

Primary Care Links Update – July 2022

This provides an update on the work that has been delivered across the Social Prescribing services being delivered through York CVS. This update provides evidence of the benefits of Social Prescribing sitting with York CVS and partnerships across health and social care and the VCSE.

Living well with pain group

In collaboration with Ways to Well Being the 'Pain Sailing' Chronic pain peer support group was set up after our team had had some excellent Living Well with Pain Training funded by York CVS.

Our Social Prescribers identified a gap in support for people living with chronic pain. The group has 13 participants – 11 female, 2 male and 4 people on the waiting list (all female).

The group is doing very well. Regular attendance has been much better than we anticipated (people living with chronic pain finding it so hard to predict if / when they will be well enough to attend things). So far, the focus has been on building group cohesion through choosing a name, making a banner and developing a group agreement. The group have found commonalities in their experiences in living with pain – discussing being disbelieved, how they have adapted activities of daily living, worries regarding opioid addiction, managing family's expectations and incontinence issues. There was lots of laughter. The group have identified areas related to pain management that they wish to know more about. In July, a specialist Occupational Therapist from the Yorkshire Fatigue Clinic will visit to discuss pacing. Clarence St is working well as a venue. Having the café so group members can stay on for lunch is great in terms of the group's sustainability, developing friendships and an informal peer support structure that can exist beyond the monthly group sessions.

Cuppa and Craft group

This is a group set up by Ways to Wellbeing at York Art Gallery. It is a space for those patients we are working with who are extremely anxious about going to a group. Our Group helps to build confidence with the support of social prescribers, crafts and peer support for our patients to move onto groups within their community. This group is going from strength to strength – all 13 places are filled every session. We created 2 volunteer roles and filled both posts, with plans to recruit more. The next stage of this work is developing our 'move-on' group, i.e., the place people can continue to attend regularly, indefinitely. This means we can have a continual

throughput of people attending the core Cuppa and Craft group, moving on once they have built their confidence in coping in a group setting and feel ready for the next step. Because we don't want people to lose the friendships they make in the core group, the 'move-on' group also serves to provide a place for those social connections to continue and grow. We have also trialed holding a group at the Theatre Royal. Members of the Cuppa and Craft group spent a morning testing out the venue and were very positive about it. We have agreed to pilot a monthly group there at the midway point between our monthly Cuppa and Craft sessions at the Art Gallery. As well as providing a new social and confidence-building opportunity, it builds on the cultural access that Cuppa and Craft provides. Very few of the people who have attended it so far had ever been to York Art Gallery before joining the group. By also developing our relationship with the Theatre Royal and introducing people we support to it, we can continue the work of helping them feel comfortable in these cultural resources that they previously felt were not places they were entitled to go.

Social Prescribing Buddy Role

In collaboration with our colleagues at the York CVS Volunteer Centre, we have developed a Social Prescribing Buddy role – a type of short-term volunteering, where a buddy is introduced to someone being supported by a social prescriber, then accompanies them on a small number of occasions, to attend a new group or activity; do bus practice etc. We will start recruiting Buddies in August, with the first roles being called 'Geek Guardians' - Buddies who accompany keen gamers to a local inclusive café & community venue called Geek Retreat. This came about because we have a number of young adults we are supporting (referred by The Retreat) who have autism, are very keen gamers, would like to meet like-minded people, but need a little extra moral support the first couple of times they try out a new place and new people.

Befriending Calls

Our befriending calls run in collaboration with York CVS Volunteers Centre continue to be a success. This project was started after our Social Prescribers identified a gap in befriending calls for patients aged 18 and above. The project runs from March 2022 to December 2022.

Due to the success of the project, we are looking to recruit volunteer befrienders, if you or anyone you know would be interested in this and have an hour a week to spare then please email: volunteering@yorkcvs.org.uk

York Integrated Community Team (YICT) from Callum Neave

We now have a Social Prescriber, Callum Neave, who works as part of the York Integrated Community team (YICT). This is the first Social Prescriber to be in post within this team, and an exciting opportunity to connect people to their local community to help expedite safe discharge from hospital; preventing a deterioration in frailty and to live well for longer and support managing long term conditions by connecting patients with their local community.

Referrals can be made to Callum via the YICT Team

A quick hello and update from Callum...

“Hi, it is going well at YICT and I have settled into the team. Since July I have received 47 referrals for lots of different issues (carer strain/support, isolation, mental health support, financial aid, bereavement) and this does not include the times that I have given information to another member of the team to pass on to the patient as they have been reluctant to see me as they already have the relationship and trust built up with my colleague. This will be something we will work on.

In terms of positive outcomes, a couple of examples are as follows;

I have had a patient who was feeling very isolated after the loss of her husband 2 years ago and had then been unable to go out due to covid and lost all of her confidence. I visited with this patient a couple of times and we discussed the importance of socialising on both physical and mental wellbeing and then looked at what was available in her area, with some encouragement the patient agreed to attend a church-ran local coffee morning and I agreed to go with her as support. I am very pleased to say despite her reservations the patient told me she thoroughly enjoyed it and will be making the effort to attend each week going forward.

Another example would be a patient who was struggling with extreme carer strain from looking after her husband who has dementia amongst other comorbidities, when I met this patient, it was clear she was very worn out and she admitted to me she had lost 2 stone in the last couple of weeks due to being rushed off her feet and not having time to eat, she was admirably prioritising her husband's welfare over her own but it was now taking its toll. I spoke with the patient about York Carers centre and how they could support her and with her consent referred her to them, I also explained to the patient that I thought she should see a GP about her own health after losing so much weight and feeling as weak as she did, she agreed to let me contact her surgery and has since had a home visit from her GP who will be supporting her going forward. York Carers Centre are also in touch with the patient and working with her and her son to look at respite options for her husband.

I have had lots of support from all the members of YICT and my CVS colleagues which has been very helpful in settling in.”

Green Social Prescribing Project

The Green Social Prescribing project that we are working in partnership with Hey Smile Foundation aims to embed Green Social Prescribing in existing community organisations to support people with their mental health by connecting with the outdoors.

The first cohort is coming to an end and the second cohort has just started. We will be reporting back on this when the project finishes.

Please follow the link below to look at the fantastic work already being done:

<https://wetransfer.com/downloads/78ae5f58abf2793627baf272856abbbaa20220508181555/b7ae4d382fe5fbc1bc2293526e4e4ed720220508181555/0c480c>

Travel Grant

The grant, secured by York CVS, has enabled us to support people getting out to activities and appointments in the community. There is a huge gap in provision for patients who are housebound, and travel has proved to be one of the barriers.

So far, this grant has helped 67 patients get out into the community who otherwise would have been considered housebound in relation to connecting to their local community. Our team continues to work with these patients to re-build confidence going out, getting public transport, and managing finances.

Purey Cust Trust

We have applied and been successful for a small grant from the Purey Cust trust to help patients who find finances as an initial barrier to achieve an improvement in their health and wellbeing. For example, needing to pay administration fees from the surgery to get a bus pass when a patient cannot afford it.

Another example is a patient who has a diagnosis of Autism and Chronic Pain; she is a wheelchair user. The patient is in receipt of universal credit; she is on the waiting list for an assessment for Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

The patient lives in temporary accommodation and is delighted to soon be moving into her own place. However, she is moving into social housing with no furniture and no money to buy any. A priority for her is an orthopedic mattress, being in pain and

not being able to sleep has a huge impact on her health and wellbeing. Poor sleep exacerbates her chronic pain. Too little sleep can also heighten the challenges she experienced regarding her autism diagnosis, finding it harder to concentrate and communicate with others. A mattress that meets the patient's needs would give her the best chance of a good night's sleep and would in turn enable her to focus on her aspirations around starting a craft course and making new friends, resulting in an improvement in her sense of purpose, health and wellbeing.

Training

We have asked our Social Prescribing Link Workers to attend a Building Vaccine and Screening Confidence Training Programme This training is aimed at people who come into contact with low vaccine uptake populations and screening hesitancy including areas of higher deprivation, ethnic minority groups and parents of 2 and 3 year old's and those in at risk categories. Due to the nature of our role, we work alongside these groups on a regular basis so having this training will result in our team having the confidence to encourage and support the patients they work with to attend screening and immunisations addressing preventative health conditions and reducing health inequalities.

As always, please get in touch with me at lucy.kitson@yorkcvs.org.uk if you would like to discuss anything further.