HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

SUBMISSION FROM CHERYL SMITH, PODIATRY PROFESSIONAL HEAD OF SERVICE, NHS FIFE

THE ROLE OF PODIATRISTS IN SUPPORTING SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

1. NHS Podiatrists routinely recommend physical activity and/or sport activities for patients of all ages including children and young people, adult and frail elderly. Having the ability to prescribe and signpost patients to appropriate support is likely to be more effective than providing advice without having the ability to refer directly. Following referral progress can be discussed as part of the care plan at review appointments.

2. The podiatry service in Fife enables people to directly request assistance and does not require a GP referral. In order to enhance the patient’s journey it is important that podiatrists are able to decide whether social prescribing is appropriate based upon the patient’s goals and physical health and wellbeing. Close liaison with community link workers is of great value in ensuring that patients can be made aware of all relevant opportunities.

3. To effectively provide person centred care the model of service delivery needs to be very different from the usual medical model and staff need ongoing upskilling to support patients to understand the benefits and be motivated to take the lead in improving their health and wellbeing. Much progress has been made to date by AHP professions in adopting more person centred interventions.

4. Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness would need to be undertaken on a multi agency basis with the patient, referrer and provider involved. Progress would need to be monitored over a period of months with review after a year.