



Strand Patient Participation Spring Newsletter

In this newsletter you will find articles about Social Prescribing, the Health Kiosk and other PPG meetings attended by members

At our recent Committee meeting we had a presentation by Rachel Rogers, our Social Prescriber, about Social Prescribing and what it can mean for patients. Rachel has contributed an article about it which you can read below.

What is Social Prescribing?

Social Prescribing is a way of connecting people to activities, groups and services that can improve their health and wellbeing.

For example, people may visit their GP because they may be feeling stressed about their work, money, or because they are lonely and isolated. But these problems cannot be fixed by medicine or doctors alone.

Social prescribing presents the NHS with an opportunity to help people make use of existing community services, resources and facilities which can help them manage or overcome these social factors. The team of Social Prescribers will then link patients into this range of services based on their situation and preferences. This could include, for example, volunteering, arts activities, gardening, befriending, advice on debt or finances, and a range of physical activities.

This approach aims to reduce pressure on clinicians, improve people's lives through improved and timely access to health services, strengthen community resilience, reduce health inequalities, and meet the needs of our diverse communities.

Social Prescribing at your PCN [Primary Care Network]

Going Local is your Social Prescribing service. The team has 7 Social Prescribers and Rachel Rogers is the Social Prescriber for the Strand Medical Group and two other local GP surgeries.

The Going Local Social Prescribers help people focus on what matters most to them through shared decision making and support planning. We connect people to community groups and agencies for practical and emotional support. We collaborate with local partners and community groups to ensure people are able to access the services they provide.

Going Local offers a flexible way of working, giving the people we support the choice of holding our sessions remotely, outside, in community spaces (and in some cases back in GP surgeries).

For more information, please visit the Teams website at: <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/community-wellbeing/going-local/>

Social Prescribing Case-study: John

(name changed, and permission given to share).

John was referred to Going Local with multiple areas of need. John's Partner was going through a diagnosis which subsequently turned out to be a form of dementia. John was feeling physically and socially isolated and they both suffered from low mood with worries about the future.

Upon exploring their circumstances, John's Social Prescriber was able to support John to prioritise time to himself (something he felt guilty about) as well as time with his Partner. They contacted a number of local organisations and explored various options until the right groups for John and his Partner were found.

Referrals were made to Carers Support, Mind, The Dementia Hub and a local social group. John was extremely anxious about attending the social group for the first time, but the Social Prescriber was able to accompany him on the first occasion, which John found really supportive.

John continues to attend the group and has formed close friendships. He now meets his new friends outside of the group too. These new social connections have given John something to look forward to each week and a network of people to rely on for informal support.

Help from Carers Support means that John now feels more confident in his new caring role, and has been able to rely on them for emotional and practical support. Thanks to Carers Support, he has even been able to go and see family for the first time in years thanks to funds provided by their Wellbeing Fund.

Support from Mind has also helped John to manage his mental health and encouraged him to feel more confident prioritising time for himself.

Lastly, the Dementia Hub were able to support John with advice and information about his Partner's condition, signpost him to additional support and provide some respite with groups and social activities he and his partner can attend together.

Since engaging with Going Local, John feels he is coping much better and he is starting to feel hopeful about the future and his wellbeing and confidence has increased. He commented that "Going Local has given me my life back".

Going Local prides itself on supporting our local community by helping and supporting individuals to overcome challenges and improve the quality of their lives by gaining access to local services, organisations and charities within Worthing and Adur.

If you are looking for support yourself or know someone within Adur and Worthing who may benefit from some additional support, Going Local is a free Service (funded by the NHS) and available to all who live in this area. Individuals can connect to Going Local in any of the following ways:

- Online via the Going Local Website:
<https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/community-wellbeing/going-local/>

- Calling Adur and Worthing Councils on 01903 221222 (where you can request a call back from a member of the team)
 - Via your GP
- A supportive and warm welcome awaits.

Health Kiosk



How does it work?

You may have noticed in the corner of our waiting room a new piece of equipment. This is our new Health Kiosk. Simply log into the Health Kiosk with your name and date of birth, this is securely verified against your patient record that we hold here at the Strand, you will then be able to complete questionnaires and assessments that are relevant to you. In most cases, your results are available immediately and they are sent to your patient record where they can be reviewed by a clinician.

Are my details safe?

We appreciate in this day and age many of us are protective about our personal details. The Health Kiosk is secure and only transmits details internally, therefore your details will not be shared with 3rd party companies.

What can I use it for?

The Health Kiosk can save you time, meaning often no appointment with a clinician is necessary, it can also be carried out at your convenience. You can use the kiosk to conduct a variety of checks including:

- NHS health checks
- Oral contraception
- Asthma
- COPD
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Smoking
- Arthritis
- Postnatal
- Menopause
- Dementia carers review
- Eating disorders
- Alcohol
- Phobias
- Depression
- Anxiety
- And more...

West Sussex PPG Network

There are three Public Participation Groups (PPG) Networks in Sussex: West Sussex and East Sussex PPG Networks and Brighton and Hove PPG Network. One of the reasons these Networks were set up was in response to a growing appetite over recent years of the members of patient groups wanting to reach out and communicate with other patient groups in the area to discuss health related topics, engage with each other and perhaps get some helpful tips as to what improvements could be made. We were interested in how other groups were functioning: did they, like us, have difficulties in increasing the member numbers of their virtual groups? Did they fund raise? How often did they meet? That sort of thing.

The Network meetings take place virtually on a regular basis using Microsoft Teams, the COVID-19 pandemic having led to face-to-face meetings being replaced by virtual ones. Although there are disadvantages, these are outweighed in bringing together members of patient groups who would probably not be able to meet very often, the practical challenges of arranging face- to-face meetings being challenging to say the least. It is also true to say that before the pandemic not many of us had the practical experience of remote working that we have now.

Turning to the topics discussed these are many and varied and cover just about every health topic one can imagine including:

- the ambulance service's difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff
- the new community pharmacist led clinical service enabling GP practices to refer patients with minor illness for same day consultation with a community pharmacist
- the problems facing patients who are digitally excluded

- that neighbourhoods across West Sussex can vary significantly with pockets of poverty/deprivation and areas of affluence
- the increasing number of new housing estates springing up all over West Sussex and the lack of infrastructure to support them
- services such as E-consult – this seems to be popular but of course only works for patients who are not digitally excluded

Finally moving on to updates from PPGs with good ideas:

- three Shoreham GP practices having amalgamated over recent years resulting in a huge number of registered patients, their Patient Group now has a Patient Liaison officer
- Friends of Selsey have organised helping patients with the blood pressure machine and are encouraging people to report to their GPs with their blood pressure readings
- Lime Tree treated us to an excellent presentation on the Green Impact for Healthcare toolkit which has been produced to help GP Practices become greener and save money. A whole range of actions can be taken including using recycled paper in the printers and prescribing low carbon alternatives where possible such as dry powder inhalers.

By being part of the Network, we have been able to keep going, to soldier on, keeping in touch with each other and drawing inspiration from each other. Thanks to the Chair Tom Goodridge, Public Involvement Manager and Claire Evans Public Involvement Officer for all their hard work and support.

Last but not Least

We are hoping to spend our remaining funds on privacy screens for the Health Kiosk. In the past we have bought a Doppler machine and a screen for the waiting room. We are not undertaking any further fund-raising, but the account will remain open for any donations or legacies.

We would also welcome new members on our Committee.