

**Affinity 2020 CIC Social Prescribing**

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| **Contact email** | [Barbara@affinity2020cic.co.uk](mailto:Barbara@affinity2020cic.co.uk) |
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**Social Prescribing Policy for SEND Provision at Affinity**

**1. Introduction**

At Affinity, we are committed to providing comprehensive support for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and those who are care-experienced. Our approach is centered on holistic development, addressing not only academic needs but also the emotional, social, and practical skills required to prepare for adulthood. Through our Social Prescribing initiatives, we aim to enhance young people’s confidence, wellbeing, and life skills, while supporting their transition into independent living.

This policy outlines how we support young people to engage in a variety of non-clinical, community-based activities that promote mental and physical health, social inclusion, and personal growth. The activities we offer are designed to help young people build the skills, resilience, and confidence needed to seek out similar opportunities in the wider community, beyond their time at Affinity.

**2. A Holistic Approach to Health and Wellbeing**

Affinity recognises that health and wellbeing extend far beyond the classroom. Our social prescribing initiatives are rooted in the belief that engagement with meaningful activities is an essential part of supporting young people’s emotional, social, and practical development. These activities address a range of needs, including:

* **Mental Health Support:** Building emotional resilience, self-esteem, and confidence.
* **Physical Health:** Encouraging active lifestyles through sports, gardening, and cookery.
* **Social Inclusion:** Providing opportunities for young people to interact with their peers and wider community.
* **Life Skills Development:** Helping young people acquire practical skills for adulthood, such as budgeting, cooking, and leading activities.

**3. Activities Offered**

To ensure a wide range of experiences, Affinity offers a variety of activities that help young people explore their interests, develop skills, and boost their confidence. These activities include:

* **Volunteering Opportunities:** We support young people in finding and engaging with local volunteering roles. This builds a sense of purpose, responsibility, and contributes to their personal development.
* **Arts Activities:** Creative workshops and projects, such as painting, drama, music, are offered to encourage self-expression and boost confidence in non-judgmental environments.
* **Group Leading and Peer Support:** Young people are encouraged to take on leadership roles in group activities, developing communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills.
* **Gardening and Horticulture:** This practical activity promotes mindfulness, responsibility, and offers a tangible sense of achievement while developing skills that can lead to further opportunities in the community.
* **Befriending Programs:** We facilitate peer mentoring and befriending initiatives, helping young people build social skills and reduce isolation.
* **Cookery and Healthy Eating:** Practical cooking sessions that encourage young people to learn about nutrition and develop basic cooking skills for independent living, this includes supported shopping experiances.
* **Sports and Physical Activities:** Offering both structured and informal sports sessions, from team sports to individual activities, aimed at promoting physical health and team-building skills.

**4. Building Confidence to Access Community Services**

At Affinity, we aim to empower young people to seek out and engage in activities outside of our provision. The skills and confidence gained through these activities will help them feel prepared to seek out similar opportunities within the local community. This is an important part of our Social Prescribing approach—helping young people develop a sense of belonging and independence.

* **Signposting to Local Services:** We regularly signpost students to local, non-clinical services that support health and wellbeing, including mental health services, community groups, and sports clubs.
* **Community Integration:** Through our activities, we provide young people with the experience of being involved in local community initiatives. This encourages a sense of belonging, reduces social isolation, and helps build confidence to interact with others in wider community settings.
* **Skills for Independent Living:** By offering activities such as cooking, gardening, and group leadership, we prepare young people to engage with the broader community. This not only fosters independence but also builds the self-sufficiency needed to navigate adult life confidently.

**5. Support Outside of College Hours**

We understand that the transition to adulthood does not happen during the typical college day. Therefore, our social prescribing activities extend beyond the standard hours of education to support young people during evenings and weekends.

* **Flexible Scheduling:** Activities are offered at various times throughout the week to ensure young people can participate regardless of their academic timetable. This includes after-college sessions, weekend workshops, and holiday programs.
* **Continuity of Support:** Affinity staff work closely with young people to ensure they feel supported in accessing and continuing activities outside of college hours. Our team is available to offer guidance, encouragement, and practical help as needed.

**6. Collaboration with External Partners**

Affinity works in partnership with local community organisations and services to ensure a seamless transition for young people into community-based activities. We collaborate with a range of local non-clinical services to provide access to additional support when required, ensuring that our young people receive the appropriate care and guidance to achieve their personal goals.

**7. Monitoring and Evaluation**

To ensure the effectiveness of our Social Prescribing policy, we will regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of the activities offered on young people's confidence, wellbeing, and readiness for adulthood.

* **Feedback from Young People:** We gather regular feedback from young people to understand their experiences and to improve the activities on offer.
* **Progress Tracking:** We track the progress of each young person, monitoring their participation, skill development, and increased engagement with community opportunities.
* **Staff Review:** Our staff team reviews the outcomes of the social prescribing initiatives to ensure they are meeting the holistic needs of each young person.

**8. Conclusion**

Affinity’s Social Prescribing Policy is designed to support care-experienced SEND young people to grow into confident, independent adults who are actively engaged in their communities. By offering a range of non-clinical, community-based activities, we not only support their immediate wellbeing but also equip them with the tools and confidence they need to seek out similar opportunities in the wider world. Our holistic approach ensures that young people have the support they need, both during and outside of their time at Affinity, to thrive in their transition to adulthood.