

# Edinburgh Community Link Worker Network

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2022



Welcome to the summer 2022 edition of the Community Link Worker newsletter.

It's been a busy few months for the network, and this bumper issue reflects some of the highlights. As the nights start to draw in (yes – I know!!) we are beginning to think about our autumn in-person conference which returns after a three year break. This will be held on the morning of Weds 12 October at Norton Park Conference Centre, so please pop a note in your diary and we will announce booking details etc in late summer. In the meantime do enjoy the good weather and hopefully the communities we all work with will be back outside enjoying coming together once again.

**Ian Brooke** (Deputy Chief Executive, EVOC)

## ELEMENTAL IS LIVE by Julie Roxburgh

As you will be aware, the core implementation group have been working closely with Elemental since November 2021. We have been meeting weekly and working on building the referral platform to fit with our project's needs. The Community Link Workers involved in the pilot were given access to the online training academy in March, this was then followed up with online training with project manager Bronagh Monk. Following the training we began the integration process with Vision which unfortunately led to a delay in the go live date. With much input from both Vision and Elemental this issue was thankfully resolved and 7 of our pilot practices went live on 20th April 2022.

The team have decided to use a phased approach to using the platform to allow for some teething issues to be resolved without disruption. Each practice has a nominated GP who will start using the platform first, allowing the CLW to get to know the system at a manageable pace. Thus far we have had 7 referrals through Elemental. We will provide more updates as we progress along this pilot. The Community Link Worker users meet weekly for a Q&A session and have started to draft data recording guidelines.

This will be a working document that is developed as we go along, to ensure we are recording appointments and contacts with patients correctly. Once we have a substantial amount of data on the system, we will be able to start running reports and test what the system is able to produce.

In July Elemental will be integrating EVOC's Red Book Directory, this will provide the CLW will access to all services listed on the red book to attached to patient cases as prescriptions. The GPs will also be able to view this directory through their vision tab, thus having desktop access for signposting purposes. In the interim Elemental has uploaded the top 15 referral destinations for each practice ready for use. The Community Link Workers can then create more bespoke interventions based on their local knowledge, adding them to services already on the system.

## DEEP END views from several Community Link Workers

Last month saw us get together with CLWs based in practices where the focus is on health inequalities, to discuss the challenges and difficulties they experience. Reflections from 3 of the CLWs included

- Challenges of an appropriate deep end referral - exploring the referrers 'unconscious/undeclared content'.
- How it honestly feels, to work in communities struggling to deal with poverty and community members.
- Environment and cultures - the lack of social capital in some areas of the city
  1. Issues around the expectations placed on link workers in terms of what they can do for patients
  2. A realisation that link workers in deep end practices are all experiencing similar difficulties - peer support is so important in terms of coping with this
  3. GPs appreciating that the emotional burden of more complex cases is taken away from them, but this is then left with the link workers
  4. Acknowledgement that although it's great there is now more open dialogue between the network, GP practices and link workers about deep end issues, the next step is to focus on solutions to these issues

- It's different in different localities - it was noted that the SW has a lot more services that support deep end practices and that Link workers working in both areas noticed a big difference. I work in NW and worked in the SW before this and there is a significant difference in the amount and quality of services available in the SW to what is in the NW.

### CONCLUSION 1:

More work needed in some practices to cement the relationships between GP team members and CLW.

### CONCLUSION 2:

Common challenges are low income, fuel poverty, mental health, trauma, undiagnosed neurodiversity, language barriers, long term physical conditions, accessing physical activity, transport, addictions and support for children, often all within one referral.



*Did you know that we're on Twitter...*

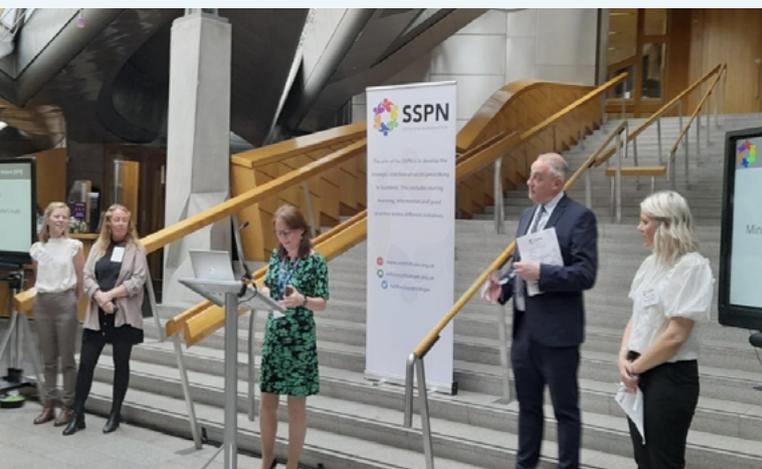
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## PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION by Alison Leitch

I have been involved in the Scottish Social Prescribing Network since its inception almost two years ago. The steering group comprises of CLW programmes, social prescribing programmes, medical students and cultural partners who all passionately believe in social prescribing. We have been working closely with representatives from Maree Todd, Minister for Public Health, Women's Health and Sport's team since autumn last year to raise the profile of social prescribing in Scotland and to highlight how programmes can assist in achieving Scottish Government policies and strategies. Paul McLennan, MSP for East Lothian approached Clare Cook (SPRING social prescribing) and I at the end of last year to contribute to a members debate on mental health and through many discussions, Paul offered to host a Parliamentary Reception which was held earlier this month.

We were delighted that Maree Todd agreed to speak at the event, whilst Jason Leitch (National Clinical Director) and Michael Kellet (Director of Population Health) were happy to attend. Clare and I spoke about our own programmes and Julie Roxburgh presented a case study along with a social prescriber from SPRING. We

had over 70 people attend, all who have a role or interest in social prescribing and there was definite buzz in the room, with many commenting on how powerful the case studies were. It was also recognised that Scotland lags behind the other UK nations in that we don't have anyone in charge of social prescribing within Scottish Government. It took three months of hard work to organise but I am hopeful the event kick started bigger conversations on social prescribing in Scotland so it will be interesting to see what happens next. I am very grateful to everyone who ensured our network was well represented, I have no doubt we made a great impression!



## ARTS BLOG by Anne Crandles

VHS hosted two online events bringing together arts practitioners, such as Youth Theatre Arts Scotland, Art in Healthcare and some of the City's Link Workers. There was a series of presentations and discussions over the course of both sessions allowing participants the opportunity to begin to understand one others' roles and perspectives. Following this, a workshop was held for several of the city's CLWs at The Collective. The aim was to introduce the CLWs to this art resource and for the link workers to add it to their "toolbox" of activities.

We then invited participants from the two VHS events to come along to meet with some CLWs. There was much discussion around the challenges of connecting with people who face challenges such as finance and housing, with arts and culture. The group was able to discuss how CLWs, their employing organisations, local practices and the arts and culture groups could work together to bring arts and culture to the people we work with in ways that suits them. This has been extremely helpful. CLWs have highlighted specific barriers and offered practical solutions to the individual organisations and the CLWs are able to describe and explain what local arts initiatives (in their very broadest sense) can offer.

### CLW HOUSING NETWORKING EVENT by Flora Ranachan

Earlier this year, the CLW network hosted an event focussed on housing issues and homelessness. Increasingly, CLWs tells us that housing is a common presenting issue for many of the people that we are working with. Housing is a foundational issue that affects many aspects of physical and mental health, and often clients tell us they need to prioritise resolving housing issues in order to allow them to address other health issues. In recognition of this, the Network held this event in partnership with key members of the City of Edinburgh Council Housing Team.

The event was well attended with just under 40 attendees. We were very pleased to welcome Karen Allen, HART Manager, who kindly delivered a presentation for us covering topics such as the role of a housing officer, and the various housing criteria that Edindex uses. Karen presented various figures displaying the huge differences between the available stock and current demand, which is one of the primary challenges faced by those working within housing. We also heard from Julie, Carol and Gillian from the CLW network, who presented an overview of the CLW role, explaining how housing issues affect our clients.

Feedback from attendees was very positive, with some housing team members mentioning it was particularly helpful in gaining a better understanding of the CLW role, and it was good to make connect with CLWs in each locality.

It was strongly agreed that it would be helpful to continue this conversation and continue building a relationship for the benefit of our mutual clients. Suggestions going forwarded included having a 'key contact' per locality for CLWs which would ensure continuity for both workers and patients. Having joint meetings with local CLWs and Housing Teams was also discussed, with all parties keen to progress this.

### SOCIAL VALUE by Helena Richards

Following the successful social value pilot evaluation of the Community Link Worker service at Southfield Medical Practice between October 2020 and May 2021, it was agreed that the remaining four Craigmillar practices should also be evaluated using broadly the same methodology. This was undertaken between October and December 2021 with 647 patients contacted and around 1700 texts sent. Here are some key findings across all four practices.

It has been encouraging to see that patients have largely benefitted from the input from their Community Link Worker (CLW):

- **90%** of patients felt that being referred was right for them and helped them
- **84%** of patients felt that the CLW had got it right when referring them on to these specific destinations
- **79%** of patients said the organisation they were referred to was what they were expecting
- **36%** of patients were referred on elsewhere by that organisation
- **29%** started attending another group or volunteering at the organisation they were referred on to
- Patients rated the CLW referral process as **7.5** on a scale of 1 to 10

### CONCLUSION

Those who responded to the questionnaires at their practices found the referring on process to be largely constructive and helpful. They benefited from contact with the CLW and from the organisations they were referred to and felt that it was right for them. We received some extremely positive and insightful comments which demonstrated the value patients attached to the service they'd received.