



**CONNECT
for health**

Being Well Together



**Ipswich and East Suffolk
Clinical Commissioning Group**

Social Prescribing Second Edition

In this newsletter, we aim to debunk the myths and let you know what we are doing in Ipswich and east Suffolk

What is Social Prescribing?

Social prescribing enables GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services.

NHS England describes social prescribing as “enabling all local agencies to refer people to a link worker”. Link workers - known locally as Community Connectors - give people time and focus on what matters to the person as identified through shared decision making or personalised care and support planning. They connect people to community groups and agencies for practical and emotional support.

Social prescribing particularly works for a wide range of people, including those:

- with one or more long-term conditions,
- who need support with their mental health,
- who are lonely or isolated,
- who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.



Mia Philips - Community Connector in Stowmarket says...

“Two months on and I have had the privilege of working with 15+ people who are hoping that engagement with this new service will bring something new to their lives.



It has been an honour to assist someone complete an application form to volunteer at the Museum of East Anglian life and then watch as he fully embraces his new purpose and role within the team of such a valuable community asset.

I have encouraged a woman to attend a support group for people struggling with the impact of cancer on their lives and have felt such admiration as she put all her social anxiety and lack of confidence to one side and attended the Christmas meal with other members of ‘Cancer Coffee and Cake’.

With the generous assistance of Citizens Advice I have helped someone come to terms with managing the burden of navigating the benefits system and three of my participants have attended classes in the heart of Stowmarket, attended yoga at Needham Lakes, tea dances and Cardiac-health classes at the Stowmarket leisure centre, meet up Mondays at The Walnut and lunch clubs at Red Gables—and this is only the start—there is more to discover in the community and more ways to connect people with all the opportunities out there. Not one to hide from a metaphor, I have decided that Social Prescribing is not just a light house, it is also the ‘second oar’. For people who are stuck going round and round in circles wondering how to move forward in their lives, I feel so lucky that my job feels like handing over a second oar—and then watching with encouragement, as they move themselves forward in the right direction.”

How to refer into the Connect for Health programme

The Social prescribing programme in Ipswich and East Suffolk is Connect for Health.

To make a referral into Connect for Health for an appointment with a Community Connector individuals can:

- Be referred by their GP practice or healthcare professional
- Self-refer
- Be referred by another person (with permission)

The telephone numbers to make a referral can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

How will Connect for Health work?

Individuals referring to Connect for health can have one or more 45 minute appointments with a non-clinically trained Community Connector. They will work with each individual to create a personalised plan of support based on their skills, strengths and area of need. This may include support for loneliness and isolation and individuals may be introduced to befriending groups, clubs or activities.

Other support may include advice on welfare benefits, financial issues, employment, training or volunteering opportunities.



**CONNECT
for health**
Being Well Together

Measuring outcomes

The Connect for Health programme will be measured on outcomes via an evaluation conducted by the University of East Anglia. This evaluation will measure:

- The impact on the person; physical and mental wellbeing
- The impact on the health system; improvement in which care systems e.g. reductions in GP visits
- The impact on community; individual sense of belonging and community capacity

Where Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG is up to on its Social Prescribing journey....

The Connect for Health social prescribing programme in Ipswich is continuing to evolve with appointment uptake increasing on a month by month basis.

In East Suffolk, the Connect for health providers have been booking in and seeing individuals for appointments since September 2019. Positive relationships have been developed between the Connect for health providers and organisations referring in to the programme. GP Practices have made a number of referrals to the programme together with other health professionals, including social care.

The Community Connectors are located in a number of different locations throughout East Suffolk, including Community Hospitals, The Museum of East Anglian Life, a Community Shop, as well as community and leisure centres. This is enabling Community Connectors to get out into the heart of the community and meet people who can benefit from social prescribing.

Some of the organisations Community Connectors have already been referring to include: Suffolk Mind, Citizens Advice, Job Centre Plus, Cruse, Suffolk Family Carers, OneLife Suffolk, Activlives, Worry tree Café and local art groups.

Launch of National Social Prescribing Academy

Dr Dean Dorsett, GP Lead for Social Prescribing for Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG and Louise Hardwick Head of Partnerships attended the launch of the National Social Prescribing Academy on 23 October at the Southbank Centre in London. At the event Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock set out his ambition for every patient in the country to have access to social prescribing schemes on the NHS as readily as they do medical care.



The National Academy for Social Prescribing will work to:

- Standardise the quality and range of social prescribing available to patients across the country
- Increase awareness of the benefits of social prescribing by building and promoting the evidence base
- Develop and share best practice, as well as looking at new models and sources for funding
- Bring together all partners from health, housing and local government with arts, culture and sporting organisations to maximise the role of social prescribing
- Focus on developing training and accreditation across sectors

The independent academy will receive £5 million of government funding and will be led by Professor Helen Stokes-Lampard, the outgoing Chair of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

It has been developed in partnership across government, with Sport England, Arts Council England and a range of voluntary sector partners.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/social-prescribing-new-national-academy-set-up>

How Patient Participation Groups have got behind Social prescribing

Connect for Health Community Connectors have presented at PPG network meetings. At these they have explained to PPG members how the service will operate and how referrals can be made. Discussion areas have included how PPG members can support the programme, such as raising awareness with members of the public, distributing postcards in the waiting room and discussing Connect for Health with Practice staff at PPG meetings.

At a recent All PPG Network meeting on Tuesday 17 December PPG Members presented the following showcases:

- * **Ipswich East:** an introduction to the pre-diabetes programme from Anne Walker, Two Rivers Medical.
- * **Ipswich West:** Terry Shemming spoke with the group around the work Burlington Primary Care have been doing with patient engagement in the waiting room
- * **Saxmundham & North East:** Leiston and Church Farms PPG members Lesley Hill and Pauline Quinn presented their highlights of the year.

- * **Woodbridge:** Alan Swerdlow from Framfield House presented to the group on the @16 Health booklet

- * **Eye & North West:** Eye Health Centre representative, Tony White explained to the

group the work around Balance is Beautiful, Falls prevention classes which have been well attended.

- * **South Rural:** Jan Devey presented the Art and Health in Practice which is currently taking place in Hadleigh Boxford surgery.

- * **Stowmarket:** Ian Clarke from Combs Ford spoke regarding a well being event at the museum of East Anglian Life.

- * **Felixstowe:** Alan Rose spoke about the 4 PPGs in Felixstowe's involvement with the minor injuries unit in Felixstowe.



Case Study:

SD was referred into the Connect for Health programme after becoming socially isolated following unemployment and a marriage breakdown. Conversations with SD highlighted that he felt isolated and didn't participate in social activities or have any kind of social structure. SD recognised that engaging with other individuals may help his isolation and provide him with activities and interests where he can feel a sense of purpose. SD enjoys a wide genre of music and has a keen interest in art.

Exercise is difficult for SD due to muscle pain however SD is interested in going swimming and thinks this may provide him with exercise. It was agreed at the initial meeting that the Community Connector would initially explore the option of using a local swimming pool with a discounted rate for a person on limited income, arts and crafts activities and the option of food parcels was explored. Future discussion could include healthy eating and music including guitar.

The outcome at a final meeting was that SD confirmed he has attended 2 sessions of Weight-Watchers and this has prompted him to address his diet. The sessions are opportunities to meet new people which he is enjoying. SD stated he has yet to attend a pool but was planning to do so that weekend, SD stated that he was thankful for the information and the discount card to enable him to have cheaper sessions at the swimming pool.

How do I get an appointment with a Community Connector?

There will be a community connector based in your local area.

Ipswich: contact your GP practice

Eye & North West (including Fressingfield, Debenham, Mendlesham, Ix-worth, Claydon & surrounding areas): call Suffolk Family Carers 01473 835477

Felixstowe area: call Access Community Trust on 01502 527200

North East Suffolk (including Saxmundham, Leiston, Aldeburgh and Framlingham & surrounding area): call Access Community Trust on 01502 527200

Stowmarket & Needham Market: call Suffolk Family Carers on 01473 835477

South Rural (including Hadleigh, East Bergholt, Shotley, Peninsula & surrounding areas): call Suffolk Family Carers on 01473 835477

Woodbridge, Kesgrave, Martlesham, Alderton and Wickham Market areas: call Shaw Trust on 07967 395985 or 07790 922228

Social prescribing and personalised care

Social prescribing is one of six key components of the NHS Comprehensive Model for Personalised Care. Alongside shared decision making, personalised care and support planning, supported self-management, personal health budgets and broader choice within the NHS, social prescribing enables people to be more involved in their care. Social prescribing should be delivered as part of a broader shift to personalise care. For further information, please visit: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/>