\*\*\* NEWS RELEASE \*\*\*

24 July 2023

**NEWCASTLE PAEDIATRICIAN TO ADDRESS HOUSE OF LORDS COMMITTEE ON LOCAL SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROJECT FOR CHILDREN**

On Monday 24 July, Dr Alex Battersby, consultant paediatrician at the Great North Children’s Hospital, will address members of the House of Lords about her work with Zone West, a Newcastle-based service for vulnerable young people.

The Integration of Primary and Community Care Committee of the House of Lords is currently undertaking an inquiry into integration of primary and community care.

Zone West is a Newcastle-based service which offers a link worker to children aged seven to 15 years old who have been identified by teachers and GPs as requiring developmental support. The service links them to community resources to improve their social, emotional, and academic achievement.

Each child is allocated a Link Worker, who will have mentoring meetings and groupwork sessions with them each week. Through that relationship the aim is to help the child identify targets and then link them to activities.

Dr Battersby said:

“I’m delighted to have been invited to speak to legislators to talk about the work we are doing to improve the lives of children in Newcastle via an innovative project which connects primary care services and community resources.

“Children, parents, and teachers have all reported improvements in social, emotional, and educational wellbeing. As a paediatrician, I’ve valued collaborating with colleagues from the education and voluntary sectors. We believe that our partnership model is ready for replication across Newcastle, the North East and North Cumbria.

**Notes to editors:**

1. Social prescribing is [defined](https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing/) by NHS England as “an approach that connects people to activities, groups, and services in their community to meet the practical, social and emotional needs that affect their health and wellbeing”.
2. Background information about the House of Lords Primary and Community Care Committee’s inquiry can be found [here](https://committees.parliament.uk/work/7269/integration-of-primary-and-community-care/).
3. [Zone West](https://www.northeastwellbeing.co.uk/zone-west/) is an initiative delivered by North East Wellbeing and Health Works. It is funded by Newcastle City Council, primary care networks and grant-making trusts.
4. [North East Wellbeing](https://www.northeastwellbeing.co.uk/) is a charity founded in 2012 working across the North East to improve prospects for children affected by poverty.
5. [Health Works](https://www.healthworksnewcastle.org.uk/) is a charity based in Newcastle working with local communities across the North East to improve their health, wellbeing, and life outcomes.
6. Dr Alex Battersby, Dr Toby Quibell (Director of North East Wellbeing) and Dr Jenna Charlton (Senior Researcher at Newcastle University) submitted [written evidence](https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/120197/pdf/) to the Lords Committee regarding the project.

For further information, please contact Dr Toby Quibell on 07799 060323.

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