



# SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PILOT 2020-22

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES

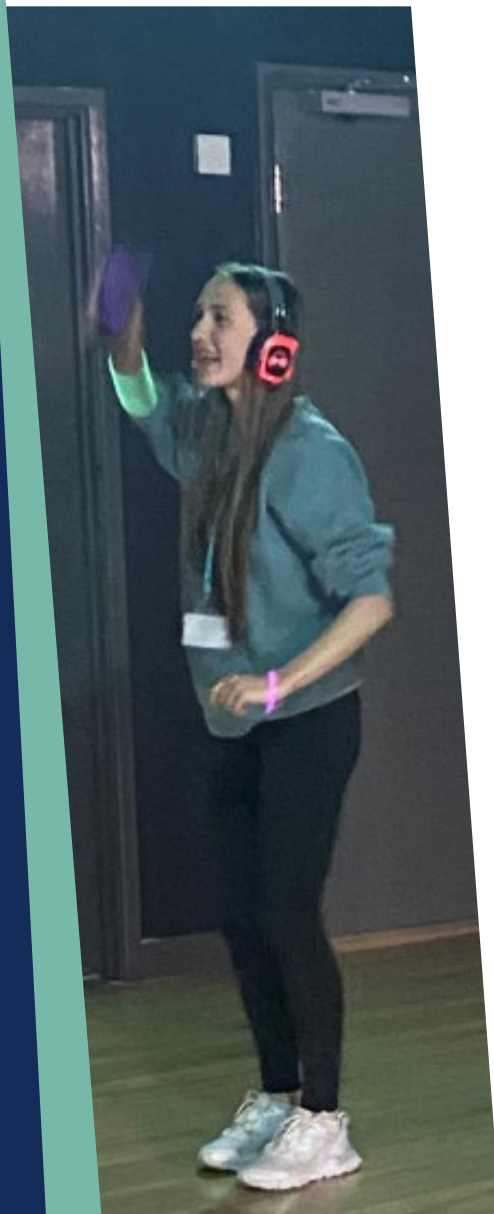
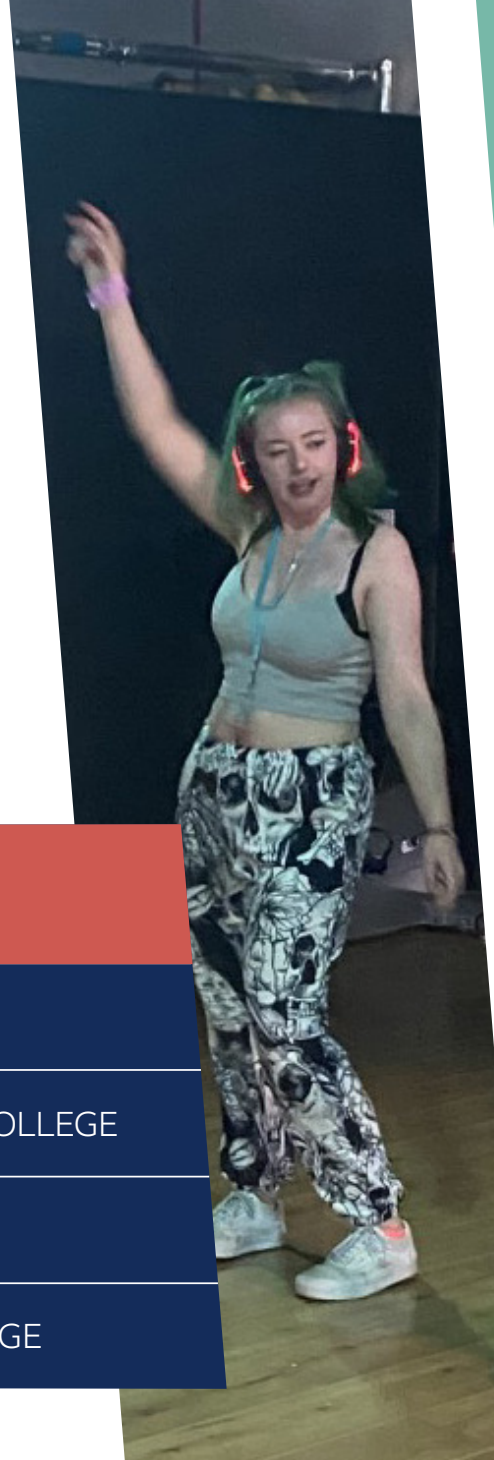




# INTRODUCTION

In early 2020 StreetGames was awarded funding from the Association of Colleges to test and learn from the development of youth social prescribing models in several colleges across Greater Manchester.

This report details the impact of the social prescribing in colleges project, which has seen in excess of 390 students from across Greater Manchester benefit from the creation of a sustainable social prescribing offer in their college. The project had two phases: in phase one of the project, four colleges were recruited, and in phase two this doubled to eight colleges.



## PHASE ONE

BOLTON COLLEGE

THE MANCHESTER COLLEGE

XAVIERIAN COLLEGE

WINSTANLEY COLLEGE

## PHASE TWO

SALFORD COLLEGE, WORSLEY CAMPUS

OLDHAM 6TH FORM COLLEGE

TAMESIDE COLLEGE

HOPWOOD HALL COLLEGE

# SETTING THE SCENE

## HEALTH INEQUALITIES IN GREATER MANCHESTER

Greater Manchester often tops the tables in terms of health inequalities, having **185 of the 282 Lower Super Output areas (LSOAs) in the 10% most deprived nationally.**

**A further third of LSOAs are in the top 10% most income deprived areas nationally and 35.6% of our children aged less than 16 years are living in poverty.**

Living with the day-to-day stresses of poverty, especially in early childhood, can have damaging consequences for long term health and life chances.

The Manchester Child and Adolescent Mental Health and Wellbeing Transformation Plan suggests that...

**79.4% of children with a mental health issue may not be getting timely support**

Nationally it is recognised that in communities with the highest levels of health inequality, young people may be up to **three times more at risk of experiencing poor mental health** than their more affluent peers.

Across Greater Manchester...

**JUST 1 IN 3 YOUNG PEOPLE (34%)**

**are reaching the recommended levels of physical activity set by the Government's Chief Medical Officer of at least one hour per day.**

This falls to 27% of girls, 27% of Asian pupils, and 18% of Chinese pupils. GM #BeeWell survey

The Children's Society currently estimate there are now

**5 MILLION CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY IN THE UK**

which as a result has a significant effect on their health and mental wellbeing.



## WHAT IS SOCIAL PRESCRIBING?

Youth Social Prescribing is the means by which young people can find their way into local, wellbeing-boosting initiatives, with the help of a link worker, community activator, youth leader or education professional.

It supports young people to discover new opportunities, create new connections and build on their strengths to steer young people towards improved health and wellbeing. These connections could be to an advice or counselling service, sociable sports, or a creative or other community-based activity including volunteering or literacy initiatives. Whatever it takes to give them a strong foundation, positive wellbeing, enhanced life skills and reliable relationships.

Traditionally used to help adults and older adults find non-medical ways of combating loneliness and stress, social prescribing has huge potential for young people too. Youth social prescribing is delivering fantastic results for young people all over the UK.

As pressures on the health service increase, and the impact of the pandemic continues to take a toll on the mental and physical wellbeing of too many children and young people, alternative pathways for young people with complex needs are more important than ever. Despite its impact and effectiveness, the use of social prescribing to support children and young people is still in its infancy and we believe this project developing such an offer in a college setting is the first of its kind.

## WHY STREETGAMES AND AOC?

StreetGames is one of the nation's leading 'sport for development' charities, changing lives and transforming communities through the power of sport. The work that we do helps to make disadvantaged young people and their communities healthier, safer, and more successful. In the last decade we've worked with over half a million young people to develop an active lifestyle.

Over the last five years we've enabled 75,000 young people to attend major events and residential sports camps and trained an additional 25,000 to become coaches and activators in their own community. We believe in the power of sport to transform lives and to broaden ambitions.

In 2017 StreetGames successfully applied to the Department of Health and Social Care for funding to test and learn about the potential impact that social prescribing could have for children and young people. We then successfully delivered a research programme that enabled us, with our academic partners at the University of East London, to publish the first [academic paper](#) on this topic. We also created a raft of [accessible tools and resources](#) to support others who may be setting up their own social prescribing projects for children and young people.

It was through this work that the AoC then approached StreetGames to support and lead on the social prescribing in colleges programme. We are grateful for the opportunity to not only have contributed to the embedding of social prescribing for children and young people across Greater Manchester, but to have been able to continue to grow our knowledge and understanding of this new approach.

StreetGames' support for colleges in the pilot focused on the following key areas:

**Creating a community of practice for the 8 colleges in the pilot**

**Providing 1:1 support via specialist social prescribing field workers**

**Providing funded training opportunities and resources for college staff**

**Supporting colleges with monitoring and evaluation as needed**





## ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PILOT

In both phases one and two of the pilot there were two stages of implementation. Firstly there was a focus on training and development of colleges' staff to build knowledge and capacity, this was also a way to ensure the sustainability of the programme after the pilot project finished. The core training module was the "Introduction to Social Prescribing for Children and Young People", to ensure there was a consistent understanding of the principles behind social prescribing, its use and the potential benefits to the health and wellbeing of students.

There was also a further training offer consisting of a menu of options including Youth Mental Health First Aid, Engaging Young People, 5 Ways to Wellbeing and How to Deliver Fun-Sports and Activities. This offer was aimed at building staff's confidence and skills in "prescribing" activities for students and also to support staff to understand when it may be helpful and appropriate in the college setting to 'prescribe' and at what point when necessary to refer on to additional help and support.

Launched in the summer of 2021, the pilot was set up in response to the growing need for youth social prescribing, culminating in an offer to students to access activities which could positively impact their physical, social and mental wellbeing. Each college in the pilot delivered a free health and wellbeing programme internally, within the college, as well as exploring and engaging with local external (community based) providers.

The social prescribing pilot programme was deliberately not prescriptive in the model of delivery that should be used. This meant that colleges were able to respond to their local needs and develop bespoke provision for their young people in line with what students wanted to see delivered. For example Winstanley College (Wigan) appointed a dedicated link worker who took up referrals from colleagues in the college and Bolton College rebranded all their "enrichment" activities into one clear offer, rebranded and promoted as "Enrich You".

A

BOLTON COLLEGE

**Student A agreed with the Counsellor and Student Liaison to attend “Colour and Chill” (Mindful colouring and conversation with other students) and “The Hangout”; an online social space with games, quizzes and chat with other learners.**

**For the first four sessions, the learner joined the online space ten minutes before the activity to re-connect with the Student Liaison and for security checks, as she needed to show herself on camera. The learner and Student Liaison stayed online briefly following the activity to review progress and agree goals for the next session.**

#### **SESSION 1**

The learner distanced themselves from the sessions, with their camera and microphone off. They chatted only with the Student Liaison, by typing in the chat box.

#### **SESSION 2**

The learner typed to other learners, using the chat box. The Student Liaison, keenly aware of the learner’s needs, highlighted to the group that the messages were there and encouraged the group to interact.

#### **SESSION 3**

The learner began by typing in the chat. The Student Liaison encouraged the learner to speak, if she felt she wanted to. The learner switched on her microphone and, after a long time, she began to engage minimally in conversation. She continued to seek reassurance from the Student Liaison via typed chat.

#### **SESSION 4**

The learner engaged in spoken conversation from the outset. She surprised everybody by switching her camera on, appearing half-in and half-out of shot now and again. She interacted with the Student Liaison verbally.

#### **SESSION 5**

The learner arrived a few minutes later than usual, appeared on camera more often throughout the session, engaged with other learners and began to develop conversations and relationships. She engaged less with the Student Liaison.

At this point, lockdown ended and the learner returned to College. She was seen around College smiling and interacting with other learners. She visited the Student Liaison Office to celebrate her progress and to express an interest in volunteering and fundraising, post Covid restrictions.

The learner clearly demonstrated and acknowledged progress through the activities, and the College Counsellor reported the following:

***“The benefits of the two enrichment activities were even greater due to the lockdown situation, which created isolation for the learner from her classes and social aspect to college. These two activities not only gave access to contact with other learners but also enhanced the learner’s practical knowledge of using zoom and importantly, increased her confidence to speak within the groups and to put her camera on to participate fully.*”**

***The learner often states that she wishes she knew how to have fun and to make jokes ‘like other young people’. Having access to these more social activities has provided more of a fun environment for her. The progress she has demonstrated will see greater interest and participation from her.*”**

The learner subsequently progressed to volunteer in the Atom Shop, in the College Reception and in a charity shop.

# B

*A student on The Prince's Trust programme was quite shy and anxious, they found it difficult to establish friendships and maintain relationships. After being approached to join the social prescribing programme they were unsure of whether to attend and how they would feel.*

**After a number of conversations and building trust they were supported to ensure they knew what was happening during the session and how long is lasted for. They came with a trusted friend to make sure they felt more comfortable and fully supported. They attended the silent disco, then came back for another session after finding they really enjoyed it. They built confidence and started to attend the henna session and have regularly been taking part in other weekly sessions in the wellbeing room.**

They have now established a small friendship group with people who are on their course and on other courses.

They are actively taking part in other sessions in college and eager to do more socially.

They are looking forward to the future and have fewer mental health issues.

They have grown in confidence and this has lead them to apply for a part time job.



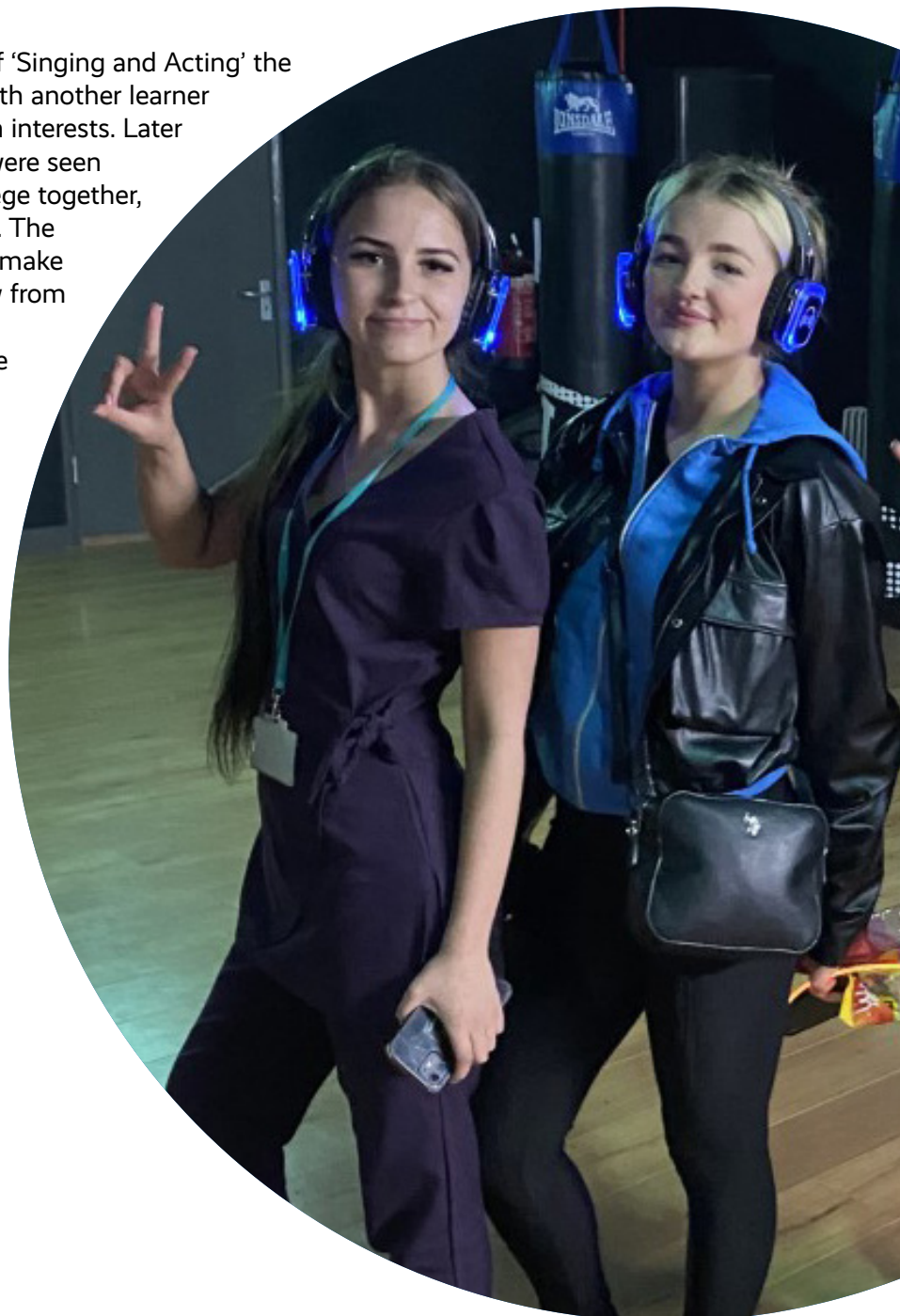


C

*This Care Experienced learner presented with anxiety and depression, as she struggled to connect with others and make friends. The learner was referred to a Mental Health and Wellbeing Mentor who then referred her to Counselling.*

**The learner agreed with the Counsellor and Student Liaison to attend 'Singing and Acting' and to become a College Champion for Care Experienced learners, so she could connect with and help others in her situation.**

At the first session of 'Singing and Acting' the learner connected with another learner who shared common interests. Later the same day, they were seen walking around College together, talking and laughing. The learner continued to make friends and withdrew from counselling early, as she no longer felt she needed that support. The learner is now working with her Mental Health and Wellbeing Mentor to start a group for Care Experienced learners in the College. The first meeting is in January.





# SOCIAL PRESCRIBING 2020 TO 2022 STATS

The figures below relate to the delivery of Social Prescribing within the colleges and have been accumulated from data submitted by the college's quarterly reports and through an online survey that was completed by 6 of the 8 pilot sites in May 2022.

**8** COLLEGES DELIVERED SOCIAL PRESCRIBING ACROSS **12 DELIVERY SITES**

**34**

DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES DELIVERED ACROSS A 5 DAY WEEK

**390+**

YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED

ON AVERAGE THE COLLEGES DELIVERED

**4-10**

WEEK BLOCKS OF ACTIVITIES



CROSS DEPARTMENT COLLEGE STAFF SUPPORTED THE DELIVERY OF THE PROJECT

**480**

APPROX NUMBER OF SOCIAL PRESCRIBING HOURS DELIVERED

**27**

TRAINING COURSES WERE AVAILABLE TO STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

**135**

STAFF TRAINED ACROSS A RANGE OF TOPICS

**100%** OF COLLEGES DELIVERED FACE-TO-FACE SESSIONS

**60%** OF COLLEGES

ENGAGED TERM TIME ONLY INCORPORATING DELIVERY INTO THE COLLEGE ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME

**75%** OF COLLEGES

MADE CONNECTIONS WITH VCSE

**75%** OF COLLEGES

MADE CONNECTIONS WITH LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH TEAMS

**25%**

OF COLLEGES ENGAGED WITH LOCAL LINK WORKERS

**18**

STUDENTS WERE REFERRED INTO EXTERNAL SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROGRAMMES

TOP 5 ACTIVITIES

- 1 SILENT DISCO
- 2 'TIME TO TALK'
- 3 BOXERCISE
- 4 ZUMBA
- 5 POTTERY

# YOUNG PEOPLE QUOTES



**“Krafty Korner is such a brilliant way of winding down. I study hard subjects and lots of homework to do. I can chat and sit with friends and talk about my worries and problems whilst knitting a jumper for my mum. Doing something like this really helps to get rid of stress”**

**Xavierian College Student**

**“The silent disco was great, I was nervous at first but once we got into it I found myself singing along to the music”**

**Worsley College Student**

**“I have never been to a silent disco, I would do that every week if I could”**

**Worsley College Student**

**“The group is a safe and calm place to express yourself without being judged. It is amazing to talk about your concerns and worries”**

**Hopwood Hall Student**

**“It has really helped my confidence and keeps up my fitness”**

**Tameside Student**

**“Going to the groups is very helpful as they have helped me improve my confidence and make new friends. The worker is a very kind person and easy to talk to and she tries her best to help in any way that she can so thank you. Face your fears. If you're gay, bi or pan it's okay”**

**Hopwood Hall Student**



## COLLEGE STAFF QUOTES

**“Links with the wider community & projects which we would not have known about or had the resources to research has been positive. These activities provide a different opportunity for students that they would never have tried alone”**

**Hopwood Hall Tutor**

**“Through cross team identification, it was recognised that a whole College approach was required to highlight and develop personnel’s understanding of the term of ‘Social Prescribing’”**

**Bolton College Tutor**

**“It has enhanced our enrichment offer and put a real focus on the wellbeing aspect of physical activity”**

**Tameside College Tutor**

**“Support for the ever increasing levels of anxiety, including over the GCSE exam period both in the exams and prior with morning mindfulness have proved very supportive and beneficial for students”**

**Hopwood Hall Tutor**

**“We saw improvements in confidence, anxiety and behaviour across our students”**

**Tameside College Tutor**

**“By providing a safe space and doing something artistic, many of the students really reap the benefits of being a member of this group. We create a relaxing atmosphere and students, who are mostly very shy, come out of their shell and can unwind and relax in a comfortable, secure place”**

**Xavierian College Tutor**

**“Students are connecting with people that they wouldn’t normally have come into contact with. They have learnt new skills and had a chance to try something different”**

**Worsley Hall Tutor**

**“We have been able to establish a range of college societies under the umbrella of Social Prescribing. This has been particularly successful with the LGBTQ+ Society and creating a culture of inclusivity and belonging. Students in this society have commented that they feel ‘seen’ in a way that they weren’t at high school”**

**Hopwood Hall Tutor**

**“The project was an opportunity for Bolton College to redevelop our enrichment offer and brand to improve accessibility for both learners and staff”**

**Bolton College Tutor**





## TRAINING

An important part of ensuring delivery was of the highest quality and to develop the long-term sustainability of social prescribing in the colleges, was to capacity build through the staff teams who were directly delivering social prescribing by giving them access to appropriate training opportunities, delivered by the StreetGames Training Academy. The following courses were made available to the staff:

Introduction to Youth Social Prescribing

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health Conversations during Covid 19

Inclusion in Sport and Youth practice

5 Ways to Wellbeing Webinar

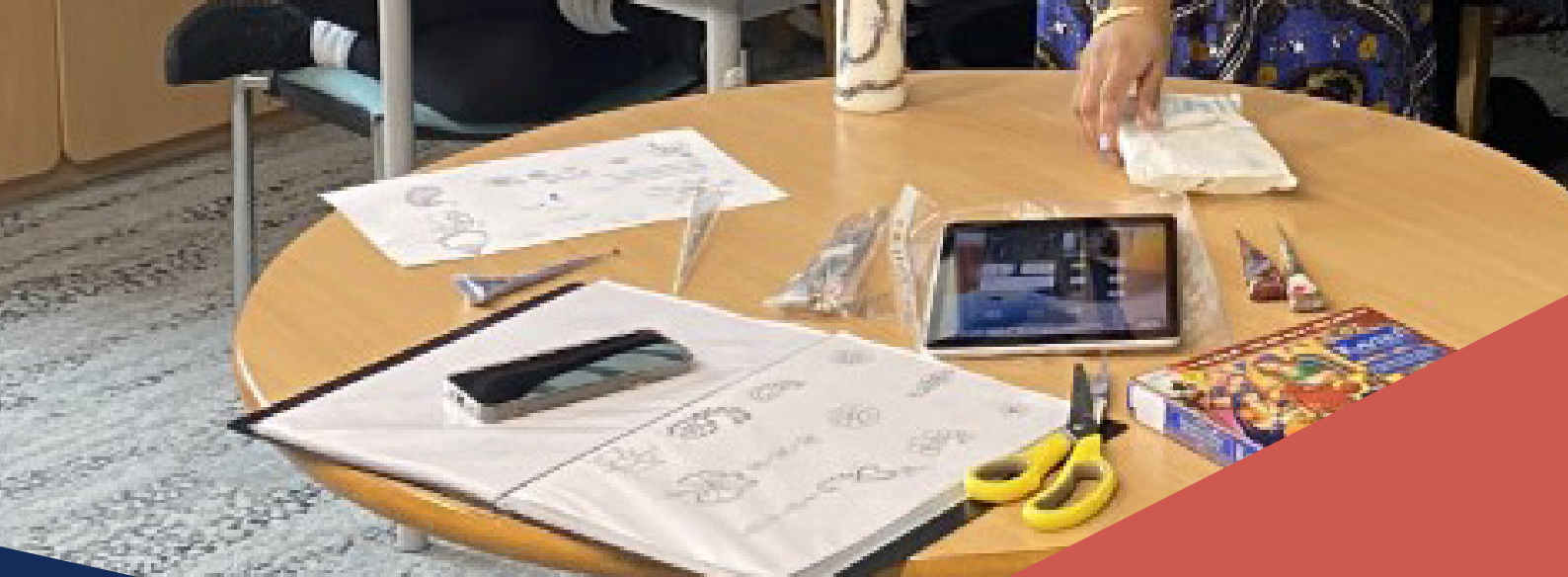
Engaging Inactive Young People

Getting Young People Active during and beyond Covid-19

The colleges also delivered in house training opportunities to build confidence and knowledge of staff and volunteers to ensure best practice was in place.

Our national Social Prescribing Youth Network also shared additional resources to help upskill staff and volunteers involved in a Social Prescribing programme.





## KEY LEARNING AND REFLECTIVE THINKING FEEDBACK

- 1 Start small and gradually grow your social prescribing programme.
- 2 It is a huge benefit if a thriving college enrichment programme is in place to support the social prescribing opportunities.
- 3 Use the opportunity to put a real focus on the wellbeing aspect of physical and creative enrichment activities.
- 4 Ensure 'Youth Voice' is embedded into the planning and delivery of your programme.
- 5 Understanding student needs takes time but will provide a platform for growth built on initial referrals and triage with counselling team.
- 6 Accept some students will not want to be part of a social prescribing programme.
- 7 Build relationships to foster trust and respect to help explore what would make a difference to the college experience and health and wellbeing of the students. Relationships take time to build but are key to this both with staff (pastoral and support team) but primarily the students.
- 8 Give time to reflect on current practice and be prepared to make regular changes.
- 9 Talk to others who are doing things well, share best practice.
- 10 Build a team of social prescribers across the college to establish key contacts who can support the programme.
- 11 Encourage staff to really engage and refer students to activities otherwise they don't see the connection.
- 12 Don't work in isolation, make links with wider VCSE, mental health teams and local opportunities to enhance the college offer.
- 13 Recruit a dedicated social prescribing Link Worker to support students. This has proved to be invaluable when in place.
- 14 Build contacts with any local Link Workers, this is vital for networking and establishing community links.



## LEGACY

During the time that this project ran, StreetGames were able to develop relationships and partnerships within Greater Manchester. The AoC funded pilot gave the opportunity to show the potential impact of Social Prescribing, within the Combined Authority this was recognised and acted upon.

A Children and Young People's Social Prescribing Lead was appointed in 2021 and has been able to drive this work forwards ensuring that this innovative work will continue to grow and embed within and across Greater Manchester.

With new partners including Petrus and Curious Minds on board to keep strong links to the voluntary and community sector, we are excited for the future of this work beyond our involvement and would like to recognise the contributions of all partners to the success of this work.

**Curious  
Minds**

**Petrus**

**GMCA** GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
COMBINED  
AUTHORITY





## CONTACT US

Find out more via our website and social media channels:

[www.streetgames.org](http://www.streetgames.org)



StreetGames Sports Charity



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[SPYN@streetgames.org](mailto:SPYN@streetgames.org)