

LONDON BOROUGH OF HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Report to: Health and Wellbeing Board

Date: 18th March 2026

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

Report author: Sara Ross, Assistant Director, Adult Social Care

Responsible Director: John Morley, Director of Adults Services (DASS).

SUMMARY

This report presents the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between West London NHS Trust (WLT) and the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF). The MoU outlines joint working arrangements across integrated mental health services including hospital discharge, community pathways, forensic services, and Section 117 aftercare.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board is recommended to:
Agree and sign off the Memorandum of Understanding to establish close working relationships and provide improved outcomes for residents in Hammersmith and Fulham with mental illness.

Wards Affected: All

Our Values	The H&F Corporate Plan highlights core values reflected in the MoU and Working Together approach. Key points include compassion and inclusion, ensuring no resident is overlooked.
Building shared prosperity	The MoU encourages mental health inequalities in underserved areas, supporting community wellbeing, enabling local economic growth and facilitating collaboration among professionals.
Creating a compassionate and inclusive council	A compassionate and inclusive council seeks to meet the diverse needs of its community, focusing on those underserved. It should engage inclusively, address health

	inequalities, maintain transparency and accountability, and commit to continuous improvement through closer working relationships with health partners.
Doing things with residents, not to them	A core principle in developing this MoU is to engage meaningfully with residents, working with communities to meet their actual needs. Working more closely with health partners enhances meaningful engagement with residents and removing the need for multiple telling of their stories.
Being ruthlessly financially efficient	The MoU will promote financial efficiency by reducing duplication of operational work, ensuring appropriate funding streams and effectively sharing the workload.
Taking pride in H&F	The MoU encourages using community assets and staffing resources to provide community based, person centred care in the mental health space, leading to pride in our integrated services and allowing for a whole community approach.

Background Papers Used in Preparing This Report

DETAILED ANALYSIS

BACKGROUND

WLT and LBHF have a long-standing history of collaboration in delivering mental health services. The previous integrated working Section 75 (National Health Service Act, 2006) ceased in 2018, and this MoU has been designed to fill that gap. The Health and Care Act 2022, Integrated Care Systems (ICSs), and the Northwest London Integrated Care Board (ICB) provide the current strategic context. The MoU brings together responsibilities, expectations, and joint working arrangements across key pathways.

Roles and Responsibilities

WLT leads on clinical assessment, diagnosis, inpatient care and early discharge planning. LBHF leads on Care Act assessments, social care planning, safeguarding, and post-discharge reviews. Joint responsibilities include Section 117 planning, maintaining a shared aftercare register, dispute resolution, and shared governance.

Governance and Oversight

The Hammersmith & Fulham Mental Health Steering Group provides strategic oversight. The Operational Leadership Group oversees day-to-day delivery, escalation, and performance monitoring.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance indicators include timeliness of discharge, reduced delayed transfers of care, reduction in out-of-borough placements, Section 117 compliance, readmission rates, and user feedback. These measures will be monitored monthly and reported into governance structures.

Financial Implications

The MoU itself creates no new financial obligations. Any pooled budgets or financial commitments must be agreed separately through appropriate commissioning and governance routes.

Risks and Mitigations

Risks include potential Section 117 disputes, information-sharing issues, inconsistent practice across teams, and pressures on supported accommodation. Mitigations include clear governance, shared records, improved joint processes, and strengthened accountability.

Benefits to Hammersmith & Fulham residents from adopting the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and the '*Working Together Framework*'.

- 1. Faster, smoother access to the right support:**
Residents experience quicker access to assessments, treatment, crisis support, and community services through improved pathways and reduced delays.
- 2. Shorter and safer hospital stays:**
Focused efforts to reduce length of stay, reduce delays once clinically ready for discharge, and prevent readmissions result in safer, timelier discharge and better recovery.
- 3. More joined-up assessments and decision-making:**
Clear responsibilities across Care Act, Mental Capacity Act, Section 117, and safeguarding mean fewer repeated assessments and quicker decisions.
- 4. A more personalised, prevention-focused approach:**
Strengths-based practice, rehabilitation, improved carer support, and early intervention help residents stay well and maintain independence.
- 5. Clearer responsibilities = fewer gaps in care:**
Clarified roles reduce hand-offs, service gaps, and delays, creating a seamless and accountable experience.

6. **Better planning for complex cases:**

Stronger multidisciplinary work and better coordination in hospital, forensic, community, and onward-journey pathways improve safety and long-term outcomes.

7. **Greater transparency and accountability:**

Governance, oversight, and annual reporting ensure continuous improvement and accountability to residents.

8. **Better use of data to improve services:**

Improved use of metrics such as length of stay, readmissions, caseloads, and MHA activity ensures services evolve based on real local need.

The MoU strengthens integration, improves statutory compliance, and supports more effective mental health pathways for residents of Hammersmith & Fulham.

Options Considered

1. Health and Wellbeing Board to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between West London NHS Trust and Hammersmith and Fulham Council.
2. Health and Wellbeing Board choose not to adopt the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between West London NHS Trust and Hammersmith and Fulham Council.