Social Prescribing and community-based approaches

Loneliness and Social Isolation in Mental Health Network
Launch event 03/12/18
Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services.

But does it work? And how does it fit in with wider health and care policy?
Understanding social prescribing: content

Linking? Provision of social resources? Both?

Extent of focus on:
• Health (e.g. physical activity groups)
• Practical support (e.g. debt advice)
• Social connection (e.g. choirs, befriending schemes)
Understanding social prescribing: client group

- General population, or anyone with vulnerability to mental illness?
- People with existing depression or other CMD?
- Specific groups? (e.g. Macmillan social prescribing for cancer patients)
- Suitable for people with SMI?
Understanding social prescribing: setting

• Located at, or referral exclusively via, GPs?

• Or Local Authorities?

• Or voluntary sector groups?

A rapidly expanding field (Kings Fund identified <100 services in 2017; Social Prescribing Network had 172 survey responses in 2016)
Evaluating social prescribing

Limited current evidence base  
https://www.york.ac.uk/media/crd/Ev%20briefing_social_prescribing.pdf

Expected outcomes are not always obvious:
• Should Social Prescribing reduce health service use?
• Are mental health measures appropriate (e.g. for depression)?
• Is reducing loneliness to be expected?

➢ Services often collect good routine data (e.g. Wellbeing Enterprises – WEMWBS and ULS-8 Loneliness scale)
➢ No reason why trials are not possible
Our work

We aim to inspire and motivate people to get involved and lead change in their communities.

We do this through Big Local – a radically different investment of £220m from the Big Lottery Fund – which supports people in 150 places to make a difference to the things that matter most to them in their community.

It’s a vision of dynamic, resilient, resident-led change that we want to share. That’s why we’re inviting you to join the conversation to explore the future with Empowered Communities in the 2020s.