TIPS FOR EVALUATING YOUR SOCIAL PRESCRIBING SERVICE THROUGH AN EQUITY LENS

1 WHO TO INVOLVE?

Involve service users, carers, and the people who you want your service to reach in planning, delivery and evaluation of your service.

Examples: Consider who you want your service to reach and how your services can or should benefit target populations. Involve them throughout your evaluation and interpreting your data: they will have insights that may help you to understand your data better

2 WHO IS AND WHO IS NOT ACCESSING YOUR SERVICE?

How well-represented are different groups of interest in the service? Think about the data that you collect on characteristics of service users and also how these may interact with each other (intersectionality).

Examples: You should aim to include demographic information such as age, gender, and postcode, protected characteristics such as carer status, disability race and sexual orientation as well as wider socioeconomic factors such as employment status, education and housing tenure

3 HOW WILL YOU DEMONSTRATE THE IMPACT OF YOUR SERVICE?

Think about the type of data that you need to collect to demonstrate impact and align this to the aims of your service.

Examples: Which groups of people do you expect to access your service and what changes and improvements (outcomes) do you expect to see in their lives? What outputs and outcomes can you measure that are also meaningful to these groups?

4 WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN THINKING ABOUT OUTCOMES?

It is useful to compare your outcomes and service reach to other services as well as use other data (e.g. local/regional level data) to contextualise your impact.

Examples: To work out the proportion of people from different groups or backgrounds in your service compare the numbers captured by your data with the population of the local area. Local authorities often publish local population health data online. This information may help you explore which groups might not be accessing your services or having differential outcomes. For example, if 15% of people in your catchment area have a disability but only 1% of people in your service have a disability, your service may not be as accessible to this group. Consider what might be contributing to certain groups being under or over-represented in your service user data.

5 HOW MIGHT GROUP CHARACTERISTICS INTERACT WITH SERVICE ACCESS AND DELIVERY TO AFFECT OUTCOMES?

Explore the patterns in your data. Do some groups have poorer or better outcomes than others? Consider why that might be the case including intersectionality. Explore what works best for whom, and in what context.

Examples: You could explore how categories such as age, gender or homelessness overlap and impact outcomes for different groups (e.g. a young homeless person versus an older adult who is homeless or women or carers of different ethnicities). How does the service delivery impact these outcomes?

6 WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR SERVICE?

Consider the cycle of referral, access to service, service delivery, re-referral and re-engagement

Examples: Are some groups more likely to take up the service offer or are there only certain groups being referred in? When in your service are some groups with shared characteristics referred on to other services and others are not? Do some groups of people stay in the service longer than others? What might you need to change to make the service more accessible? How does your service meet the needs of individuals (equity versus equality)? You could involve people from your target group to explore barriers to access and engagement to help you tailor your services.

7 CONSIDER WHAT MIGHT BE INFLUENCING YOUR FINDINGS?

It is important to consider the possible biases that may arise from missing data. You should be confident that differences observed are due to systematic differences between groups of interest rather than chance. This is where it is useful to think about support with statistical analysis and input from a data analyst or a quantitative researcher. More detailed analysis can help you understand how different factors acting together might be impacting outcomes of your service

Examples: You might have a hunch or anecdotes to suggest that people with certain characteristics are more likely to drop out of the service and not have their outcomes recorded. Statistical analysis to look at this in a more robust way can be carried out if you have a dataset that has recorded information on participant characteristics. Collecting the right service user data is key to a good evaluation.