

A surface evaluation into the allotment project at Benfield Park Medical Group

Sophie Thomas (medical student)



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Background and goals

The allotment project started in Feb 2019 as part of social prescribing framework. Benfield Park is located in an area with a high degree of deprivation, and many patients do not have green space at home. There is also a high burden of mental health problems. The aims of the allotment included helping patients with mental and physical illness, combatting loneliness, and providing a sense of community. The aim of this study was to evaluate the impact of the allotment has had on patients' overall wellbeing, the number of GP consultations, and prescriptions.

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Designing the study

I started by asking the social prescriber at the practice for a list of patients who were heavily involved in the allotment. I then interviewed these patients with a short semi-structured questionnaire. I then looked at the number of consultations they had had with a GP in the last 6 months, and in the 6 months before becoming involved with the allotment. I also looked at their prescriptions in the last month, and in the month before becoming involved with the allotment.

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Results

- All attend the allotment at least twice a week
- None had ever been involved with an allotment before, and two have no green space at home
- Number of consultations with GP – 12 → 5
- Prescription changes
 - Sertraline 150mg OD → 50mg OD
 - Amlodipine 5mg OD → 2.5mg OD
- All now discharged from social prescribing

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Measuring impact

- ♥ Improved physical and mental health
Fewer prescriptions
- 🌳 Reduction in number of GP consultations → 18kgCO₂e over 6 months⁽¹⁾
Reduction in prescriptions
Making the most out of available green space
- 👤 Involvement in a community
Teaching and learning new skills
- 💰 £274.61 saved across just the four patients in 6 months from reduction in GP consultations⁽²⁾

