

## Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group

# WIRRAL PARTNERS IN BETTER CARE – COMMUNITY CONNECTOR ROLE



Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Wirral Department of Adult Social Services (DASS) were awarded funding by Health Education North West to deliver a project to reduce unplanned hospital admissions. The project aimed to deliver this by linking to an existing initiative, namely the development and implementation of a Risk Stratification Tool and use best practice as outlined in the 'Partners in Better Care' document which was jointly developed by the Royal College of GP's and the College of Social Work. Along with other costs, the project funded two Community Connector posts (social workers on secondment) to work alongside GPs to support people to use existing community assets, thus avoiding unplanned admissions to hospital.

The Community Connectors worked within five general practices across Wirral to identify people with multiple long-term conditions who manage and live with their symptoms well, but who are still at risk of unplanned admissions to hospital. Health risks may arise from social isolation, being a carer for someone with similar conditions, or from struggling to tackle the causes or circumstances which exacerbate their condition (for example, housing, debt or relationship problems). The social worker skill is ideal to support such patients and could make a unique contribution to the improvement of people's lives. However, many of these people's needs would not meet the current social care eligibility for services so would not have been seen by DASS. The project also sought to examine the practical working relationships between Social Workers in the Department of Adult Social Services and GPs in Wirral. The document, Partners in Better Care, recognises the importance of the relationship between GP's and Social Workers in improving outcomes for patients.

## Positive Outcomes

- Learning from the Care Connector role will assist with future planning for skills mixes within wider integrated teams
- Improved working relationships established between GP practices and the voluntary and faith sector
- Derived learning which is transferable to other integrated teams
- Case study evidence of positive outcomes for patients
- Community Action Wirral was able to use the experiences of the social workers to develop the content and functionality of Wirral Well + to ensure that it meets the needs of social work professionals.
- We used a novel tool, the Relational Proximity® Framework, to generate foundational insight about the professional relationships involved and to evaluate the impact of the Community Connectors on frontline collaborative relationships.
- Practices are now fully enabled to use the Risk Stratification Model via secure Web Portal to target cohorts of patients that may require intervention and potentially avoid hospital admission.

