

GOING LOCAL

Happy is Healthy

Going Local - the story so far

November 2016 to July 2018

Introduction

Ask yourself two questions:

What are you worried about and what do you want to change in your life?



It can be hard to answer these questions. It can be even harder to put those answers into practice. This is what Going Local does: it helps people understand their problems and find a way forward.

There are two full-time Community Referrers on the Going Local team working out of six GP surgeries in Adur and Worthing. They use a technique called 'Motivational Interviewing' to build rapport and identify priorities with people who are referred to them by the GPs.

Then, using detailed local knowledge that the whole team is constantly building on, our Community Referrers connect people to the right places to get the right help.

This includes using a brilliant App we have developed which helps the team find local resources and connecting to them, often literally as they are sat with the person they are helping.

“We want people to come away from their time with Going Local with a clear idea where help is available in their local area. If people have this knowledge, they have a stronger, more sustainable support network. Going Local is the short-term route to a network that helps a person sustain changes in the long-term.” says Tom, a Community Referrer on the Going Local Team.

You'll also notice we use the word 'person', rather than 'client' or 'service-user'. This is important to us because we think about people in the round person, and don't define them by the services they wish to access or the problem they wish to solve.

Welcome to the story so far- this report has been prepared to provide an update on this exciting new initiative in Adur and Worthing and to show the difference it's making to local residents.

Let's start at the very beginning

Going Local is a social prescribing project funded by four organisations: Adur and Worthing Councils, West Sussex County Council and Coastal West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group. It started as a two-year pilot and Autumn 2016. We're thrilled to report that a further two years have been committed by all parties- taking us into 2020.

Going Local is in six GP surgeries in Adur and Worthing, these are:

- Victoria Road, Worthing
- Worthing Medical Group- Heene Road and Shelley Road
- Limetree Surgery, Worthing
- Manor Practice, Southwick
- Harbour View, Shoreham
- Northbourne, Shoreham

Social prescribing isn't new, in fact it's been around a long, long time. It's a non-clinical approach to helping people - the dispensing of 'social medicine' rather than a long term prescription of tablets.



For example, Mrs Smith sees her GP for depression and sleepless nights, she is referred to Going Local to unpick the root cause of the problem (a recent bereavement, money worries and fear of losing her home) whilst the GP helps with the traditional prescription in the interim.

The aim is that helping to solve the social problems will mean taking tablets for less time, visiting her GP less for this particular issue and being more resilient in the future should a similar situation arise in the future.

How does it work?

Simply, GPs and their staff have access to an App and they click a few buttons to refer into Going Local. On the other side, we receive a notification and then make contact with the person within a week. We aim to physically see them within 2-3 weeks and have up to six hour-long sessions with them. Occasionally it's more and sometimes it's less. The sessions can also be over a long period of time- perhaps after a person has tried a particular group or course, and just wants to check in with us.



Why did Going Local start?

Looking at the more strategic elements, Going Local is a solution to several health challenges that we're all too aware of 1) changes in the public's health needs 2) changing and stretched levels of funding for health services and 3) 'failure demand' ("demand caused by a failure to do something or do something right for the customer" Professor John Seddon, 1992).

Parallel to this, the huge challenge faced by the NHS of treating long-term health conditions. The NHS spends 70% of its budget on this, so better prevention and self-care is vital.

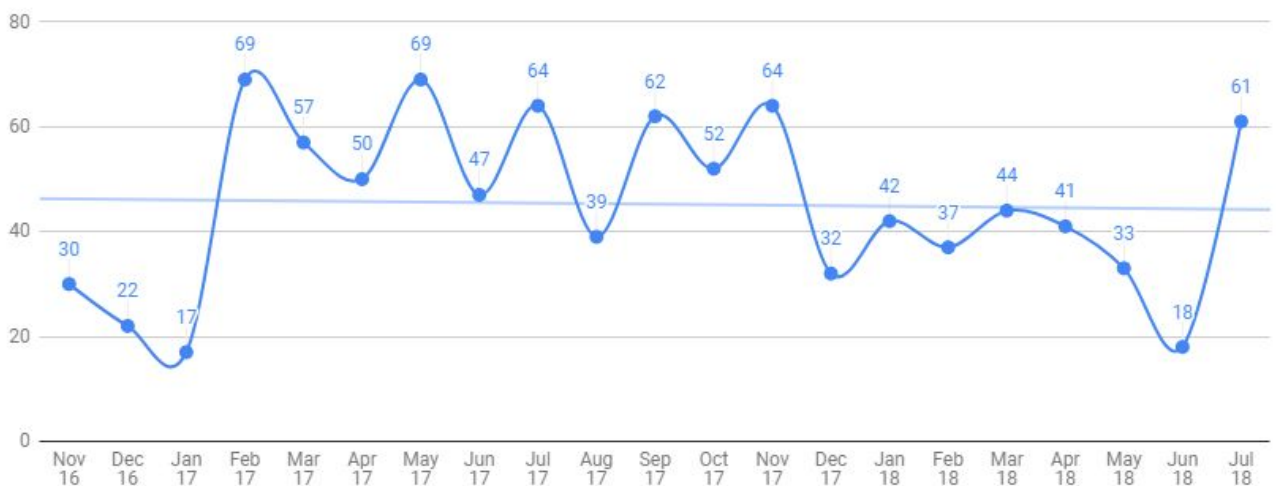
Each of the four Going Local funders bring lots of experience, expertise and knowledge from their respective organisations to the project. It also helps break down the barriers of “our” or “your” problem, instead, working together for the common good.

There are two full-time paid members of staff on Going Local, called Community Referrers, and we are hosted by the Communities and Wellbeing Team at Adur and Worthing Councils and managed by the Communities and Third Sector Lead. Being part of the Council has many advantages, such as lots of shared learning across front-line staff but sometimes it also works as a positive that the service has its own brand and identity.

The scores on the doors

Since November 2016, **969** people referred by GPs to Going Local through six GP surgeries.

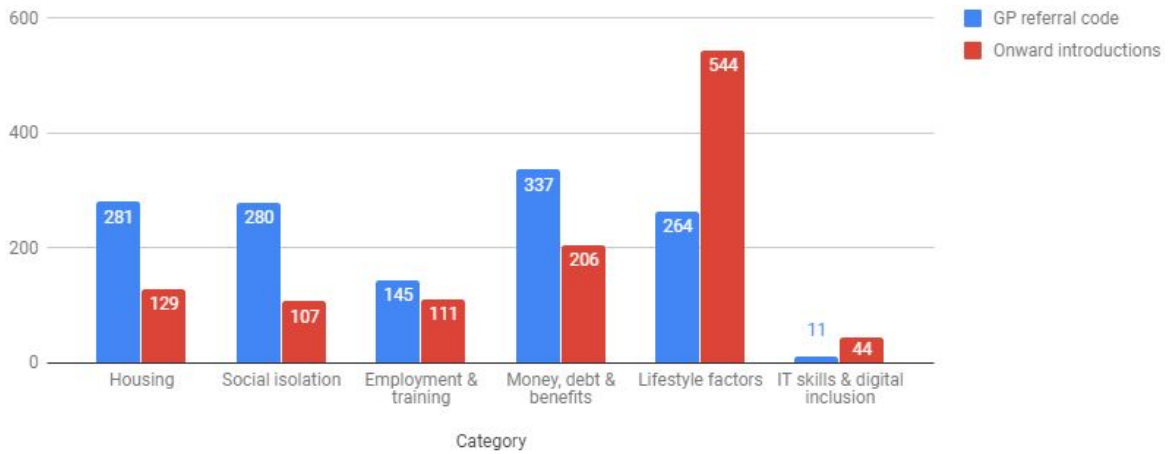
Number of monthly referrals to Going Local



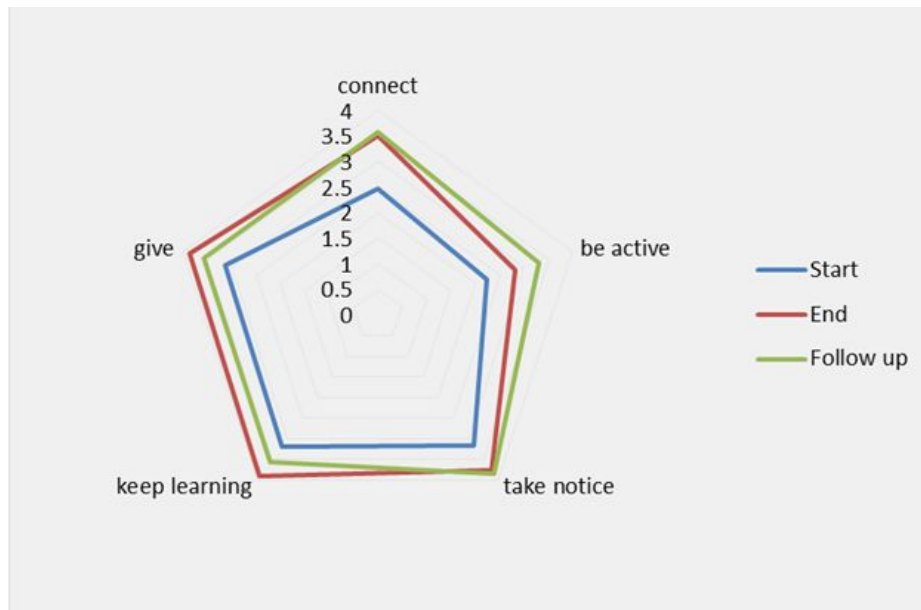
Referrals are roughly 60% female and 40% male.

GPs can choose up to six reasons for the referral to Going Local. The team then categorise the online referral they make to further organisations. You'll see that quite often the referral reason can be quite different and also that some of the challenges can be resolved during the sessions by unpicking the woes with motivational interviewing:

Initial GP referral code and Community Referrer onward referral category



In the initial meeting with a person, they complete a ‘Wellbeing Star’. This tool asks people to rate their feelings out of five in five different areas. To date, we have noticed that the scores are increasing, demonstrating a increase in people’s health and wellbeing:



To date, **1,141** referrals have been made to services ranging from The Conservation Volunteers to befriending activities, IT support and weight-management groups.

The most referred to services are the Citizens Advice, The Corner House, Adur and Worthing Wellbeing Hubs and Guildcare.

Going Local is being evaluated by West Sussex's Evaluation and Evidence team and the results so far indicate that the impact is good for people and good for GPs. People are less likely to miss appointments, and because their non-medical needs are being looked after by Going Local, they and their doctor have more time to focus on their physical health needs. This also means doctors are less likely to be running late, making everyone happy!

We are helping hundreds of people get help, quickly and easily. We take away barriers to finding help, and do all we can to get people through the door of the service they want to access. With a GP taking a minute of their time to let us know a person needs help, we have a chance to make a difference that can change a person's life.

Don't just listen to us

The real proof in the pudding is what people who have used Going Local say; many report that they feel supported, encouraged and enabled to make improvements in their lives. For example,

"More progress has happened in the last 3 weeks than in the last 3 years"

"The meetings were beneficial in the sense of spurring me on to get out doing things, being more creative and active and interact more with people."

And from a GPs:

"Many of the problems patients present to us have a social cause or trigger. Previously, I have felt ill equipped to help. Now I can refer patients to someone who can spend time looking at these factors and can signpost them or give them the help they need. This service is invaluable and makes a huge difference to patients. Without this focus on the social context we are not able to give the patient the holistic approach they need."

"In today's stressful society, the Going Local initiative is absolutely an essential part of the Primary Care Team. It provides an invaluable service to those patients that need that extra support to work through difficult life situations, leaving the clinicians to manage their medical care. The team are all friendly, knowledgeable and grounded and need to always be part of the overall team working in General Practice."

What else we've learnt



We are keen to learn what people who use the service can teach us. We noticed that housing was a very difficult issue for lots of people, so we created a new service called 'Wellbeing Housing Advice Team'.

Now, people who come to Going Local with a housing issue can be seeing by a specialist, employed by Citizens Advice and working closely with Worthing Churches Homeless Projects, quickly. They get the best advice on their housing issue whilst the Community Referrer can help the person with the other things they want help with.

Going back to prevention, we also make sure we ask every single person about their housing and listen out for triggers (such as someone losing their job) as we know how fundamental secure housing is to health and wellbeing.

We also learned that lots of people needed help from the Citizens Advice, so we arranged with them for a quicker route to refer people. Now, people can quickly get help, usually within a few days. We try to avoid people re-telling their story too many times, so the referral process is tight to ensure the background is shared, making most use of everyone's time.

We also continue to notice that there is not common practice across doctors' surgeries regarding GP charges or filling out forms. Coincidentally, Citizens Advice are focusing some policy work on this. We also hope that we can make change by closely working with our colleagues in the Councils' Housing Team to unpick this. More to follow on this at a later date.

We feed back our work to a monthly Steering Group meeting, made up of representatives from the CCG, GP surgeries, West Sussex County Council and Adur and Worthing Councils, as well as Community Works and a lay-person representative. This lets us hear many different perspectives on the work we do, and helps us become a better and better service. The lay-person is invaluable for asking great questions, reminding us of the basics and not to talk in acronyms!

What's next?

It is an exciting time for the project with 2 further years funding currently enabling the service to operate until late 2020. In this time we will help thousands of local people get help and make changes that can last a lifetime, whilst allowing GPs to do their job better. We also know there are other surgeries that would love to have Going Local so the list of surgeries could soon increase.

We love what we do and if you'd like to find out more or come shadow some of our work, please do get in touch:

communityreferrals@adur-worthing.gov.uk

Appendix two - Case-studies from the Community Referrers:

“**Person A** was referred following concerns around her mental health and abuse of substances. We identified her priorities - her physical health worsened three years ago, resulting in the loss of her employment. The subsequent financial worries (and bereavements) had led to a relapse into substance use. We worked together and unpicked her financial worries - and were then able to set up more intensive support around mental health via The Corner House. Once this was happening Person A felt strong enough to start looking at her substance use. After completing the ‘Intuitive Recovery programme’ she felt empowered to make more changes.

Now, 8 months have passed and she has undertaken courses through the Corner House and plans to get involved in some voluntary work. Person A is feeling a lot happier, healthier and in-control.”

“For **Person B**, the referral was ‘for a 70+ year old women with chronic back pain needing help’. I identified her worries as chronic pain, managing diabetes and achieving weight loss.

She had previously struggled to find activities that were affordable and mentally stimulating. The Wellbeing Hubs and The Get Active Programme acted as the ideal foundation for Person B to start thinking about making lasting lifestyle changes.

She was soon able to start reducing from her pain medication. Between us we then suggested that she try the Intuitive Recovery Programme - a week long course to try and alter how the brain perceives things that we might be addicted too. This transpired to be “one of the most insightful things CF had done” and led onto the “biggest improvement with pain and weight for 35 years”.

Person B’s GP reports that she has made substantial progress in regards to health - as she is no longer reliant on medication and is not needing to make as many appointments. To maintain this we are now looking at getting access to an affordable long term gym programme.”

“I met **Person C** at the surgery in June 2017. He felt very isolated, with great difficulty engaging with various educational, recreational and vocational situations and services. He told me about an interest in computers, but said he didn’t have one. I told him about the IT Junction- he was interested but not confident to go. I arranged to go with him on his first visit to help overcome this. After this, **Person C** attended these sessions twice a week, and was even staying behind to help with tidying up- this was a gentle way to reduce isolation and offer, via the IT Junction, a comfortable gateway into more opportunities.”