

# Integrated PLUS

## Connecting and supporting people for wellbeing and a sense of purpose

Integrated Plus is a social prescribing support service delivered by Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (Dudley CVS) and funded by Dudley Integrated Health Care as part of Dudley's integrated care model. The service:

- Provides holistic non-clinical support to patients aged 16 and over
- Supports patients to become less reliant on medical services (eg avoidable GP consultations, A&E attendances and hospital admissions)
- Encourages and supports patients to get connected into wellbeing services and activities often delivered by the voluntary sector
- Aims to improve quality of life and help patients find a sense of purpose in their lives



The service takes referrals from GP surgeries in Dudley borough and at the ICT Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings. Our top 3 referring surgeries for this quarter were:  
**Keelinge House, Wordsley Green and Lapal Medical Practice.**

**Our referral form can be found on EMIS. If you need help or have any queries please get in touch at**  
**[integrated.plus@nhs.net](mailto:integrated.plus@nhs.net) or 01384 573381**

## Integrated Plus Drop-in A Real Lifeline....

"For me it is hard to get myself up and out, and I start the day feeling very depressed. But I love it here, so I make myself get up and out, and it makes me feel a hundred times better. I love the crafts, they are therapy for me. I love the people. Everyone has problems but they're all coming out to do something positive. the group is so supportive and understanding of each other. No-one judges anyone and everyone is open and honest. You don't have to do anything or talk, unless you want to. Talking helps us and so does the crafting. Life would be much more lonely and depressing without my coming here. It's a lifeline for me I'm so grateful to come here. Thank you all for allowing me."

*Integrated Plus client*

## Goodbye to A Wonderful Manager.....

Keeley began her journey with Integrated Plus 6 years ago, starting out as a Link Worker before taking up the post as Integrated Plus Manager in 2019. Keeley's passion for social prescribing and the enormous benefits that it brings have been the driving force and passion behind Integrated Plus for the last 4 years. Keeley has moved on to a new post at DCVS as Senior Development Officer for Children, Young People and Families. We wish her every success in her new role and she will be sadly missed from our Social Prescribing family.



## Hope for Humankind - A Case Study....

B (64) was always a fit and hard working man all his life, working flat out as a builder in all weathers. Up until last year, he enjoyed good health and had never claimed benefits or accessed professional support - he and his wife were totally self sufficient. In his spare time, he enjoyed fishing, boating and taking the dogs for long walks after work.

Then, all that changed when physical health issues for him and his wife started to deteriorate. Pain from osteoarthritis and a shoulder injury after a fall has affected his mobility and the dexterity in one hand. He now struggles going up and down the stairs and often sleeps on the sofa. A cataract in one eye has meant that he has stopped driving, leading to a sudden loss of independence. Being away from the 'busyness' of work has left him socially isolated. The financial and psychological impact of all of this has really affected him and his family. He found the complexity of form filling overwhelming and he wasn't sure what he was entitled to claim in order to help his worsening financial situation. The emotional impact of this massive change in his lifestyle has been immense and he doesn't like asking his mates to help out. Overall, he has found the whole experience embarrassing, demeaning and demoralising. In his own words 'we've never had to deal with anything like this before'.

At this point, his GP felt that Integrated Plus input would be useful for B so that he could receive support towards getting him back on track with trying to cope with his totally altered life.

Aiesha (Social Prescribing Link Worker) set to work by helping him (and his wife) fill out the relevant forms to apply for the correct benefits (which will, in turn, lead to the couple being eligible for further financial help).

She also made a referral to Citizens Advice for additional guidance. She gave B information about emotional support such as the Dudley Talking Therapy Service and a local men's group.

## Goodbye to a HIU Lead...



Danielle Giles also leaves us this month to begin a new role as Senior Service Lead within the British Red Cross HIU Service covering Sandwell and West Birmingham. Danielle has been instrumental in establishing the HIU programme here at Integrated Plus and has dedicated 5 years to developing a HIU service that we can be proud of. We're proud of Danielle and wish her every success in her new role.

Aiesha talked to him about various aids and adaptations available to help him at home, as well as the Occupational Therapy service. She referred him to the Winter Warmth service as he reported feeling cold much of the time at home. They provided him with a heated throw and food vouchers (allowing him more money to spend on heating bills). Aiesha also gave him some supermarket vouchers so that he could afford to get some food in at Christmas time when he was struggling the most.

Involvement with Aiesha has provided B with practical, timely guidance and emotional support. This has been invaluable for him and his family at a time when they've needed it the most. B has found the Integrated Plus service to be excellent and has given the following feedback about Aiesha:

*'I don't know what we would have done without her - she's been an angel'*

*'She got the ball rolling and told me what was available'*

*'She has given me a bit of hope for humankind'*

B feels reassured that he can access support from Integrated Plus if he needs it again in the future.

# A Few Small Steps...

Charlotte was referred to Nick Tromans, a Link Worker Social Prescriber in Feb 2023, by the Mental Health Liaison Team following a recent assessment at the hospital.

She said she felt quite isolated and welcome the opportunity to meet other people. She was interested in art, mainly mindfulness colouring books, and expressed an interest in trying to draw and using a variety of media such as oil pastels, water colours, etc. Nick and Charlotte researched local projects and the nearest seemed to be the Art Yard in Cradley Health. Some of the courses that the Art Yard run are over 6-8 weeks and seemed quite specialised eg life drawing classes, However, they also host a 'pay as you go' session Wednesday evenings, which is open to all abilities and has more of a social focus. This seemed ideal and Nick made contact with the Art Yard to check this would be in order. The organiser said they would very much welcome Charlotte. She said that her mother would accompany her the first time and arrange transport,

During the assessment they discussed opportunities for social activities in the Halesowen area and Charlotte expressed an interest in attending a local coffee morning at Huntingtee Park. Nick contacted the lead officer at the Halesowen PCN who stressed that this group is mainly for over 60s and is also moving to other premises nearby. I checked with Charlotte and she said that she enjoyed socialising with people older than herself so this would not be a problem.

Charlotte had benefited from a support worker / CPN in the past and asked if it would be possible to have another to help her with particular activities - support with confidence-building, using public transport, etc. She also recognised the importance of learning to manage on her own in the future - managing a property and household expenses, using appliances such a washing machine. Nick suggested making a referral to a charity working in Dudley called Creative Support, which can offer this kind of support, and Charlotte agreed to this.

Charlotte explained that she does not have a computer and would lack the confidence to use one. Nick mentioned the possibility of having a laptop computer on loan, with support through the Black Country Connected Project, and she consented to a referral being made.

Charlotte is interested in volunteering and also getting work experience in manicures. Although courses are available through the Dudley Adult Community Education Programme, these are held at Dormston Centre in Sedgely and she felt that this was too far to travel in the evenings. They agreed that this was an issue that could be addressed in the future. In the meantime, Nick gave her information about the Thrive Into Work project, which could provide support in this regard.

The assessment covered lifestyle issues - diet, nutrition, exercise. Charlotte indicated that some coaching support would be helpful in this regard and Nick agreed to make a referral to the relevant Health and Wellbeing Coach at her medical practice.

Charlotte expressed an interest in gardening. Nick said this was something that we could build on, as gardening can often improve people's mental health and overall wellbeing. In this regard, he suggested a referral to the Hawbush Woodland Project: she asked if she could attend one of the 'taster' sessions, held on Fridays. This would enable her to learn about gardening and, at the same time, socialise with other people there. Nick said that this could be done, stressing that there would be no pressure to commit long term if she wasn't happy. Nick also mentioned an opportunity to supply a garden planter at her home. He identified a product on the internet which would enable deep rooted plants to be grown and checked that she would be willing to assemble it. She confirmed that she and her mother would look forward to building the planter, seeing it as a project. This was funded from the HIU personal budget.

Charlotte said "I really value the support being offered by Integrated Plus and it makes such a difference to be listened to and supported. It has given me an opportunity to meet other people and enjoy art and gardening activities. I feel more confident about the future."

To find out more about Integrated Plus please visit:

Website: [our page](#)

Twitter: [@IntPlusDudley](#)

