

# An exploration of co-commissioning approaches to social prescribing

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**26 June 2019**



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## **Bromley by Bow Centre – An exploration of co-commissioning approaches to social prescribing**

### **Background**

- Research commissioned by the GLA
- Explores the experiences of schemes within and outside London around co-commissioning of and collaboration around SP schemes, particularly by CCGs and LAs
- Looks at different models, benefits and challenges, enablers and barriers of co-commissioning
- Aims to support LAs, CCGs and VCS to consider how best to work together locally to deliver effective SP services

### **Methodology**

- Conducted eight semi-structured interviews with representatives of CCGs, LAs and VCS partners
- Five in London, three outside
- It's an exploration and snapshot of a diverse range of experiences rather than a quantitative piece of work

### **Approaches**

Broadly, the approaches taken in different areas fell into three categories:

- **Collaborative working** – one party commissions, with others providing active input and support around scheme design and ongoing delivery
- **Complementary commissioning** – multiple parties commission different services or elements of services which work closely together and may share processes/infrastructure etc
- **Fully integrated co-commissioning** – partners work together to pool funds and operate as a single commissioner of services

#### **Complementary commissioning and collaboration**

**Redbridge** is moving to a more locality based model with interdisciplinary teams including both NHS and LA staff e.g. link workers, community nurses, social workers etc also working closely alongside the voluntary sector.

#### **Fully integrated co-commissioning**

In **City and Hackney** the local authority and CCG are working closely together around the integrated care agenda and are currently in the process of creating a unified commissioning process for social prescribing and other associated services

In **Greater Manchester**, four LA areas now have one Chief Officer across both CCG and LA, resulting effectively in pooling of budgets and potential for increased unification and coherence of strategies and priorities



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### **Benefits**

The benefits of CCGs and LAs working together were found to be wide ranging:

- **Complementary perspectives and differing expertise** on effective ways of working
- Local authorities bring experience of **preventative approaches** and **working in community spaces**
- Opportunity to develop **real time knowledge** on the demand for services and utilise in commissioning
- Increased ability to **avoid duplication** and ensure that **services work coherently** together
- Promoting **more diverse outcome measurement** and enabling a more rounded understanding of impact
- **Broadening scope** for schemes and link worker roles e.g. new locations, widened focus and remit

### **Conditions and Enablers**

A number of common themes emerged including:

- **Desire to work with and build on what's there** – recognition not starting with a blank sheet of paper
- **Laying the groundwork** – taking time to ensure clear ownership, shared vision etc
- **Willingness to test and learn** – new approaches need time to embed and develop
- **External funding** – can be critical in early stages
- **Relationships** – both pre-existing and developing
- **Buy-in at senior/elected official level**
- **Buy-in amongst frontline staff** – can be equally important in ensuring embedded, integrated delivery
- **Motivated individuals and organisations** – bring others along with them
- **Backgrounds of key individuals** e.g. experience within public health/NHS, understanding of culture
- **Space for building shared vision and maintaining connection** e.g. steering groups, forums
- **Interest in shared agendas** – broader than just SP
- **Building evidence base** to secure ongoing funding

### **Challenges and barriers**

Some of the main challenges raised were:

- **Funding environment** for all stakeholders
- **Sustaining momentum and building security** particularly after initial external funding
- **Gathering right evidence** for a range of audiences with interest in differing KPIs
- **Complexity of joining up commissioning processes** where there is a desire to do so
- **Addressing under-resourcing in VCS** – whose responsibility is it?
- **Difficulty having open and honest conversations** - particularly with fragility of funding
- **Negotiating differing priorities, languages and cultures**
- **Working with what's already there** – moving from one model to another
- **Creating clear division of responsibility** – ensuring smooth decision-making, ownership and momentum
- **Allowing for local difference** – promoting best practice while allowing for local leadership and variation



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### **Conclusions**

- There is huge potential for collaboration and co-commissioning, and good practice in this space is rapidly evolving
- Clear it's not only about where the money comes from, but how partners build a shared sense of purpose and put this into action

### **Further questions for the future**

- What support is needed in London to enable local partnerships to reach their full potential?
- How can good practice be promoted at the same time as allowing for local difference?
- How can we create spaces to learn from each other and other parts of the country? e.g. Greater Manchester which operates in a similar context

### **Who will the report be of interest to?**

- Anyone with a stake in a local social prescribing scheme or an interest in establishing one, as well as those who are keen to understand how best to support schemes to get off the ground and become effectively embedded within the local service landscape.
- Beyond social prescribing, anyone within local bodies such as LA, CCG, STP interested in developing collaborative models of funding and working that build integration, including with the VCS and communities

### **How do I access the report?**

- The report will soon be made available via the GLA and Bromley by Bow Centre websites

### **How can I find out more?**

Contact me on [dan.hopewell@bbbc.org.uk](mailto:dan.hopewell@bbbc.org.uk) or visit our website at [www.bbbc.org.uk/insights](http://www.bbbc.org.uk/insights) to find out more about our work on social prescribing