**Social prescribing and dementia in GM – related readings**

**Overview**

**Content:**

* Gibbons, A., Howarth, M, Lythgoe, A. (2019). Social prescribing in Greater Manchester. University of Salford, report.
* Healthwatch Manchester (2017). Beyond the Diagnosis - Young Onset Dementia and the Patient Experience. Report, November 2017, retrieved from <https://healthwatchtrafford.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Beyond-the-Diagnosis-hw-manchester.pdf>
* Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust (2015). Later Life Mental Health Services – Our Plans to Redesign the Services A consultation on improving mental health services for Older People in the City of Manchester. Retrieved from <https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/sites/manchestercommunitycentral.co.uk/files/LL%20Consultation%20Doc.pdf>
* Dementia United website, <https://dementia-united.org.uk/>
* Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) website, <https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/>
* Volunteer Centre Manchester website, <https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/volunteer-centre-manchester>
* Manchester Community Central (MAC) website, <https://manchestercommunitycentral.org/>
* Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group website, <https://vcseleadershipgm.org.uk/>

**Later Life Mental Health Services and access to dementia-related services in GM**

Later Life Mental Health Services (by Mental Health Trust) have been redesigned recently to be more community based and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions. The objectives are to deliver more equal access to services, increase community-based services, improve access to assessment, diagnosis and aftercare for those with dementia and increase evidence-based therapeutic interventions (Manchester Mental Health and Social Care Trust, 2015). However, it appears this restructuration reduced the number of wellbeing services provided by Later Life Services but dementia-friendly activities and social groups in the community remain few and far between (Healthwatch Manchester, 2017). In consequence, people living with dementia (especially those with young-onset dementia) and their carers do have not enough options to stay active and engaged in the community.

Healthwatch Manchester (2017, p. 4) recommends that “to achieve a truly integrated health and social care system in Manchester, statutory services need to build up stronger links with individual grass-roots organizations. Commissioning bodies need to have a holistic overview to balance the capacity and demand for both NHS services and their associated voluntary sector services”. Among others, Healthwatch Manchester (2017) recommends to 1) providing more innovative referral pathways in the community to memory assessments and other mental health services – it can also reduce the burden on primary care, 2) Dementia Support Advisors should be given enough resources, 3) commissioners need to ensure that there is enough investment in the community to fill the gap left by the redesign of NHS services, and 4) commissioners need to enable GPs to do more social prescribing – people are not sufficiently informed about what dementia support services are available in the community. They also highlight that transport remains a big challenge to social participation, that more black and ethnic minorities sensitive dementia-related support are needed, and that more services and organisations need to publicise themselves by adding their activities on the Alzheimer’s Society’s Dementia Connect database.

Observations from Healthwatch Manchester fit with Dementia United objectives. Dementia United is the Greater Manchester programme for dementia that aims to drastically improve the quality of life of people with dementia or those caring for someone with dementia in the region. Its three main objectives are to provide access to dementia care services for all, to increase independence for those living with dementia, and to ensure an equally high standard of dementia care, no matter where you live (Dementia United, 2021). This action relies on the devolution of powers and budgets from the national government that enable more local decision making in Greater Manchester, which is presumed to lead to greater benefits for people and communities. The Greater Manchester VCSE (Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise) Leadership Group, or GM VCSE Leadership Group, was set up to promote the role and involvement of the VCSE sector and communities in Greater Manchester devolution (GM VCSE Leadership Group website).

**Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise and dementia in GM**

As highlighted by Gibbons, Howarth & Lythgoe (2019, p. 3), “the VCSE sector is well placed to take the lead on early help / prevention models within communities; whilst also excelling in supporting people living with long-term conditions and in helping to improve wider wellbeing and reduce social isolation. Its strength lies in its holistic, asset-based, community-embedded and personalised approaches. Its diversity, flexibility and potential for innovation gives it the ability to meet the needs of people that the statutory sector often find more difficult to support. Their expertise represents an important complement to medical and social provision in supporting people into improved health and wellbeing and building healthier, more connected communities”. In consequence, the VCSE sector is a main source of support for people living with dementia and an essential partner to support their well-being and social involvement.

To promote volunteering, the Volunteer Centre Manchester has been implemented as a part of the Manchester Community Central (Macc) services, an organisation that supports the voluntary community and social enterprise sector in the city of Manchester (Macc, website). The Volunteer Centre Manchester provide information, support and training to Manchester residents who want to volunteer and to organisations that work with or involve volunteers. Rochdale, Tameside and Oldham areas are covered by an organisation called Action Together. Bolton and Salford also have a volunteer centre. Bury, Stockport, Trafford and Wigan benefit from volunteering brokers which offer fundamentally the same thing (workshop 1).

Social prescribing in Greater Manchester has been recently assessed by literature review and survey undertaken by the University of Salford in partnership with Salford CVS (Gibbons et al., 2019).

**Dementia pathway**

**Dementia advisors x GM**

Related info:

The Volunteer Co-ordinators Forum (VCF) is a chance for people who are responsible for involving volunteers in the work of their organisation, whether as their paid job or as a volunteer themselves, to come together. It is a peer support space facilitated by Volunteer Centre Manchester, a space to share ideas and resources that you have found useful and to seek support and advice from other volunteer coordinators in the city.

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday 23 February 2022

Time: 13:30 - 15:00