

Surgery Signposters set to launch in Gosport

Pilot scheme will guide people to a better, healthier life

A new free and confidential scheme to help Gosport people improve their health and wellbeing will be launched on Monday (Oct 26).

Surgery Signposters is a two-year pilot project to literally 'signpost' patients registered at all the town's practices to the wide range of voluntary and community services available in Gosport – services that many GPs might not know are available.

So far, 11 volunteer 'surgery signposters' have been recruited in a scheme being run in partnership by NHS Fareham and Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Gosport Voluntary Action (GVA).

The 'signposters' will be based at Waterside Medical Centre in Mumby Road, Gosport – the practice of Dr David Chilvers, who chairs the CCG. But it is a borough-wide scheme.

The volunteers have received training, and will take referrals from GPs and other healthcare professionals to help people access community-based resources like social clubs and fitness advice.

They will be able to put patients in touch with support groups for certain health conditions, social activities, assistance with exercise or diet, and help to reduce a patient's social isolation and build up levels of confidence about self-care.

Volunteers will also be able to signpost patients to organisations which can help with wider life improvement issues such as housing, benefits, employment and education.

GVA aims to improve the quality of life for residents, especially older people and those with disabilities, through the work of its various projects which include befriending, dustbusting, 'Give Gain & Grow,' Shopmobility, community transport, decorating and repairs and Driving Force.

Dr Chilvers said: "GPs know that there are many fantastic voluntary and community services doing some great work out there. But it's hard for us to keep fully up-to-

speed with who is doing what and where in all the non-medical networks, much as we would like to be able to.

“Sometimes, we see patients who are a bit down and lonely and come to us as their GP for a chat with someone they know they can trust.

“This is one way in which the surgery signposters can step in. After speaking to the patient, they may be able to open up a whole new world for them in pointing them towards groups, services or even individuals who share common interests or could assist them.

“This will not only potentially relieve pressure on GPs and our primary care services right across Gosport, but, much more importantly, could considerably improve a patient’s wellbeing. It could be guiding people to a better, healthier life.

“We are enormously grateful to our GVA partners and to each and every volunteer who has stepped forward to give up their time to help with this valuable role.”

Generally, the service will be available from 3pm–5pm on Mondays and from 9am–12noon and 3pm – 5.30pm Tuesday to Fridays.

Appointments can be made by calling Waterside on 023 9258 3344 after noon on Monday. A map of the Waterside is shown below:



