

EMBEDDING WELFARE RIGHTS ADVISORS IN GENERAL PRACTICE

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Objectives

- Contribute to the delivery of integrated, person-centred care by enabling practice staff to respond effectively to the socio-economic needs of patients
- Reduce pressure and enable practice staff to deliver clinical interventions more efficiently, with more time to focus on the quality of care provided
- Facilitate earlier intervention in relation to patients' socio-economic difficulties, prior to them reaching a crisis point

How it Works

-  The advisor becomes part of the practice team
-  The practice team can make direct referrals to the advisors on behalf of patients
-  Advise on social welfare and financial problems
-  Access to medical records, with patients' consent, and GPs is key

Methodology

The Improvement Service conducted a Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis to measure the social and economic value generated by embedding welfare rights advisors in general practices.

The process involved substantial engagement with patients, general practice staff, advisors, and funders across three different practices in Edinburgh and Dundee. This was carried out in partnership with NHS Lothian, Dundee City Council, and Granton Information Centre.

Going Forward

-  Funding for a Welfare Advice Service Facilitator, who supports roll-out of the model
-  Growing evidence base, following publication of Glasgow Centre for Population Health's evaluation of the model in Glasgow's 'Deep End' GP practices
-  Expansion of the model into other public services, such as schools and libraries



Patients report improved health and wellbeing

“ I felt I could trust the advisor because I was referred by my GP
Patient ”



Funders report greater ability to target resources at priority groups

“ The approach has been so successful I am now thinking about other ways of using 'trusted' locations, such as schools as a way of engaging directly with individuals
Funder ”

“ Before this service was introduced, 50% of my workload was taken up by the socioeconomic problems of patients
GP ”



GPs have more time to focus on delivering medical interventions

“ Having access to patients' medical records reduces the time I have to spend on their cases. I can also easily contact medical practice staff for assistance...which results in fewer appeals
Advisor ”

Every £1 invested generates around
£39
in social and economic benefits