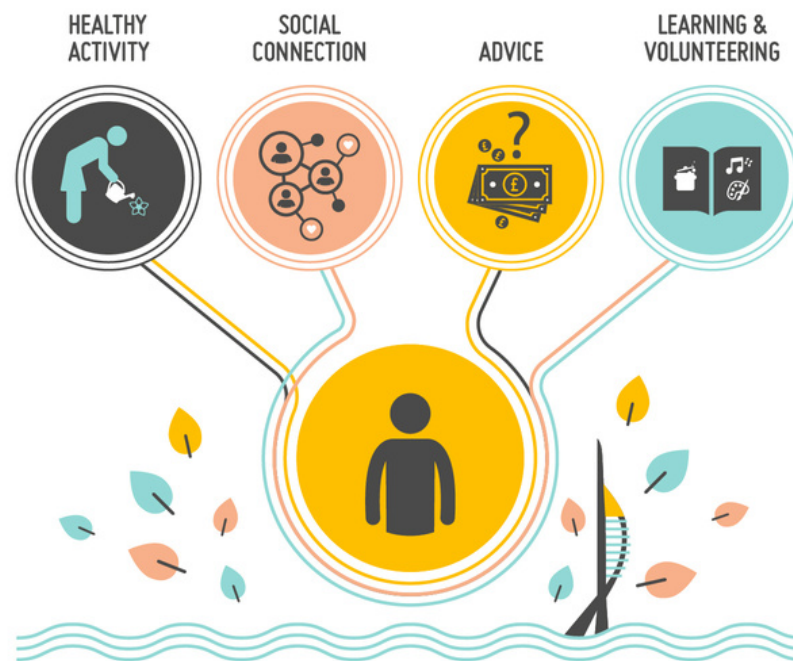




THE SCOOP

The Social Prescribing Newsletter for Well Up North PCN



HOW IS YOUR YEAR GOING?

For the Social Prescribers and Health & Wellbeing Coaches it's been pretty busy. As a small team of 9 we have been busy working across all surgeries within the Well Up North Primary Care Network (PCN), which runs along the coast from Berwick to Morpeth. In the first 3 months of 2023 we have supported nearly 1300 patients! This has involved over 9000 contacts with patients, either in person or over the phone.

Social Prescribers received 249 referrals during this time, 95% of these came from staff working within the surgery like GPs, Nurses, Physios, etc but 5% were self-referrals. Did you know as a patient you can refer yourself directly to the Social Prescribing team? It's as simple as speaking to reception or emailing nencicb-nor.socialprescriberswun@nhs.net.

The team have also been busy supporting local projects and groups, developing partnerships with local organisations in the community and running all sorts of schemes - all of which you can find more about throughout this newsletter!

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- Team Update
- Coaches' Corner
- SEAFIT Support
- Shining Star
- Green Social Prescribing
- How a Sunday Surprise Changed a Life
- Community Transport
- Furry Friends
- Are you ready for your next chapter?
- Holding on to Mum
- Positive Prescribing
- Health Inequalities Update

To find out more email nencicb-nor.socialprescriberswun@nhs.net

TEAM UPDATE



Goodbyes

We send our best wishes to Jane Cannam, one of our Social Prescribers, who left the team last month. Jane supported patients from Alnwick Medical Group and co-ordinated the Well Up North PCN Book Club. She'll be a great miss to patients and colleagues.

I just wanted to take this opportunity to say cheerio from social prescribing - it has been a wonderful three and a bit years. We have forged a service in the dark days of Covid and now social prescribing is a shining light of holistic healthcare, firmly embedded within Well Up North. It has been wonderful to be part of a such an amazing team of dedicated people who consistently deliver better health outcomes for people via non clinical interventions. Thank you so much. Jane Cannam

Social Prescribing Day

Social Prescribing Day is an annual national celebration of the people, organisations and communities who make social prescribing happen. On March 9th we joined in to help raise awareness of the social prescribers working in your local surgery and the amazing work they do to help patient's health and wellbeing. Many things that affect our health can't be treated by doctors or medicine alone - like loneliness, isolation, or stress due to financial pressures. Social prescribing is a way of connecting people to activities, groups and support that can address these issues, and improve health and wellbeing more generally.

To find out who the social prescriber is in your surgery email nencicb-nor.socialprescriberswun@nhs.net.

Left to Right:
Natalie Arnold
Lisa Baker
Jan Casson
Carol Gunn
Jane Cannam
Lorna Chappell

Missing:
Miranda Hughes

 **Social
Prescribing
Day**
9TH MARCH '23

#SOCIALPRESCRIBINGDAY



COACHES' CORNER

by Tom Henderson,
Health and Wellbeing Coach



Try, try and try again!

Making changes can be quite daunting, we tend to be creatures of habit and in general these are habits that are serving us, whether that's because they fit into or around our work, hobbies and other responsibilities, or they help to improve our mood and energy levels – or at least they did at some point!

Recognising when some of these habits are no longer serving us or are becoming detrimental to our Health and Wellbeing can feel like a bit of a 'penny dropping' moment when it happens. It's easier said than done in many cases as we often don't take the time to reflect on our lifestyles.

But when the penny does drop then it's an opportunity to try new things. We tend to want the answer given to us but to find the changes that serve us and are sustainable it's about trial and error; try, try and try again until you find what suits you. Trying new things can push us out of our comfort zone and we are unlikely to find the solution first time. While that can sound daunting and frustrating, just keep in mind that each try is a growth and learning opportunity. The positives of finding something new you enjoy or finding a better habit that serves you will, more often than not, outweigh the short-term discomfort and frustration. Even if at the start you just find things that don't work or you don't enjoy, you've still learnt something and can be one step closer to finding something that serves your Health and Wellbeing.

Service update

In the last couple of months, the team have been trying some new ideas ourselves to improve the service for patients in Well Up North. These 'Pilot' projects are a way for us to develop the service and collect feedback from patients before deciding whether to roll them out across more practices and patients.

Weight Management Group Pilot

The team recently ran an 8-week Weight Management Group for patients at Wooler Health and Coquet Medical Group. This was delivered as a mixture of in-person group sessions and online content including recorded information and live Q+A sessions.

This was our first experience of running a group as part of the Health and Wellbeing Coaching service and although patients were looking to reduce their weight, the programme was focussed on coaching around individual lifestyle and behaviour change to improve Health and Wellbeing, and if weight loss occurred then that was a happy bi-product.

Patients who completed the course successfully made changes to work/life balance, alcohol intake and in most cases weight and waist improvements followed suit.

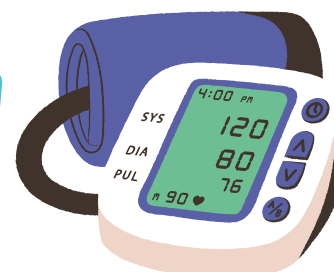
We are currently analysing the success of this pilot and will decide in the near future whether we will offer this on a regular basis and at more practices in Well Up North.

Health and Wellbeing Drop-in

Rebecca, is currently running a weekly Health and Wellbeing Drop-in service at Well Close Surgery for those looking for support with lifestyle changes for weight loss and blood pressure.

Patients are given a measurement booklet to help to track their weight and blood pressure and Rebecca is there to offer support on making lifestyle changes.

If you are a patient at Well Close Surgery you can access the drop-in every Wednesday from 8:30am to 12.00pm.



SEAFIT SUPPORT

by Karen Gibson

The Social Prescribing Team continues to work alongside other Well Up North staff (including physiotherapist, mental health practitioner, a GP and pharmacist) to provide a range of free services for retired and active fishers and their families as part of the SEAFIT programme. Healthwatch Northumberland have also been on hand to listen to the fishers' experiences of local health services. As well as, Prostrate Cancer UK, Diabetic Eye Screening Services, Fishermens Mission providing advice and support.



The next session is on:
Wednesday 31 May from 1.00pm - 3.00pm
at Coquet House on Amble Quayside



“ *The Outcome Star exercise
threw the reality of their
situation into bright light* ”

SHINING STAR
by Miranda Hughes

A patient was referred into social prescribing by their GP, with the hope to address increasing isolation, social anxiety and low mood. The patient described themselves as “not the same person” as they used to be, and felt lost, hopeless and absolutely stuck. It took several conversations for the patient to identify that they had indeed gone on a downward spiral, losing all confidence and shutting themselves inside simply to avoid facing the world. The Outcome Star exercise threw the reality of their situation into bright light, outlining clearly the areas of their life which were less than satisfactory, and helping us to understand where to direct our focus.

We worked together to establish the patient’s motivation for making change, deciding that in order to be available and supportive to their family, changes need to happen and they needed to pull themselves out of their rut. We discussed times when the patient did feel happy and confident, and considered factors that may have contributed to this. The patient came to the realisation that actually, they are a very sociable person who happened to have an introverted personality, and provided they allowed adequate time to rest in between social interactions, and meaningful alone time to avoid being overwhelmed, connecting with others may be just what they needed.

We started small, looking at existing interests, and then pulling together options from the community to provide opportunities to engage in these interests in a social setting. Within a matter of weeks, the patient had joined a local social group and made friends with several people there, as well as attending several sessions at a gardening club at Stobhill Link. As well as these sessions, they learned about the other services Stobhill Link provides, including a second hand school uniform swap shop, which they found very useful. Before long, the patient had gathered the confidence and motivation to start driving lessons, with a clear goal in mind to be able to access more of their community, see family more often, and expand opportunities for their children to attend extra-curricular activities.

The patient felt “so much happier” and exuded a new level of self-worth and confidence. Sometimes, all that is needed is the time to have focused conversations that help to identify the problem and any barriers to addressing the problems, as well as local knowledge of community resources, and the gentle guidance to make use of what is available.

GREEN SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

“ *Green Social Prescribing is the practice of supporting people in engaging in nature-based interventions and activities to improve their mental health.* ”

IN THE SURGERY

by Natalie Arnold

Spring is in the air and the gardening season is upon us which means we have been able to start again with patient sessions at Amble Health Centre Courtyard - its amazing what can be done in a couple of hours and the benefits it brings participants!

Next session is being held:

Wednesday 3rd May

10.30 - 12.30

Amble Health Centre

If you are interested in taking part
please email

nencicb-nor.socialprescriberswun@nhs.net



DOWN ON THE ALLOTMENT

by Jane Cannam



I had a great initial appointment with our patient and their parent, ascertaining that the patient's main issue was they were just really bored! Getting to know the patient, I established what was important to them and had a good mix of face to face sessions, telephone calls and email exchanges. The patient loves computers and has a long term goal of getting supported employment. They also previously enjoyed attending the Alnwick Gardens and thought that some green social prescribing might be fun. With a bit of encouragement, a few social prescribing referrals and the co-ordination of various support services diaries, they attended a taster session at the local Border Links project and also an allotment project. They now take an active role in both groups and their independence is increasing. They have also been linked with the Employment Engagement Officer at the Alnwick Gardens to see what might be available in terms of supported employment or volunteering in the longer term. A new lease of life for this patient thanks to a great community effort!

HOW A SUNDAY SURPRISE CHANGED A LIFE

by Lorna Chappell



Sunday Art Club
is held at 17, Wallace Green, Berwick
from 3.00pm -5.00pm every week.

I met a patient recently who had raised children and who had been a Carer for most of their adult life and were experiencing the feeling everyone had "flown the nest" or had advanced to next level care. In short - they were a bit lost and felt very "down". We talked on a couple of occasions and although I knew that they were interested in history and genealogy, they had not ever been a "groups person". During the course of our talks, they happened to mention that they liked drawing and painting and had put together a scrapbook of their "efforts". I was honoured to be the first person they had ever shown it to! This was a life changing session because I was able to tell them about The Sunday Art Club in Berwick which is open to all for 2 hours every week. Payment is by donation only. This has since become their most exciting and best bit of the week. Through the Art Club, their ability has been recognised and the group encouragement has empowered them to sell some of their pictures. Nobody could be more delighted or thrilled to witness the difference this has made to their life!

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

by Jan Casson



North Northumberland Voluntary Forum has been awarded a grant to help look at how community transport contributes to the broader transport agenda, especially in the rural areas. This will be a partnership approach involving the voluntary and community sector, Northumberland County Council, Northumbria NHS Trust, public transport providers and the Primary Care Network amongst others.

“

LOTTERY FUNDING -

IMPROVING INFRASTRUCTURE AND BOOSTING INVESTMENT IN NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

One of the most significant grants was awarded to the Northumberland Transport Partnership, which received £284,912. This funding will enable the North Northumberland Voluntary Forum to conduct a feasibility study into transport links within the community. The study aims to develop tailored solutions to support all members of the community in accessing services, education, employment and leisure pursuits, and to help those at risk of loneliness and isolation. Grants have helped to tackle social isolation, provide mental health support, and improve employment prospects, amongst other initiatives. I am proud to represent a constituency that is actively engaged in community activities and grateful for the National Lottery Community Fund's continued support of these efforts.

Extract from 'My week in Westminster' by Anne-Marie Trevelyan

”

FURRY FRIENDS

by Lisa Baker

Wag & Co provide a wonderful befriending service matching older dog lovers, who are no-longer able to have a dog, with volunteers who will visit them in their own homes to provide a little companionship in the form of a chat and cuddle with a furry friend.

I was lucky enough to be part of the matching process with volunteer Denise and her gorgeous greyhound Stella. Those first cuddles were absolutely beautiful to see. Denise shared "it's a privilege to visit on behalf of Wag & Co and would encourage anyone with a dog to join the Wag & Co team, they do an amazing job co-ordinating everything and are very supportive to their volunteers. Stella and I both look forward to our weekly visits".



“

It's a privilege to visit on behalf of wag and would encourage anyone with a dog to join the Wag and Co team, they do an amazing job coordinating everything and are very supportive to their volunteers, Stella and I both look forward to our weekly visits.

”

If you are interested in finding out more about Wag & Co or becoming a volunteer visitor visit www.wagandcompany.co.uk or call 01434 611801.

If you are interest in a referral to Wag & Co please speak to your Social Prescriber.



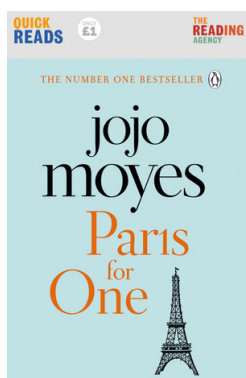
ARE YOU READY FOR YOUR NEXT CHAPTER?



A little reading can go a long way. It can connect us to others, spark curiosity, boost our self-esteem and support our mental health. Does reading really make a difference? Absolutely!

According to research, adults who read for just 30 minutes a week are:

- 20% more likely to report greater life satisfaction.
- 18% more likely to have higher self-esteem.
- 52% more likely to feel socially included and 37% more likely to get greater pleasure out of their social life.



Thanks to The Reading Agency we currently have a limited number of copies of Jojo Moyes - Paris for One 'quick read' short novel available for FREE if you would like to test this theory!

If you would like to have the opportunity to read new books and make new friends, the Well Up North Book Club group meets once a month on Zoom to discuss books that are kindly loaned by Northumberland Library. One of its regular readers says it's "a safe environment where like minded people join together through the love of books and readings".

To find more about the Well Up North Book Club or to request a free copy of 'Paris for One' please speak to your local social prescriber or email nencicb-nor.socialprescriberswun@nhs.net.

HOLDING ON TO MUM

by Veronika Cuthbert,

Maternal Mental Health Link Worker

Everyone wants to hold the baby, but who holds the mum?

Having a baby can be one of life's most exciting and challenging experiences. It can also be a bit of a roller coaster – there might be joy, happiness and delight at times, but there may be other times when all you feel is stressed, frustrated, overwhelmed and confused. Being a parent to an infant is hard work and it can certainly take lots of emotional energy.

Many things can make you feel this way. You might feel disappointment that the birth wasn't as you'd planned. You might be worrying about the baby's health or how you're coping as a parent, feeling upset if your baby is unsettled, disappointment if you find breastfeeding difficult, feeling that you aren't having the ideal baby experience you imagined or struggling with a reduced income or the loss of freedom and changes to who you were and your lifestyle. Many new mums worry that they might be seen as not coping or not perfect. You might find you have lack of emotional support from your partner or other family members and friends. You might be feeling guilty and sad that you're not with your baby if you return to work. You might not be coping with the chaos in your house. You might be struggling to make time for friendships or doing things you used to enjoy. All of this can feel very lonely and isolating.

Remember that being a parent is an enormously challenging job. It's important to acknowledge how you feel and confide in someone you trust.

Here at the Well Up North Maternal Mental Health Support Service, we think it's important that you get opportunities for support during the perinatal period, to keep your emotional health in check throughout the journey. We can work together with you to identify what matters most to you, and support you in offering a range of personalised support sessions that help you affect the change you would like to see in your life.

When you feel well and content, supported, listened to, understood, you're better able to manage stress, maintain happy relationships, communicate your feelings and really enjoy life with your new baby. Looking after your new baby during the first year of life is a constant and demanding job. Lots of people need a bit of extra support at this time. There's no shame in asking for help, if and when you need it. We would be delighted to help.

Your GP, Midwife, Health Visitor or Social Prescriber can refer you to us. We can work with women anytime throughout their pregnancy, up until the baby is 2 years old, if you are experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties. We look forward to meeting you soon.



"This support is so valuable. All I needed was to be listened to, my story remembered, my troubles accepted as being real. That was all I really wanted."



"You are the first person to actually ask about me and not the babies. I love them, but no one seems to think about me and what I might want. Everyone just thinks because the babies are well, I should be happy. Which of course I am, but I want someone to care how I'm doing"



"This is the only time of the week I feel calm, when you speak with me. You just have this ability to soothe and make things feel alright again. All of my other appointments, I come out crying and frustrated. But this one, I feel like I get my strength back and I can go on"

POSITIVE PRESCRIBING

by Carol Gunn

Unfortunately the Bridge project has come to an end, but a patient referral and support from the Social Prescriber resulted in them having the confidence to apply for their "dream job" and being successful in securing employment within the NHS.

“ Without your encouragement and believing in me I would never have had the confidence to apply, never mind actually getting the job. Thank you so much! ”

A successful application to The Greggs Foundation for a washing machine for a family who couldn't afford to buy a new one. All were very happy and were very appreciative for the support to get this.

“ You have no idea what a difference this has made! ”

HEALTH INEQUALITY UPDATE

by Karen Gibson

Access survey for those living with a disability:

We have carried out a survey in relation to access issues for our patients living with a disability. With support from family members, carers, and support workers, we have had a great response from patients within Well Up North. The results and the themes that emerged are being collated and will be considered by GP practices in relation to their quality improvement agenda.

Military Veterans:

Work continues and links are being made throughout the area on how support can be provided to military veterans. The Northumberland Armed Forces Forum develops links between the Local Authority, Public Health, the Armed Forces, Veterans, and relevant partner organisations who all want the best support for military personnel including veterans. We have asked our GP practices within Well Up North to enable military veterans to identify themselves so that they can be coded correctly on the electronic systems. This enables me to research the health inequalities of these patients, and to also advocate on their behalf in helping the local authority with a plan to help reduce any identified.

Farming Community Health Project - Northumberland Farm-fit:

This is a pilot project, and we are currently undertaking a needs assessment.

"The Future of Farming in Northumberland" report was produced in November 2022 by Professor Sally Shortall. This was at the request of Northumberland County Council to try and understand the challenges and opportunities faced by farmers and landowners in Northumberland, especially in moving from the current regime of subsidy funding to the new benefits system for environmental land management. Research shows issues within farming include things such as undiagnosed health conditions, poor mental health, anxiety, stress, isolation issues and poor drinking habits. All of these are not unique to the farming industry; however, we know that due to the long working hours that farmers do, they sometimes put off going to the GP or think that something is trivial when in fact it might not be. Ideally, we need help from the farming community to understand their health inequality needs. We have reached out to large farming organisations and Young Farmers in the area to ask their opinions. Ideally, I would love to come and chat to farmers and their families individually, I know now is a busy time for all of the farming community so will fit around your schedule. We also have a survey which could be completed in your own time if this is more convenient.



To share your views and experiences please email: karen.gibson1@nhs.net

#ANDYSMANCLUB

**SUICIDE IS THE BIGGEST
KILLER OF MEN UNDER 54
1 MAN EVERY 2 HOURS**

**PRESENTATION HERE!
DETAILS BELOW:**

**Tues 16th May
at 7pm. Bell View,
Belford, NE70 7QB**

**JOIN THE
CONVERSATION**

 [andysmanclub](#)
 [andysmanclubuk](#)
 [@andysmanclubuk](#)
 info@andysmanclub.co.uk



#ITSOKAYTOTALK

We are a peer to peer support group for men. Come have a brew and a chat!