

Sent via email

To:

- **STP Personalised Care Leads**
- **PCN Social Prescribing Leads**
- **Personalised Care SRO's**
- **STP Personalised Care Clinical Leads**
- **PCN Clinical Directors**

NHS England & Improvement
Wellington House,
133-135 Waterloo Road,
London, SE1 8UG

1st May 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Subject: Social Prescribing Response to COVID-19 – Update

COVID-19 has heralded fundamental changes for the NHS and social care, with an increased focus upon the role of social prescribing. The LCAG on the 30th April reviewed the role of Social Prescribing Link Workers and the changing nature of their work supporting and coordinating the local response to COVID-19.

Following national guidance and the need for social distancing SPLWs' roles have changed such that:

- SPLWs have been encouraged to contact their clients by telephone and/or video-consultation rather than face to face
- SPLW client lists have increased significantly. SPLWs are engaging with their current list as well as proactively contacting vulnerable/ shielded groups
- Due to the proactive approach, there is increased engagement from GP practices with social prescribing.
- In some areas SPLWs are assisting with the local coordination of volunteering support for those with less complex needs

An initial review of Social Prescribing in London highlights the following emerging themes

- Move towards greater digitization of services / leveraging digital resources and ways of working
- Clinical supervision and wider support networks for SPLW are important, these are being established but need to be rolled out at pace
- Important to continue with wider training opportunities for SPLW due to complexity of cases now being seen
- Voluntary and community sector must be funded to a level that it can respond to significant increases in need and method of delivery (e.g. more remote working)

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- There is appetite in PCNs for more SPLWs to be recruited though currently there is a lack of capacity to support recruitment

The London Social prescribing Team, working with the GLA, NHSE/I, senior Personalised Care Clinical and STP leads across London, have reviewed Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLW) roles and are continuing to support SPLW in the following ways:

- Messaging out to the PCNs to ensure SPLWs have all necessary equipment and access to primary care systems to deliver their role remotely
- Increased capacity in the region to support webinars and online support for SPLW
- Online training has been mapped, further capacity commissioned, and working with regional partners (e.g. Thrive LDN) to increase support for Link Workers.
- Working with LondonPlus and the GLA to map provision of VCSE support and needs
- Offer of regional recruitment to support increased numbers of SPLW

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Kind Regards,



Dr Jagan John

London Personalised Care Lead