SOS Community Health Bus Project Team

Open Road

The SOS Community Health Bus (SCHB) project is a mobile community welfare initiative operating across North Essex. Designed to tackle health inequalities and overcome major barriers to accessing care, SCHB brings vital services directly into communities that need them most. Its mobile unit offers cancer screenings, sexual health checks, leg ulcer clinics, podiatry, maternity support, addiction advice, and general health assessments like blood pressure checks - all delivered by qualified professionals in a safe, welcoming environment. In just six months, the SCHB project has delivered over 1,200 interventions across 89 visits, with 136 participants being referred on for further support. Referrals have included GP's (19%), Citizens Advice Bureau (23%), Sexual Health Clinic (18%) and substance misuse services (18). Service uptake in high-deprived areas has increased significantly, and early intervention rates for conditions like hypertension have improved.

Many of the communities served face deep-rooted challenges: poverty, rural isolation, poor public transport, and distrust of traditional systems. SCHB overcomes these by bringing multiple services to one place, reducing stigma, anxiety, with a proactive, preventative focus. One resident, found with dangerously high blood pressure during a routine check, was immediately escorted by staff to a nearby GP surgery – an intervention likely preventing a major cardiac event. The service has reached people deemed 'hard to engage,' including women who tested positive for Hepatitis C while receiving a general health care assessment. They are now receiving specialist care and support to manage both the disease and associated conditions caused by neglect and poverty. The SCHB doesn't just deliver services - it saves lives, reduces inequalities, and strengthens both the community and the partner organisations involved.