HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

SUBMISSION FROM scottishathletics/ jogscotland

1. To what extent does social prescribing for physical activity and sport increase sustained participation in physical activity and sport for health and wellbeing?

Social prescribing to PA & S can link a person to activities based in their local community, where they can be encouraged to achieve their goals, meet new people, feel part of their community and improve their feelings of wellbeing. These social connections, sense of belonging to a group and an activity can all lead to sustained participation of the individual.

In our 2018 members survey carried out by the University of the West of Scotland our participants commented:

“IT has been 'life' affirming at time of loneliness and despair”

“Jogging ‘makes’ me ‘feel’ alive, *energised* and ‘helps’ to ‘raise’ my ‘mood’”

‘I am seeing small but increasing improvements in my overall health and wellbeing. I suffer from depression, anxiety, chronic fatigue and I’m overweight. Jogging is helping me battle this.’

Our group leaders are able to create the right environment where participants feel supported and motivated to continue with their activity with the group but also additional activity outwith group time. Increased motivation had positive impacts on individuals self-esteem, perception of body fat, feelings of vitality, reduced feelings of loneliness and increased their intentions to continue their involvement within the group.

2. Who should decide whether a social prescription for physical activity is the most appropriate intervention, based on what criteria? (e.g. GP, other health professional, direct referral from Community Link Worker, self-referral)

We’re probably not best placed to identify the criteria for a referral. We would however suggest that referrals could be made from any GP, health care professional or Community Link Worker who can assess the individual against the criteria. Self-referral would be more challenging in ensuring that criteria is met.

jogscotland is free to join nationally, however some groups do charge a small fee on a weekly basis. We would be happy to discuss further how referrals can work across our network.

3. What are the barriers to effective social prescribing to sport and physical activity and how are they being overcome?

- Lack of information on groups and activities that are available in the area, lack of physical activity from GPs and other health professionals,
• Lack of education/training in health issues and conditions amongst fitness and sports leaders and how they can best support someone
• Waiting times to access services
• Low confidence, energy levels, motivation of clients
• Enjoyment or interest in the activities on offer locally

4. **How should social prescribing for physical activity and sport initiatives be monitored and evaluated?**

We would suggest the following indicators to monitor and evaluate social prescribing for physical activity and sport.

- Number of referrals and track of where referred from and to
- Change in the individual’s physical activity levels during time in programme
- Change in the individual’s wellbeing during time in programme
- Retention level beyond initial programme
- Tracking of physical activity and wellbeing for 12 months following programme