

Haringey and Islington Blood Pressure Testing with Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations

Aditi Karnad, Camden and Islington Public Health; Polly Kwok, Camden and Islington Public Health; Diane Farmer, Haringey Public Health; Esther Dickie, Camden and Islington Public Health

Background

In Haringey and Islington, approximately 100,000 people are living with high blood pressure, only half of whom have been diagnosed. Between 2018 and 2020, Haringey and Islington Council have been awarded funding from the British Heart Foundation (BHF) to work in partnership with local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations to deliver blood pressure testing in a variety of community settings. Some of the organisations involved include the Tottenham Hotspur Foundation and Octopus Community Network (full list provided in Figure 1).

Aim

To provide an interim evaluation of the two-year BHF funded blood pressure programme working with VCS organisations in Haringey and Islington.

Methodology

Haringey and Islington Public Health continue to train and support a network of volunteers from VCS organisations to perform blood pressure testing in settings such as community centres, summer events and workplaces. Individuals have to fit certain eligibility criteria in order to receive a blood pressure check.

Based on the individuals' blood pressure readings, volunteers provide different advice and signpost the individuals to suitable local services. Data from the blood pressure tests are also recorded through online software and sent electronically to the individuals' GP.

Figure 2. Full pathway from individual attending a blood pressure check, to advice provided by VCS organisations following blood pressure measurement

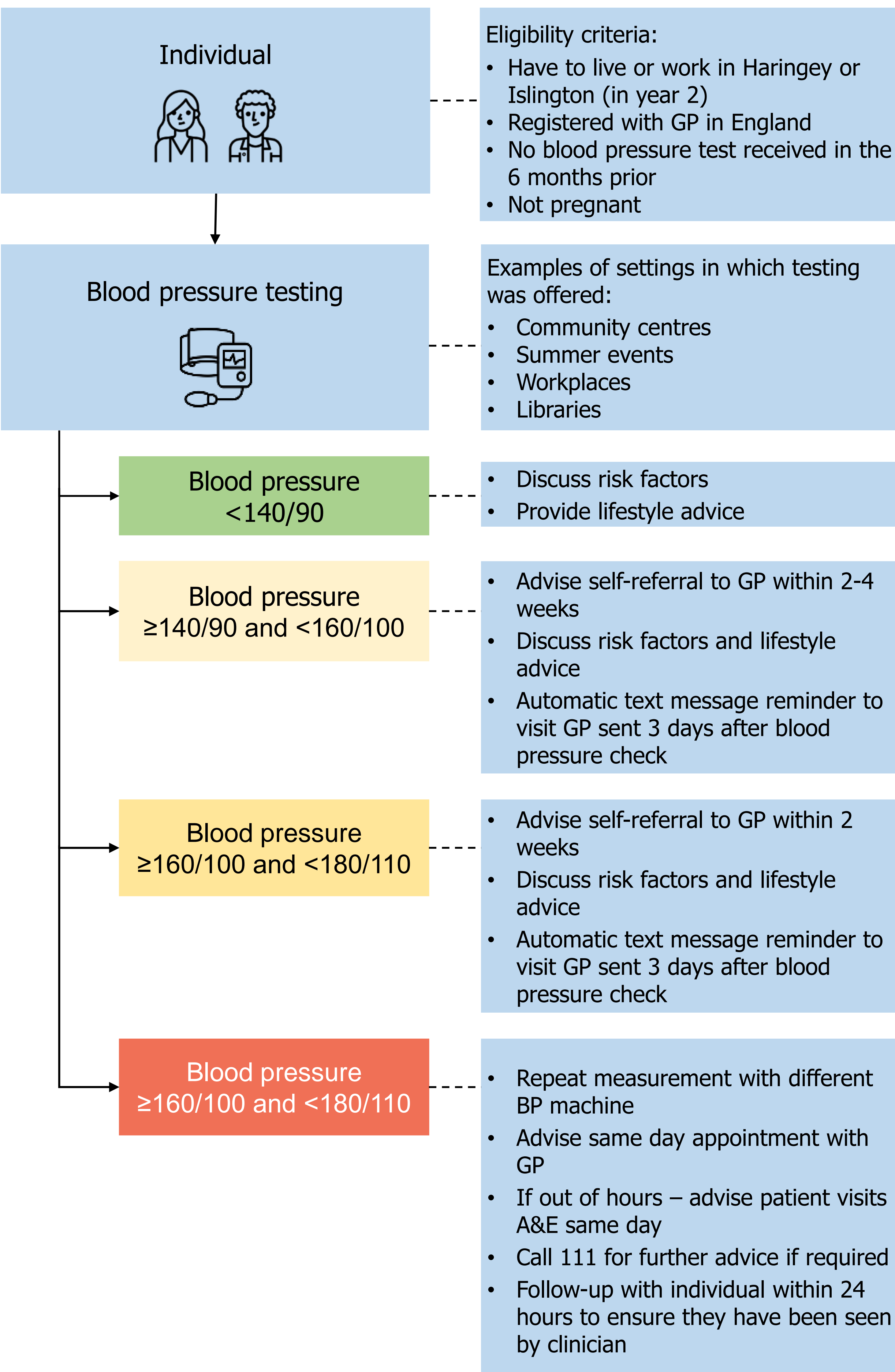
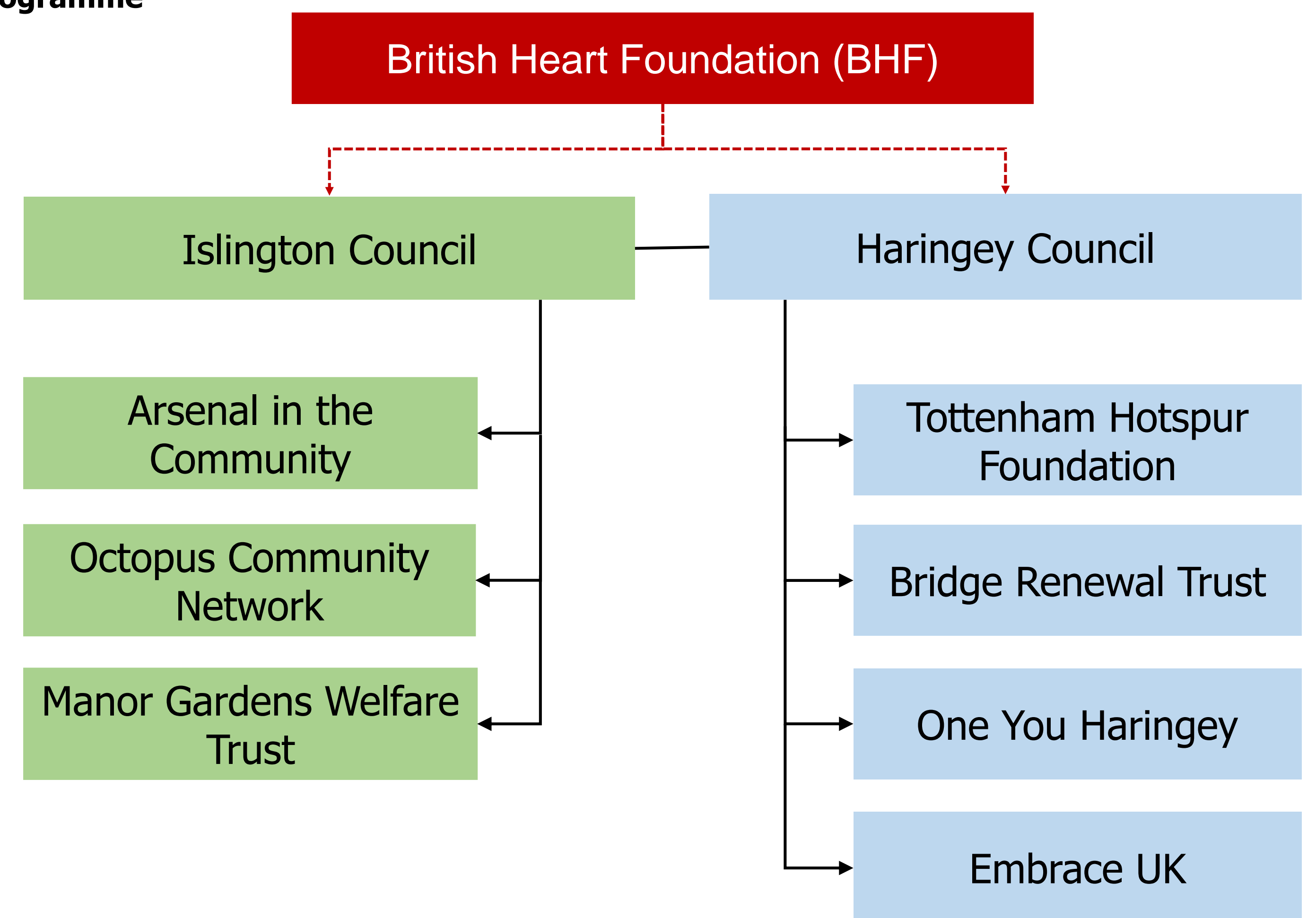


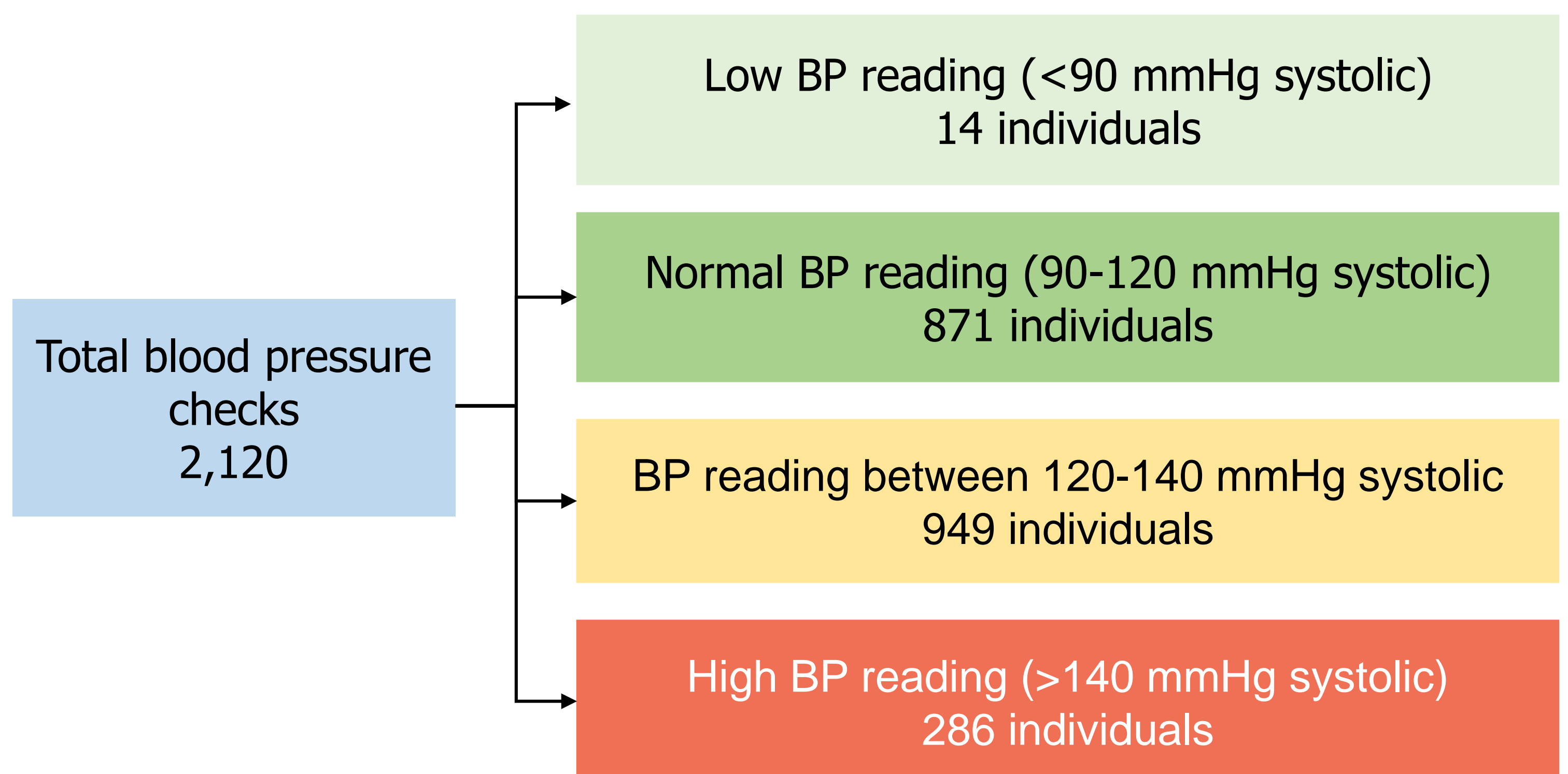
Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of partners and organisations involved in the BHF programme



Results

Between February 2018 and December 2019, blood pressure checks were conducted for 2,027 people in Haringey and Islington. Of these, 275 (14%) individuals had high blood pressure readings (>140mmHg systolic), and 906 (45%) individuals had measurements between 120 and 140mmHg systolic. 822 (41%) of the people who received a check were of Black ethnicity and 714 (35%) people were of White ethnic background. Almost half of the individuals who received a blood pressure check were between the ages of 35 and 54 (49%). 1,327 (65%) were female.

Figure 3. Diagram showing total number of blood pressure checks conducted and how many measurements were split across low/normal/high readings



Conclusion & Key Findings

This poster presents our findings from two years. The delivery of blood pressure testing through the VCS provides both opportunities and limitations. The VCS model is theoretically sound, and while the organisations are able to attend many community events and refer individuals to local services, there were some limitations we did not foresee:

- Logistically there were some issues around volunteer turnover which increased the amount of training required, software and computer literacy
- Participant eligibility posed some issues. In the first year, the eligibility criteria outlined that individuals had to be residents of Haringey and Islington. However, in the second year, the criteria was extended to include individuals who worked in the two boroughs. This increased the number of people who were able to receive a check, but is still not ideal given the transient nature of the two boroughs.
- Some outreach events were not suitable for performing checks. For example, events tend to be limited to the summer period and can often be too loud an environment. Furthermore, Wi-Fi was required for data entry, which was not always available.
- Workplaces seem to be the most effective for all VCS organisations.
- Furthermore, an initial high reading taken by VCS organisations required further follow-up by a GP to confirm the diagnosis (therefore increasing demand on general practices)