

Paper 6

Role of HSCPs in developing, implementing and supporting community link working

The Memorandum of Understanding¹ identifies Community Link Workers as one of the six priority areas to be addressed through Primary Care Improvement Plans. It is expected that most HSCPs will work with the third sector to commission link workers given that sectors ability, skills and experience in:

- responding flexibly to individuals and communities needs and demands
- using an asset based approach²
- community development and community networking

Whilst the third sector might deliver community link working it is crucial that HSCPs continue to play a role in providing support for implementation and development.

Edinburgh HSCP has taken a proactive role in supporting the development and roll out of CLW across the city where the service is delivered by seven local third sector organisations. Key features of their approach are identified below:

- Leadership from HSCP senior management team, specifically the Strategic Lead for Primary Care
- Proactively working with Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC), to develop a strategic group to oversee community link working across the city – this group is chaired by EVOC
- Commitment to commission link worker services for the life-time of the Primary Care Improvement Plan to enable the link workers to establish and embed their role within general practice; build relationships with practice staff, local communities and community organisations; and develop a quality service to meet the needs of the practice and patients.
- Funding a specific role to take operational responsibility for link working focussing on governance, integration and effectiveness; developing and

¹ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Health/Services/Primary-Care/GP-Contract/Memorandum-of-Understanding>

² http://www.gcph.co.uk/assets/0000/3433/GCPHCS10forweb_1_.pdf

implementing a Community Link Worker Network across the city; and working with GP practice receptionists to increase their awareness and understanding of social prescribing

- Developing and leading a tripartite agreement between GPs, third sector and the HSCP to ensure effective delivery of the service
- Negotiating and agreeing a Data Sharing Agreement between NHS Lothian Caldicott Guardian, general practices and CLW organisations.
- Actively supporting, co-ordinating and troubleshooting the implementation and delivery of the service
- Ensuring link working is included in the HSCP health inequalities / prevention strategy
- Taking responsibility for getting buy-in and support from clinical leads at both city and locality level
- Taking an active role in the recruitment and selection of CLW to ensure they have the skills, experience and ability to work in primary care and general practice
- Supervising CLW jointly with their third sector employer to ensure appropriate standards of conduct, performance and ethics are achieved (see Paper Five)
- Supporting CLW through the provision of psychological support groups
- Planning and delivering training and induction for CLW in response to their needs and demands, and the needs and demands of the practices and patient groups
- Supporting and developing a CLW Network which brings together all those in clusters and / or localities that deliver a link worker type role in health and social care
- Monitoring and evaluating gaps and pressures in local services, which people are linked in to by CLW, and acting proactively to fill or meet these gaps or pressures.