



Training for GP practices

Social Prescribing – West Lancashire (30 minutes)

The following guide is to

- ✓ Introduce **Social Prescribing** – what it is, its benefits
- ✓ Understand **your role** as GP/health professional in a Social Prescribing project
- ✓ Help you refer into local Social Prescribing initiatives

And so this pack looks at:

1. Social prescribing – including the **support** available within West Lancashire
2. **what to do next** after reading this or taking part in a short course

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CEO: Bromley by Bow, 29th March 2018: “The surprise isn't that 70% of health is driven by social factors. It's that the response is to commission solutions that are 100% clinical”.

Dr Sakthi Karunanithi, Director of Public Health Lancashire, at the event “Strengthening and developing the VCFSE sector’s role in the West Lancs health economy”, Edge Hill University, September 2018: 80% of health is not about services, it is about lifestyles, living and social factors.

1. Social Prescribing – what is it

This section talks about Social Prescribing generally, and the West Lancashire (Skelmersdale) service.

What is social prescribing?

- Social prescribing (or ‘community referral’) is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other health professionals to refer people to a range of **local, non-clinical services**. Voluntary and community groups and organisations typically provide these services.
- It also aims to help individuals take **greater control of their own health**.
- Social prescribing recognises that people’s health is not just about their physical or mental health, but is also about other factors too, such as social and economic factors (e.g. housing, air quality, income, transport, family ties etc.)
- Social prescribing schemes can involve a **variety of activities**: examples include volunteering, arts activities, group learning, gardening, cookery, healthy eating advice and a range of sports.

(Adapted from The King’s Fund: *What is Social Prescribing?* 2nd February 2017

<https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/>)



Social Prescribing is about recognising a wider definition of health – from the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**:

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‘Health is the extent to which an individual or a group is able, on the one hand, to realise aspirations and satisfy needs; and, on the other hand, to change or cope with the environment. Health is, therefore, seen as a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living; it is a positive concept emphasising social and personal resources, as well as capabilities.’

(Milestones in Health Promotion. World Health Organisation. 1984)

The Skelmersdale Social Prescribing Service - a new route to wellbeing

A new ‘Social Prescribing’ service was introduced in April 2018 as a pilot project by West Lancs Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) (online link underlined) after being developed with great success in other areas of UK.

How does it work?

If you have a patient living in Skelmersdale with non-medical issues that are affecting their health (such as low mobility, social isolation), you can refer to the Social Prescribing service via an Elemental online portal. As the service is also working to support patients in being more active conversation partners in their health care management, they may ask about it or ask to be referred.

A Social Prescriber based at West Lancashire Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) will then call the patient to set up an appointment at a place that is suitable (it may be at the charity base or a community location). Each Social Prescriber will:

- ✓ identify the non-medical issues that are affecting the patient’s health
- ✓ look at the range of services that could benefit the patient
- ✓ support the patient in deciding what they would like to join, such as creativity groups (tackle social isolation/ brain function), walking clubs (to lift mood/improve exercise), choirs (support improved breathing) or other activity
- ✓ help them connect with the group or community support that they have identified with the Social Prescriber
- ✓ stay in touch with the patient to support their journey to better wellbeing
- ✓ ensure that you receive feedback for their patient record
- ✓ protect patient confidentiality at all times.

For more information about the Social Prescribing project in Skelmersdale, contact the Social Prescribing Team on 01695-733737. For more information on Elemental, see the self-learning pack (Elemental – recording the journey and impact).



2. What can I do next?

- ✓ The Royal Society for Public Health (RSPH) Level 2 Understanding Health Improvement course (online link underlined) also provides information on promoting health and signposting to community support:
West Lancashire CVS is an RSPH Centre and runs the course. Contact helenj@wlcvs.org for more details.

Resources:

For community news:

- Sign up to **local community opportunities and news** at [West Lancs Buzz](#) or via Twitter – part of the opportunity to learn more about the local community.

On physical exercise

- British Association of Sport & Exercise Medicine

“Motivate2Move Factsheets

GPs often cite a lack of time and lack of training and knowledge as primary barriers to counselling efforts and as prohibiting factors when asked about the barriers they face in promoting physical activity in practice.

The resource Motivate2Move was created by GPs with this in mind. It aims to increase your ability to promote physical activity advice within your consultation. Designed with brief bites of key information, scientific evidence of benefits in 33 conditions are presented alongside a starting example of behaviour change using Motivational Interviewing”.

<http://www.basem.co.uk/Resources/motivate2move/motivate2move-factsheets.html>

- Research on Social Prescribing: Dr Marie Polley et al. [Making sense of Social Prescribing](#) 2017. University of Westminster