



Social prescribing: The Home Group offer

Contents

What is social prescribing?	4
The Home Group approach	5
Home Group in action	6
The impact on the individual and the community	8
The impact on health and care services	9
Social prescribing during the Covid19 pandemic	10
Customer case study	11





What is social prescribing?

Social prescribing is a system where healthcare professionals can refer patients to local, non-clinical services to meet their wellbeing needs. The services available locally and how they work together will determine what the patient will be able to participate in.

Social prescribing has greater prominence in health and social care, as it has been identified that people are attending healthcare services such as GPs and hospital emergency departments with non-medical needs, such as social isolation and loneliness.

Recent studies in 2019/20 have found that 26% of patients seen by GPs report a problem that is social rather than medical.

This is where social prescribing can play a crucial role.

As the prescribing part of the name implies, social prescribing often involves GPs or other health professionals referring people for non-medical support. Social prescribing involves the individual meeting with another professional, often called a link worker, whose role is to understand what

matters to the person who has been referred. They then work with them to develop an action plan and help them to identify and access appropriate local activities and sources of support.

Support is as varied as the individuals who need it - everything from groups of friends meeting for a chat, peer support groups, online communities, clubs and informal hobby or activity groups, to sports, arts and culture activities as well as more traditional charity services such as information, advice and advocacy.

In the context of social prescribing, the VCSE sector covers an extremely broad range of organisations. Social prescribing link workers also refer people to statutory services including social services and sometimes back to health services.

“Since working with my support worker... I now feel hope” – Home Group customer

The Home Group approach

We aim to:

- Design and deliver person centred care, underpinned by evidence, which supports people to lead fuller, happier lives
- Build capacity within community based services which reduces demand and releases capacity from the acute sector and in-patient beds
- Co-produce integrated services with our health, local government and voluntary sector partners around the needs of the person to improve their outcomes and support them to achieve and sustain wellbeing
- Design services which incorporate psychological therapies by building skills and capacity in our workforce.



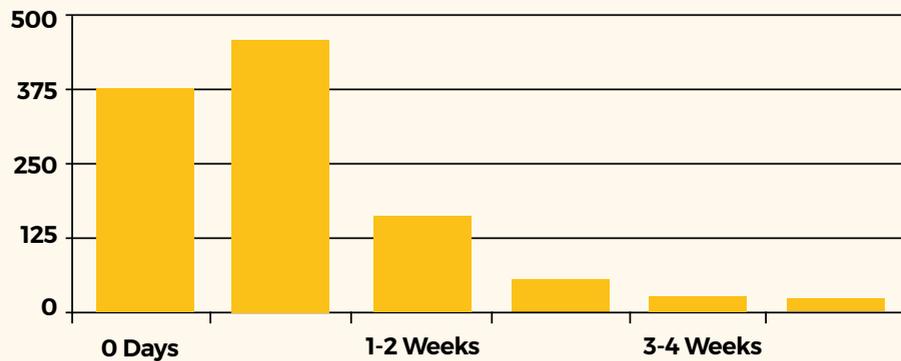


“Volunteering has not only given me a purpose after I could no longer work anymore, but also a way to give back. The support from staff has been nothing short of amazing from the 1:1 support I received which helped me to get my independence back and understand my mental health condition, whilst the groups have given me the chance to socialise, undertake activities, training and meet new friends. I still go through tough times but know that the staff are always here to offer me support when I most need it.” - Home Group customer.

Home Group in action

Since October 2019, Home Group has provided social prescribing to 2,913 patients and clients. 835 patients were assessed within 72 hours, with a bespoke support plan implemented for them.

Referral to First Contact Wait Times





The impact on health and care services

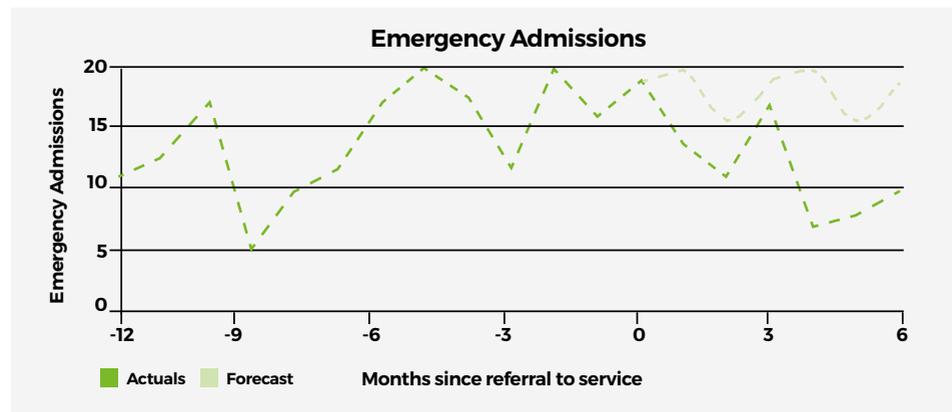
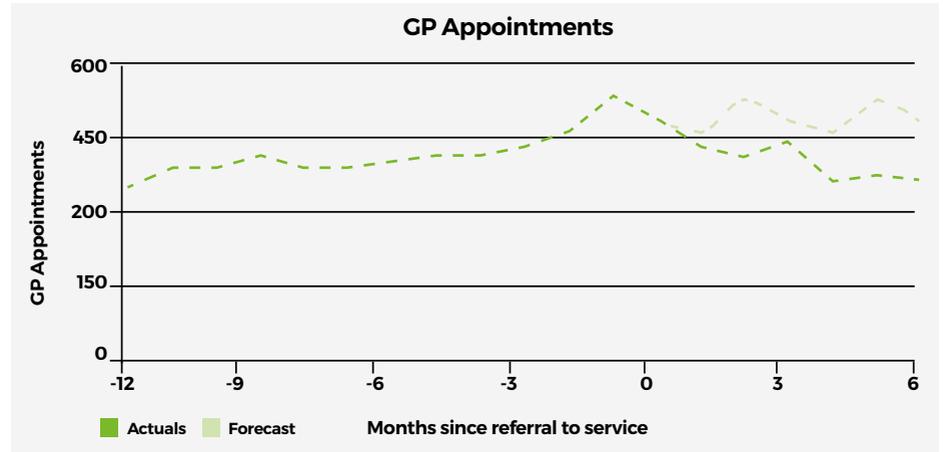
The impact on the individual and the community

646 patients/customers were assessed and 76% of the individuals saw an improvement in their wellbeing (based on ONS scores).

Initial Average Scores



Initial and Follow Up Average Scores





Social prescribing during the Covid19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown and shielding requirements for people with long-term conditions, has had an immediate and significant impact on social prescribing schemes everywhere.

Both established and new schemes have had to rapidly change their delivery models, with many providers – especially those which are more community based, taking on key roles in helping to identify and coordinate support for the most vulnerable individuals.

All Home Group services have robust business continuity plans in place and our revised social prescribing service was established and maintained, within less than 24 hours of the original national lockdown being announced.

Social prescribing providers have experienced enormous increases in demand - as much as 700% in some cases. As well as those on the shielding

list, this includes many people who were not known to the NHS but were identified by social prescribing link workers.

With few community activities able to continue unaffected by the pandemic, some link workers are taking on a much more active role in providing support themselves, for example delivering food and medicines, helping people to get online, or acting as befrienders. By providing essential help to this increase in demand, social prescribing is playing a key role in protecting the NHS during the pandemic.

“I don’t know where I would be right now without you. You’ve helped me and my family so much these past few years and we are so grateful for everything. I just wanted to say you are appreciated.” – Home Group customer.

Customer case study

Our customer was made redundant as a result of Covid-19. They were referred to the social prescribing service by their GP. Support needs were identified as follows: mortgage payments, bills, budgeting, benefits, arranging appointment with the job centre, emerging mental health issues and the impact of a family breakdown.

Firstly, the customer was supported to apply for and was awarded an extended mortgage payment holiday. This reduced anxiety and pressure by reducing the need to find employment immediately.

Energy providers, the local council and water provider, were contacted and payment plans were put in place for priority bills. Utility payment breaks were also arranged. The customer was supported to collect and send evidence to support this.

The customer was supported to register with the local job centre. Benefit entitlements were established, and a new budget plan was devised, based on their revised income.

The customer was displaying signs of mild depression and said that communication had broken down within the family and they were struggling to maintain relationships.

The customer was feeling ‘hopeless’ due to recent redundancy.

We signposted them to a mental health practitioner and support was provided by CWS in terms of coping strategies, triggers and the importance of overall wellbeing, such as exercise, healthy diet and communication. Weekly healthy food parcels were sourced within the community and delivered to the family. The CWS team also provided £100 worth of board games for the children in the family.

The family were supported to have weekly family meetings where any issues could be discussed, and they were encouraged to support each other and to take regular breaks from the sometimes stressful home environment. The family were encouraged to take an hour a day for exercise and currently CWS have provided the whole family with a free family health card to enable them to participate in local activities.

Find out more

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