

Portfolio Holder Report

Housing, Health & Well-Being

Introduction and Overview:

At Bromsgrove District Council Portfolio Holders provide an annual update to Council on services within their portfolio remit. These services are delivered in accordance with the Council's Strategic Purposes, as detailed in the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2019 – 2023.

This report provides an outline of services and activities within the remit of this particular Portfolio Holder. Information is included in relation to the Council's Strategic Purposes, relevant key activities, partnership working, projects and programmes and news stories.

A version of this report, focusing on each Portfolio Holder's remit in turn, will be considered at each meeting of Council (except for the Annual Council meeting).

Whilst services will be contributing information into this report it is worth noting that not all sections of the report will be relevant to all service areas. In this circumstance, some sections may not be completed by all services.

The report will be structured as follows:

- 1) Update on Strategic Purposes
- 2) Partnership working
- 3) Key activities and priorities
- 4) Good news stories and awards (if applicable)
- 5) Other

The Council has the following Strategic Purposes and Priorities:

Strategic Purposes	Council Priorities
Run and grow a successful business	Economic development and regeneration
Work and financial independence	Skills for the future
Living independent, active and healthy lives	Improving health & well being
Affordable and sustainable homes	A balanced housing market
Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Reducing crime & disorder
The Green Thread runs through the Council Plan	Internal priorities
	Financial stability
	High quality services
	Sustainability



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1. Update on Strategic Purposes

Relevant Strategic Purpose Title 1: Living Independent, Active, and Healthy Lives

NEW Lifeline

NEW Lifeline supports over 1200 vulnerable residents of Bromsgrove to remain living independently at home. NEW Lifeline Installation team provides equipment that they install into the home of the individual, or body worn devices, to aid the service user to call for assistance in an emergency and/or equipment that monitors their wellbeing and safety without infringing their privacy.

The Monitoring Centre is the heart of the operation, taking calls day and night from service users and their families to support, reassure, and enable; helping with matters (such as doctor appointments, health concerns, anxiety, access to care, housing repairs, equipment faults, and communication to name a few) and responding to emergencies (such as falls, medical emergencies, no response calls, smoke detection, door access, key safe access etc).

The Monitoring Centre team monitor the equipment used by NEW Lifeline Service users 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. The team are a highly trained and multi-skilled. Not only monitoring the Lifeline equipment, but also providing out of office hours telephone answering services for the Council and several other corporate clients, and CCTV monitoring across North Worcestershire.

The NEW Lifeline service is a paid for service, with charges agreed at Council each year. However, we offer a 6 weeks free service, to those who are referred in by a health or care professional, where there is an opportunity to support someone coming out of hospital or indeed going into to hospital.

The Monitoring centre Operation is a shared service between Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils but also provides monitoring services to a number of other organisations, creating a significant revenue for the Council support the Council's priority for Financial Stability.

Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is part of a commitment to personalised care
Personalised care means all people have choice and control over the way their care is planned and delivered, based on 'what matters to me' and individual strengths and diverse needs. This happens within a system that makes the most of the expertise, capacity and potential of people, families, and communities in creating better health access, outcomes, and experiences. Personalised care takes a whole-system approach, integrating services around the person. It is an all-age model, from maternity and childhood through to end of life, encompassing both mental and physical health support. It can contribute to advancing equality and reducing inequalities in access and outcomes for all. Social prescribing can support a wide range of people, including (but not exclusively) people:

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- with one or more long term conditions
- who need support with their mental health
- who are lonely or isolated
- who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.

The service is commissioned by Bromsgrove Primary Care Network which is made up of nine GP surgeries across the Bromsgrove District. The contract between the PCN and Bromsgrove District Council is for five years and two social prescribing link workers are employed to support the nine surgeries.

Social prescribing link workers:

- assess how far a patient's health and wellbeing needs can be met by services and other opportunities available in the community;
- co-produce a simple personalised care and support plan to address the patient's health and wellbeing needs by introducing or reconnecting people to community groups and statutory services;
- evaluate how far the actions in the care and support plan are meeting the individual's health and wellbeing needs;
- provide personalised support to individuals, their families and carers to take control of their health and wellbeing, live independently and improve their health outcomes;
- develop trusting relationships by giving people time and focus on 'what matters to them'; and
- Take a holistic approach, based on the person's priorities, and the wider determinants of health.

The contract commenced in November 2020 however due to the pandemic the service did not start taking referrals until May 2021. Since then, there have been over 350 referrals made to the service. There are three referral pathways – patients can self-refer via the Councils' Monitoring Centre; surgeries can email the Social Prescribers requesting they contact a patient they believe would benefit from the service; agencies can refer using a referral form.

Relevant Strategic Purpose Title 2 - Affordable and sustainable homes

Housing Strategy

As the local housing authority, the Strategic Housing Services Team delivers those services relating to the affordable and sustainable homes priority.

Homelessness: The Council's statutory housing advice and homelessness service is contracted to BDHT to deliver on behalf of the Council. This contracted service is due to be re-tendered this financial year. Homelessness

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presentations remains stable in the district with an average of 250 assessments completed yearly. The main reasons for homelessness approaches remain as friends and family no longer willing to accommodate, end of assured shorthold tenancy and relationship breakdown. The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has placed additional duties on the Council to provide temporary accommodation as 'safe accommodation' for victims of domestic abuse and changed the priority need definition with homelessness legislation. A new post has been implemented through Government funding to provide additional support to those applicants presenting due to domestic abuse.

We continue to receive and manage the Homelessness Prevention Fund from central government which is ringfenced to provide service that:

- Fully embed the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- Reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation by maximising family homelessness prevention.
- Reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and eliminate family B&B placements beyond the statutory six-week limit.

Affordable Housing: The Housing Strategy Team work with developers and Registered Providers to deliver affordable housing in the district. Developer contributions through s.106 agreements provided 68 units of new affordable housing in 21/22 with a further 28 units being provided by Registered Providers through the Affordable Homes Programme. The definition of affordable housing in the National Planning Policy Framework has also been updated to include the requirement for developments to include 'First Homes' a discounted sale product for first time buyers. Officers are working with developers to deliver this new affordable housing product which is required to be a minimum of 25% of the affordable housing requirement on qualifying sites.

Private Sector Housing: The Private Sector Housing Team support both tenants and landlords of private rented accommodation and manage the licensing requirements of houses in multi occupation (HMO) and mobile home park sites. The primary role is to enforce standards of accommodation and management predominately through the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 undertaking Housing Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections. The team also manage the Home Repairs Assistance Grants to assist homeowners to keep their homes in a liveable standard and Disabled Facilities Grants to provide adaptations to properties to assist occupants to remain in their home. The team also play an active role in a controlling migration project working with the Police, Fire Service and Immigration Service focusing on migrant workers and substandard accommodation provision.

Energy Efficiency: The team are responsible to the management of the Sustainable Warmth Programme used to assist occupiers to increase the energy efficiency of their properties using retrofit technologies.

Housing Development: The team are leading the work on the construction of 61 homes being delivered on the Council's former offices at Burcot Lane.

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These energy efficient homes will provide 18 units of affordable housing to be delivered by BDHT and propose to have 37 homes for private rent and 6 homes to purchase on the open market.

Key activities since last report:

NEW Lifeline

Key activities for the Lifeline service have focussed upon resilience, business continuity and nationwide telephone digital upgrade.

Telephony digital upgrade has been spoken about in the Technology Enabled Care Industry for many years. The date by which all telephony infrastructure becomes digital is 2025. In order to meet this deadline the Lifeline team, in collaboration with IT, have upgraded the Monitoring Centre infrastructure to a hybrid call answering platform. This allows existing analogue Lifeline equipment and new digital equipment using the Social Care Alarm Internet Protocol (SCAIP) to activate emergency calls into the monitoring centre. This new system was installed January 2020. We were, as far as we can tell, the first digitally enabled local Authority alarm receiving centre in the country.

Following the installation of the new digital platform a number of improvements have been launched:

- The replacement of old analogue equipment for Digital equipment installed in service user homes has begun. Utilizing the latest mobile technology Lifeline units has enabled us to provide services where people have no landline. The GSM equipment provides a quicker connection to the monitoring centre, clearer speech contact, preventative maintenance opportunities where low batteries are flagged through a reporting system and many other reports that increase efficiency and resilience.
- Operators are able to work from home. This has enabled new levels of resilience within the team, for example when many members of the service had to isolate due to the pandemic, those who were not ill could still work.
- New Business Continuity plans Disaster Recovery centre set up at Parkside. This enables:
 - The latest IT security patches to be applied promptly on release increasing corporate resilience to cyber-attack.
 - Service continuity, should Town Hall Redditch be inaccessible we are able to divert all calls to Parkside and operate a normal service from there.
 - Additional operators to work from this location increasing our call handling capacity.

Other priority activities undertaken were to establish our position as a service supplier to other organisations and we have become a “Technology enabled Care” provider on a national framework. We aim to tender for contracts within this framework to increase revenue. We have renewed the Contract to provide services for Cannock Chase District Council through this avenue.



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Social Prescribing

Key activities for the Social Prescribing service have focussed upon promotion and partnership working. Initially when the service commenced, BDC employed two social prescribers and the PCN commissioned Onside to provide social prescribing as well as some other well-being services. The Social Prescribers for BDC and Onside shared the referrals across the nine surgeries. Since April 2022, the PCN have commissioned BDC to provide the social prescribing service for all nine surgeries.

Strategic Housing

Key activities for the Strategic Housing Team have continued to focus upon the provision of affordable housing, the reduction of homelessness, raising standards in the private rented sector and the retrofit of energy efficient technologies.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones For Next Period

NEW Lifeline

The NEW Lifeline objectives going forwards:

- Grow group customer base and local service users increasing income. We aim to attract at least 1 new group customer through active promotion of digital upgrade. This will further increase financial stability.
- Program of work to replace analogue equipment to increase in scale.
- Robust review of fees and charges to ensure that the service is accessible to all in need.
- Review of Installation Service and staff resilience following increased staff turnover.
- Consider rebranding the service to reflect the recent modernisation of equipment.

Social Prescribing

The Social Prescribing objectives going forward:

1. Measuring impact as follows:
 - Impact on the person – six-month distance travelled and review of assessment and plan and case studies
 - Impact on the community groups – understanding any gaps in provision or over capacity of VCSE sector sessions/services
 - Impact on the health care system – information from GPs and other local health organisations

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2. Ongoing relationship building with the GP surgeries, community groups, and promotion of the service

Strategic Housing

The Strategic Housing Teams objectives going forwards:

- Homelessness reduction including rough sleepers.
- Re-tender of the Housing Advice & Homelessness contract.
- Completion of the Burcot Lane development
- Delivery of other housing development opportunities
- Management of the Homes for Ukraine scheme
- Implementation of First Homes
- Implementation of Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy
- Delivery of the Sustainable Warmth Programme
- Delivery of the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding programme

2. Partnership Working:

The Council works with a range of partner organisations to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the District. The following section details work delivered within the remit of this Portfolio Holder.

Partnership working examples:

NEW Lifeline

NEW Lifeline works with a number of partners to ensure knowledge of our service reaches those in need, taking referrals from the Hospital discharge teams, District Nurses, GP surgeries, Occupational therapists, Social Services, BDHT, Age UK, and other charities.

NEW Lifeline is working with the Falls Response service part of Platform Housing Group. For Service Users that fall but are uninjured we are able to facilitate a pickup from the Falls Response Team. They operate alongside us 24/7, reducing time spent on the floor considerably and decreasing some of the pressure on the ambulance service in Bromsgrove.

Social Prescribing

Social Prescribers work with several partners to ensure knowledge of the service reaches those in need, taking referrals from GP surgeries, Occupational Therapists, Social Services, BDHT, Age UK, Onside and a host of other organisations as well as from patients themselves. The Social Prescriber's role is to signpost patients to appropriate services, so partnership working is crucial.

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Bromsgrove Partnership

Partnership Groups

As the relevant Portfolio Holder, Councillor Shirley Webb is part of the Bromsgrove Partnership, namely Community Wellbeing Theme Group and the Ageing Well Group, as well as the Children and Youth Provider Group (which links to both the Community Wellbeing Theme Group and Community Safety Partnership too).

To improve health and wellbeing and enable residents to live active and healthy lives it is vital for the Council to work in partnership with other local agencies across the public and voluntary sectors in particular. In addition to meeting separately with representatives from other agencies, Councillor Shirley Webb has used the relevant Bromsgrove Partnership groups to create and develop good working relationships with a variety of agencies. It is through building those links with relevant local agencies that delivery opportunities can open up (e.g. opening a dementia meeting centre working with both BDHT and Age UK Herefordshire and Worcestershire).

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

The ABCD approach, which was initially presented by Public Health to the Partnership back in 2020, has progressed, despite the significant impact of covid. Community builders are in place, recruited from the local community. Community builders are supported through a number of mechanisms, including the Bromsgrove and Redditch ABCD Learning Network, facilitated by Public Health which the Portfolio Holder attend. To ensure all understand the concept of ABCD, 1-day workshops are open to all and all are encouraged to attend one.

Health and Wellbeing Board & Health Improvement Group (HIG)

Councillor Shirley Webb is a member of both the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board (on behalf of the Districts Councils in North Worcestershire) and HIG (representing Bromsgrove District Council). This helps ensure a link between District and County level. Councillor Shirley Webb inputted into the recent review of the purpose of the HIG going forward to ensure its effectiveness. This was part of a wider Governance Review of the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board (which HIG sits under). With lots of changes happening within the health arena, it is important that Bromsgrove District Council is represented at these county groups as well as the District Partnership Groups.

Strategic Housing

All elements of the Strategic Housing Service work with many partners in the delivery of its services. The reduction of homelessness requires the team to work with both statutory partners and partners from the voluntary and community sector for example through the Rough Sleeper Outreach Service

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and the provision emergency accommodation for Housing First and No Second Night Out.

Key activities since last report:

NEW Lifeline

NEW Lifeline has increased the promotion and circulation of the 6 weeks free offer. Where provision of the Lifeline Service may prevent someone from going into hospital or where we can facilitate someone coming out of hospital, we will provide the service free of charge for 6 weeks. In this case most referrals are received from Health and Care Professionals but we are open to referrals, that meet this criteria, from all partner organisations. Many of the service users opt to retain the service once the 6 weeks are over.

NEW Lifeline is now supporting the Bromsgrove Social Prescribing team by taking all self-referral calls. The Lifeline team, available to take calls 24/7, talk to the caller relaying the Social Prescribing services available and pass their details through to the SP Team.

NEW Lifeline are working in partnership with The Community Housing Group based in Wyre Forest, on a Pilot Technology enabled Care project. All people who are eligible for a domiciliary care package are given a telecare assessment to determine what equipment could support their independence. We are then installing the advised equipment, which is often complex.

NEW Lifeline is promoted on the Worcestershire [Here2Help](#) directory

Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing Grant Funds – we are currently undertaking a piece of work to influence the rest of the spend, by contacting small local community groups and asking them if they need any support with funding to enhance what they already offer.

The partnership between Onside (who have well-being contracts with the PCN) and BDC well-being teams continues to grow and develop with internal referral systems to ensure seamless services for patients. They are meeting regularly as a whole wellbeing team.

Clinical Supervision is provided by the PCN Clinical Leads to the Social Prescribers, and they are forging good relationships and understanding the needs of patients.

Attendance at a variety of partnership events including the Support Bromsgrove Outreach drop ins in a variety of locations across Bromsgrove, the Age UK Roadshows, and the Early Help in your Community Event at How College. These events enabled us to reach people we may not have usually come across and offered a great opportunity to network with other agencies and spread awareness about the service.



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Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones and Priorities For Next Period

. NEW Lifeline

The NEW Lifeline partnership objectives going forwards:

- Promotion of the service locally through partnership working and increased social media presence to increase referrals.
- Business Continuity planning is a serious element of service delivery for the Lifeline service to be safe and protective of service users. We shall be looking to team up with a new reciprocal partner who can call handle on our behalf for a short period of time should we need to evacuate the Town Hall. We currently share this arrangement with The Community Housing Group but would like to move forwards with an organization using the same platform as NEW Lifeline.

Social Prescribing

The Social Prescribing partnership objectives going forward:

- Ongoing promotion of the service locally through partnership working and increased social media presence to increase referrals.
- To continue to build strong local relationships with VCSE sector organisations and community groups.

Bromsgrove Partnership

- Working with BDHT and Age UK H&W, opening a Dementia Meeting Centre
- Supporting the partnership work between BDHT and St Basils at the Pod to ensure the café facilities were re-opened recently
- Support the work of the Children and Youth Provider Group such as support and activities during school holidays that the group has co-ordinated
- Continuing to engage and join meetings of partnership groups
- Joining the newly established Bromsgrove and Redditch ABCD Learning Network and supporting the Community Builders hosted by the voluntary sector
- Providing input into the County Health and Wellbeing Governance Review and representing the Bromsgrove District and North Worcestershire Districts on the HIG and Health and Wellbeing Board, respectively.

Strategic Housing

The Strategic Housing Team partnership objectives going forwards will be to continue to build and create new opportunities for the service provision it delivers especially in the reduction of homelessness.



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3. Good News Stories and Awards (if applicable)

NEW Lifeline Quality Standards Framework – Audit Compliant

NEW Lifeline are externally audited every year to ensure compliance to the Industry Best Practice. In October 2021, the audit was conducted and the team found to be meeting all requirements, with no areas for improvement required.

Social Prescribing



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Press Release

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Social Prescribing service celebrates one year of helping residents

This month Bromsgrove District Council and ONSIDE are marking one year since a successful wellbeing service was launched in the district.

The partners are celebrating almost twelve months since the opening of Bromsgrove Social Prescribing Service in line with national Social Prescribing Day which takes place on March 10.

In Bromsgrove, four link workers have helped **193** people to get back to some form of normality after the pressures, restrictions, and challenges of the past two years.

The service, which is run in partnership with ONSIDE, connects residents with Social Prescribing Link Workers through a self-referral process. The link worker then provides them with a face-to-face conversation during which they can learn about activities in their communities and design their own personalised solutions to life struggles.

Research suggests that 1 in 5 people go to their GP with non-medical issues which can be helped through schemes like Social Prescribing instead. Research also states that within 3 to 4 years, Social Prescribing schemes have reduced the pressures on GP appointments by up to 40%.

Here's what some of the Social Prescribing clients think about the service:

"I'm so grateful...it's nice to be able to talk to someone and get some perspective."

"Honestly, I can't thank you enough for your time, patience and advice. I have never felt pressured but feel I've made great progress."

"Social prescribing has pointed me in the right direction, rather than me floundering around not knowing what to do and what is available. I have all the information I need when I am ready to use it."

"You have helped me enormously over these past few weeks, knowing someone will listen to me without judgement. I know you'll call and that's like my routine if I am feeling down."

A 'social prescription' is provided so that people with social, emotional, or practical needs are empowered to find solutions which will improve their health and wellbeing, often using services provided by the voluntary and community sector.



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Social Link Worker, Antonia Whitlock, said: “We are all really proud of what has been achieved over the past twelve months, but the real success is the people who have come through the service and turned their lives around.

“It’s been a terrible, anxiety filled, couple of years so helping people to reconnect with their community and feel more confident about the future has been extremely rewarding for us and really beneficial to our clients.

“We are here to help guide people back to happier life in the wake of the pandemic, so if you’re struggling and want help to develop a 1-2-1 plan of action for your future, please just give us a call.”

The service had a soft launch in March 2021 before officially opening on May 13 in line with Mental Health Awareness Week.

Social Prescribing is an innovative and growing movement, with the potential to reduce the financial burden on the NHS and particularly on primary care.

ONSIDE is a local charity working across Worcestershire and Herefordshire, providing a wide range of support services to ensure fairness and equality for all members of the community who may be vulnerable, disadvantaged or discriminated against.

For more about Social Prescribing Day on March 10, check out the council’s social media feeds or go to <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/social-prescribing-day-2022/>

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Risk

NEW Lifeline from the Telephony Infrastructure Upgrade

National changes to the telephony network, upgrading it from analogue to digital are having a big impact on the service. The call handling platform has been upgraded and we are set for the equipment out in the district to also be upgraded to the latest tech. However, our service users being older, vulnerable people, do not understand the need for the upgrade or the benefits. The current digital equipment prices are considerably more than analogue, and as Lifeline is not a free service the increase in cost is passed to the service user. (The cost difference is largely due to the requirement of an ongoing SIM card subscription required by the digital units.) Therefore, uptake of the new equipment is much slower. Other organisations locally, are not pushing the digital agenda so appear to offer a similar service for much less.

BDC Current weekly costs for a standard alarm and pendant are £4.45 for analogue service and £5.50 for digital.

By 2026 it should be noted that all phone lines will cease to exist as we know them today and all telephone calls will be over digital networks. The phone handset may look the same but the network you don't see is starting to look very different.

Social Prescribing

When services are commissioned, there is always a risk the contract will end early due to lack of funding or underperformance. The risk is managed by quarterly contract meetings with the PCN where we can discuss any concerns, they may have regarding KPI's, outcomes and service delivery.

Strategic Housing

- The proposed implementation of 'Right to Buy' for housing association tenants may result in reduction of affordable housing.
- Move on accommodation for Homes for Ukraine guests will impact on the availability on private rented properties for the prevention of homelessness duties and possible increased numbers requesting homelessness services.
- Asylum Dispersal Policy may also affect the availability of private rented properties in the District dependant on numbers required

Opportunity

Social Prescribing

Due to the positive feedback from the PCN there is an opportunity to consider expanding the social prescribing service – we continue to have discussions about this and if referrals continue to increase and we can measure positive impact there may be the opportunity to employ more social prescribers.

4. Other (including risks, opportunities, issues not raised elsewhere).