



THE SCOOP

The social prescribing newsletter for Well Up North PCN

...it is of huge benefit to the practice to know that any patient we have concerns about can be referred to the GP Link Workers to contact them for the appropriate help. This ensures vulnerable patients do not fall through the gaps and gives them the most appropriate help they need whilst freeing up GP time to see to medical issues. It's an invaluable resource for Primary Care

- GP from Well Up North PCN



WHAT'S INSIDE?

SPECIAL FEATURE

KEEPING WARM THIS WINTER

- Social prescribing case studies
- Killer Bowls Fundraiser
- Chair Based Yoga at Amble
- Music Group for those with dementia in Berwick

DRIVERS DIARIES

-what it's like for GP Link Workers

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU ?

by Jane Cannam

As a GP Link Worker it never ceases to amaze me the breadth and depth of peoples interests and hobbies. Part of social prescribing's role is to develop with the patient goals and action plans to help patients to engage in the things they enjoy or services that can help. This quarter we have thankfully seen so many local activities recommence or start afresh.

THANK GOODNESS!

Across the PCN area it is all systems go and we are delighted to see how positive community engagement in groups or activities that matter to a patient is boosting that person's health and wellbeing. It is clear that there is significant strain on health services and that is why, doing what we can to encourage self care through community connection is so vital.



...of everything - connecting with Mind and Sole has been the thing that's helped me the most

Non clinical interventions work and they work well, one patient said to me just yesterday - "of everything, connection with Mind and Sole and the Walking Group and the Hub has been the thing that's helped me the most". Friends really are cheaper than therapy!! Stepping out again takes courage but the rewards are great.

HERE TO HELP

CASE STUDY BY CAROL GUNN

GP Link Workers often have access to Mental Health support which may be less advertised than a standard TMN referral route. When a patient was referred to us for our support we were able to access support for their Mental Health and when the patient moved area we were able to link them into their local GP Link Worker so that there was continuity of service. This is what the patient had to say...

...Thanks Carol - I will contact her in due course. Thank you for what you have done for me. In the short amount of time we have been in contact, I have felt supported which is half the battle with Mental Health. Thank you for all you have done.

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES BEHIND KILLER BOWLS AS ATTENDED BY CAROL AND LORNA

Tweedmouth lady Carol Ditchfield was the inspiration behind the idea. Being a member of Tweedmouth Bowling Club in Berwick, she wanted to raise money for the local Berwick Cancer Cars after using their service herself.

The Berwick & District Cancer Support group (Berwick Cancer Cars) was founded in 1992 and is a registered charity. The service is to provide free transport to any cancer sufferer to all the major hospitals in the area. The group is run totally by Volunteers, many of whom have experienced living with Cancer themselves and they rely on fund raising to raise money for the service.

Carol came up with the idea of having a fundraising event split over two nights - one for the ladies and one for the men, where there was games and a night of fun and laughter to raise money for the charity. The first event was so successful it became an annual event.

Sadly, Carol lost her battle with cancer but the club (in agreement with Carol's partner and family) decided to keep the event going in her memory. The Cancer Support Group have also named one of their cars Carol in appreciation of all the funds she raised for them over the years. (Nearly £9000)



LOST AND FOUND

CASE STUDY BY LORNA CHAPPELL

A local pharmacy delivery person referred an elderly woman to me as "she was so upset and not making much sense". So, I called her once I had consent to do so.

She was upset because she couldn't find her deceased husband's birth certificate. She needed it for probate. Unable to get help from family, one of her Carers had made an online application for her but the feedback from County was that "no certificate matched these details" - she was distraught.

A quick call to the local Archivist and I discovered that in the Winter of 1928 things were bad and the suggestion was that the birth may not have been registered until the following quarter in 1929. Sure enough this information was helpful to County and they found and delivered the birth certificate. The patient is now able to sort out her affairs and as such, is less stressed and once again able to sleep!

BEING BRAVE

CASE STUDY BY JANE CANNAM

One of our patients referred to the service had overwhelming obstacles to overcome through the pandemic. Ill health meant she had to give up her career she loved and close down her business. Her physical and mental health deteriorated and life was very difficult indeed. We spent time talking with the patient each week, checking in on her and encouraging steps towards recalibrating life. She got involved in the original Northumberland Recovery College meetings and gave such insightful contributions to the meetings. The patient had always enjoyed being outside and so when told of the walking groups she bravely took herself off and as a result has become a regular at these on a Tuesday in Alnwick and sometimes on a Friday in Amble. She's also a big fan of the new Hub set up by Mind and Sole and believes these connections have been invaluable in terms of her healing, care and support. Chrissy Smith from Mind and Sole encouraged her to do some artwork for the Hub and these six beautiful pictures with quotes now adorn the walls.



To link in with Mind and Sole and their Hub follow them on Facebook <https://m.facebook.com/mindandsolehub> They have so much going on!

CHAIR BASED YOGA

Coquet Medical Group have teamed up with a local yoga instructor, Judith Ramsden through their social prescribing contact to provide a number of patients access to six free sessions of chair yoga. After an amazing social media campaign led by Gayle from the surgery and a bit of co-ordination, we found many patients interested in this. The classes so far have been a great success with many coming who have long term health conditions including Parkinsons and Arthritis but have made the commitment to get moving again. A few have also got involved from the WI and we look forward to fostering this connection. The class is friendly and relaxed and offers an opportunity to learn breathing techniques, yoga stretches and deep relaxation. It is hoped that the class will continue on for patients through our connection with Judith and the Dovecote Centre in Amble but a charge will be made for these unless we can source funding. We await patient feedback but so far we are quietly confident that these classes are having a positive impact on health and wellbeing. Judith has now also developed classes at Widdrington and Alnwick. Contact your GP Link Worker to refer people into these.



THE WELL UP NORTH BOOK CLUB...



...meets every 2nd Thursday in the month on Zoom.

e-mail jane.cannamenhs.net for an invite

THE ALLOTMENT

The Community Allotment in Alnwick is coming together. We're just dotting the i's and crossing the t's to create safe sessions for patients.

Alnwick Town Council are actively supporting this project and are looking to install a new shed and paths, a local company AI Gardening Services are donating some tools and the staff room at AMG are busy saving tea leaves for compost. There is a real buzz about the project. Once we're all First Aid trained and DBS checked we'll be excited to launch the project and get patients involved in the sessions. We can not wait!



Memory Laners Music Group



First day

After much excitement and a good deal of hard work, we were ready for the off, 4 people living with dementia and 4 carers came to the first session!

We greeted each other over a cup of coffee and some very fine traybakes provided by the on-site café, then followed a warm up exercise, where we shook our fingers, stamped our feet, and did some vocal exercises. Then followed us all singing a 'round' which worked so well, that Sam Lord our professional musician and group leader decided to record it, we listened to the play back in amazement, we sounded so good!

The Chief Executive of the Theatre then paid us a visit and we performed again for her, she looked amazed and quite taken aback.

More music followed including 'What shall we do with the Drunken Sailor' one of the gentlemen came up with a new verse for us all to sing, 'Stick him in the poo, without any paper' this we sang with gusto. Then there was a marching song, Louis got up (ex -army) and showed us all how to march, his daughter looked thrilled!

One gentleman appeared to smile for most of the two hours and there was a great deal of foot tapping and joining in.

One of the volunteers (a dancer) leapt up and performed a 'Sailors Horn pipe', this was followed by a rendition of 'Rock around the Clock' and our dancer went into a full Twist.

A few verses of 'Mud Glorious Mud', and we were all just about done in.

Next session will be Flanders and Swann music and one of the couples is going to do a tango for us, I can't wait!

Thanks go to our team of volunteers and musicians, the amazing Mo, fleet footed Chris, tremendous Cath on the keyboard, lovely Doreen and finally the stars of the show Andy and Sam (Sam sang, danced, played the saxophone and the recorder, and led the singing, her partner Andy, walked the plank, told (terrible) jokes and danced.

Thanks to the funders, our hosts the Maltings, and to the North Northumberland Voluntary Forum for being brave enough to take us on.

Thanks also go to the Hospice (for lovely Doreen-Dementia Support Worker), RVS and Alzheimer's Society for their support, and BADFOD (Berwick and District Friends of Dementia) for their support too.

There are a few spaces left, for details on how to join us contact:

Jan Casson GP Link Worker (Dementia) on 0748 531 4252

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING ANGELS!!

BY CAROL GUNN



Some of the GP Link Worker's role still is about the promotion of what is a relatively new service. With the openness for organisations to refer to us and even the opportunity for self referrals we are grateful for opportunities to join in community events and spread the word about Social Prescribing.

Carol, Lorna and Jan pictured here, attended a local event "Tea in the Park" in Spittal run by the Spittal Improvement Trust and incorporating the November Club's "Walk in your Shoes", This was a walk covering 126 miles of St Oswalds Way starting in Hexham and ending in Spittal.

The November Club held doorstep theatres telling the tale of St Oswald in eight communities along the way. The final one was in Spittal and when asked if we would like to have a stand at this, we were delighted to attend - Thank you.

There was live music, raffles and various stalls at the event. A great afternoon enjoyed by all.

GP LINK WORKER CONTACT DETAILS

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KEEPING WARM THIS WINTER

BY NATALIE ARNOLD



GET £140 OFF YOUR ENERGY BILL THIS WINTER THROUGH THE WARM HOMES DISCOUNT SCHEME - ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS CAN CLAIM THE DISCOUNT VIA THEIR ENERGY SUPPLIER SEE [HTTPS://WWW.GOV.UK/THE-WARM-HOME-DISCOUNT-SCHEME](https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)

PEOPLE IN RECEIPT OF GUARANTEED PENSION CREDIT WILL RECEIVE A LETTER BETWEEN OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021 STATING THEIR ELIGIBILITY IF YOU ARE ON A LOW INCOME OR ARE IN RECEIPT OF CERTAIN BENEFITS YOU MAY ALSO BE ELIGIBLE IF YOUR ENERGY SUPPLIER TAKES PART IN THE SCHEME. THE FUNDING IS LIMITED SO PLEASE FOLLOW THE LINK TO ENQUIRE ASAP

THE SCHEME IS IN ADDITION TO THE EXISTING COLD WEATHER AND WINTER FUEL PAYMENTS WHICH ARE PAID AUTOMATICALLY TO ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS.

UNFORTUNATELY IF YOU LIVE ON A CARAVAN SITE NO MORE FUNDING IS AVAILABLE FOR THIS WINTER - HOWEVER YOU CAN REGISTER YOUR INTEREST FOR NEXT YEAR VIA [HTTPS://WWW.PARKHOMESWHD.COM/](https://www.parkhomeswhd.com/)



JOIN OILCAN FOR SAVINGS: A BULK BUYING SCHEME RUN BY COMMUNITY ACTION NORTHUMBERLAND [HTTP://WWW.CA-NORTH.ORG.UK/SUPPORTING-INDIVIDUALS/OILCAN](http://www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/oilcan) GETTING HELP WITH THE COST OF CONNECTING TO A NEW GAS LINE [HTTPS://WWW.CE-CIC.ORG.UK/ASSISTED-GAS-CONNECTIONS](https://www.ce-cic.org.uk/assisted-gas-connections)

COMMUNITY ACTION NORTHUMBERLAND WARM HUBS: LOCATED ACROSS THE COUNTY PROVIDING A SAFE AND WARM SPACE. FOR LOCATIONS GO TO: [HTTP://WWW.CA-NORTH.ORG.UK/SUPPORTING-INDIVIDUALS/WARM-HUBS/LIST-OF-WARM-HUBS](http://www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/warm-hubs/list-of-warm-hubs)

FOR SIMPLE AND IMPARTIAL ENERGY ADVICE: [HTTPS://WWW.SIMPLEENERGYADVICE.ORG.UK/](https://www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk/) OR CALL THE HELPLINE ON 0800 444 202

IF YOU NEED HELP TO ACCESS ANY OF THE ABOVE, PLEASE CONTACT CITIZENS ADVICE NORTHUMBERLAND ENERGY PROJECT ON [ENERGY@NORTHUMBERLANDCITIZENSADVICE.ORG.UK](mailto:energy@northumberlandcitizensadvice.org.uk) OR CALL 01670 339749



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR IF YOU ARE SIMPLY NOT SURE WHERE TO TURN, ASK YOUR GP PRACTICE TO SPEAK TO THE SOCIAL PRESCRIBING LINK WORKER

TEAM TALK



SHE'S BACK! – The GP Link Worker team welcomes back Natalie Arnold who worked for the PCN to help set up the service and prior to that worked at Alnwick Medical Group...after a brief spell South, Natalie returns to the fold and is thrilled to be back. Her enthusiasm, work ethic and commitment to her patients continues to inspire!



We welcome too, Rachel Driver who has a wealth of experience from the NHS, housing services and adult social care and is keen as mustard to support her patients in surgeries in Felton, Widdrington and Morpeth and is growing her caseload across these practices with ideas for development. Hear about Rachel's experiences as a Link Worker on the next page!



We are also delighted to announce that team mate Miranda is now a Mummy !! Luca Patrick Hughes arrived 19th October to her and her partner and we pleased to say all are doing really well and we wish them every happiness!



We would like to welcome Becky Bass who joined the team in October 2021 as the Manager of GPLW and HWBC Teams.

Becky previously managed teams in a secondary school setting and whilst developing and managing a new drug and alcohol service for children and families. Prior to taking on role, Becky worked closely with children and families and also volunteered as a panel member for the Children's Hearings System in Scotland.

DRIVERS DIARIES

The Prodigal Patient

BY RACHEL DRIVER



I started in my new role August 23rd – after a hectic 18 months working around Covid in Surgery at Well Close in Berwick. Thankfully, Miranda Sheehy, whose leave I am covering was on hand to show me the ropes and guide me around the people, places and day-to-day business of being a Social Prescribing GP Link Worker for Well Up North PCN. Armed with my lap-top, mobile phone and a very sketchy knowledge of Widdrington and Morpeth, my patient caseload was transferred and it was time for me to phone up and organise my own workload.

It turns out I really LOVE the possibilities contained within the role. Things don't always go to plan. A short 'well-being call' may stumble upon a brand new issue that has suddenly arisen in someone's life, or a patient who has been guarded and reluctant might suddenly open up and begin to want to engage (the job centres on building rapport and trust).

Not everything is rosy. I have some patients who are challenging or hard to engage. Some just say 'No!' – you try this and that, offer open invitations to Walking Group, or open doors to contact Citizen's Advice, Bridge Northumberland, CVS, or Age UK – 'No!' – but a small thing can just switch, a tiny chink of light, and the person that was clamped shut, may for some reason, on a day recollect a relative, a work colleague, a situation – and from that will unspool something that makes a connection. From that connection a conversation grows, and one day, they say 'Yes', and so you reinforce: "it's today, 10:30 – I'll be outside the Surgery – shall I see you then?"... You have no idea if they will actually turn up...but you hope –

In this sense, it is more an art, than a science. A strange alchemy – you don't quite know which formula might work, but you listen and listen to catch the word that may unlock what it is that makes a person pick up the phone, but keep up a persistent 'No!'.

Thankfully, there are many more yeses – so at Morpeth Walking Group this week there were two new patients, to join regular walkers. The group fluffs up it's feathers and welcomes in the newcomers.

At Widdrington, our nascent Walking Group a still small, but mighty. We walked in the Ancient Woodland that stands in a corner between the busy B1337 and Railway line. It was like a gorgeous cathedral of light, colour and autumnal earthy smells. They talk about Forest Bathing – like it's something fancy folk in glossy magazines do. But there we were – minutes away from the Co-op and the Widdy Chippy marvelling. This is Social Prescribing – exercise, blether and saying 'Yes'.

