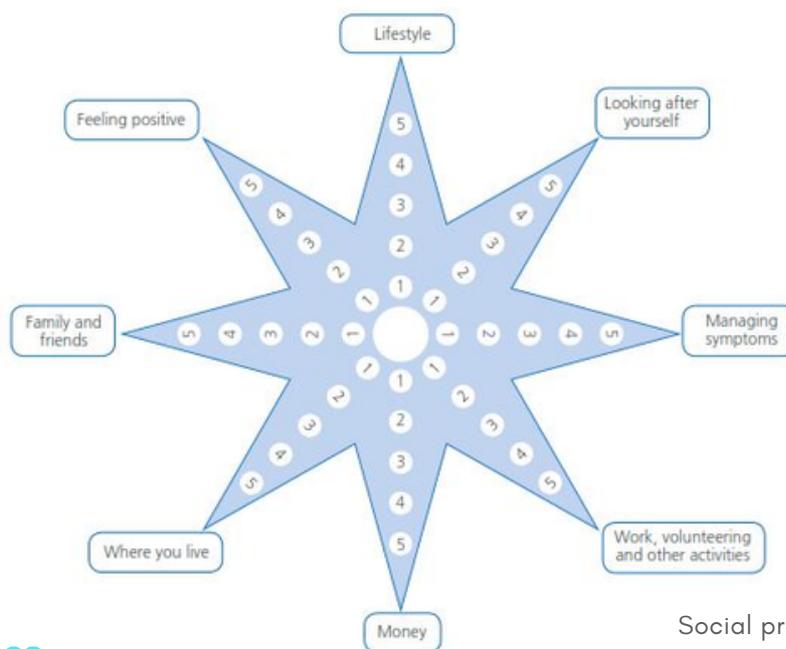




# THE SCOOP

The Social Prescribing Newsletter for Well Up North PCN



## by Miranda Hughes

Whether we are leaping, pottering or dragging ourselves into 2023, the renewing of another year is often a time where we reflect on our lives, and consider our hopes and plans going forward. It is a time where we can be faced with the state of our health and wellbeing, whether that's in the form of gratitude, acceptance, concern or fear. Our health and wellbeing is responsible for a huge amount of our overall happiness and life satisfaction, so it often gets scrutinised as we reflect on how we feel about our lives at a pivotal point in the year. Feeling unwell does not just come in the form of coughs, colds and broken bones, but it can be a combination of many factors working together to make you feel not quite right.

Poor mental health, long-term health conditions that are tricky to manage, social isolation, problems with money, family, friends, housing and employment - there are all kinds of issues, many of which are non-medical, that can have a huge impact on our state of health and wellbeing.

Evidence tells us that the two main determinants of health are socio-economic status and lifestyle. These have a more severe impact on our health than anything else. Social prescribing looks at addressing these issues, and providing guidance and support on how to tackle them in order to achieve a better state of health and wellbeing.

Social prescribing is available at your Well Up North GP practice, where you can either self-refer through reception or discuss your options with your GP, nurse or other medical practitioner. Everybody deserves to live life in good health and with a strong sense of wellbeing, but understanding how to make changes to improve this can be overwhelming.

Our new wellbeing star assessment tool (see image) helps with this and will allow you to see your journey to hopefully improving different aspects of your life through the support and interventions from social prescribing. Social prescribing can help to identify what matters to each individual, and provide support in accessing services, connecting with the community, and creating an action plan to make this year healthier, happier and more fulfilling than the last.

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# HEALTH AT THE QUAYSIDE

by Karen Gibson



Well Up North Primary Care Network, as part of its drive to address health inequalities for the people of North Northumberland, have joined forces with the SeaFit Programme, which is run jointly by The Fishermens Mission and the Seafarers Hospital Society, along with Healthwatch Northumberland and Amble Harbourmaster. This group is to deliver a new health equity pilot programme called "Health at the Quayside." the aim of this is to help the fishing community past and present, and their families in Amble access better healthcare.

Dr Saul Miller, Clinical Director of Well Up North says: 'We are really excited to be bringing together those like ourselves who want to help improve the health of fishing communities along the north Northumberland coast. If this initiative proves successful it will make waves all around the British coast given the many fishing communities out there, and their known health difficulties.'

Karen Gibson, Health Inequality Project Lead for Well Up North stated "This pilot programme is designed to improve the physical and mental health and wellbeing of our fishermen. I was alerted to their needs via one of our Social Prescribing Link Workers (Natalie Arnold).

Working in the fishing industry is one of THE most challenging jobs. Work-related injuries are high within this industry and time spent at sea means it can be difficult to access appropriate health care. We also know that there is anxiety within the community in relation to requirements for the ML5 medical certificates coming into play in November 2023. There will be plenty of information available on this, along with our healthcare team providing on the spot support. We are very much looking forward to working collaboratively with our partners in this pilot. Healthcare in a place based setting in the heart of the fishing community in Amble.

Carol Elliott SeaFit Manager advises: The SeaFit Programme has been running for the past 4 years, taking health and wellbeing services to various ports throughout the UK. We are delighted to see the interest that is growing from primary care networks and other health care providers. This means we are able to connect more fishermen with much needed health and wellbeing support through the Fishermen's Mission and the Seafarers Hospital Society.



The Health and Inequality Pilot "Health at the Quayside" commenced in January 2023 with a positive response. Future events will be held on Wednesday 29th March and Wednesday 31st May from 1.00pm to 3.00pm at Coquet House, Amble Harbour, Amble, Northumberland NE65 0AP and will offer a range of free services for retired and active fishermen including:

- Health checks
- First contact physiotherapist
- Mental health support,
- GP
- Pharmacist technician
- Social Prescribing Link Worker
- Health and Wellbeing Coaches.
- Healthwatch Northumberland will also be on hand to listen to your experiences of about local health services.



# COACHES'S CORNER

by Tom Henderson, Health and Wellbeing Coach

The theme of this month is one of **opportunity** in the Health and Wellbeing Coaching Service.

While we are unfortunately waving off one of our Coaches, Jake, to pastures new - it serves as a good **opportunity** to reflect and be grateful for his contribution to building the service and the fantastic support he has given his patients in improving their Health and Wellbeing across the Well Up North primary care network.

The New Year has also brought the **opportunity** to test new ideas; this week marked the start of our Weight Management group pilot programmes in Wooler and Hadston. The 8-week programme is designed to support like-minded patients with the common goal of weight management through a combination of coaching and signposting in a group setting. This is breaking new ground for the Health and Wellbeing Coaching service that will allow us to reach more patients and cater for those who find benefits in group activities. We are very grateful to the patients who have agreed to join and help us trial this approach. If the pilot is a success, then we will be looking to roll it out across more areas in the Well Up North primary care network - so keep your eyes peeled for future updates!



Opportunity is unpredictable,  
it can come in all shapes and sizes  
and you never know when a new one might pop up.

**Opportunity** is unpredictable, it can come in all shapes and sizes and you never know when a new one might pop up. In 2023, the Health and Wellbeing Coaching Team are looking forward to the **opportunity** to reflect, learn and improve the service for patients looking to improve their Health and Wellbeing. What **opportunity** are you looking forward to?

Finally, the **opportunity** for you to access Health and Wellbeing Coaching support is always available at your GP practice. If you think Health and Wellbeing Coaching is for you then speak to one of the clinicians at your practice or your social prescribing link worker.



# LOVE IN THE HUB!

by Lorna Chappell

I received a message from a GP asking me to help a patient that would like some "social engagement".

When speaking to them on the phone they seemed to be in quite low spirits so I arranged to visit them at home. They told me that they would ask a family member along too in case they couldn't remember anything important. They were an older person who shared they hadn't been out for weeks but had a friend who was visiting them daily. During the home visit we talked about the local 'Warm Hub' (also known as Warm Spaces). They agreed to give it a go and hoped that they might manage to go along once a week.

When I called again to check how things were going, I was delighted to hear that they now attended the Warm Hub at least 3 times a week! They had also joined the Cinema Club on Wednesday afternoons, were going to Carpet Bowls and they had met "a new partner" who they went dancing with twice a week. Although the patient shared "I can only manage half of a dance session these days but they don't seem to mind!".



## What is a Northumberland Warm Space?!

Warm Spaces are places where people can come together in a warm, safe, welcoming place and maybe enjoy a hot drink, a sit down and have a chat with others.

Voluntary groups, community organisations and others from communities have come together to establish a network of warm spaces this winter which are free to visit and offer a warm welcome environment.

Some places may offer a hot drink, activities and other things like free access computers and Wi-Fi. You can go along and spend time quietly or meet other people in your community for a chat.

Each warm space is different and may not be open every day, so always best to double check first.

To find your nearest warm space visit  
**[nland.cc/warmspaces](http://nland.cc/warmspaces)**  
 or speak to a Social Prescribing Link Worker.

**Warm Welcome**

Northumberland County Council

Northumberland communities together

If you want to come and say hello face to face, we're working with a network of community spaces that you can visit this winter.

They are warm, welcoming places where you can pop in, spend some time and even have a chat (about cost of living or anything else).

*For you, your family and friends*

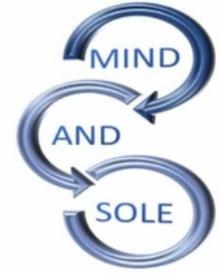
Find your nearest warm space at  
**[nland.cc/warmspaces](http://nland.cc/warmspaces)**

or call Northumberland Communities Together on 01670 620015 from 9am to 6pm 7 days

# MORPETH WALKING GROUP

## with Mind & Sole

by Lisa Baker



The Mind and Sole walking and talking group in Morpeth have made a few changes going into the new year.

With Vision Northumberland becoming a Warm Space and offering a lovely service to visitors of teas & coffees and homemade soups the walkers were keen to sample these delights, especially on the more blustery cold winter days!

Therefore the walk now meets outside the Vision Northumberland building (behind Morrisons car park) at 11.30am every Thursday. Walkers enjoy a gentle 1 mile walk around Morpeth that is suitable for all ages and abilities with lots of chatting and laughs along the way.

The Mind and Sole Walk Leaders deliver a safe walking environment that is structured around the members and they are also trained first aiders, sighted guides and have training in mental health first aid and suicide awareness. This really is a group that is open to EVERYONE!

For more information pop along to a session, speak to a Social Prescribing Link Worker or contact Mind and Sole at [mindandsole1@gmail.com](mailto:mindandsole1@gmail.com) / 01665 603040.

“

...Everyone was so friendly and it's lovely to explore places I'd never walked to before despite living here all my life!



**FREE 'WARM SPACE'**

Vision Northumberland will be opening its doors and putting the kettle on for those in need this Autumn and Winter

Join us on Thursdays 10.00am - 3.00pm at Reiver House Staithes Lane, Morpeth, NE61 1TD

Free refreshments, charging points, magazines and newspapers

LAST REFRESHMENTS SERVED AT 2PM  
Call us on 01670 514316

The poster features a Vision Northumberland logo in the top left, a hand holding a blue mug in a circular inset, and a cup of coffee with a heart-shaped latte art in another circular inset.

## FUEL IN THE TANK

by Jane Cannam

“

...It's peace of mind knowing that there is someone to contact if I need support.

A patient was referred to the Social Prescribing Team following early retirement from work due to health problems. They needed support to help with the transition onto benefits and whilst they were empowered to navigate this well themselves this took some time and they found themselves getting behind on important bills. The patient was signposted to Citizens Advice and Christians Against Poverty where they were able to get helpful advice on the new range of benefits and financial support available to them. The Social Prescribing Link Worker also made an application on their behalf for a hardship loan.

This enabled them to fill their oil tank for the winter.

The rising cost of living has had a impact on many of our patients but getting the right advice through effective signposting and social prescription has made all the difference for this family.

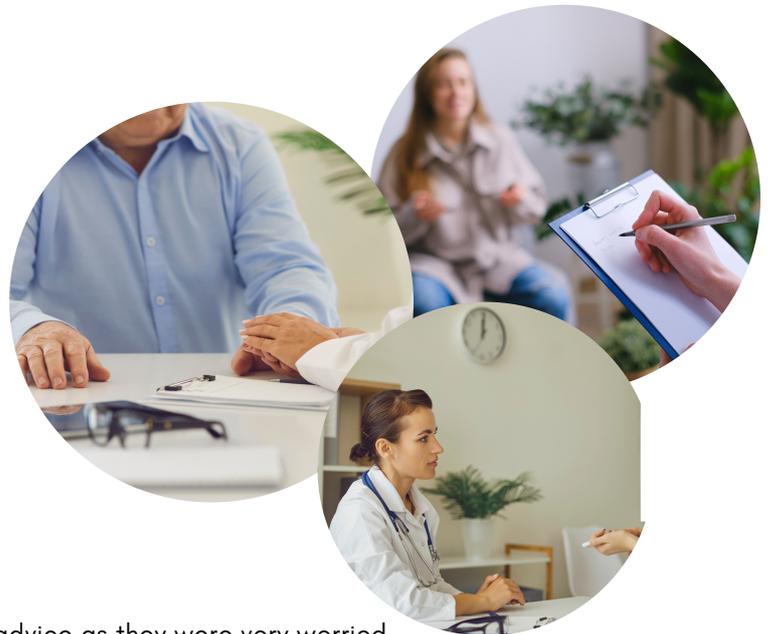
Also, as a unexpected treat our patient was nominated to be given a gift bag full of Alnwick Christmas goodies from the Alnwick Gardens. A show of appreciation for the years of work they had provided in the care sector!



## "WE DIDN'T KNOW THIS SERVICE EXISTED!"

by Carol Gunn

A patient's relative called the surgery asking for some advice as they were very worried about their relatives failing memory. The patient was unaware that there was anything wrong and was refusing to make an appointment to speak to a GP. The Social Prescribing Link Worker spoke with the relative to listen to their worries and to talk through options to support the patient to attend the surgery. They then contacted the patient to offer their support and the patient shared that, following a recent hospital admission, they were in a bit of pain. The Social Prescribing Link Worker suggested an appointment with their GP to talk about this and supported them to make arrangements for them to attend with their family. The patient and family were given the opportunity to raise all their concerns and discuss the appropriate assessment route to take. The family were grateful to the Social Prescribing Link Worker for listening to them and providing support to enable their relative to get the care they needed.



# GARDENING ON PRESCRIPTION

by Natalie Arnold

The GP partners at Coquet Medical Group alongside Social Prescribing Link Worker Natalie Arnold have launched a Courtyard Garden Project at Amble Health Centre. The aim of the project is to bring patients together to create a sensory garden space.

The first session was held in September and work began by clearing weeds to make way for the new gardening season.



"My hopes for the project are to bring people together in nature, to give our patient attendees a sense of achievement and empowerment through creative input and collaboration, as well as offer a safe space to talk, build friendships, and generally improve mental and physical wellbeing. I'm really excited to see the space transform over the coming months and be able to offer staff a calming space to take 5."

Natalie Arnold, Social Prescribing Link Worker

If you are a patient of Coquet Medical Group and want to get involved with the project; whether you are a keen gardener that would like to volunteer your time and expertise or you have no experience and just want to come along and get stuck in please contact the practice!

'Being able to refer to social prescribing is a fantastic resource for me as a GP.

Many of my patients don't need medication from a GP to help them, instead they get much better results through focusing on improving their social circumstances and engaging with others in the community. Before we had Social Prescribers I felt frustrated that I could see what my patients needed but was unable to help as much as I would like.

However now with our Social Prescribers it is wonderful to be able to offer my patients a bespoke quality service which can help make real life positive changes to their life.'

Dr Katherine Carman, GP partner



# MAGICAL MUSIC

by Jan Casson

It feels like Memory Laners has been around a long time, in fact it's just 15 months, but what a difference it appears to have made. We have had our ups and downs, the downs being the loss of several of our merry band, but each of them have left us with so many good memories that we can only be grateful for the time we spent together. The ups on the other hand are almost too numerous to name. The joys of watching people come alive through music and dance, the laughter when things go wrong - a frequent and hilarious part of the group! The time spent with each other, the contribution of the children of St Marys and their wonderful teachers, the fun you can have making a fairground out of junk and then sharing it with the children. The indoor picnic and end of session ice creams at our fun day at the school, and the contribution of the wonderful choir and the Earl Greys .

The bedrock of the group is our lead Sam Lord, a clever, talented musician with a joy for life and a wicked sense of humour. She heads our wonderful band of volunteers, ably accompanied by Cath on the keyboard, Spike on guitar and friends she invites to come and join us from opera singers to bell ringers, and not forgetting our dancers.

Everyone plays a part, from the wonderful team at the Maltings who set up the tech required plus all the tables and chairs, the café team who provide our tea, coffee and traybakes, and the group themselves who care for each other, make us laugh and cry, and provide friendship, warmth and a lust for life undiminished by what has been thrown at them.

Finally a huge thank you to North Northumberland Voluntary Forum for doing the admin for the group, without which none of this would be possible.

