

Social Prescribing - short guidance for local areas 2019-20

Purpose: This briefing aims to summarise the social prescribing commitments made in the [NHS Long Term Plan](#) and [Five Year Framework for GP Contract Reform](#). Information provided here will help people and organisations in local areas to work collaboratively with their emergent primary care networks to embed social prescribing link workers in primary care multi-disciplinary teams, using new national funding.

Definition: Social prescribing enables all local agencies to refer people to a 'social prescribing link worker' to connect them into community-based support, building on what matters to the person as identified through shared decision making, personalised care and support planning, and making the most of community and informal support. Social prescribing is part of a comprehensive model of personalised care which is described in [Universal Personalised Care](#).

NHS England has worked collaboratively with partners to produce a [Summary Guide to Social Prescribing](#), which celebrates holistic social prescribing link worker practice across England, introduces the Common Outcomes Framework for measuring the impact of social prescribing, and identifies key features of effective social prescribing, as shown in the **model in fig 1**.

Social prescribing link workers will be embedded within primary care network multi-disciplinary teams to give time to people who lack the confidence or knowledge to get involved in community groups or to approach agencies on their own. The role will include:

- providing personalised support to individuals, their families and carers to take control of their wellbeing, live independently, and improve their health outcomes
- developing trusting relationships by giving people time and focusing on 'what matters to them'
- taking a holistic approach, based on the person's priorities, and the wider determinants of health
- co-producing a simple personalised care and support plan to improve health and wellbeing
- introducing or reconnecting people to community groups and services
- evaluating the individual impact of a person's wellness progress
- recording referrals within GP clinical systems using the national SNOMED social prescribing codes
- supporting the delivery of a comprehensive model of personalised care
- drawing on and increasing the strengths and capacities of local communities, enabling local VCSE organisations and community groups to receive social prescribing referrals.

Fig 1. Model for social prescribing



Social prescribing link workers will ensure that VCSE organisations and community groups have safeguarding processes for vulnerable individuals and can provide opportunities for the person to develop friendships, a sense of belonging, and build knowledge, skills and confidence. They will

work collaboratively with all local partners to nurture community assets and enable local VCSE organisations and community groups to be sustainable, including providing support to set up new community groups and services, where gaps are identified in local provision.

In 2019/20 link workers will take referrals from the primary care network's members, expanding from 2020/21 to take referrals from a wide range of local agencies. Primary care networks that already have social prescribing link workers in place, or who have access to social prescribing services, may take referrals from other agencies prior to 2020/21.

NHS Long Term Plan commitment: 'Link workers within primary care networks will work with people to develop tailored plans and connect them to local groups and services. Over 1000 trained social prescribing link workers will be in place by the end of 20/21, rising further by 23/ 24, with the aim that over 900,000 people are able to be referred to social prescribing schemes by then'. ([Long Term Plan, section 1.40](#))

How will the new national funding work? NHS England will provide funding directly to primary care networks for a new, additional social prescribing link worker to be embedded within every primary care network multi-disciplinary team, through the Network Contract Direct Enhanced Service (DES). This will be available from July 2019, at 100% reimbursement of the actual on-going salary costs, up to a maximum amount (£34,113) [GP Contract Reform, section 1.26](#). The percentage will neither taper nor increase during the next five years, giving networks maximum confidence to recruit to the full.

Existing practice suggests that many primary care networks may choose to fund a local voluntary sector organisation to employ the link workers on behalf of the network. The contractual arrangement will be for local areas to decide, but the funding will be routed via the Network Contract DES. Funding will also be available to all primary care networks across England, including local areas where link workers are already embedded in primary care multi-disciplinary teams.

What should local partners do to make the most of this funding opportunity? All local partners will be encouraged to work together to develop a shared local plan for social prescribing, including CCG commissioners, local authorities, primary care networks, VCSE leaders, existing social prescribing connector schemes and other partners. Templates are available from NHS England: england.socialprescribing@nhs.net

Shared local social prescribing plans should include:

- how partners will build on existing local social prescribing connector schemes to avoid duplication and maximise impact
- a plan to embed social prescribing link workers in all primary care networks across the local area
- how additional link workers will be recruited locally
- a commitment to provide shared local investment for the VCSE sector and community groups receiving social prescribing referrals.

For more information about how you can be involved in social prescribing.

- Find out who is leading social prescribing in your local area. Who already employs social prescribing link workers? Talk to them.
- Contact your local clinical commissioning group, local authority or primary care networks (as they develop). Ask to be involved in shared planning for social prescribing locally.
- Connect with others involved in social prescribing through the NHS England regional social prescribing networks and online platform. Ask to be part of these by emailing england.socialprescribing@nhs.net