

## Social Prescribing Project: Views of Local People: Collation Jan 2017

Number of people involved 136

Age range (approx.) of people involved 11-85

The respondents from the communities in which the delivery organisations are located had the opportunity to discuss the SP Project with the assistance of staff from the delivery organisations supported by the project summary document. The people's responses are reflective, thoughtful and insightful. They will assist greatly in shaping the ways in which the SP Project is implemented in communities. The presentation of responses below highlights the nature and strength of the views on key aspects of the project, The comments which illustrate the views expressed are presented in the actual works of the respondents

For topics 2 to 11 the views of respondents have been grouped under 5 categories - Very Positive, Positive, Neutral, Some Concerns and Negative. The numbers of respondents' views in each category are also presented as a number and as a percentage of the total number of views. The total number of responses for each topic is presented as (N =). The total numbers do not correspond to the total number of respondents ie 136 as, for example, a respondent's view may be very positive about the topic and they may also express some concerns related to the wider context in which the SP Project will operate.

**The views of respondents for each topic are presented in their own words.** Numbers in brackets are included where a significant number of respondents (20plus) provided the same comment

### **1. What would make the biggest difference to improving people's health and wellbeing in your community?**

The respondents identified a wide range of items that linked well to many of the features of the SP Project. Thirty different topics were identified. They are grouped as follows:

#### **Relationships and connectedness**

- *Looking out for other people*
- *Getting out and about*
- *Meeting new people*
- *Making new friends*
- *Reduced isolation and being better connected (20)*
- *Sharing stories - making people feel less alone*
- *Better understanding of people's problems*
- *More time to talk about problems*
- *Knowing the right people to talk to*
- *Places to take people to socialise*
- *Someone to have time to listen*
- *Being able to contribute and being valued as a person*
- *Give people opportunities to integrate into a community project that focuses on their needs*
- *Social Prescribing is also a 'heavy term' to use when working with young people. This is an important factor and necessary to keep the consistency of interest and a endances for one to one sessions.*
- *The biggest difference to me would be that I can go out with my friends and <sup>[1]</sup>not worry about being bullied – this some mes keeps me awake at night and I can't get to sleep. I usually just go on to my ipad – this means I can't go to school the next day because I am so red. My Mum thinks there is something wrong with me and she is worried too. <sup>[SEP]</sup>*

- *We need more work – this also helps with how people feel*
- *I think it's important that we have somewhere where we can speak*
- *I call in quite often – it makes me feel good about myself – I have also joined the wee sewing bee and made new friends. I still need to go to the G.P. for anti-depressants but they're not as strong as they were.*

### **Practical Improvements**

- *Looking at things differently*
- *More awareness about stigma attached to mental health*
- *Poverty and lack of friends and poor mental health support*
- *Transport is a nightmare*
- *Home visits*
- *Access to deaf/hard of hearing awareness training*
- *Quicker time to access support*
- *Having a variety of support options*
- *One stop shop for services*
- *Access to activities that don't cost the Earth*
- *Financial support to access activities eg bus fare, child care etc*
- *Relevant information and signposting (19)*

## 2. Having heard about social prescribing what do you think of the idea?

N = 157

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
94	50	2	11	0
61%	33%	1%	5%	0%

### Very Positive

- *It would work*
- *Sound really good (25)*
- *Positive*
- *Wonderful*
- *Amazing*
- *It's essential*
- *Could only be a benefit (24)*
- *Empowering people at local level working together to find solutions that help everyone in the local community*
- *Why didn't someone think of this earlier?*
- *It's a good idea – it's a name for something that is already happening but doctors and other people like teachers don't really think about how important it is. There's lots of changes going on – maybe this will make a big difference.*

### Positive

- *We require being with other people*
- *Saving the NHS mega bucks*
- *It's better – should try everything before trying medication*
- *Anything that helps people – less drugs*
- *Can be preventative and avoid longer-term problems*
- *Feeling you can be helped in the community*
- *Free up GP time*
- *Moving away from the only answer being a medical approach*
- *I think it will take a wee while but it will definitely work*
- *I think you would have to be in the situation to really appreciate it – that's how I feel – everyone here is benefitting from social prescribing – they just don't realise it.*
- *I'm going to tell my Aunt Elizabeth about it as she is quite lonely and takes Valium*

### Neutral

- *Would work alongside medication*
- *Need someone with greater knowledge and resources for referral pathways*
- *"Community Therapy" is a better name*
- *I'm not sure – I think so?*
- *Is this because of all the news about NHS and how they've got no money – is this to save money*

### Some Concerns

- *Good but don't want to become too dependent*
- *Good if patient is in a frame of mind to believe this would work*
- *People expect pills which often mask the problem*
- *Options need to be realistic in term of transport etc*

### 3. Do you think a social prescribing project would be good for your community?

N = 139

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
73	60	3	4	0
52%	43%	2%	3%	0%

#### Very Positive

- Definitely (70)
- Raise awareness of the importance of community in increasing positive mental health
- Would make a real difference
- Can't wait to see this introduced
- A lot of people will be cynical – they will think it's to save money – it is to save money though – that's the whole idea – it's to save money and make people feel better in the long run
- Aye – it'll be great – are you going to do it?

#### Positive

- Community needs brought together more
- Would take pressure off the HNS
- Would help people who are not already to be engaged
- Would get people supporting one another
- Better than dishing out tablets
- Good to have another choice
- I don't know – I think I'm a wee bit too young to understand but from what you are saying I think it would help me – I think my Mum would like it
- It would be really good for bits like sports groups and other places that provide hobbies for folk – they would get recognition and their membership would maybe increase

#### Neutral

- Possibly
- If I was to benefit

#### Some concerns

- Provided GPs and other medical professionals are fully aware of it
- Too much onus on the voluntary sector to provide activities – a capacity issue
- SP should not be seen as the cheap option – SP should be a quality option which is best value

4. How do you think you would react if your GP recommended that you contact a person in the social prescribing project who would be able to work with you on a social prescription rather than getting a drug prescription from the GP.

**N = 126**

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
56	44	12	14	0
44%	35%	10%	12%	0%

### Very Positive

- *Sounds really good (40)*
- *This worked for me*
- *Know examples where this has worked*

### Positive

- *I'd be fine about it (67)*
- *Agreeable (36)*
- *Saves dishing out drugs*
- *Talking about things*
- *I would prefer it to putting chemicals in my body – they are a short fix*
- *I would be relieved that social support was readily available on a regular basis*
- *Welcome personal support and contact*
- *I would think 'that's something different'*

[L]  
[SEP]

### Neutral

- *Need more details*
- *I would like both – medication and social prescription*
- *Very different for a lot of people*
- *Quite a radical idea*
- *Has to be a good explanation of whether this is a better solution to be taken seriously*
- *A lot rests on how much people trust their GP and have a positive relationship*
- *I would be intrigued by the idea as an alternative*
- *Yes – I would go somewhere if it was something that I know – I don't think I [L]  
[SEP] could do it on my own – I would need someone with me like my sister or something [L]  
[SEP]*
- *Not sure to be honest but I would give it a try*
- [L]  
[SEP]

### Some concerns

- *Provided there was an explanation of the alternatives*
- *Not sure about social contact making a difference*
- *Could be a way for GPs to palm you off to other services, saving their own resources*
- *Confidentiality – needs to be fully thought through especially in eg small village*
- *It should always be voluntary, no pressure from GPs*
- *If drug prescription is only part of the treatment*
- *I'd be raging at first I think – I need my pills to help me but I know I can't just keep taking them [L]  
[SEP]*
- *I would probably come out of the surgery and tell folk they've lost the plot – but it's time for change [L]  
[SEP]*

5. What would most persuade you to follow up a social prescription from your GP or other local medical professional?

**N = 122**

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
10	77	25	10	0
8%	63%	21%	8%	0%

**Very positive**

- *Credibility through having local knowledge of the organisations providing the social prescription*
- *It's more informal*

**Positive**

- *Repeat prescriptions*
- *No drugs involved*
- *Not waiting to take medication*
- *Improving own health and sense of wellbeing*
- *Reduce medication*
- *Something interesting and welcoming*
- *Building relationships and trust takes time*
- *Variety of options/activities*
- *More of what makes you happy*
- *Knowing purpose of the organisation was to help me personally to become happier If GP thought this was a good way forward I would trust that it would be good*
- *Need small group or even one to one at start plus well prepared tutors*
- *Need plenty of encouragement to attend*
- *Need to support people to attend at first/ If the SP worker could introduce me to the project initially to help me get over any embarrassment*

**Neutral**

- *Need personal support*
- *Lots of info about the project*
- *Sometimes you need to be taught what makes you happy*
- *Recommendations from people/positive feedback from others using the service*
- *Local service*
- *If other people we knew were involved*
- *Champions locally who promote the benefits of SP in the community*
- *May need to have medication and social prescription*
- *Needs to feel welcoming and you need to feel valued*
- *The group felt that together it would take someone they know well to help them attend initially*

**Some concerns**

- *Not an abrupt end to medication but a gradual crossover*
- *SP must be appropriate to level of need*

6. What would stop you from following up a social prescription from your GP or other local health professional?

N = 156

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
26	70	11	48	1
17%	44%	7%	31%	1%

**Very Positive**

- *Nothing (26)*
- *I know it works*

**Positive**

- *Need to be at least once a week and some one-to-ones*
- *Could reduce the times you attend your GP*
- *Might need someone to go with at the start*
- *Might be best to get the patient's permission for a social prescriber to contact the patient*

**Neutral**

- *Motivation*
- *If I needed my medication first and foremost*
- *To me, it's like doing something completely off the wall – I don't really do that much – I haven't been in work because of my health for a long me – where do you start?* [SEP]

**Some concerns**

- *Lack of information*
- *The bus route to somewhere I don't know – I live in Cronberry so it is hard for me but I suppose I could get help somewhere with a lift* [SEP]
- *That I wouldn't get my prescription* [SEP]
- *Confidence – I don't have much – it's alright for folk that like to do things but I can't*
- *Distance /transport /travelling/transportation (37)*
- *Fear of the unknown/anxiety/lack of confidence (27)*
- *Side effects?*
- *Lack of regularity and accessibility*
- *Attitudes of health professionals. They would need to be positive and convincing and know about it*
- *Mobility*
- *If I don't feel comfortable or not welcome or feeling left out*
- *Lack of response from providers of SP*
- *Reliance and security with present medications and concerns about changing this*
- *Whether there are implications for benefits ie health assessments/medication evidence conditions – would SP be deemed equivalent*
- *Probably other commitments*
- *I would be scared to meet new people* [SEP]

**Negative**

- *Not getting the benefits*

7. Do you think it would be a good thing if all GPs had the option to make social prescriptions for non-medical conditions?

**N = 131**

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
68	49	10	4	0
52%	37%	8%	3%	0%

**Very Positive**

- *Yes, definitely (28)*
- *It would combat depressive isolation*

**Positive**

- *Would help take your mind off things*
- *Too easy to write a drug prescription*
- *Raise public awareness (of mental health issues)*
- *If it is in the interests of people being referred then yes*
- *Free up more time for more urgent medical situations*
- *Sometimes relying only on drug prescriptions doesn't help*

**Neutral**

- *Depends on the person*
- *Would require more training*

**Some concerns**

- *Not everyone is mobile enough to get out and about*
- *3 (out of 7) felt it is important that social prescribing is part of what G.P.'s do – others felt it would be a whole shift change and depends on what the G.P.'s think too – maybe they would be scared in case they made a mistake.*



8. Our social prescribing project would have an individual based in a trusted and respected local community organisation who would work with you to make up a health pathway for you. The person would then support you to achieve the improvements in your wellbeing you said you wanted to achieve. Do you like the idea of making up a health pathway?

**N = 116**

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
47	61	8	0	0
41%	52%	7%	0%	0%

### Very positive

- *I like the idea of continuous development*
- *Love it!*
- *Ideal for my circumstances*
- *Making up a pathway would be very important to individuals*
- *Like co-production and ownership*

### Positive

- *If someone is supporting you it makes it easier and clearer to follow*
- *Yes (65)*
- *Good to help with goals*
- *Prevent reliance on drugs*
- *More in depth than GP*
- *SPP worker would be good and should be informed about participants medical conditions in detail to make choice of activities*
- *Building into the pathway the facility for things not to work out/reflective practice/acceptance that not always a forward trajectory and ensuring people don't feel they have failed*
- *I wish this was the first question – anyway, that makes a big difference to everything I've said – you always need someone to help you in the beginning – I still visit to let him know if I am having a bad time or a good time even.*
- *Definitely would make a difference but I still need the bus fare – do you think they would come to me?*
- *This would help me make friends*

[L]  
[SEP]

### Neutral

- *Would like a befriending service*
- *Not for me at the moment*
- *A pathway sounds posh – is that what it is? A pathway?* [L]  
[SEP]
- *Not sure – maybe just now and again – maybe once you've done something a couple of times it would be ok* [L]  
[SEP]

9. What do you not like about the proposed social prescribing project?

**N = 111**

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
60	35	8	8	0
54%	32%	7%	7%	0%

**Very positive**

- *All in favour*

**Positive**

- *Nothing (63)*
- *A radical idea*
- *I hope it's going to work if it happens – it kind of already is but not really if you know what I mean* [SEP]

**Neutral**

- *Medication should always be one option*
- *Need to understand the framework*
- *Need information*
- *The name 'social prescribing'*
- *Need to have routine ie same times same days each week*
- *I would need a bit longer to think about that really* [SEP]

**Some concerns**

- *What if you change your GP and they don't social prescribe?*
- *Concern about GPs using it as a 'dumping ground'*
- *Need to be prescribed the right thing*
- *Needs to be suitable for me*
- *A bit vague*
- *That it's just another thing that won't last*
- *What about when it's the weekend what do you do?* [SEP]

## 10. What do you like about the proposed social prescribing project

**N = 139**

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
62	76	1	0	0
45%	54%	1%	0%	0%

### Very positive

- *To be able to help everyone*
- *Reduced drug prescriptions*
- *Nice to have someone care about you*
- *Connect people into the community*
- *Trusted and respected organisations involved*
- *Great resource*
- *Exciting new way of working*
- *Like the idea of focussing on personal development as sometimes you only get 10 mins with GP before you're moved on*
- *I think it'll be good when it happens* [SEP]

### Positive

- *Free up GP time*
- *It's different*
- *We need people with imagination*
- *Build relationships and trust*
- *Getting people out and thinking more about their options*
- *More choice*
- *Experience people with knowledge of people and area*
- *Giving people other ways to deal with their problems*
- *Support self-management of health*
- *More support in person*
- *Involvement of GPs*
- *Need to know if you can ask for this instead of drugs*
- *Drug free*
- *Meeting people*
- *Community based*
- *Sustained change*
- *Can ask for things that are lacking in this area*
- *I think something different needs to be tried* [SEP]

### Neutral

- *Do you think G.P.'s will really do this? Is there other places doing it?* [SEP]
- *Will it get me a job or something if I feel ready?* [SEP]

11. Is there anything that would make the social prescribing project better.

N = 83

Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Some concerns	Negative
25	58	0	0	0
30%	70%	0%	0%	0%

**Very Positive**

- *More of it!*
- *Nothing*
- *People signing up*
- *Provide it everywhere*
- *Make it work* [L]  
[SEP]

**Positive**

- *Training for health professionals*
- *More awareness about it*
- *Local is better*
- *More information*
- *If activities were free*
- *Publicise success*
- *Need to know where to go for advice*
- *More support to participants at first*
- *Greater awareness about specialist needs ,eg hearing loss, poor eyesight*
- *Could be done through self referral*
- *Variety*

12. Any other thoughts/views/points to make

- *Education to help all age groups understand this model*
- *For hard of hearing, referrals to lip reading classes, confidence building classes. media awareness, electronic notice boards and GP referrals to support services*
- *Good to hear about other SP projects*
- *This is a positive way forward*
- *We have a great community organisation that puts people first*
- *Happy to have 2 activities a week*
- *Extend to all the villages*
- *Wonderful idea and I hope it comes soon to this area and reaches isolated people*
- *If it happens real and the doctors do this it'll be good but some people probably won't [L]  
[SEP] like it at first – how are you going to tell folk about this? [L]  
[SEP]*
- *Pay for bus fares or something to help us get there – wherever it is [L]  
[SEP]*

## Key Messages for the implementation of the Social Prescribing Project

- The important factors which make a difference in improving health and wellbeing of people are centred on reducing isolation making relationships, spending time with people you trust, feeling welcomed and being valued in local communities.
- Practical things which would help improve health and wellbeing include making access to activities straightforward, including providing additional resources, through better local transport and improved support for additional support needs especially hearing and visual impairment.
- Knowing what is happening and what is available in a local community to support improving health and wellbeing through improved information channels and signposting is seen as important.
- The respondents were overwhelmingly supportive about social prescribing and saw it as empowering and a very positive way to improve and develop relationships in their communities. They felt it would be a good thing if all GPs had the option of social prescribing.
- There were very few comments on things that people didn't like about the proposed social prescribing project. The concerns that were raised focussed on practical issues such as changing to a GP who does not offer social prescriptions, what happens at weekends, the need for a routine and generally having as much information about the social prescribing project as possible. The positive comments on the project included the opportunities to receive support, to be valued, to reduce use of drugs, to have more options to deal with problems, the active involvement of GPs and the opportunity to try something different. Respondents also would welcome the opportunity to hear about other SP projects and to meet with people who had experience of using social prescriptions.
- Many respondents mentioned the provision of an alternative to 'drugs' as being a very positive way forward. However such a shift had to be taken cautiously and had to be appropriate to the individual.
- GPs featured in many responses as a person who would need to support SP, a person whose advice would be trusted, a person who would need to be convinced about SP and a person who actively supported SP. The relationship already existing between a person and their Gp was also highlighted as an important factor in how the individual would respond to SP. On the other hand there was a concern that SP would be seen by GPs as a way of saving their resources and at its worst would be used as a 'dumping ground' and a way of 'palming people off' to other services. There was a recognition that GPs have limited time to talk with people so SP could offer more time and a range of personal support in the community making people feel more valued and welcomed.
- People were generally positive in their views about following up a social prescription from their GP. However certain conditions would make this more likely. These include a positive, trusting relationship with the GP, the variety of options available, the local provision of options, good accessibility/transport, the encouragement and support, especially initially, to take up the social prescription, access to people who had tried a social prescription, the welcoming approach of activity providers, the need to feel valued and a gradual crossover from medication if appropriate.
- The factors which could inhibit people from following up a social prescription focussed on the risk and the anxiety of taking on something different. Personal aspects like lack of confidence, motivation, worry about meeting new people, fear of the unknown and the need to have

someone with the person particularly in the early stages. Not feeling comfortable, not being made welcome and a feeling of being left out were also seen as important in stopping people from following up a social prescription. Practical difficulties also featured in responses particularly transport worries, mobility and lack of responses from providers of SP.

- The idea of health pathways was broadly welcomed and was seen as very important to individuals. The factors that worked in favour of pathways included having someone supporting the person in identifying goals and the empowering effect of working up a personal pathway and the ownership of the pathway.
- Some respondents highlighted the possible problems arising from not having sufficient options/ capacity in the community to deliver on personal pathways and the related point about the extra load, without extra resources, placed on the third sector organisations through social prescribing.
- One of the last comments from a respondent sums up the feeling from the survey “Make it work”.