

Greenwich – Interconnected services for a seamless client journey

BACKGROUND

Social prescribing has been present in Greenwich for a number of years, primarily through commissioning from the Public Health team at the Royal Borough of Greenwich and supplemented by external funding. It originally evolved from the Health Trainer model, moving to a broader conception of health in more recent years.

Currently there are three strands of activity: the Greenwich Community Directory, the Live Well Line and the Live Well Coach (social prescribing service). The Community Hub, a phone-based service which evolved during the pandemic from the 'Live Well Line' and is the first port of call for residents seeking support and information, triaging on to a range of services as well as direct service delivery. The other two strands offer more intensive phone-based or in person social prescribing support continuing via walk and talk during the pandemic. DES funded social prescribing services are integrated within the Live Well Service ensuring continuity and consistency. The services are all delivered by the [Charlton Athletic Community Trust](#)

All strands of delivery work closely with the Royal Borough of Greenwich [Welfare Rights Service](#) who have always been the most common destination for onward referrals, with this becoming more pronounced during the pandemic.

“
Our approach is built on the
foundation of strong working
relationships which have
come into their own in the
past year.”

TOP TIPS

- **Find ways to ensure that referrals can be passed on without delay.** By developing the social prescribing service in such a way that initial need is triaged through a brief telephone engagement, clients can be assessed quickly with urgent advice needs passed on rapidly.
- **Use remote working to break down boundaries between teams** and consider using multi-disciplinary approaches to tackling the complex challenges service users face.
- **Evidence demand using statistics** to be able to make the case for expanded capacity if and when needed.

THE APPROACH

The approach taken to integrating social prescribing and social welfare advice services is characterised by some key principles:

Seamless referral processes

With the social prescribing service already having an established telephone infrastructure and a strong working relationship with the Welfare Rights Service predating the pandemic, there were already strong systems in place to feed demand through from social prescribing to the advice service. While before the pandemic on average there was one referral per day from social prescribing, the increased need and the prominence of the Community Hub service (which was at one point taking 1,000 calls a day) meant this increased to 80 – 100 cases per week.

Building on the existing seamless referral pathway, clients were able to access advice quickly and efficiently, which was particularly important for those who had found themselves with extremely low income or no income at all and were in desperate need of support. This also meant the Welfare Rights Service had the ability to build a strong picture of demand coming through to the service, enabling the team to successfully advocate for increased resource to meet the increased level of need.

CASE STUDY CONTACT

Name: Aideen Silke, Head of Live Well

Organisation: Royal Borough of Greenwich

Website: <https://livewellgreenwich.org.uk/>

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This case study has been produced by the [Bromley by Bow Centre](#) and [Greater London Authority](#) who are working together to support the development of social prescribing in London.

THE APPROACH (continued)**Cross-team working**

With social prescribing services commissioned through the Royal Borough of Greenwich and the Welfare Rights Service also based within the local authority, there was already a strong foundation of partnership. Despite this, the pandemic has led to a significant increase in collaborative working across teams, with multi-disciplinary case conferences taking place twice a week including social prescribing teams and the Welfare Rights Service, as well as housing, children's services, mental health teams and GPs. It is felt that remote working and the ability to meet at the click of a button has helped to break down barriers between teams to support collaborative working in the best interest of local residents.

THE BENEFITS

- Fast and efficient referrals mean that clients have been able to access support when needed and generates a high level of trust in the service.
- The Welfare Rights Service's position within the local authority means that they are able to quickly resolve issues that involve other teams such as Housing Benefit and Council Tax and multi-disciplinary case conferences enable resolution of issues and challenges which require the input of other organisations.
- Monitoring of the number of cases being referred has enabled the services to generate clear evidence of demand and need for social welfare advice and this has led to increased investment in the Welfare Rights Service to meet this challenge.

THE CHALLENGES

The most significant challenge has been meeting the level of demand which has come through, particularly in the time of Covid. Although there is capacity available, it is often stretched and it can be difficult to meet the needs of the volume of clients who require support.

The Live Well service has taken a huge amount of time and energy to set up effectively and has evolved over time to meet changing needs including the pandemic. While the pandemic accelerated service developments, the pace of change has also brought challenges.

THE OUTCOME

The outcome of this joined-up approach to supporting clients has been positive both for clients in accessing support as and when needed, and for the services themselves in being able to resolve the issues that clients present with. The evidencing of need through strong data systems has also enabled an expansion of services to meet increased levels of demand in the community.

RESOURCES**Live Well Programme**

To read more about the Live Well programme, click [here](#).

Charlton Athletic Community Trust

To find out more about the Charlton Athletic Community Trust, click [here](#).

Welfare Rights Service

To read more about the work of the Royal Borough of Greenwich Welfare Rights Service, click [here](#).



For information supporting the voluntary and community sector to deliver on social prescribing please click [here](#).



For information on support for social prescribing schemes offered by the Bromley by Bow Centre, please visit: <https://www.bbbc.org.uk/insights/>



For information on how to join the London Plus social prescribing network [click here](#).

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