

Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Monday 29 January 2024

Supportive Communities Programme Overview

Recommendations

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. To review the Supportive Communities Programme to understand how it complements the NHS Social Prescribing function.
- b. To comment and provide feedback on the Supportive Communities model.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of Cabinet Members

Councillor Paul Northcott, Cabinet Support Member for Public Health and Integrated Care

Councillor Julia Jessell, Cabinet Member for Health and Care

Summary

What is the Overview and Scrutiny Committee being asked to do and why?

1. To review, comment and provide feedback on the council's Supportive Communities programme and how it complements NHS Social Prescribing.

Report

Communities Strategy

2. Staffordshire County Council has made significant progress in working with communities. Communities are central to our Strategic Plan 2022-26 and our current approach, as set out in the Communities Position Statement, approved by Cabinet in February 2023. This statement builds on our achievements over the past 8 years, including:

- a. **27 Community Managed Libraries** that are considered national best practice.
 - b. Our **Youth** and **Children's Centre Offers** are being delivered with and by our communities.
 - c. Our **Early help Strategy 2022-27** for children and families is being delivered with partners and communities through a place-based approach.
 - d. **Do It to Make Staffordshire Sustainable** and the **Climate Change Action Fund** are supporting local community-based climate change initiatives.
 - e. The **Supportive Communities** programme is working with partners and community groups to help residents to remain healthy and independent.
 - f. Empowering **Parish and Town Councils** to take the lead on local priorities, including loneliness.
 - g. Supporting the local VCSE sector to thrive through our nationally recognised **VCSE capacity building partnership** with Support Staffordshire and SCVYS.
 - h. **#DoingOurBit** communications campaigns to promote community action and encourage behaviour change.
 - i. Co-ordinating a community led response to the **Covid-19 pandemic** and the **cost of living**, as well as supporting our **Ukrainian guests**.
3. In February 2023, Cabinet agreed 'to engage with partners and communities to develop a long-term, innovative, and ambitious Communities Strategy for Staffordshire.' This will build on success to date and deliver the three priorities set out within the Communities Delivery Plan and Communities Position Statement:
- a. Embedding **community-led prevention and early help** to make sure our residents can access the support they need to be healthy, independent, and live in sustainable communities.
 - b. Promoting **community action and building community capacity**, working with Staffordshire's vibrant voluntary and community groups and helping our residents to get involved in what matters to them.
 - c. Supporting our organisation and others to have a **communities mindset** by challenging our approach to commissioning, exploring opportunities for partnership working, and reviewing our internal policies.
4. A consultation is currently underway to inform the development of the Communities Strategy and the Supportive Communities Programme, launched in 2020, is the key deliverable to help Staffordshire residents remain healthy and independent.

Supportive Communities Programme

5. The Supportive Communities Programme was developed using evidence and good practice as a response to managing health and care demand as outlined below in the vision, priorities, and objectives of the programme.

Vision, Priorities and Objectives for Supportive Communities

Vision: People (in Staffordshire) can live independently with support from families and communities

Priorities:

- Develop tools for promoting independent living (using digital and non-digital means)
- Grow & enhance community capacity for people to help themselves and others
- Help to develop the skills, knowledge & confidence of the wider care & community workforce
- Effective communication & engagement with both communities and the workforce

Objectives

- Increase awareness of and access to voluntary and community assets.
- Increase use of information, products, and tools to promote independence.
- Understand the strengths, capabilities, and wellbeing of our communities.
- Increase engagement, empowerment, and sustainability within the community.

6. This approach complements the local NHS Social Prescribing model that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing.

7. The main difference is that NHS Social Prescribers undertake case management directed by GPs. The Supportive Communities model takes a strengths-based approach and interfaces closely with the Adult Social Care workforce. Many components of the Supportive Communities programme are available to Staffordshire residents and other partners. Social Prescribers utilise the Supportive Communities resources and tools.

8. The main components of the Supportive Communities programme are detailed in the table below:

Supportive Communities Function	Description	Cohort	Website Link
Staffordshire Connects	Online directory of community-based support, groups, organisations and services. Accessed and used by a range of partners, including social prescribers.	Staffordshire Wide	https://www.staffordshireconnects.info/kb5/staffordshire/directory/adult.page?adultchannel=0
Living Independently at Home Resources	Online information, advice, guidance tools and resources to help make daily living easier.	Staffordshire Wide: Older People, people with mobility issues	https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/happyathome
Community Help Points	Community Help Points are physical locations across Staffordshire (such as libraries, voluntary organisations and community centres) where people can find out more about local support offers.	People accessing the Adult Social Care System	https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Advice-support-and-care-for-adults/Community-Help-Points.aspx Contact the Staffordshire Cares team by phone on 0300 111 8010
Entitled To	Free online benefits checker to ensure people are accessing the benefits they are entitled to.	Staffordshire Wide	www.staffordshire.entitledto.co.uk
Supportive Communities Training	A range of free health and wellbeing training sessions that health professionals, community groups and individuals can access. There are also some self-help tools, resources and printable presentations.	Organisations but individuals can access the resources	https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Advice-support-and-care-for-adults/Information-resources/Training-and-activities.aspx
Support Staffordshire (VCSE Infrastructure Partner)	Staffordshire County Council is working with Support Staffordshire to map community assets, build and sustain VCSE capacity, develop volunteering, engage with communities, and represent the VCSE across Staffordshire	Staffordshire	https://supportstaffordshire.org.uk/

Supportive Communities Function	Description	Cohort	Website Link
Community Champions	Working with local people, organisations and businesses the Champions Programme is focused on improving the two-way flow of information and communication into key communities.	Burton, Tamworth, and Newcastle	https://letstalk.staffordshire.gov.uk/hub-page/community-champions

9. Some of the successes of the Supportive Communities programme to date include:

- a. **26 Community Help Points** across Staffordshire have **800** health and care clients e.g., increase social contact, complete forms and help with finances
- b. **1560 people have** accessed Supportive Communities training increasing both knowledge and confidence above 90%.
- c. **over 4650 local community groups and organisations** delivering social action have been identified and registered onto **Staffordshire Connects**
- d. **166** trusted Community Champions disseminate information to targeted communities. This has resulted in improved uptake of vaccines and NHS health checks
- e. More than **350 community groups** have benefited from £500,000 Supportive Communities funding
- f. Between Aug 2022 and July 2023 **Support Staffordshire** have increased capacity by supporting **527** health and care providers and placing **122 volunteers**

10. The Supportive Communities programme has evolved from a Staffordshire County Council programme to become more collaborative and is now driven by a range of partner organisations. In the summer of 2023, the Supportive Communities Board reviewed the programme to assess the approach and align to emerging partner priorities and plans.

11. Stakeholders from across Midlands Partnership University Foundation Trust (MPFT), the Staffordshire Integrated Care Board (ICB), Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire County Council attended a range of workshops and meetings to share their views to inform the 2024 and beyond plan.

12. The overall feedback was positive and acknowledged a strong foundation to develop local Supportive Communities partnerships and networks and there is agreement to work closer together to:

- a. Have responsive and flexible information, advice and guidance resources and tools offer
 - b. Sustainable investment for community capacity building
 - c. Connect the health and care workforce with community and voluntary groups
 - d. A local network of Community Helps Points, Community Champions and volunteer organisations
13. To achieve this, we need to work differently, be more collaborative with communities, partners and the workforce. Moving to a strength-based dialogue will focus on understanding issues and working collaboratively to design solutions. Ongoing engagement and evaluation is key to ensure we focus on the right outcomes to understand we are making the right difference.
14. An example of working more collaboratively is for the council to share Support Community outcomes, priorities and action plans with Primary Care Networks and the Social Prescribing Advisory Group (SPAG).

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