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HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE



Co-production



New models of
meeting priority
needs



Innovation

Sunderland City Council

Social Prescribing – co-producing a citywide and innovative community support programme to meet the needs of Sunderland’s residents

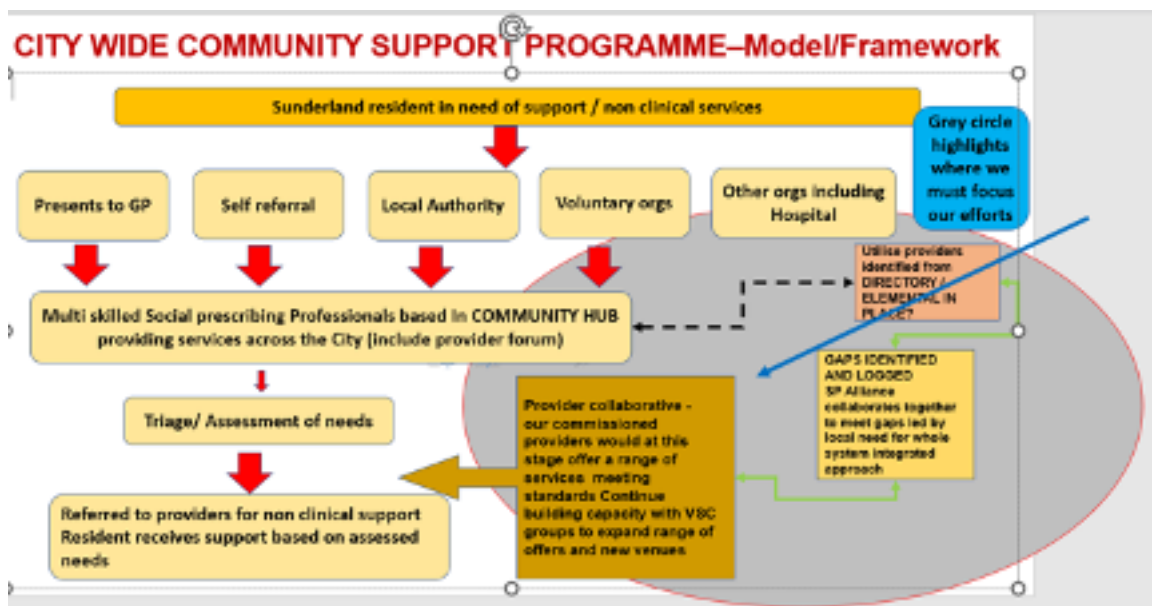
Sunderland City Council (SCC), have for many years worked in partnership with Sunderland’s Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), most recently to support the delivery of Community Covid Hubs, Covid Champions, Household Support fund and provision of Warm Spaces across the city during the ongoing cost of living crisis. The funding allocated to the voluntary sector grows the capacity of those organisations to ensure they can be active within communities and deliver, or enhance delivery of, essential local services and activities to meet the needs of the most vulnerable within our communities. Supporting residents who continue to live with the after-effects of the covid pandemic compounded by the cost-of-living crisis, and in doing so those organisations are helping to grow the wider community support programme and social prescribing offer in the city. Tackling health inequalities and the wider determinants of health in the heart of communities. The Social prescribing model in Sunderland is not all about the GP prescribers and link workers, but about the ‘offer’ and growth of capacity, available within communities to enable residents to access the support, and for those with additional support needs, via the help of the prescriber / link worker.

Sunderland Council are leading the partnership in Sunderland, working alongside the Integrated Care System (ICS) (formerly Sunderland CCG), GP Alliance, Sunderland All Together Health Alliance and Sunderland Voluntary Sector Alliance, to embed and develop further those social prescribing services within communities across Sunderland and further develop both the physical environment, digital accessibility, devices and activities and support programmes on offer within those ‘Social Prescribing Hubs’.



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Building on learning to date and adapting the programme of activities from feedback from residents and their ‘lived experiences’, as well as the learning from the Better Mental Health Programme and the emerging Community Mental Health Transformation programme to achieve this Sunderland are investing in the digital infrastructure and facilities in the City’s community buildings. This investment will strengthen and embed the social prescribing model into the built environment, demonstrating that social prescribing only works if the offer is available on the doorstep for all residents to access, particularly those in crisis or isolated. The offer in Sunderland is about reducing health inequalities and addressing the wider determinants of poor health and resilience. Digital poverty is a big issue in Sunderland, as are health inequalities, and by broadening digital inclusion within the social prescribing offer, more residents, of all ages, can improve their skills and knowledge and increase their access, to improve their long-term health, wellbeing, and resilience (including financial resilience – support to access best offers online, job searches, training courses, access to benefits etc.)

Integrating primary care – is a key agenda for the whole country and delivery models at place must meet the needs of residents. Sunderland is reviewing all the space available in each system, service by service, to inform the ICS estates infrastructure strategy. These reviews are helping the city to understand what we have got and what we can fix locally, as well as help us prioritise funding as and when capital becomes available. Sunderland’s approach to social prescribing is about capacity building within communities, taking ‘one public estate’ approach and thinking creatively about primary care estates, developing primary care estates plans from the perspective of access, population health and health inequalities, making use of local authority, third sector and community assets, building on the approach to COVID-19 vaccination, including places of worship, community centres.

Social prescribing in Sunderland is co-production, building on and supporting the work being undertaken to promote self-care and prevention, by providing social prescribing through an integrated, city-wide service, delivered by multiple providers, operating under a single point of access, sharing referrals and resource, regardless of organisational barriers, so that the service is seamless and proactively improves the health and wellbeing of the people of

Sunderland – that’s innovation and that’s developing new models to meet community needs.

The specific aims within the co-produced social prescribing programme in Sunderland aims to:

- Develop, communicate, and promote a social prescribing **identity** across Sunderland, designed through collaboration and taking into consideration the life course approach of the model
- Develop **standards** and associated process and policies for partners within the Social Prescribing Model for Sunderland
- Design and implement a ‘**digital community support platform**’, to ensure access to good quality and timely community-based support and self help
- Development of a **research, evaluation, and knowledge exchange** Programme to support the Social Prescribing model

The overall goal - greater inclusion of, and engagement with, people who may be typically under-represented and improve health inequalities at a neighbourhood level

- All organisations working together to ensure best outcome for the ‘resident’
- Place-based interventions
- Working with, and from within communities
- Valuing lived experience and co-production
- Partnership working to grow the market
- Services integrated into community life
- VCS Capacity Building – through the Alliance model
- Evaluation to inform change – University
- Empowering residents and communities – enabling self-help and resilience

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