

Social Prescribing

Shropshire Libraries



What is the reason for social prescribing?

- Many people in the UK are in situations that have a detrimental effect on their health
- Factors can include financial, educational, poor housing, low self-esteem, isolation, relationship difficulties, long term conditions and physical and mental health problems
- **It has been estimated that around 20% of patients consult their GP for what is primarily a social problem**
- Often people want to improve their situation, but need support and motivation in order to make a positive change
- Social prescribing facilitates the use of non-clinical support and provides a link to local community support



Shropshire Social Prescribing (SP) Operational Diagram

Why libraries?

- Libraries support access to quality, up to date health information through resources such as Reading Well collections and by providing local community support information
- Libraries are neutral, free, friendly, warm and non-judgemental environment
- Host events, advice sessions, groups and clubs to champion wellbeing in person and online
- Have friendly knowledgeable staff to encourage social interaction

Our template

- Adjusted how we deliver library inductions to understand client's needs
- Have nationally recognised quality resources created by patients and health professionals and endorsed by NICE
- Offer a wide programme of interventions such as clubs, groups, events, volunteering

Aim



- To connect, empower and improve the wellbeing of local residents through social interventions
- To reduce GP patient appointments
- To strengthen resilience of communities through partnership work – Community Connectors

Staff training

- Libraries delivering social prescribing
- Healthy Conversations training for frontline staff
- Dementia Friends training
- Autism Friendly training
- Exploitation and Vulnerability training

Case study

A librarian describes how a local customer had been coming into the Library for eighteen years, and she had noticed how the person was very withdrawn, upset, and in general not in themselves.

She was really concerned that the person would take his own life, and with the person's consent, contacted safeguarding and social prescribing teams.

She says: "Thankfully I talked to him at length giving him lots of positive reasons to be alive, all the health and wellbeing things we have to offer at the Library and in the community. I said I would refer him and somebody would be in touch. Thankfully quite quickly too. Looking back, I am so glad I did the referral and he is so grateful. He calls in to see me most days to give me an update which also helps get things off his chest."

Evaluation by The University of Westminster – overarching findings

- **A reduction of 40% in GP appointments**
- Changes translated into improvement in weight, Body Mass Index, Cholesterol, blood pressure, levels of smoking and physical activity
- High patient satisfaction – suitable times, venue and ability to discuss concerns with the Adviser
- Unmet needs were supported beyond the remit
- The approach is aligned with the most recent National Public Health Strategy (2018)
- The service seeks to address real life social complexity and inequalities by offering integrated, holistic solutions to complex health and care issues

Challenges

- Communicating the value and place of libraries and the personal support and development they provide to the individual
- Staff training
- Funding

What's next

- Developing social prescribing interventions to support people to reflect changing needs during Covid 19 though some of our core interventions are still available such as Reading Well collections
- Social Prescribing interventions in libraries training for staff and link workers
- Working with Public Health on Social Prescribing support for children and young people

Questions?

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