



National
Academy
for Social
Prescribing



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24

"We remain optimistic about the power of social prescribing. By working together, we can strengthen communities and support people facing a wide range of challenges that affect their health."



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A welcome from our Chair and CEO

It is now almost five years since the National Academy for Social Prescribing was formally established, and since the NHS Long Term Plan committed to rolling out social prescribing across England.

During that time, there has been huge progress across the social prescribing movement. There are now more than 3,600 Social Prescribing Link Workers in post in GP Practices across England (and many more across the wider NHS and community) and social prescribing has been enshrined in national policy, from the Loneliness Strategy to the Suicide Prevention Strategy to the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan. There are an extraordinary range of innovative projects across the country, many of which we have supported over the last year.

The success of the cross-Government **Green Social Prescribing** programme and our own **Thriving Communities** programme highlight what can be achieved when we connect the health system more effectively with well-designed local projects.

The second round of the **Art by Post** project, in partnership with the Southbank Centre, has demonstrated the impact that creativity can have on mental health.

Through the **Power of Music Fund**, we are showing the value of bringing together public, private and philanthropic funders to invest in music-based activities for

people living with dementia. As well as directly supporting grassroots groups, we have established a Centre of Excellence, which will provide the evidence and resources needed to operate at a larger scale in future.

Through our **Champions programme**, **webinars** and **resources**, we have continued to support health workers, voluntary sector professionals and others, and to help Primary Care Networks and Integrated Care Systems to make social prescribing a priority. We have also worked on toolkits for **Nature Buddies**, **Heritage Buddies** and **Connectors**, based on the evidence generated by successful pilot programmes, which outline how volunteers can identify and support people who would most benefit.

Across the world, we have **worked with more than 30 countries** to develop social prescribing programmes, learning from what has been achieved in the UK. And we continue to work hard to **raise the profile of social prescribing** through our Social Prescribing & Me campaign and the annual Social Prescribing Day.

As new plans emerge for the next ten years of health and care policy in England,

this is a crucial time to highlight the evidence-based role that social prescribing can play in helping people to live well for longer. Our **'Future of Social Prescribing in England'** report sets out what has been achieved, and also what could happen next. Our **evidence reviews** show that social prescribing can support people in many different ways, that it benefits our

economy, and that it reduces unnecessary pressure on the health system.

In the face of changes, we remain optimistic about the power of social prescribing. By working together, we can strengthen communities and support people facing a wide range of challenges that affect their health.



Helen Stokes-Lampard,
Chair



Charlotte Osborn-Forde,
Chief Executive

This is a time of change - with a new Government and also new leadership at NASP. Through our first five years, Professor Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard has been our Chair of Trustees, establishing and growing the charity with wisdom, clarity and kindness. As she moves to New Zealand, we are hugely grateful for everything she has done, both for NASP and for the

health of our country more widely. As the first full-time CEO for NASP, I have just completed my first year in post and I am proud to lead this remarkable team and to work with our diverse and innovative range of stakeholders. Thank you all for helping make this organisation the huge success that it is, and I look forward to the opportunities and challenges ahead.

Charlotte Osborn-Forde,
Chief Executive



Our Vision

Our vision is to help people live the best lives they can through social prescribing.

Our strategy for 2023-26 focuses on five key ambitions.



In 2023, we published our Future of Social Prescribing in England report, which builds on this vision and sets out recommendations for the future.



Highlights from 2023-24

Launched the **Power of Music Fund**, announcing a Centre of Excellence for Music and Dementia and grants for music-based support

Supported thousands of **Link Workers** and voluntary sector professionals through **webinars, toolkits and resources**

Increased visitors to the NASP website by **235%** since 2022-23

Published **The Future of Social Prescribing in England** report, setting out an ambitious plan for the next five years

Launched the second iteration of **Art by Post**, supporting thousands of people through art and poetry projects for health and wellbeing

Visited and **presented on Social Prescribing** in South Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore and Japan

Launched the **Innovation Network**



Connection



We are continuing to create a connected social prescribing system, enabling easier access to activities and information. We do this by supporting the social prescribing workforce - including Link Workers, NHS clinical staff and voluntary sector organisations - and providing advice and support to improve social prescribing systems.

Thriving Communities

In 2023/4, we celebrated the completion of our Thriving Communities programme. Highlights of the programme included:

- Establishing the £1.8 million Thriving Communities Fund, an innovative programme of grants dedicated to supporting social prescribing activities in local communities, working in partnership with Arts Council England, Historic England, Money and Pensions Service, Natural England, NHS Charities Together, Sport England, and NHS England. The fund supported more than 10,000 people through 37 projects and left a legacy of new programmes and improved connections between health systems and community organisations.
- The Thriving Communities Regional Programme, which involved delivering Learning Together, which brought together local voluntary sector organisations to develop skills, learn and network. Our Regional Leads also delivered a wide range of webinars, workshops and conferences, and created reports and resources based on the local needs.

The programme has played a crucial role in connecting organisations at a regional level. We are building on its success through the work of our National Leads (see Partnership section below) and by creating resources and webinars for voluntary sector organisations across the country. We are also continuing to support voluntary organisations through our Power of Music Fund (see Investment section below).

Social Prescribing patient Outi's story



When social prescribing is successfully embedded in a medical setting, patients like Outi benefit. Having lost her business and home in quick succession, she experienced physical health issues caused by the stress, and initially visited her GP. Following some medical investigations, she was referred to mental health support and then a Link Worker. She says the impact has been profound: "When

I felt like I'd lost everything, it was social prescribing that helped me turn my life around. The support I received through my Link Worker helped me see there was a life still out there for me at a time when I was so low and couldn't see a way out. Now things are much better."

Through a social prescribing pilot programme, that focused on reintegrating people who had been isolated during the pandemic back into their communities, Outi began to leave the house again, meet new people and regain her confidence.

Workforce and Healthcare Integration

In 2023 - 2024 we engaged with 37 Integrated Care Partnerships and Boards, out of the 42 Integrated Care Systems that exist across England, supporting the development of their social prescribing programmes. We published ten guides focused on integrating social prescribing into the health and care system. These include guides on children and young people, older people and population health management.

In October 2023 we launched the Link Worker Advisory Group, consisting of 28 practising Link Workers with representation across England. The group meets monthly and covers a variety of discussion topics - including the opportunity to discuss national developments, be part of workshops to inform our developing workforce programme and offer advice, support and skills across NASP's work.



Social Prescribing Link Worker Reuben's story



Brighton and Hove LGBT Switchboard supports vulnerable individuals through its specialised social prescribing service. Reuben, a social prescriber at the charity, assists TNBI (trans, non-binary, and intersex) people and LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer) migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. These groups can face significant challenges in healthcare, mental health, education, employment, and

social connections. Founded in the mid-1970s, Switchboard still operates its original helpline and collaborates with other services to offer comprehensive care. Funded by NHS England via Together Co Brighton, their social prescribing services are unique in the UK. Reuben explains, "It's a privilege to see an issue through to resolution or support clients with other services. We meet people where they feel comfortable, emphasising our 'by and for' LGBTQ+ service to ensure clients feel accepted and understood."

Champions

Social prescribing champions are NHS staff members in England (clinical and non-clinical) working across community, primary, and secondary care to raise awareness of social prescribing within their workplace or profession. Since 2022, they have been supporting Social Prescribing Link Workers, promoting good practice, and helping busy practitioners to consider social, emotional and practical support needs alongside biomedical interventions for patients.

In 2023-24, a review of the programme in the previous year showed that 96% of participants felt that NASP's workshops had had a significant positive impact on their ability to champion social prescribing. They had hosted webinars and workshops to raise awareness, engaged thousands of fellow professionals on social media, and in some cases redesigned local systems to increase the use of social prescribing. While the programme is no longer funded by NHS England, we have continued to welcome new champions across a range of disciplines and support them to increase awareness and good practice.

We also continue to support the Student Social Prescribing Champions scheme. Over seven years, 782 student champions from 87 universities have delivered 1,500 peer-teaching sessions. The scheme has also led to social prescribing being included in the medical training curricula across the country.

NASP Student Champion, John Wells's story

John, a student nurse at Liverpool John Moores University, said:



“I initially joined NASP’s Student Champion scheme as I was very interested in social prescribing after completing a module on it in my university course. I’ve been helping spread the word to residents across Merseyside at various events but the most enjoyable was an event with Liverpool Libraries, where I spent time with residents. It was an event that was advertised on Twitter and a local radio station and had stalls from various charities to help local people. I felt so proud to represent nurses and midwives within the scheme, especially as this was a brand-new role. I want to spread the word across all multi-disciplinary teams (MDTs) about how amazing social prescribing is, and the dramatic changes in our patients that it can make.”

NASP Student Champion, Emily Dean's story



“I initially joined the scheme because after hearing about social prescribing, I recognised it would have helped me in my struggles with an eating disorder. Structured activity with like-minded people would have helped me so much because the activity itself and the associated friendships positively impact mental and physical wellbeing and loneliness. Also, my experience volunteering with adults with learning disabilities through activities such as gardening, cooking, art and sports also showed me that community built through shared experiences changes people’s lives. My aim when joining the scheme was to introduce other healthcare students to the role of Social Prescribing Link Workers and how they provide access to activities, support and volunteering opportunities for patients. It’s essential that we can utilise this amazing resource to benefit individual patients.”

The Future of Social Prescribing

In November 2023, we published *The Future of Social Prescribing in England*, a report focused on what has been achieved since the NHS Long Term Plan in 2019 and on priorities for the future. This was based on consultation with partners across the social prescribing system, and sets out priorities for the next five years.

Our recommendations:

1. Ensuring that every GP practice in England has a Social Prescribing Link Worker, by almost doubling the number of link workers to 6,500.
2. Supporting frontline community organisations through Shared Investment Funds for social prescribing.
3. Improving data through a national hub to ensure social prescribing becomes business as usual in the NHS.
4. Establishing a world-class training and development programme for Social Prescribing Link Workers and social prescribing leaders working in the NHS and beyond.
5. Making prevention a priority by embedding social prescribing in wider civic and community services, including in workplaces.



Partnerships



National Leads

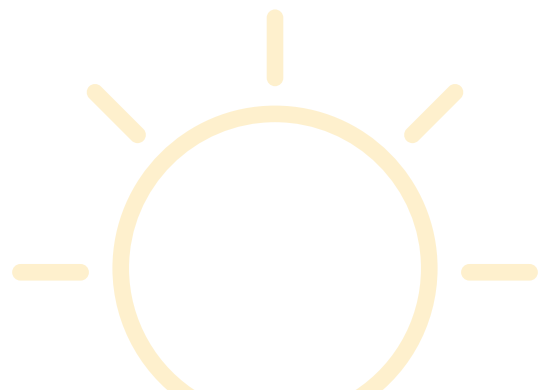
Natural Environment

This year we have made significant strides in the Green Social Prescribing (GSP) Test and Learn pilot, collaborating closely with national programme partners on the next steps for scaling and spreading the programme. The GSP toolkit, a key output from the pilot programme, has been promoted on the NASP website, resulting in 1,957 downloads over the financial year.

Nature Buddies emerged from the GSP pilot programme to help address barriers individuals face in accessing nature-based activities and support. Through a co-design process with local partners and Natural England, different models for Nature Buddies were scoped, leading to pilot projects that explored how buddies can support people experiencing social isolation and anxiety. The learning from these projects and stakeholder discussions was compiled into the Nature Buddies toolkit, which organisations and providers can use to set up their own Nature Buddies programmes. The Nature Buddies toolkit, resource pack, webinar recording, and animations are hosted on our website and have had high engagement, with the toolkit being visited by 2,000 users and downloaded 378 times in 2023/24.

In addition, we successfully submitted a bid to the Treasury to extend the GSP Test and Learn pilot programme. The bid outcome extends the programme until March 2025 with a £2.846 million grant from the Treasury Shared Outcomes Fund. The national evaluation report, set for publication, will provide insights into the programme's impact.

In collaboration with Natural England, we have also updated the Nature Connections evidence note, enhancing the dissemination of evidence-based benefits of nature connection and nature-based activities, which has been downloaded 1,168 times over the financial year 2023/24.



Social prescribing patient, Beks's story



Beks was in the depths of depression and post traumatic stress disorder, and was struggling with financial issues, when she was referred to her Social Prescribing Link Worker at Devon Mind.

When offered a place on a two night hiking residential led by the Mind over Mountains team of professional coaches and counsellors, she was able to embrace her deep connection of nature to begin to shift the way she felt about herself and her place in the world.

Beks said: “The group as a whole was so positive and there was no judgement, which was really important to me. Everyone had such different backgrounds, with different experiences and varying levels of support, but it worked well and there were plenty of opportunities for me to feel safe, included and supported.”

Historic Environment

Working with Historic England this year, we have successfully completed two pilot projects. The Heritage Connectors pilot delivered by Frome Medical Practice showed how heritage can be used in a local NHS-based social prescribing service. The Heritage Buddies pilot delivered by Nottingham Community and Volunteer Service showed how heritage volunteering can be linked to buddying and befriending to help people in need and maximise the potential of local heritage assets.

Both pilots produced toolkits, case studies and evidence reports, in collaboration with local and national partners (Historic England, NASP, Natural England and Wavehill Ltd), while two webinars on Heritage and Nature Buddies and Community Connectors helped share the results and learning widely.

The other heritage and wellbeing pilots include Project Rejuvenate (focused on heritage and archaeological therapeutic interventions for disadvantaged young people), HerWelNHS (looking at ways to improve wellbeing for NHS staff at Queen Alexandra's Hospital in Portsmouth via engagement with local heritage) and Heritage Link Worker (developing social prescribing pathways for supporting people with ill mental health in Great Yarmouth). Each resulted in useful blueprints for future embedding of heritage in wellbeing and social prescribing initiatives.

A major highlight for the heritage sector this year was the first ever Wellbeing and Heritage Conference, organised by Historic England (and the NASP National Lead for the Historic Environment), The Council for British Archaeology and The Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities, held at Delapré Abbey. It was a huge success, attracting 140 delegates representing more than 30 organisations with 70 practitioners speaking and presenting, including local MPs and social prescribing leads from the Department of Health and Social Care.

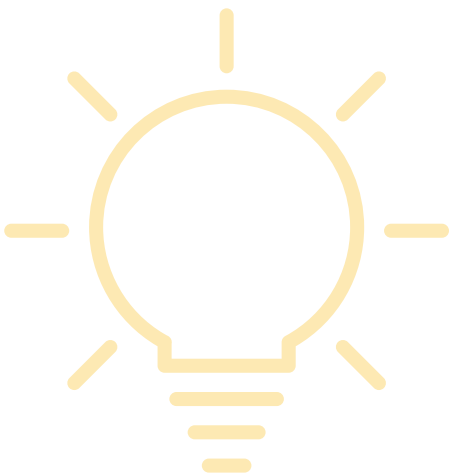


The Heritage for Wellbeing project, run by The Restoration Trust, has transformed the lives of many in Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, and Lowestoft. By engaging participants in archaeology, ancient landscapes, historic sites, and archives across East Anglia, the initiative has provided a unique avenue for mental health support.

In collaboration with local health and heritage services, the project connects individuals referred through social prescribing services to enriching heritage activities, and breaks down barriers that prevent those with low income and poor health from accessing them.

Participant David Ball shares, “When my wife died, I felt utterly alone. Heritage for Wellbeing became my lifeline. The group welcomed me warmly, transforming strangers into family. Learning about local heritage with them has been a joy.”

Participant Kerry-Ann reflects on her journey: “Joining the group introduced me to kind, caring people. Heritage for Wellbeing has been a lifesaver, offering freedom in open spaces and alleviating my isolation. I’ve rediscovered laughter and curiosity about our heritage, leaving little room for negative thought.”



Arts and Culture

2023 saw the second iteration of the hugely successful Art by Post: Poems for our Planet. In partnership with the Southbank Centre, this postal and digital project produced a series of creative booklets, designed by artists and activists, which guided participants through activities. They used poetry, creativity and nature to inspire and support wellbeing, helping readers to make connections with the living world around them. Over 3,500 booklets were distributed by June 2023.

Karin Parkinson, who is a carer for her husband living with dementia, said:
 “You have to feed yourself if you are a carer, if you don’t then you can’t care any longer. Resources that make you feel like you still exist - not just as a carer but as a creative person - are fantastic and I think Arts by Post really did that for me.”

We undertook some rapid preliminary research on referrals to the arts and creative activities made by Link Workers and social prescribers. During this scoping exercise, we held roundtables with academics, Link Workers and creative health practitioners to test the widely held assumption that referrals to the sector are relatively low, despite evidence that creativity positively impacts wellbeing. We concluded that this perception is broadly true, although the reasons are complex, pointing to the need to do more to understand why before designing effective solutions.

Along with advocacy, webinars, podcasts and speaking engagements to raise the profile of social prescribing in the arts sector we also worked closely with Libraries Connected, Public Libraries Health Group and the Reading Agency to further develop and embed the social prescribing offer in libraries as part of their universal health offer. This included initiating a bid for a pilot social prescribing hub in Suffolk next year.





Physical Activity

Over the last year, our work has continued to grow and embed physical activity within primary and secondary care. We have been working with Link Workers and multi-disciplinary teams across the country to explore how to embed physical activity into their working practice. We have recruited areas around the country, interested in developing links with the local physical activity infrastructure to work in collaboration to address their local populations' needs via groups and developing local collaborations.

In September, we brought a number of national sports and physical activity organisations together with intergrated care systems across Yorkshire and Humber to explore how physical activity and sports could work together in collaboration to share resources to address local health priorities. It was a successful day, with 50 people in attendance, all committed to exploring ways to work better together. This became a springboard for us to work with a number of national organisations exploring collaboration and shared investment for children and young people's social prescribing for mental health, which will be a major focus for next year.

Older People

In partnership with Independent Age, we commissioned Reaching People Leicester (RP) and Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) in April 2023 to better understand the needs of older people not currently accessing social prescribing, and to co-design local, asset-based social prescribing offers that respond to their priorities. Engagement of local people in Hastings took place, for example, in foodbanks and community larders. In Leicester, RP identified that the highest priority groups according to local ICB deprivation data were three sets of older people - those facing financial hardship, those socially isolated and those for whom English is a second language. They used positive psychology coaching in the engagement activities, which were delivered in English and Gujarati.

As a result of the engagement, social prescription initiatives were co-designed. In Hastings, several co-designed Healthy Hastings sessions and one Community Marketplace took place before the end of March. Through the Community Marketplace, HVA were able to provide access to activities, information, advice and guidance on health and wellbeing and financial wellbeing by a range of local services and organisations. In Leicester, activities included draught excluders being made with Adult Learning in the Knit and Natter sessions, and participants helped to apply for Attendance Allowance and move benefits into their own accounts. Building on their experiences of co-design with local older people, the two sites produced a toolkit to share their learning and tips.

Through engaging older people, the sites identified a lack of relevant information, so they collated demographic data, and mapped community resources and social prescribing services. This insight is written up in a blog published by the King's Fund. Another blog was published by the Oxford Social Prescribing Research Network about Leicester's dual in person and online provision as well as developing volunteers to take on running groups.



Children and young people

Social prescribing has enormous potential to support children and young people. We were delighted to begin partnerships with the Linbury Trust and the Sam West Foundation to develop a vision for social prescribing for children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. Working with a wide range of partners across the UK, and learning from successful projects, we will publish a report in 2024 outlining a plan for the future.

Global

International visits and speaking engagements

We have hosted a series of ministerial delegations in person at NASP as well as delivering several presentations in person in South Korea, Hong Kong, Australia, Singapore, and Japan. For example, our Global Lead and Healthcare Integration Lead visited Singapore to deliver a Social Prescribing Masterclass to over 400 people and was part of a ministerial roundtable organised by the Department of Health.

In November we hosted delegations from Canada and Australia, including a political roundtable. We arranged comprehensive site visits for our guests, offering firsthand insights into innovative care models at Bromley-by-Bow and Frome Medical Practice.

We have been part of multiple international conferences including keynote speeches at the launch of the Lisbon Social Prescribing network, Nigerian Arts in Health Week, a presentation for the Department of Health in Germany, a keynote presentation for a social prescribing conference in New York and several others. We hope to use existing NASP assets to secure larger consultancies that would enable NASP's long term sustainability.

International Social Prescribing Collaborative

During the Autumn, we spent some time clarifying the governance structure and relationships between the Global Social Prescribing Alliance (GSPA LTD), NASP and the global network of international partners which reformed as the International Social Prescribing Collaborative (ISPC) in late 2023.

This community of practice - the International Social Prescribing Collaborative - is thriving and continues to meet on a six-weekly basis. The group has grown to include representatives from 34 countries around the world. This group enables NASP to learn about best practice taking place across the world and facilitates shared learning on a global scale.



We continue to provide secretariat support to the group and see high engagement, fostering a dynamic exchange of knowledge and experiences. These gatherings have proven invaluable in strengthening international relationships and facilitating shared learning amongst peers, reaffirming our position as leaders in this community.

We have secured two co-chairs for the group to spread ownership and responsibility, as well as some subgroups on Children and Young People, Evidence, and Green Social Prescribing, to allow members to explore more in-depth conversations and collaboration with each other.

In early 2024, we presented an update of the Global Social Prescribing Map, extending it from 24 to 30 countries. This was published in June 2024 at the International Social Prescribing Conference.

Partnerships

In partnership with Harvard University, for the third consecutive year, NASP hosted two students between June and August. Both students collaborated with international partners and led key work on the development of case studies in social prescribing for children and young people, and the development of an international training programme for Link Workers.

We supported NASP's workforce lead with developing an Accredited International Link Worker Training Programme as well as working closely with our evidence team to join efforts in developing the International Evidence Collaborative.

Innovation

In 2023-24 we evolved our approach from hosting a stand-alone Accelerating Innovation Programme to committing to promoting a whole organisational culture, supporting the delivery of a truly connected social prescribing system. At the heart of our innovation work, we aim to amplify voices across the social prescribing system, to develop effective practice, support opportunities for collaboration and drive forward quality delivery of social prescribing to those who need it most.

In August 2023, we launched our new Innovation Network, which supports those delivering social prescribing to build the knowledge, connections and skills they need to apply innovation in their organisation/sector. A recent survey showed that the network provides members with:

- opportunities for peer learning and networking
- new knowledge direct from practice
- understanding of the wider system
- learning from regional and national examples.

Across the year, we have also:

Launched the Innovation Network

186 active members, bringing together national and regional voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) organisations, public sector bodies and Link Workers from across the UK.

Developed a Knowledge Gateway

A digital training and development offer for charities and social enterprises, with **60 VCFSE organisations** interested in undertaking the training when launched later this year. The Gateway will provide organisations with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively deliver quality social prescribing activity.

Launched the Innovation Hub

An online resource, offering simplified access to case studies that demonstrate innovative social prescribing initiatives across a wide range of sectors and communities. We have so far showcased **over 30 innovative examples** that aim to inspire and inform individuals from across the social prescribing system.

Supported new research

We provided insights and support to increase the evidence base of social prescribing, particularly focusing on research that demonstrates the impact and scalability of innovative approaches. This includes our work on the NIHR Work and Health, research which aims to address key challenges in supporting workplace health, including long-term conditions.

Led learning exchanges

Working with emerging areas of social prescribing, including the prison and probation system, and the business sector, we have hosted a series of learning exchanges where experts in social prescribing come together with leaders in underdeveloped areas of social prescribing to share learning, make recommendations and advocate for developing social prescribing within these sectors/communities.



Investment



Power of Music Fund (PoM)

The Power of Music Fund aims to support people living with dementia and their carers through music. We launched the fund in November 2023, in partnership with the Utley Foundation, Arts Council England, Music for All and Universal Music. The launch event included speeches from Sir John Whittingdale, Minister of State for Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and arts leaders, and led to significant press coverage.

The fund was designed after research and co-design sessions with colleagues from across the sector, including the Utley Foundation. The sessions brought a breadth of participants, from academics to groups providing support to people living with dementia at a hyper-local level, to funders.

In 2024, 70 grantees were selected to receive funding in the first round of Small Grants for community organisations providing music activities and groups for people with dementia. This is multiyear funding of up to £7,000 across three years and will enable over 4,500 people to benefit. The organisations have been selected as best practice and innovators in the field developing new models and approaches or gathering evidence and data which is strategically useful. They were selected from 380 applications - a demonstration of how much excellent work is already taking place at local levels across the country.

We also developed plans to launch the UK's first Centre of Excellence for Music and Dementia, with bids submitted at the start of 2024. The Centre of Excellence will directly support over 1000 people living with dementia and their carers, but also provide evidence of the impact that music-based support can have on health, wellbeing and vitally, demonstrate a reduction in NHS service use.

The fund has been highlighted with government departments including Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Department of Health and Social Care as a pilot for a shared investment approach to resourcing social prescribing. It was featured as an exemplar in the DCMS Creative Industries Vision.

Shared Investment Funds for social prescribing

We worked with more than 100 organisations to develop new models for shared investment funds for community groups and services providing socially prescribed support. *Envisaging a Social Prescribing Fund*, our report funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, will be published later in 2024.

The report recognises that funding for community organisations and activities is too often short term and fragmented. However, by combining different sources of investment - including from national funders, NHS, Local Authorities, businesses and philanthropists - there is an opportunity to develop new longer term funds, aligned with local health needs.

This work builds on previous shared investment initiatives, like The Power of Music Fund, The Thriving Communities Fund and the cross-Government Green Social Prescribing programme. Endorsed by a wide range of organisations, it sets out an ambitious plan for the future of social prescribing investment.



Evidence



New evidence published in 2023-24

During 2023-24, we continued to work with our evidence collaborative to produce accessible evidence products on a range of identified evidence gaps for policy and practice in the UK. We have built on our existing library of published briefings and rapid evidence reviews to add reviews on:

Children and young people's social prescribing

There is emerging evidence around the benefits of social prescribing for young people, particularly for those aged over 17, on personal and mental wellbeing, including loneliness. There is also preliminary evidence to suggest there is a potential favourable return on investment. However, to strengthen the evidence base, more robust research is needed.

Supporting the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise sector to evaluate social prescribing

The review helped to identify and collate existing resources that aim to support the evaluation of social prescribing activities. The review found a need for clear signposting to trusted resources and identified potential solutions to shared challenges when evaluating social prescribing activities.

Building the economic case for social prescribing

Evidence suggests that social prescribing can save money, with findings from studies using five different methods showing that social prescribing can have a positive economic impact through reduced pressure on the NHS. This includes reduced GP appointments, reduced hospital admissions and reduced A&E visits for people who have been referred to social prescribing. Studies suggest that social prescribing schemes can deliver between £2.14 and £8.56 in economic and social value for every £1 invested.



Profile



Communications

We have continued to raise the profile of social prescribing, among both the public and health and care professionals. According to our YouGov survey in March 2024, 20% of adults in England have heard of the term “social prescribing” - a rise from 13% in March 2022.

While recognition of the phrase “social prescribing” is still growing, 65% of adults in the UK are now aware that health workers can refer people to non-medical activities to improve their health and wellbeing. Most respondents also agreed that there should be someone available in every GP surgery who can get to know patients, understand their needs, and refer them to non-medical services in their area.

Our activity to raise awareness of social prescribing over the last year has included:

The Social Prescribing & Me campaign. Showcasing the stories of Linda, Evrill and Shiv, the campaign reached more than one million people on social media through NASP channels, with more than 30,000 views of the campaign films. Six social media influencers also supported the campaign (with more than 700,000 combined followers).

We secured media coverage about social prescribing on BBC 6 and 10 o’clock news, The Today Programme (Radio 4), the Guardian, Telegraph, Sunday Times, Independent, Express, Evening Standard, Pulse PCN and BMJ - and a wide range of local and regional media.

We coordinated #SocialPrescribingDay, producing a wide range of editable resources for organisations across the country to use. The hashtag had a potential reach of 6.8 million people on the day, with more than 30 events taking place across the UK. We also supported NHS England’s Help Us To Help You campaign.

Overall, the number of **unique visitors to our website** has more than doubled in the last year: from around 60,000 in 2022-3 to more than 136,000 in 2023-4.

Webinars

NASP continues to offer a programme of free webinars covering a range of topics from a broad spectrum of industries and backgrounds. Examples across the year include: men's mental health, social prescribing across the life course, how care navigation can improve access to social prescribing and supporting Link Workers in their role and induction.

We held **12 webinars aimed at the social prescribing workforce** over the year 2023-2024, with an average attendance of 260 people at each one. In post-webinar surveys, the average rating for usefulness of our webinars is 8.06/10 and satisfaction with our webinars is 8.1/10.

Internal Developments

Through 2023/24 we continued to build and develop our internal processes and policies, ensuring a robust structure to support NASP's current and future work. A particular focus has been our work on Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB).

A comprehensive EDIB strategy was developed and shared with staff, along with an action plan, to support embedding our EDIB approach across our work. This sits alongside our work around staff wellbeing, and we began the process to establish staff action groups to develop and improve these areas in collaboration with colleagues.

Other highlights include improvements to our recruitment and onboarding processes, including rolling out a well-received 'Buddy Scheme' to support new starters to understand the organisation; an annual all staff survey undertaken by an external partner to gather feedback and highlight potential improvements; and our registration as a 'Disability Confident Committed' employer. We have developed a plan to progress further within the Disability Confident scheme, to increase our support for and commitment to this area.

Whilst the majority of our work was undertaken remotely, staff regularly came together at our office at London's Southbank Centre for team and project meetings, as well as our festive day; and at other venues including a summer visit to the Bromley-by-Bow Centre. The operations team continue to look at ways to improve our communication and connection as a hybrid organisation.



Our Partners

We would like to thank our national partners, including:

Arts Council England
Historic England
Independent Age
LEGO
The Linbury Trust
Money and Pensions Service
Music for All
Music for Dementia
NHS Charities Together
NHS England
The National Lottery Community Fund
Natural England
The Sam West Foundation
The Social Prescribing Network
Sport England
UK Music
Universal Music
The Utley Foundation

And our regional partners, including:

Active Dorset
Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS
Communities 1st
Community Action Derby
Crawley Community Action
London Plus
Voluntary Organisations Network North East (VONNE)

Our Board

Prof Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard PhD FRCGP, Chair

Brad Gudger, Vice-chair

Jonathan Badyal, Trustee

Dr Harry Brunjes, Trustee

Dr. Davina Deniszczyc, Trustee

Patty Dimond, Trustee

Amanda Ellingworth, Trustee

Clova Fvfe, Trustee

Sarah Metcalfe, Trustee

Gay Palmer, Trustee

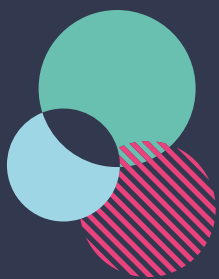
Phoebe Vela-Hitchcox, Trustee

Financial Review

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2024

(as extracted from audited accounts)

	2024		2023	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		12,520		31,273
Current assets				
Debtors	76,398		402,091	
Cash at bank and in hand	1,424,652		844,639	
		1,501,050		1,246,730
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		(559,021)		(519,127)
Net current assets		942,029		727,603
Total assets less current liabilities		954,549		758,876
Income funds				
Restricted funds	442,822		449,856	
Unrestricted funds	511,727		309,020	
		954,549		758,876



National
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Get in touch

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Southbank Centre
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Charity number: 1191145
Company number: 12275770