

National
Academy
for Social
Prescribing

Social Prescribing Champions Programme

Year in Review: 2025-2026

Empowering healthcare professionals to champion
and advance social prescribing





NASP's Social Prescribing Champions Programme equips professionals across the healthcare system to champion social prescribing by raising awareness, strengthening advocacy, and embedding more holistic, person-centred care in their workplaces and communities.

The year in numbers

Since the programme relaunched in January 2025, Champions are making a difference:

373

Social Prescribing Champions recruited across England (January 2025 to March 2026)

78%

of Social Prescribing Champions report having a positive impact on colleagues and fellow professionals

Over 60%

of Champions are reaching more than 25 colleagues with social prescribing information and resources

Nearly 40%

based in primary care, spanning clinical and non-clinical roles, followed by 31% in a community/ neighbourhood setting

80%

report they have increased understanding and awareness of social prescribing and the role of a link worker amongst colleagues, as a result of their advocacy

“I am very proud to be a Champion... I feel more valued by other organisations.”

Introduction

In 2019, social prescribing was introduced into national health policy in England. As the largest investment in social prescribing by any national health service, this marked a significant commitment to personalised and holistic care, signalling a major shift towards a model of health that acknowledges the profound impact of social, non-clinical factors on our health and wellbeing. Since then, social prescribing has grown rapidly: over 3,300 Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) are employed across England, and an estimated 5.5 million GP consultations have involved social prescribing referrals since 2019ⁱ.

...over 3,300 Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) are employed across England

Despite this growth, challenges remain. Awareness and understanding of social prescribing among healthcare professionals and system leaders remain inconsistent, limiting the effectiveness of social prescribing services and the successful integration of the SPLW workforce. NASP's 2025 Link Worker Survey found that only 62% of SPLWs felt valued by their primary care team, and just half felt that their role was well understoodⁱⁱ. Without sufficient clinical engagement, the unique and specialised skill set that SPLWs hold can be overlooked, leading to inappropriate referrals and unclear expectations about the support they provide. This in turn can lead to role drift, poor job satisfaction, and high turnover, affecting patient satisfaction and continuity of care.

As we move towards neighbourhood health models and place increasing emphasis on prevention, personalised care and reducing inequalities, it is crucial to strengthen the understanding of the role that social prescribing plays in these shifts, so that its full potential and impact can be realised.



NASP's Social Prescribing Champions Programme sits at the heart of this effort. It brings together clinicians, healthcare professionals and others working across the healthcare system to build awareness, strengthen advocacy, and support the integration of social prescribing and its principles into everyday practice. It also recognises and celebrates the longstanding advocacy of healthcare professionals that has made social prescribing what it is today. Clinicians have long been at the forefront of this movement, and their continued leadership and advocacy are essential to ensuring that patients and communities can receive access to high-quality, person-centred and holistic care.

This report powerfully demonstrates what the Champions achieved last year, as well as the potential to reach many more health professionals in future.

*Charlotte Osborn-Forde,
Chief Executive,
National Academy for Social Prescribing*



The Programme

The NASP Social Prescribing Champions Programme aims to equip healthcare professionals and others working in healthcare settings to raise awareness and build understanding of social prescribing among colleagues, across their workplaces and workforce, and within their localities. The programme was first launched in 2022, supported by NHS England funding and hosted by NASP, with eligibility focused on NHS staff. In recognition of the many non-clinical roles and staff who work alongside clinicians, our

relaunch of the programme in January 2025 widened eligibility criteria to all professionals working in a healthcare setting.

Becoming a Social Prescribing Champion is a light-touch commitment that fits easily alongside professional responsibilities. The programme celebrates existing advocacy for social prescribing within the healthcare system, while equipping Champions with knowledge, resources, and tools to further raise awareness.

Social Prescribing Champions:

- ✓ Promote the role of social prescribing in supporting people's health and wellbeing, ensuring consistent messaging across the healthcare system
- ✓ Increase understanding of what social prescribing is and is not, including the role of link workers and their scope of practice
- ✓ Advocate for social prescribing services, related roles and approaches, and share helpful resources with their networks and other Champions
- ✓ Raise awareness of social prescribing within their workplace, workforce, and locality
- ✓ Commit to ongoing learning of social prescribing best practice and guidance
- ✓ Support a collaborative, whole-system approach to social prescribing, enabling cross-sectoral working and sustainable investment for communities
- ✓ Celebrate the success of social prescribing as a universal offer within our health system.

The Offer

Social Prescribing Champions receive a variety of resources to enable their success, including a suite of resources to support continued learning, networking, sharing, and equipping them to be part of the movement.



Welcome Pack: introduction to their role, volunteer agreement, resources, and clear steps to get started, with examples that celebrate successes of existing Champions.



Monthly Newsletter: a tailored newsletter that brings together key resources to share and updates - recent research, evidence, best practice guidance, case studies, news articles.

A 'Champions Spotlight' section showcases submissions from Champions of how they have successfully advocated for social prescribing in their role, with the goal of inspiring others: attending events, delivering presentations or learning sessions, creating leaflets, supporting their link workers and more.

SPOTLIGHT



This month we are highlighting the work of Katie Fisher, a NASP Social Prescribing Champion and a specialist therapeutic radiographer at Rosemere Cancer Centre in Preston.

Katie has developed an innovative green prescribing project within her service, providing practical, evidence-based initiatives to connect her patients with nature.

These include:

- Walking routes around the hospital, complete with QR codes linking to guided mindfulness exercises
- Seed swaps so patients can take home and grow plants at no cost
- Nature imagery and window wraps inside treatment areas, creating a calmer and more welcoming environment
- Information boards highlighting local green spaces and community activities across Lancashire and South Cumbria

There is a wealth of evidence demonstrating the health and wellbeing benefits of connecting with nature, and Katie's project is an innovative example of how green prescribing can be implemented in secondary care settings. From Katie:

"This isn't complicated or costly; it's about giving patients and staff opportunities to connect with nature in ways that are meaningful and accessible. As radiotherapy services see so many patients every single day, there's huge potential to scale this up and benefit thousands more."

You can read more about Katie's work [here](#).



E-Learning Modules: Champions receive exclusive access to two bespoke, bite-sized and self-paced online modules. These equip participants with the core knowledge of how social prescribing works, the context in which it has emerged, the importance of the programme, and key evidence headlines.

95%

found the
modules useful

85%

felt that their knowledge
of social prescribing
had increased

83%

felt more confident in
communicating what social
prescribing is and how it works



Lanyards & email badge: designed to help spark conversation and bring visibility to the role.

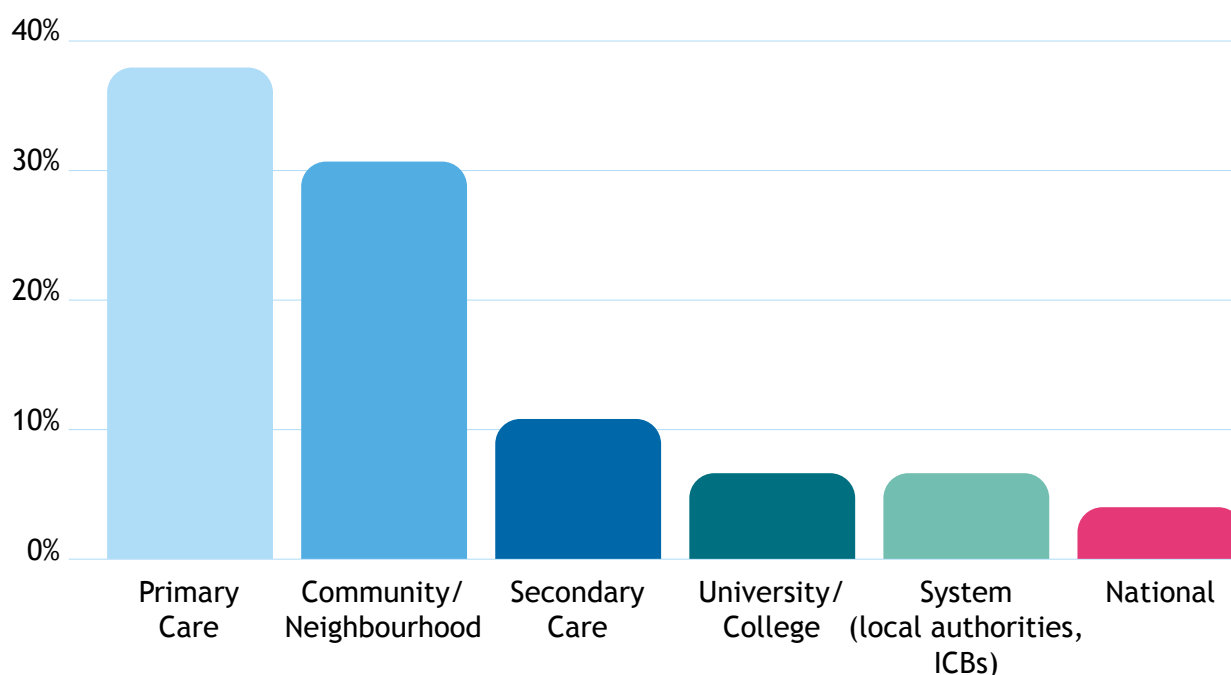


LinkedIn Group: In direct response to feedback from Champions who desired the opportunity to network with others, we created a closed LinkedIn group to enable Champions to connect with one another.



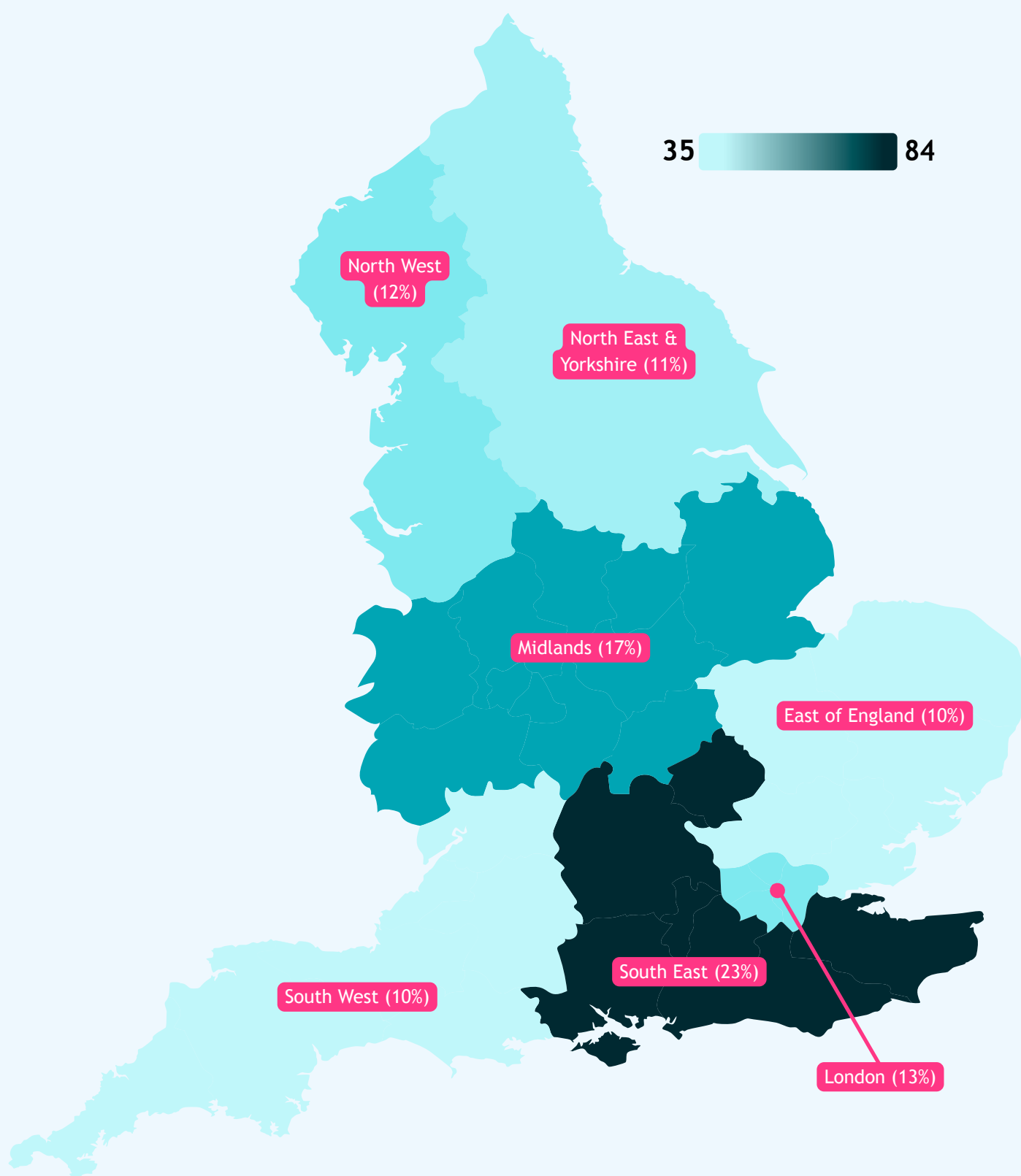
Profile

Between January 2025 and March 2026, 373 Social Prescribing Champions were accepted to the programme, including 33 enrolments from previous cohorts. Champions are from a wide range of backgrounds, roles, and settings, with nearly 40% working in primary care.



Sample Clinical Champion Roles			Sample Non-Clinical Champion Roles		
GP	Nursing Associate	Consultant Paediatric Neurologist	Peer Support Worker	Diabetes Care Coordinator	Personalised Care & Practice Engagement Lead
Lead Paediatric Radiographer	Respiratory Nurse Practitioner	Student Podiatrist	Family Wellbeing Practitioner	Head of Public Health & Prevention	Lead CYP Social Prescriber
Psychotherapist	Consultant Psychiatrist	Consultant in Emergency Medicine	Lecturer in Health & Social Care	TNBI+ Social Prescriber	Health Improvement Officer
Cancer Support Nurse	Occupational Therapy Assistant	Lead Occupational Therapist	Public Health Manager	Integrated Neighbourhood Team Programme Manager	Personalised Care Lead
Care Home Pharmacy Technician	Children's Physiotherapist	Band 5 Staff Nurse	Community Health & Wellbeing Worker	Community Health Lead	Health & Wellbeing Coach
Public Health Midwife	Diagnostic Radiographer	Consultant Paediatric Intensivist	Deputy Practice Manager	Mental Health Employment Advisor	Mental Health Nursing Lecturer

Geographic reach: Social Prescribing Champions



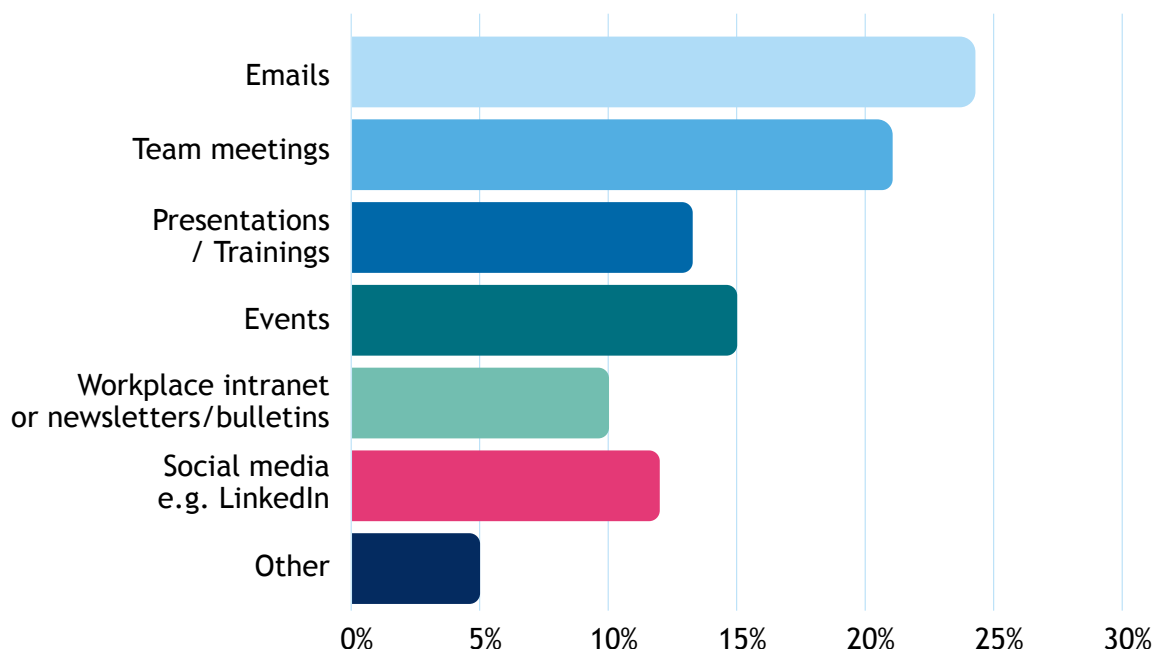
Impact

Champions are:

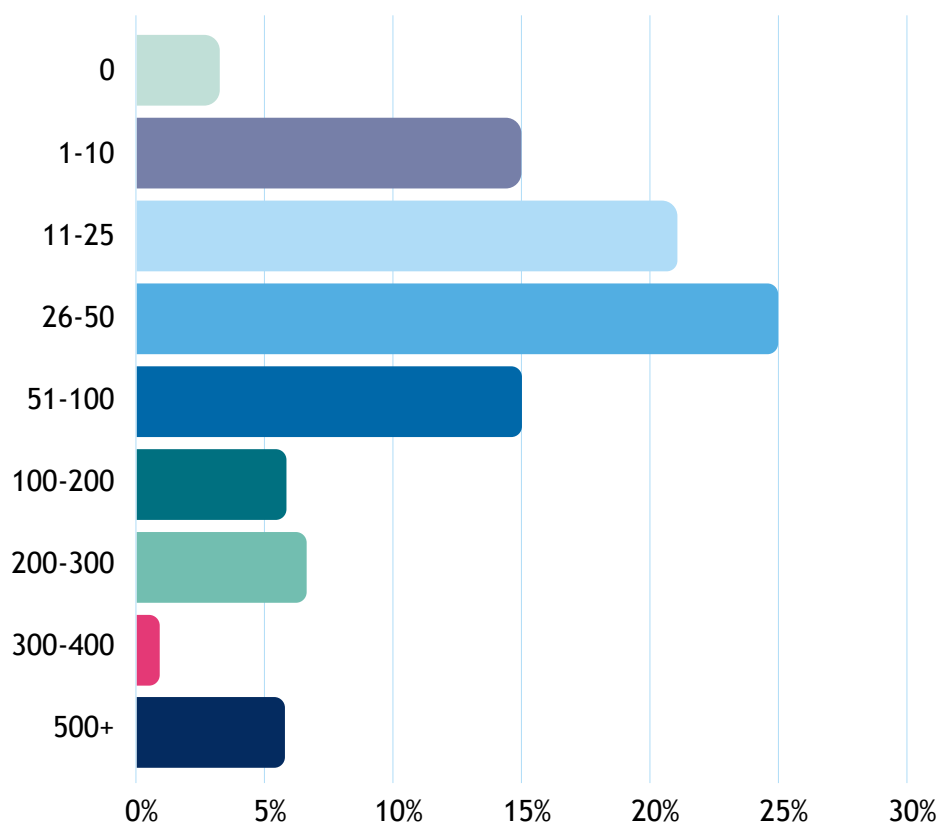
- ✓ Increasing understanding and awareness
- ✓ Sharing information and resources with hundreds of colleagues
- ✓ Driving culture change - embedding holistic, person-centred approaches into everyday practice
- ✓ Strengthening connections, increasing referrals, and supporting collaboration with link workers

To assess the impact of the Champions programme since the relaunch of the programme in January 2025, we ran a feedback survey in March 2026. The results show that Champions are having significant positive impact, both on colleagues and healthcare professionals and on their own practice.

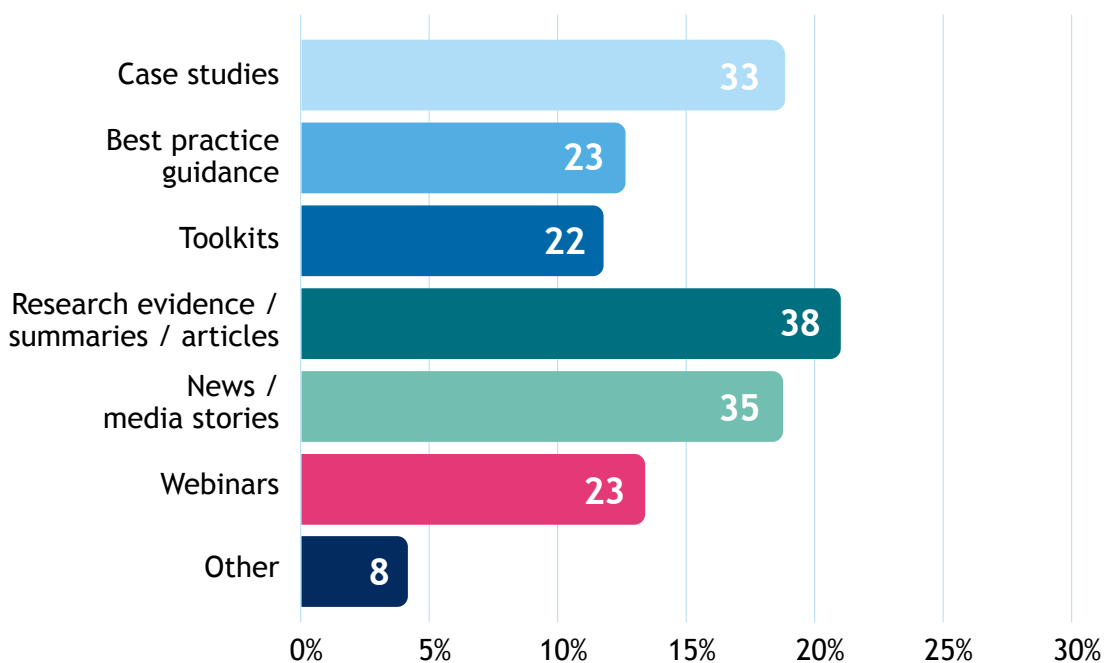
How are Champions sharing social prescribing resources and information?



How many colleagues are Champions reaching with social prescribing information or resources?



What resources are Champions sharing?



What impact are Champions having on their colleagues?

78% agreed that they are having a positive impact on other health professionals or colleagues.

This impact includes:

- ✓ Increased understanding and awareness of what social prescribing is and the role of a link worker (80%)
- ✓ Greater consideration of non-clinical factors affecting health and wellbeing (61%)
- ✓ Increased referrals to link workers (57%)

Other impacts include the onward sharing of resources, and increased confidence in discussing social prescribing with patients.

"I now regularly share examples and practical ideas on how to integrate our Medicines Optimisation work with sustainability principles. I have also promoted and shared relevant webinars to help colleagues better understand social prescribing."

"I am an occupational health advisor and there are social determinants of health that affect working age people and their ability to work. I have recently held a training event to my team and discussed how this service can benefit ours. It was received positively."

"Created resources packs for medical students and registrars to raise awareness but also to encourage referrals."

"I always ensure that I share information/updates with colleagues."

How are Champions changing their own practice?

Champions report a variety of changes to their own practice, including:

- ✓ More routine signposting to community resources
- ✓ Increased confidence discussing social prescribing with patients and colleagues.
- ✓ Greater collaboration with link workers

"I am more aware of the impact and usefulness of social prescribing in my day-to-day practice. I am also more likely to signpost patients to resources."

"I think it has encouraged me to consider the benefits of non-clinical interventions in my practice and also signposting clients and patients to social prescribing services."

"Improved my approach and communication skills with colleagues and community. Strengthened my network, and commitment to social prescribing."

"In my clinical role: I am now more regularly and consistently offering social prescribing to my patients."

"I am very conscious and proud to be a Champion, the lanyard has initiated conversations from some of my participants, I feel more valued by other organisations as it prompts conversation with them also."

"I now work closer to the surgery Social Prescribers."

"I constantly question in clinical meetings whether social prescribing is an option to support patients."

Conclusion

NASP's Social Prescribing Champions Programme is demonstrating clear and measurable impact. Social Prescribing Champions are not only raising the profile of social prescribing but are also actively changing daily practice - supporting more holistic, person-centred care and strengthening collaboration with link workers.

As our healthcare system continues to evolve, it is crucial to sustain the success of social prescribing through ongoing education and

engagement of healthcare professionals. We are committed to building on the strong foundations of the programme by providing resources, tools and development opportunities that equip Champions with what they need to ensure their success and further amplify their impact, in line with their feedback. This includes engaging a diverse range of professionals across and beyond primary care, to support a truly whole-system approach.

Click [here](#) to find out more about NASP's Social Prescribing Champions Programme and apply today.



ⁱ Bu F, Burton A, Launders N et al. National roll-out of social prescribing in England's primary care system: a longitudinal observational study using Clinical Practice Research Datalink data. The Lancet Public Health, 2025; 10, e903-e911

ⁱⁱ National Academy for Social Prescribing. Social Prescribing Link Worker Survey 2025. Available at: <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/eznh1x3a/splw-survey-report-2025.pdf>



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