

## Edberts House

A community hub pioneering social prescribing in Gateshead



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Sector: **Health & Social Care**  
Location: **Gateshead**  
Grant Awarded: **£60,537 health & social care exemplar grant + £20,000 Bright Ideas Fund**  
Grant Date: **October 2018 (health & social care exemplar grant) + August 2017 (Bright Ideas Fund)**



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Ownership:

**Registered Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee**

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### Grant purpose

The Bright Ideas grant funded two consultancy posts to explore new income streams for Edberts House. We then helped them develop their social prescribing service by funding a Development Manager

### Locally rooted

In 2009, an unused building was revived into the thriving Edberts House, led by the needs of local people. It has since helped reduce anti-social behaviour from the highest in the borough to below average.

### Improving health and social care

Through its pioneering Community Linking Project, Edberts House is running a successful social prescribing programme which is helping reduce unnecessary GP visits and improve the health of local people

### Partnership approach

The strong partnership between management at Edberts House, local people and the Council has really driven a community-led approach, which allows the hub to respond to changing needs of their community.

**In 2009, Gateshead Council leased the empty Edberts House to a local charity to enable them to support their local tenants more effectively. At the time, the area had the highest anti-social behaviour rates in the borough, and a lot of nearby houses were boarded up.**

Having realised the community had informally been using the building for years, the charity and council asked local people what they wanted to run as services and activities. Women asked for an on-site creche while they took maths qualifications to get back into work, one of the first and many

examples of community-led services. Since then, Edberts House has turned into a thriving community hub and has helped turn the area into a thriving neighbourhood.

“We have a fundamental need for connections as they shape our identity. But many people have lost those connections. They might have lost their job, their children, their home...we create a space where people can make new connections and revive their identity.”

**Sarah Gorman**

CEO of Edberts House

In 2017, Edberts House applied to Power to Change's Bright Ideas Fund to help them develop new income streams. We awarded them £20,000 to pay for business consultancy, finance support and a member of Gateshead Council's staff one day a week to work with them. They explored the development of Pattinson Pizza – an on-site fresh pizza business – which has now added take away Sunday dinners to the menu. And they also explored the idea of dredging wood waste from the nearby River Tyne to set up a wood recycling service but the logistics were too complex to make it viable.

However, they had already piloted a social prescribing service, [with the help of a £95,000 People's Health Trust grant](#), to reduce the amount of people going to local GPs unnecessarily. It was trialled in one practice initially, where the Community Link Worker became an embedded part of the GP team. GPs could directly refer a patient to them to discuss issues going on in their life – such as having benefits stopped, struggling with housing or relationships, or losing their job – which were leading to health issues.

*“Community Link Workers are best placed to ask ‘what matters to you’ than a GP and can signpost people to practical ways of improving their life.”*



The Community Link Workers bring their community development experience and match it with the clinical expertise of GPs to provide a more holistic service to patients. The project quickly scaled up to 4 local practices, who were all keen to experience the benefits of this new, holistic approach.

Having proved how effective the service was at reducing unnecessary visits to GPs, in October 2018, Power to Change awarded Edberts House £60,537 health and social care development grant to expand the Community Link Workers programme into a further 5 GP surgeries. This target, however has already been exceeded, as they are now operating in 13 surgeries, and are set to sign contracts to cover the whole Borough – 30 surgeries in all. The contracts with the GPs are a source of sustainable unrestricted funding for Edberts House, as they charge a management fee to deliver the service which is reinvested into core salaries within the organisation, allowing valuable community activity to be delivered through their community hubs.



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“I receive patient cases from GPs. Then I contact the patient, let them know I’m a Community Link Worker and organise a meeting with them. Then I find out what they need help with. It might be filling out a benefit form, it might be they are lonely and need someone to go with them to a community group a few times until they make friends. I am there for them as long as they need me.”

**Nick**

Community Link Worker

### **How did they do it?**

The strong partnership between management at Edberts House and the Council has really driven a community-led approach, which allows the hub to respond to changing needs of their community. They are now working on a new hub in Beacon Lough, one of the most deprived areas of Gateshead, to bring all public services under one roof, driven by the community to make it easier for people to access the services they need.