



West Area Health Forum

Wednesday 7 July 2021, 10-11:30 via Zoom (online meeting)

1. Welcome and introductions

There were 35 people in attendance. Apologies were received from Katie Chipping, Senior Partnerships Manager for NHS Brighton and Hove Clinical Commissioning Group (B&H CCG), Maureen Copelin, Louise Bridle, Assistant Practice Manager at Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub, Becky Woodiwiss Public Health, Maureen Copelin and Ann Tizzard, Assistant Manager of St Richard's Church and Community Centre.

Please contact Forum facilitator Joanna on joanna.martindale@hkproject.org.uk or 01273 881446 at any time with agenda ideas, comments, feedback or questions; including feedback about experiences of attending the Health Forum meetings online.

2. Notes of the last meeting

The notes were agreed as accurate.

3. Social Prescribing

Jo Crease, CEO of Together Co, shared some slides about Together Co's Social Prescribing service (see: <https://www.hkproject.org.uk/docs/news/2021-07-07-TogetherCoSocialPrescribing7.7.21.pdf>), which helps people to feel happier and healthier by looking at them as a whole (alongside clinical treatment for medical conditions) by linking them with local groups and services. Jo C noted this included social and practical support based on each client's needs (such as help with bereavement, housing, weight loss, caring responsibilities and social isolation) to help meet their non-medical needs by referring them to a wide range of groups and activities (including befriending, the Neighbourhood Health Square, and access and advice services).

Together Co's Social Prescribing Link Workers support their clients by listening to their needs and working with (and for) them to link them into suitable services. They connect GP Surgeries and local organisations, and use their knowledge of available services to help their clients join suitable activities (supporting any confidence and/or access needs).

Jo C noted that the Link Workers had identified the 5 most commonly presenting needs, but most people had more than one. Each client has access to multiple 1:1 hour-long sessions with their Link Worker, and 97% of West Hove clients have reported a positive change in at least one area of their life.

Jo C shared stories about the benefits of Social Prescribing, both for the clients and the Primary Care staff involved in their care. These included helping a West Hove

resident achieve his goal of doing more physical activity; increasing his confidence and resulting in him joining two walking and wellbeing groups. This also helped link him to other people in his community and build his resilience outside of caring for his husband who has cancer. Greg added that, since the patient had received 3 months' support via Social Prescribing (initially arranged after he had complained to Wish Park Surgery), he had written to the Surgery to thank them for their assistance.

Jo C noted the benefits of collaborative working between Primary Care, Link Workers and community organisations included increasing the range of services available to support Surgery's patients and (as successfully demonstrated by Wish Park Surgery) Practices' Social Prescribing Leads working with Link Workers to streamline their internal referral processes and triage appointment requests into Social Prescribing. Jo C reported the Prescribe to Thrive project will help increase the current support offers by building stronger links with community activities and creating new ones to fill any identified gaps in response to patients' needs. Together Co are also reviewing current referral pathways in West Hove Surgeries to add Social Prescribing as an automated option instead of an add-on that clinicians have to remember for themselves.

Jo C noted that Link Workers working in the Surgeries made it easier for them to build relationships with the staff, but alternatives (such as the weekly Zoom meetings Portslade Health Centre had arranged between its Link Worker and clinicians) were still very beneficial for Surgeries currently lacking in sufficient physical space. The relationship between Link Workers and Primary Care Network (PCN) staff will be even more beneficial when the PCN's four new Mental Health workers start; as many Social Prescribing clients have been found to suffer from longer-term mental health conditions including depression, low mood and anxiety.

Jo C confirmed people could access Social Prescribing via a GP Surgery referral (via the patient record system), Adult Social Care or a voluntary organisation (using this form: <https://togetherco.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Together-Co-Social-Prescribing-referral-form.docx>), or a self-referral to the City-wide referral hub (01273 229382).

Emma Drew, CEO Robin Drew Foundation, noted Social Prescribing the NHS had only introduced Social Prescribing in the last 3 years; and the new Prescribe To Thrive project (one of 37 pilots across the country) was hoping to find the best way to make Social Prescribing more available to clinical and community organisations using whatever methods were most useful to local organisations.

Emma noted the Robin Hood Health Foundation's Hera Project had been delivering mainly creative projects for people with on-going physical and mental health concerns since 2014, which had shown significant benefits for patients and service possibilities. The Robin Hood Health Foundation also employ Link Workers in the Goldstone PCN.

Emma reported Prescribe To Thrive was running a 3 month pilot of taster sessions over the summer (alongside usual Link Workers referrals) to help local people to try

something new; as evidence shows that meeting new people, learning new things, and being in nature can have a profound impact on people's health and wellbeing. The taster sessions will include a trip to Truly Hill (via minibus) with rangers from the South Downs National Park Authority, Photography Walks, dance groups (including one for people with limited mobility), creative and visual arts activities, a singing group, and a community gardening activity in collaboration with Plot 22.

The Hangleton and Knoll Project (HKP) has also arranged taster sessions including:

- **Routes Employment Project:** free, 1:1 personal support for anyone needing some help on their journey into employment. To find out more, contact Claire Hines via routes@hkproject.org.uk or 01273 410858
- **Hangleton and Knoll Young Women's Group:** fun, friendship and wellbeing support for young women aged 13-19 (up to 25 years for young women with Special Educational Needs). For details, contact Rachael on 07579826672 or message the HKP Youth Team via Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/HKPYouthteam>) or Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/hkpyouthteam/>)
- **Shape Up Exercise Classes:** weekly classes for all abilities. First class is free, then £3 a class. For details, email claire.johnson@hkproject.org.uk
- **The Big Munch – Family Lunch Club:** free, weekly family lunch club providing a healthy lunch and activities during August 2021. To book, email claire.johnson@hkproject.org.uk
- **Sauerkraut workshop:** free, online workshop to learn to make sauerkraut. Suitable for everyone. Contact Katie via katie.merrien@hkproject.org.uk or 07422693478 for more information.

The pilot feedback will help to shape a longer programme (from October to March), which will hopefully help c100 people feel better, manage their health, access support and make new friends. Participants will be asked for their feedback and whether they now feel confident enough to join other activities across the City. Emma noted people could be referred to Prescribe to Thrive via a Link Worker, with a self-referral process hopefully going online later in 2021. Katie Merrien confirmed HKP would be running several Wellbeing Courses as part of the autumn programme, to respond to the identified community needs for support about mental health and wellbeing.

Robin Hood Health are also offering assistive technology training to all staff in the Prescribe To Thrive partnership, looking at ways to make better use of the Money Advice Service, and inviting clinicians to try some creative workshops for themselves.

In response to discussions about the significant increase in loneliness for people unable to engage via technology during the Covid-19 pandemic, and requests for an activity to improve patient's IT skills, Jo M confirmed that the Hangleton and Knoll Project (HKP) was working with the PCN and Together Co as part of B&H CCG's Digital Ambassador Programme to help people access health and wellbeing information online. These sessions will start in September 2021 at St Richard's

Church and Community Centre and be advertised to this group. HKP's IT suite is currently available for IT help and training (including help with e-consult) from 10am-3pm on Wednesdays with bookable 1-hour slots. **Contact David via hakit@hkproject.org.uk or 07422 665761 (call or text) for help and advice via telephone or in person or to book a slot in person.**

Action: Steve Cribbs and Jo Martindale to discuss re-establishing in-house IT support at Links Road Surgery provided by HKP's IT tutor.

Dr Neil Singh, a GP at Brighton Wellbeing Centre, explained the importance of GPs starting to take a more holistic approach to treating people, by looking at the whole person and not just their presenting condition(s); which could then be supported through Social Prescribing. Dr Neil explained GPs are training to look at the biological determinants of people's health, but not the environmental or social factors; which can be crucial to understanding why some people are more likely to become ill.

Dr Neil shared the story of a patient who was having trouble sleeping whom he had supported using a more holistic approach by taking the time to understand the wider factors of his personal life and history, instead of just prescribing him some sleeping tablets to resolve the physical aspect of his condition. Dr Neil highlighted the equal importance of changing perceptions about lifestyle "choices" (e.g. drug use), as they were influenced by uncontrollable social factors such as deprivation, family history, or unemployment and people's "choices" were therefore restricted by the communities around them. Dr Neil confirmed Social Prescribing could help to address some of the social factors and underlying elements (e.g. loneliness) which may be identified after taking a more holistic approach to someone's care.

Mike and Pat agreed they were glad to see Primary Care taking a more holistic approach to treating people by looking at their wider context and potential methods for prevention, instead of just prescribing medication. Mike added that being active, a healthy diet and the Five Steps to Wellbeing (Connect, Be active, Take notice, Keep learning & Give) were all helpful tools for supporting people's general wellbeing.

The Forum discussed the steps required to encourage and support GPs to take a more holistic approach to patient care, including use of Social Prescribing. Dr Neil confirmed most GPs were now looking at people's lifestyles (e.g. diet and nutrition) as part of their treatment, but not necessarily including the impact of the wider system; especially elements such as policy changes and economic factors which were out of the person's control. Emma noted Social Prescribing was intended to help GPs support anyone who was attending for non-medical reasons due to not knowing where else to go for help, and confirmed it was starting to be introduced to medical training. Jo C added that NHS England now had a Social Prescribing training and support programme for clinicians and other Surgery staff.

It was noted that significant changes were required to the current model of care (with consultations limited to 7 minutes per patient) and societal view of healthcare, in order

to enable GPs to take a more holistic approach (e.g. given the additional time required for longer consultations to get to the root of the issue). Dr Neil noted Brighton Wellbeing Centre was already running 20-30 minute consultations for members of Black And Minority Ethnic (BAME) who have stopped engaging with health services and have mental health issues. These sessions have an interpreter (where needed), treat multiple conditions in one go (where applicable) and are hoped to start building the patients' trust in health services.

The Forum agreed that increasing the understanding about the different clinical roles in Surgeries would help alleviate some of the considerable pressure on GPs by enabling people to be treated by the most suitable member of staff. Jo M noted that the NHS 10 Year Plan included establishing in-Surgery roles including Link Workers which over time should start to shift the model.

Action: Practice Managers to send any ideas of things that may help their GPs refer to the Prescribe To Thrive programme and/or be more interested in Social Prescribing (e.g. promoting it to patients via Surgery websites) to Nicole Monney (nicole.monney@hkproject.org.uk)

Jo Martindale shared an update from Katie Chipping on plans for the upcoming Social Prescribing Recommission, which noted B&H CCG's planned recommissioning of the city-wider service was on hold until Spring 2022 or later (with Together Co's funding extended until 31 March 2022), The CCG is currently looking to reinstate the Social Prescribing steering group as a place-based forum focused on Social Prescribing and working together (including with the community voluntary sector) to determine the future commissioning opportunities.

4. Primary Care Network (PCN) update

Dr Rowan Brown, GP at Portslade Medical Centre and West Area PCN Clinical Director, reported the PCN was currently working in partnership with Sussex Community Foundation Trust (SCFT) and Southdown to recruit four Mental Health workers to work across the PCN. Two of the four posts have been recruited to, and are trained to at least Band 4 level but without a specific type of Mental Health qualification but w strong experience of complex needs. The Mental Health workers will support the PCN Surgeries by increasing capacity for people presenting with mental health issues via 30-minute 1:1 clinics, and link them in with the interventions available through Southdowns, but will not be prescribing medication.

Dr Rowan noted the PCN planned to set up regular team meetings between all staff, including Social Prescribing Link Workers and the Mental Health workers, to explore wider determinants of health that can impact people's lives and present as mental and physical problems.

5. Updates Hove Medical Centre, Mile Oak, Wish, Links and Portslade Surgery representatives and Patient Participation Groups (PPGs)

Wish Park Medical Centre

Greg (Practice Manager) reported the Practice:

- Was still experiencing more demand than it could meet, and had been trying to recruit to fill GP vacancies since March. Dr Lucy Nightingale is on maternity leave, and one of the Healthcare Assistants is pregnant.
- Was using 4 of its 8 telephone lines, and answering calls as quickly as possible, but response times are being affected by staffing numbers and some calls taking longer due to a lack of appointments (so problems are being resolved by phone).
- Had previously tried prescribing alternatives to medication, but some people were only interested in getting a medical prescription. Some local residents need to be encouraged to listen to their GPs about alternative solutions; advertising Social Prescribing through local patient Forums may help with this.
- Had evidence of 75% of Practice Managers, GPs and Nurses experiencing verbal abuse at some point during the Covid-19 pandemic (including shouting and emotional manipulation), and over 50% receiving physical threats. Greg stated that this behaviour would not be tolerated, and asked that the minority of people who were demonstrating these behaviours remembered that Surgery staff were just people who wanted to help patients as best they can (with limited staff capacity).

Jo M highlighted the Forum's importance as a space for Primary Care staff to inform local residents of the pressures that they are facing. The Forum members agreed that the abuse being experienced by staff members was unacceptable, even if patients were feeling frustrated, worried or stressed.

Renee Dickinson from Sussex Health and Care Partnership suggested more support could be given to staff by the Mental Health team to help them manage difficult conversations and not feel personally attacked or take those feelings home at the end of their day. Emma confirmed Robin Hood Health offered resilience support for clinicians through its Sea Change programme.

Action: Emma Drew to send Dr Rowan Brown the details of Robin Hood Health's Sea Change programme once finalised, to explore helping clinicians with their emotional resilience in response to conflict.

Links Road Surgery

Steve Cribbs (Practice Manager) reported he was helping Dr Rowan Brown to lead the PCN's IT strategy, and he wanted this to include patient engagement and enablement for digital health care (to help patients and staff). Steve reported the local Surgeries were trying to set up a Respiratory Clinic offering Spirometry tests and asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) monitoring, which would be a shared service across all 6 West Area PCN Surgeries.

Steve reported the Practice:

- Had installed a new telephone system on 6 June, which was working brilliantly.
- Was still working beyond its staffing capacity, with overwhelmingly high demand some days (but the new phone system was hoped to help).
- Is repurposing a record storage room as a counselling room for its newly trained Health and Wellbeing Coach (Sara Ball) but progress is slow as staff are so busy.
- Hopes to have a first-contact Physiotherapist starting there in August 2021.
- Is keen to have a Social Prescribing Link Worker working in Surgery ASAP (who will work alongside Sara Ball, as their roles will slightly overlap).
- Has employed a new Receptionist, who was previously a Vaccine Hub volunteer.
- Would be restarting its patient dance group at some point after 19 July 2021.
- Is still seeing mostly high levels of patient satisfaction, but with some occurrences of people who are under stress/pressure not being as tolerant as the ideal.
- Will be reviewing its safety processes in light of the 19 July 2021 Covid restriction changes, and will take patient views into account for this (maybe via a survey).

Action: Jo M and Steve C to discuss how best to understand varying viewpoints about the 19 July restriction changes and mask wearing.

Benfield Valley Healthcare Hub (BVHH) (including Burwash Surgery)

Jo M shared a written update from Louise (Practice Manager) in her absence:

- The Practice has experienced a vast increase in the number of appointments received every day, and has no extra funding for more staff to support this. This means a longer wait on the phone for routine care.
- They have recruited a new Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP), and are currently trying to recruit a new GP and a Nurse.
- The Practice is aware that their response time to phones is not as the patients would like them to be, but staff are doing their best and are finding these difficulties just as frustrating as they are for the patients.
- They are looking at ways to open Burwash Surgery again, including managing the issues of infection control.

Mary noted the staffing list had been removed from the BVHH website, including the names of the GPs and Partners, and it was unclear which staff still worked there.

Action: Jo to ask Louise to give an update on BVHH's current GP team which JM will share and put the staff names back on the website if possible.

Hove Medical Centre

Richard Gravestock (Business Manager), reported the Practice:

- Had updated its premises, with: a new room built in the Reception area; the Reception desk replaced (with a wheelchair-accessible section); and safety flooring being laid in the final 3 consulting rooms to replace all of the carpet. This took longer than planned due to contractor issues.

- Was experiencing multiple staffing changes, including:
 - Kirsty Bush, Nurse Practitioner, returning from maternity leave in August
 - Dr Suzi Elyas, salaried GP leaving on 13 August 2021.
 - Dr Charlie Clark (who did his final training year at the Surgery) joining as salaried GP on 17 September 2021.
 - Two GP Registrars (Dr Ruth Skipper and Dr Jessie Drake) qualifying. Dr Ruth has now left, and Dr Jessie is leaving in October. GP Registrar Dr Brian Mudamburi has his final exam pending.
 - Three GPs joining the Surgery on 4 August 2021: Dr Sabine Salem ST3 (year 3 GP trainee - final year) for 12 months; Dr Mohamed Omer (year 1 GP trainee) for 4 months; Dr Emily Ross-Skinner (year 1 GP trainee) for 4 months.
- Currently has a horrendously high workload, with very high patient demand, plus the added workload of emails and e-consults. They are very worried about the stress and impact on the wellbeing of GPs.
- Has reported one issue of a very offensive patient (who made racist comments towards a GP) to the Police, who decided to prosecute. The patient will be attending Magistrates Court at the end of July 2021.
- Will still require patients to wear masks to protect staff and patients (especially vulnerable patients) after Covid-19 coming out of lockdown on 19 July 2021. If a patient chooses not to wear a mask, they will be required to wait outside until the clinician is ready to see them.

Nicole Monney noted she found Hove Medical Centre's telephone system very useful, as it confirmed your position and gave a call-back option when you neared the front of the queue, and shared a recent good experience of quickly booking an appointment. Joyce agreed with this, sounds like a great system

Mile Oak Surgery

Lisa Winney (the new Assistant Practice Manager) reported several new staff had been recruited in the last few months including an Apprentice, an IT worker and a Nurse, and 2 new front-of-house team members were joining in the next few months.

Portslade Medical Centre

Samantha Draper (new Practice Manager) reported she had recently joined the Practice Team and was currently building her understanding of the Practice in order to provide the best services for patients. They have also recently recruited 3 new Reception staff and a GP (Dr Julie Rose, who is hoped to become a future partner). The new Reception staff have been very helpful with managing the phone lines, and patients seem to be frustrated about a lack of appointments instead of call handling times. The Surgery's main issue is lack of space, and they need to expand in order to gain the physical capacity to support and see more patients.

Dr Rowan highlighted there were increasingly high levels of demand across all areas of the NHS, including Primary and Secondary Care appointments. Dr Rowan reported he had recently completed an audit of Portslade Medical Centre's position compared to 2 years ago, which shows the Surgery has the equivalent of 2 extra GPs and more

patient consultations now than 2 years ago, but this is still not meeting the ever-increasing demand (the stress of which is being experienced by Practices across the country is just not sustainable).

Dr Rowan noted that, although some patients found completing the Surgery's online forms on e-consult instead of calling for an appointment to be more time-consuming, the forms were of great benefit to the Practice as it allowed medical problems to be triaged in order for staff to make the best use of time (e.g. not giving a telephone appointment to someone who just needs a repeat prescription) and decide who is best placed to support the patient.

Jo M reported she is recruiting a patient group from across the PCN (including people who have reported issues with phone access to Primary Care, and Mary) to create and co-produce the digital access service launching in September 2021 in partnership with the PCN and get feedback on current access to surgeries.

Action: Any local patients interested in joining the Primary Care digital access group to contact Jo M.

6. Future West Area Health Forum meetings

Jo thanked the speakers for attending the Forum, and confirmed **the next Forum is booked to take place at St Richard's Church, Egmont Rd from 10am-12noon on Wednesday 27 October 2021**, with coffee available from 9:30am. Details will be confirmed nearer the time, in line with Government guidelines and Covid restrictions. The agenda will include updates from the CCG Mental Health commissioner, Community Roots Mental Health Partnership and the PCN's new mental health practitioners. Jo invited everyone to email her their ideas for any other Health Forum speakers.