

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

ACTIVE LUTON CASE STUDY



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BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Active Luton is one of four pilot sites delivering youth social prescribing since October 2018. The programme was funded by the Department of Health & Social Care, coordinated by StreetGames, and evaluated by Dr Marcello Bertotti at the University of East London. A Link Worker employed by Active Luton receives referrals from a range of sources (see below) and mainly supports children and young people to access physical activity and emotional health support sessions. Active Luton also run a Social Prescribing scheme for adults.

MAIN TARGET GROUP

Children and young people aged 11 to 18 (mean-15) with high level of anxiety and/or loneliness.

REFERRAL SOURCES/ROUTES

Referral routes include GP surgeries, social services, youth offending service and schools. Data show that most referrals are from CAMHS (40%) and friends/family (35%). The latter is mainly through the adult SP programme which through conversation and support identifies wider support required for the family unit.

HOW REFERRED

Range of referral systems including prescription pads, electronic referral forms, dedicated phone line and website. All referrers use a single referral form, sent by email to a central secure 'Active Luton' nhs.net address where it is triaged and sent to the correct Link Worker or alternative service. A dial-up service is also in development.

RATE OF REFERRAL

Total number of people seen by LW: 96 (Oct 2018- Dec 2019). Total number of people successfully referred to VCSE by LW: 72 (rate of referral from LW is 75%).

MAIN REASONS FOR REFERRAL

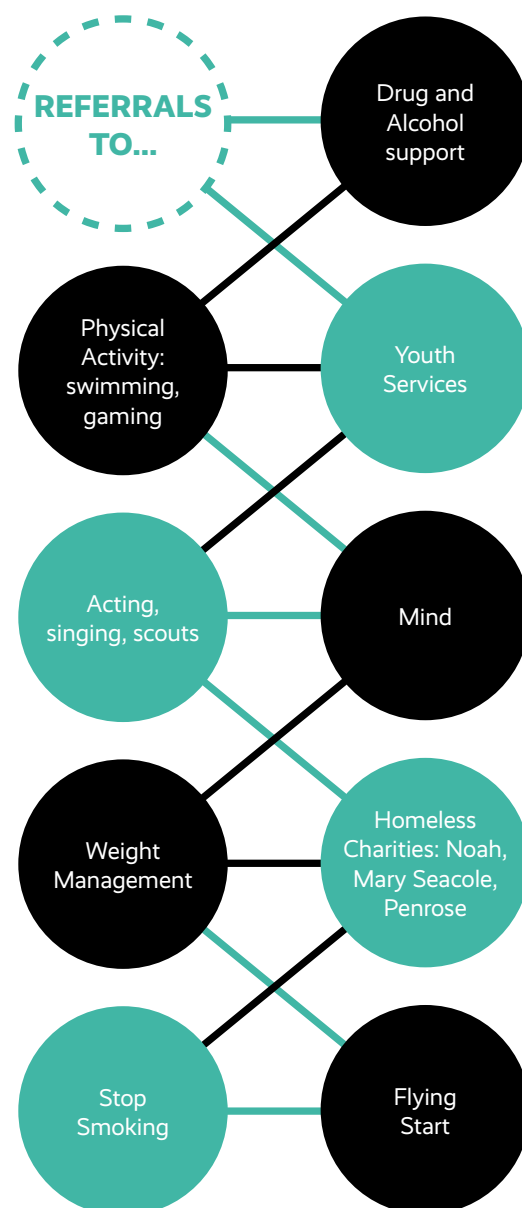
Physical activity, emotional health and lifestyle changes are all equally important reasons for referral in Luton (26.5% each).

ROLE OF LINK WORKER

LWs provides home outreach to participant, travels to secondary school, carries out face to face consultations with participant alone and/or with parent/responsible adult. Through Motivational Interviewing and behaviour change techniques (COM-B) engages, motivates and empowers the participant how to make some changes to lifestyle, access to support including ongoing support and funding.

DETAILS OF SESSIONS

Holistic in nature; sessions between LW and participant vary in number, duration and frequency, following following a person centred approach, although sessions last typically 40 minutes. The participants are entitled to 12 weeks of support and funded access to local services. LW gives people a quiz and starts conversation by looking at participant's own interests. Contacts between LW and participants also takes place by text.



EVALUATION

Key findings from one focus group with five Children and Young People (CYP) from Luton

ADVANTAGES/STRENGTHS

- CAMHS work is focused on 'coping' with your problem rather than 'distractions' to your problem. I thought it would be like CAHMS, them telling you what to do.
- Focussed on searching out activities in the community.
- CYP can text LW (flexibility).
- CYP can talk to LW; helpful and pro-active; 'actions follow discussion'; first appointment you can talk freely and off-point.

DISADVANTAGES/CHALLENGES

- Lack of written information eg leaflet available to participants so participants had limited knowledge of what to expect from the SP service.
- Location – consideration should be given to where sessions are run. No more than 30 minutes' walk from CYP home address would be ideal.
- It is not clear how many appointments each CYP has had with LW (timeframe is not clear). However, note that all apart from one of respondents to the focus group had only had one session (focussed around sport activities).

IDEAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- CYP reported that the service needs to be promoted on social media. The two most popular platforms would be Instagram and Snap Chat.
- CYP mentioned that distance may be an issue: transport subsidies may be considered as a way forward.
- Continuity with one person because of trust and opening up: CYP said they would be fully open up by the 5th appointment but in one case this was the 2nd appointment.

Key findings from other events (e.g. knowledge learning exchange event, reports from sites) from Luton

ADVANTAGES/STRENGTHS

- Flexibility in meeting locations i.e. going to meet young people in places convenient to them.
- Feedback from CYP positive: attending mainly physical activity classes with benefits in terms of growing confidence supporting CYP in the 3 most deprived areas of Luton.

DISADVANTAGES/CHALLENGES

- School engagement: there have not been as many referrals from schools as originally anticipated so we have refocussed on other agencies to set up referral pathways. Strategies to engage schools have not been very successful despite good interest during the planning and mobilisation phase.
- Inappropriate referrals: It has taken some time to reach universal understanding of inclusion criteria in order to prevent inappropriate referrals.
- Capacity and specific funding: need for further funding as current capacity is an issue including specifically capacity of link workers, and transport.

IDEAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

- Family scheme: as Active Luton also delivers an adult scheme, some young people were referred through the adult scheme. There is therefore the potential to develop a family scheme.
- Addressing transport costs: the scheme has now a free bus pass due to a partnership between Active Luton and Arriva, the local transport company. This shows that Active Luton is in continuous contact with service users and responding to their needs (see young people's view above).
- Training for young people: We have created links with our in-house training team to train and upskill young people with NPLQ, L2 Activity Leadership, First Aid and L2 Gym qualifications to help support them to become economically active. Active Luton has also provided training for link workers and youth workers.

