and focus on self-management and decision-making skills. They trust me as I have a long term health condition myself but I am a facilitator and active expert patient. I identify with the issues they're going through and am a resource for them for further learning and engagement in the local health system.'

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