



## Press Release:

**Bolton Social Prescribing Programme ends.**

**Date of press release: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019.**

**No embargo.**

### **PRESS RELEASE: Community Asset Navigator Programme ends**

Bolton's health and social care leaders have taken the decision not to extend funding for the Community Asset Navigator programme. This voluntary sector led Social Prescribing project will stop accepting referrals on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

The service was funded as part of Bolton's £29m Transformation Fund package from the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership. The programme aimed to better connect Bolton's health and social care workforce to the amazing and diverse voluntary and community sector offer across the borough, and forms part of Bolton's Social Prescribing offer.

The successful programme which has been delivered by a partnership of **6** Bolton based charities has received more than **2,050** referrals over the last 2 years. The team have supported residents from across the borough to access more than **5,700** community services and activities. People who've been supported by the team of **5** Community Asset Navigators have reported an increased sense of connectivity, improved wellbeing and increased physical activity. It has been widely welcomed by GP's, health professionals, mental health services, the voluntary sector and residents.

The skilled team of navigators are trained to focus on the social needs of people who were accessing health and care services. All navigations to activities, groups and support were individually tailored to enhance wellbeing, improve health and reduce loneliness. The team, working in partnership with health and care professionals, supported people to find activities near to their home and at places convenient for them. The emphasis was always on taking the time to have the conversations to identify what people liked to do, what they enjoyed doing and what they had an interest in in order to have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. Often, the additional support of the team is needed because illness or poor health can restrict an individual's ability or confidence to do it alone.

In addition, over £1million in grants has been distributed over the life of the programme to support community groups and charities to provide more activities. The funding has supported everything from befriending sessions for older residents, dancing groups for children, climbing activities and sports such as walking football and new running groups.

Ibrahim Ismail, Chair of the Board of Trustees of Bolton CVS said:

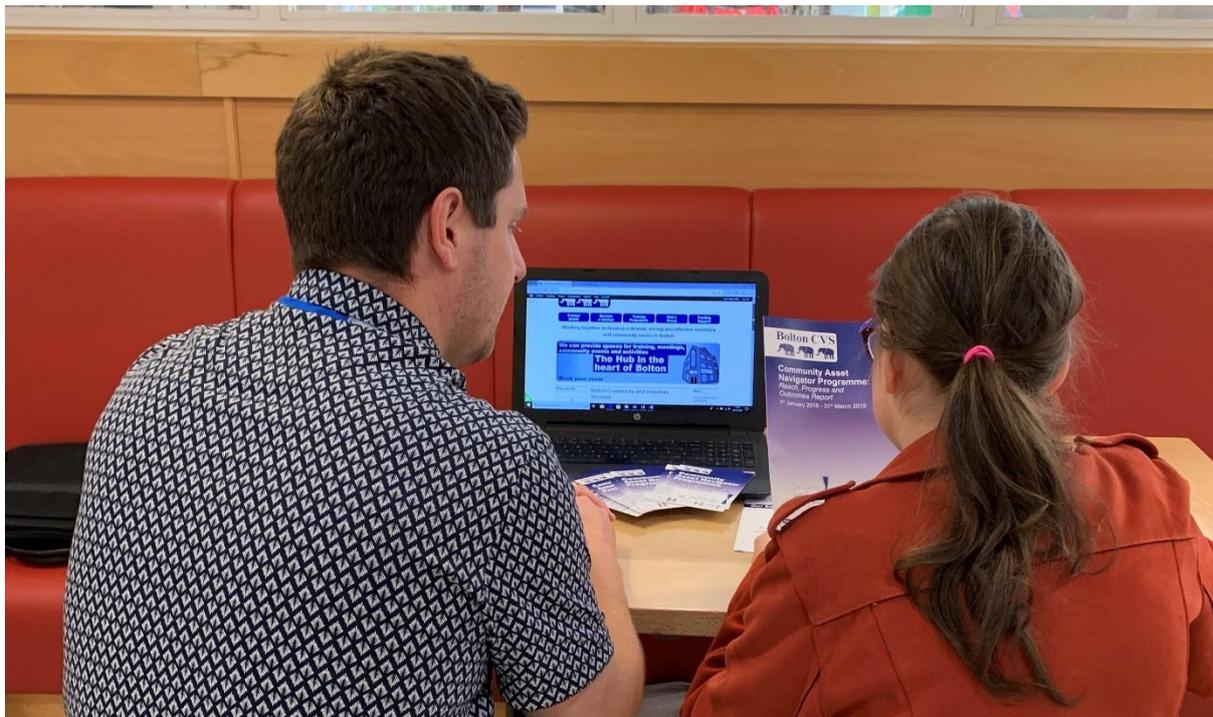
*"It's been an excellent programme highlighting how the voluntary sector, when working together with the public sector, can make a significant and positive difference to people's lives. I'm hopeful, that through the development of Bolton's Voluntary Sector Strategy which Bolton CVS and local charities are developing in partnership with Bolton Council and NHS Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group, that we see more strategic decision making around effective prevention services and voluntary sector funding in the future."*

It is widely recognised across health and care that people can get more benefit from social support and connectivity to other people in communities through social prescribing. Bolton CVS and local health and care organisations are currently looking at options for the long term future social prescribing in Bolton.

It has been agreed by commissioners that until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, 9 Social Prescribing Link Workers from within the health service will be redeployed. This is through NHS England Funding and the staff will be shared across newly formed GP Networks. If you're looking for local social prescribing support in Bolton, you can contact your GP Practice.

You can also continue to find information about local community groups and organisations by visiting the Bolton CVS website (<http://www.boltoncvs.org.uk/find-a-group>) or contacting the team on 01204 546 010.

You can find out more about social prescribing and how it works by watching this video from Greater Manchester's Health and Social Care Partnership:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbDGs\\_osSxM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jbDGs_osSxM).



## Notes to the Editor

Bolton Community and Voluntary Services (CVS) is a Bolton based charity that supports and connects voluntary and community sector groups, organisations and networks to build stronger and more cohesive communities. Bolton CVS also lead a number of voluntary sector partnerships. As a membership body with almost 600 member organisations, Bolton CVS attends a range of local strategic meetings as a champion for voluntary action and communities.

**To discuss this press release:**

**Bolton CVS Contact Details** – give the following information that the media can contact for more information.

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