The impact of Social Prescribing on General Practice use
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What is Social Prescribing?

- Social Prescribing is a mechanism for linking people with non-medical sources of support within their community to improve physical, emotional and mental well-being.
• 4 partner practice
• Servicing an area including areas of significant deprivation
• Social Prescribing since 2016
Why did we start Social Prescribing?

• Many patients seemed to be attending very frequently, what were we missing?
In Jan-Jun 2017, 19% of patients accounted for 50% of consultations
Why did we start Social Prescribing?

• Many consultations involved social issues and the stress and anxiety associated with them, e.g. isolation, unemployment, housing issues, addiction issues
Social determinants of Health — 40% of our health outcomes are determined by socio-economic factors.

Source: Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1991
Why did we start Social Prescribing?

• We did not know how to help
Brenda Nolan, Social Prescriber

• Spent 3 months researching links in the area, 350 resources now identified
• Bespoke software
• One to one assessment
• Follow up visits/phone calls as required
• Case is deemed closed when patient has successfully linked in with the community resource
• >300 patients helped since 2016
The consultation

- Patient’s narrative guides us
- We have more answers now
- Protecting empathy
Counting Social Prescribing Activity

- >300 patients helped to date
- >350 resources identified
- 3 days on average to first review
- Cases remain open for 6 months
Social Prescriber activity by type

- Admin/paperwork: 12% (260 tasks)
- Face-to-face with patients: 18% (392 tasks)
- Phonecalls with patients: 70% (1,490)

Social Prescriber Activity
Number of referrals to Social Prescribing per month to date

Total 306, average per month 9

Social Prescriber Activity
What else can we learn?

- Who avails of Social Prescribing?
- What services do they need?
Consultation rates

- Those who availed of Social Prescribing were attending almost twice as frequently as their peers in 2016.
Age

- They were young, mainly between 18-44
Medication

- Those who availed of Social Prescribing were much more likely to be in receipt of mental health linked prescriptions.
Resources – by name

- The Swan Family Support Centre (121)
- St. Dominics Community Response Project (83)
- The Village Counselling Service (95)
- Lets Get Talking - Walkinstown (57)
- Threshold: Route 24 (41)
- Tallaght Mens Shed (36)
- Threshold Training Network/Route 24 Education and Wellbeing Centre (33)
- South Dublin County Council housing (31)
- MOJO Mens Shed (26)
- Focus Ireland Tallaght (18)
- Dublin 12 Domestic Violence Service (17)
- An Cosan (16)
- Daughters of Charity child & Family service (15)
- Barnardos Child & Family Centre (15)
- The Samaritans Helpline (13)
- Community Alcohol Services - Client (formally Glenabbey) (13)
- The Swan Centre treatments (13)
- Bethany Bereavement Support- Aylesbury/Old Bawn (13)
- Hobby Hub @Tallaght Library (12)
IMPACT

Social Prescribing cases in 2017/2018:

• 35% reduction in consultation rates

• Reduction of almost 1000 GP consultations over 2 years
Themes from the cases...

- Opportunities for greater connectedness
- Support to help deal with sadness, grief, anxiety
- Tools to help manage addiction
- Helping hand in navigating bureaucracy in relation to housing, employment, education
- A sense of purpose...
Reflections

• Highlights the mix of Social Determinants that are unique to the community
• Offers real-world solutions, instead of sometimes relying on medication
• Links people with Social Capital
• Protects doctor empathy, a risk in areas of high social deprivation
• Accessible to those who may benefit the most – challenging the Inverse Care Law
Credits: Dr Mike O’Callaghan, Dr Dylan Creane
Data analytics and visualisation