

Whalley Range Community Forum Worker Report March 2026

Activities and Support at JNR8

Cost of Living and health advice, support and signposting

We offer a range of 'joined-up' services – often with people who have struggled to access support elsewhere for various reasons, often living locally and feel comfortable visiting a community centre within their neighbourhood.

We can help with one-to-one budgeting support - as people struggle with a variety of issues - often hidden from family/ignored due to stress – including spiralling debt, housing support for people who are digitally challenged, e.g. lack of skills, low income, literacy and/or language barriers.

Communication with the benefits and housing systems remains a challenge for people with literacy and digital barriers in terms of benefit sanctions (not updating journal, inability to upload documents etc) - most services are online and this creates more problems as it's difficult to join queues on the phone with low/no credit - and literacy issues mean people are embarrassed to admit they struggle to e.g. fill in their DWP journal, housing forms etc...

Many of the people we have supported have

- cleared/been able to manage debt
- received a pre-loaded SIM card/reconditioned phone
- are more confident using devices to search for e.g. 2nd hand free/ affordable items they can't afford to buy

We support an average of 4 people weekly with the one-to-one support and regular group discussions around general budgeting issues - and have built the service into our 3-year funding to continue the support as the initial 'trial' NIF grant has run out.

Support and Partnership working

Partnership work with NHS Manchester Local Care Organisation
Manchester Carers Forum
Community Care Navigators
Manchester south Central Foodbank

- General foodbank referrals,
- PIP applications (guidance and signposting)
- Universal Credit journal reporting support
- Transport to hospital appointments, arranging hospital/GP appointments:
- ensuring low-level English- speaking residents have interpreters at appointments available to discuss their needs,
- Assisting residents to reschedule appointments and plan journeys
- register with e.g. online banking, Government Gateway

The NHS/MLCO partnership and weekly Leg Up group helps attendees to

- take control of their health issues with support
- set up GP and hospital appointments using Ask My and GP My MFT
- raise health concerns and receive direct referrals to GP.

Encouraging people to participate in different activities in various venues means people feel more supported and engaged and confident in asking for help.

We are seeing a lot of people who are struggling in so many ways with financial, physical and mental health issues in the JNR8 area - and we need more resources to cope!