



SSPN

SCOTTISH SOCIAL PRESCRIBING NETWORK

Social Prescribing in Scotland

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What is social prescribing?

Social prescribing is “a means for trusted individuals in clinical and community settings to identify that a person has non-medical, health-related social needs and to subsequently connect them to non-clinical supports and services within the community by co-producing a social prescription – a non-medical prescription, to improve health and wellbeing and to strengthen community connections.”

Establishing Internationally Accepted Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Social Prescribing Through Expert Consensus: A Delphi Study by Caitlin Muhl, University of Toronto.



What does Social Prescribing look like in Scotland?

- Scottish Government funded GP-based Community Link Worker (CLW) programme was established following the 2016 manifesto pledge for 250 CLWs.
- Initial research shows that there are over 55 social prescribing programmes running in Scotland. These include roles such as community navigators/connectors, local area coordinators or social prescribers.
- SPRING Social Prescribing – National Lottery-funded programme across Scotland and Northern Ireland – ended last year due to lack of funding
- mPower – ended 2022. An EU-funded project that covered Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland – funding has continued in pockets for Ireland, north and south.



Challenges

- No recording requirements for CLW programmes
- Lack of data = lack of evaluation
- NIHR England and Scotland GP CLW study
- Inconsistencies of role across the country – each programme is different
- National CLW Advisory group has been established
- No social prescribing framework -Scotland is lagging behind the rest of the UK, Ireland and further afield.
- Social Prescribing is listed as a Ministerial responsibility under Maree Todd but there is no official lead within Scottish Government



Social Prescribing

- 1 in 5 GP appointments relate to social issues
- 1 in 5 adults in Scotland on antidepressants
- Social Prescribing was covered in Chief Medical Officers 2023 annual report – including blue and green prescribing
- Can help prevent non-communicable diseases – the burden of these is projected to increase by 21 % by 2043
- Social Prescribing included in health, sports and culture strategies
- First Minister committed to eradicating child poverty
- Public Health Scotland is committed to working with Professor Sir Michael Marmot to bring Marmot towns and cities to Scotland



CLW definition - Edinburgh

- A Community Link Worker (CLW) is a generalist social practitioner based in a GP practice serving a specific patient cohort, e.g. a socio-economically deprived community, socially isolated and/or frail elderly, addressing the problems and issues that the individual brings to the consultation. (CLW Briefing Paper, June 2020).
- They offer non-clinical support to people, enabling them to set goals and overcome barriers so that they can take greater control of their health and well-being. By actively listening to patients and having meaningful conversations, a CLW supports people to identify problems and issues they are experiencing and to talk about what really matters to them. They support people to achieve their goals by enabling them to identify and access relevant resources or services in their community.
- A CLW also maps local services, engaging with and developing productive relationships with these services.
- They will keep practice teams informed of the status of existing and new services and identify any local service gaps.



Edinburgh – who do CLWs work with?

Appropriate referral reasons – not an exhaustive list;

Adult Education

Social Isolation/ Loneliness

Basic Daily Needs

Substance Misuse

Benefits/Welfare

Unpaid Carers / Young Carers (16+)

Bereavement

Weight Management

Confidence Building

Veterans

Dementia

Digital Support

Domestic abuse

Employability/Training/Volunteering

Exercise Support

Family Support including parenting

Financial Difficulties

Housing Issues

Learning Difficulties/ Disability

Lifestyle Related Problems

Long Term Conditions

Low/ Moderate Mental Health Issues



International Social Prescribing Collaborative

