

National  
Academy  
for Social  
Prescribing

# Social Prescribing Link Worker Induction Guide



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## Foreword

The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) champions social prescribing by supporting and connecting people, communities, and organisations so that more people across the nation and internationally can enjoy better health and wellbeing.

We recognise that Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) are essential in supporting people in communities by taking a holistic and ‘what matters to you’ approach to address health and wellbeing.

That’s why we have formed a Link Worker Advisory Group from the NHS England & NASP Social Prescribing Champions programme. Here, a small group of link workers meet on an ad hoc basis to discuss issues at a local level. It was during these discussions that we found a need for a practical and informative induction guide that can support SPLWs in their first weeks of their role. We are pleased to say that we coproduced this guide with our Link Worker Advisory Group, who have been essential in developing and supporting this work.

The content in this guide aims to support SPLWs in their day-to-day practice in the first weeks of the role to allow for easing into the new role. This is complimentary to the NHS England resources available for SPLWs. All the templates provided can be edited and used in a way that supports SPLWs best and they are not mandatory to use. This induction guide is intended to be helpful to SPLWs and evolve, with opportunities to review this as the profession grows.



## Introduction to handbook

Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) are a key role in personalised care that can transform the health and wellbeing of individuals. SPLWs often join teams of varied health professionals and organisations that are revolutionising the way we practice health care in the UK.

This is an induction guide intended as a useful resource for new link workers for their first few weeks in the role. The guide was codesigned by the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) Link Worker Advisory Group. Here, the templates and information provided are all practitioner-led and were created by link workers directly to guide link workers on how they might approach the first few weeks of their role.

The guide includes:

- Useful tips and checklists for your first few weeks in the role
- Videos from Social Prescribing Link Workers and service users
- Toolkit of templates to support your work
- Guidance for line managers on supporting new recruits

We have seen significant developments in social prescribing since the [NHS Long Term Plan](#)<sup>1</sup> in 2019, with lots of information and resources in this area. This guidance will not include all the information you need in the role but aims to direct you to valuable resources and information in one document.

This guide is an evolving document, which NASP and its Link Worker Advisory Group will aim to update as other national guidance and policy further develops.

The Link Worker Advisory group at NASP hope you will find this guide useful and practical in the day-to-day of your new link worker role.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>





## How did this all start?

Social prescribing and similar approaches have been practiced for decades, with some of the earliest pioneers of the approach making waves in primary healthcare including the [Bromley-by-Bow Centre](#)<sup>2</sup> [Ways to Wellness in Newcastle](#)<sup>3</sup> and [EdbertsHouse](#)<sup>4</sup> in Gateshead.

The past few years however have seen a significant development in social prescribing with the NHS marking its 70th year since its birth by publishing the [NHS Long Term Plan](#)<sup>5</sup>. Its ambition was to embed social prescribing into its comprehensive [model of personalised care](#)<sup>6</sup> with one of the commitments in the plan being that:

“People will get more control over their own health and more personalised care when they need it.”<sup>7</sup>

Why is this important? Evidence shows that individuals demonstrate improved health and wellbeing if they are empowered to play an active role in shaping what their healthcare journey looks like. In addition, there is growing evidence that demonstrates the link between an individual accessing social prescribing and a reduction in GP visits.<sup>8</sup>

NHS England made a commitment to recruit over 1,000 link workers in Primary Care Networks (PCNs) by the end of 2020/21 and 4,500 by 2023/24. The aim was to see over 900,000 people being referred and supported by Social Prescribing Link Workers across the country.

2 <https://www.bbbc.org.uk/>

3 <https://waystowellness.org.uk/>

4 <https://edbertshouse.org/>

5 <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/>

6 <https://www.england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/comprehensive-model-of-personalised-care/>

7 <https://www.longtermplan.nhs.uk/online-version/chapter-1-a-new-service-model-for-the-21st-century/3-people-will-get-more-control-over-their-own-health-and-more-personalised-care-when-they-need-it/>

8 <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/bnjcszbz/nasp-briefing-economic-impact.pdf>

## What is social prescribing and why do we need it?

Many things that affect our health can't be treated by doctors or medicine alone, like loneliness, debt, or stress due to financial pressures or poor housing. Social prescribing provides non-medical support by connecting people to services to address these challenges, and other unmet needs.

Social prescribing often begins with a referral from a GP, hospital, charity, or other organisation to a Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW). SPLWs listen to people and try to understand their situation by identifying their unmet need, using a 'what matters to them' approach. They then "link" that person to community services, statutory services and information that can help.<sup>10</sup>

The aim is to support people to address these needs holistically, using a person-centred approach, thus giving individuals a greater sense of control over their own health and wellbeing.

Social prescribing support from a SPLW can look like:

- Connecting someone struggling with paying their bills to access debt advice and financial management.
- Supporting people who are dealing with loneliness and isolation to engage in community activities that work for them, such as gardening groups, art activities or befriending.
- Working with individuals to manage their weight and nutrition and access exercise groups.



<sup>10</sup> <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/what-is-social-prescribing/>



SPLWs play a critical role in creating the right conditions for individuals to open up about what matters to them most. Through displaying empathy and openness, they give people the time and space they need to be able to navigate some of life's challenges. As a result, they co-produce a personalised plan of support that may include goal setting, implementing behaviour change techniques or referrals to services that potentially that can work specifically for them. This person-centred approach means it is more likely that significant results follow, such as a reduction in feelings of isolation, or improved quality of life and general health.

This is the impact of social prescribing. It can transform the lives of individuals by empowering them to have control over their health and wellbeing helping them to feel heard, valued, and understood.



To hear more about its impact, watch this short video from Jackie on her social prescribing journey.



## Who Employs Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs)?

Prior to NHS England's rollout of the recruitment of SPLWs, there were varying employment methods for link workers, such as being commissioned by local authorities or primary care and delivered or hosted by the VCSE (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) sector.

Social prescribing schemes across the country therefore may have differing employment set-ups.

You can find SPLWs employed through:

- GP Federations.
- Primary Care Networks.
- VCSE organisations, including faith organisations.
- Local Authorities.

As a new SPLW, you might have an employment arrangement with any of the above organisations, with each of these placements having varying processes and working practices.

## Primary Care Networks

Primary Care Networks (PCNs) are groups of GP practices that form to deliver more joined up patient care in the community. They are a central part of the NHS Long Term Plan.

PCNs usually cover a population size of around 30,000 to 50,000 patients and work together with the local community services, social care, pharmacy, mental health and hospitals to meet the needs of the local population.

As a new SPLW you form an important part of a PCN multidisciplinary team (MDT) that works together to enhance patient care. If you are not directly employed through a PCN (Local Authority or VCSE) it is important that your employer supports you to be embedded within PCN teams during your induction. This will enable you to connect with health professionals in primary care who refer patients to social prescribing.

Your employer can support this by:

- Providing you with a list of contact details for each of the practices.
- Setting up a meeting with practice managers so they can introduce you to the team.
- Arranging for you to attend practice meetings, clinical meetings and MDTs so you can talk about your role.
- Arrange login details in order to access IT systems (SystemOne/EMIS) to update patient records.



You will receive social prescribing referrals from the GP practices that make up the PCN. Referrals may come from individuals working in different professions in the practice such as GPs, nurses, community pharmacists, first contact physios, or other practice staff. Although a large portion of referrals are received from PCNs, link workers may also receive referrals from a wide variety of other pathways such as secondary care services, local authorities, VCSE organisations, multidisciplinary teams, schools and job centres, depending on the social prescribing scheme.

## Roles in a GP Practice

In a UK GP practice, the team typically includes a number of healthcare professionals. Some of these roles may vary depending on the specific practice. However, a standard GP practice team usually comprises the following roles:



**1. General Practitioner (GP):** A doctor who diagnoses and manages general medical conditions, refers patients to specialists when necessary, and prescribes medication.



**2. Practice Nurse:** A registered nurse who can provide a range of services such as wound dressing, vaccination, screening for chronic diseases, and contraceptive advice.



**3. Healthcare Assistant (HCA):** A professional who works alongside the practice nurse and helps with tasks such as taking blood samples, performing ECGs (electrocardiograms), and administering vaccinations.



**4. Practice Manager:** In charge of managing the day-to-day operations of the GP practice, including staff supervision, finance, and communication with patient groups and external organisations.



**5. Receptionist:** The first point of contact for patients, responsible for managing appointments, handling patient queries, and maintaining and organising patient records.



**6. Care Co-ordinator:** Care co-ordinators help to co-ordinate and navigate care across the health and care system, helping people make the right connections, with the right teams at the right time.



**7. Pharmacist:** Clinical pharmacists work as part of the general practice team to improve value and outcomes from medicines and to consult with and treat patients directly. This includes providing extra help to manage long-term conditions, advice for those on multiple medicines and better access to health checks.



**8. Health and Wellbeing Coach:** Health and wellbeing coaches can be an effective intervention for people experiencing a range of long-term conditions, such as respiratory, cardiovascular (including type 2 diabetes and hypertension), and stress/low mood. They can also support people with weight management, diet and increasing activity levels.

Other healthcare professionals such as pharmacists and social prescribers can also be part of the GP practice team.





## Personalised Care Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS)

As a new SPLW you will be joining an exciting team of individuals focused on delivering person-centred care.

Part of the NHS Long Term Plan commitment is to deliver personalised care to 2.5 million people in the UK by 2023/24. As a result we have seen the rollout of specialist personalised care roles through the [Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme](#) (ARRS).

As well as recruiting SPLWs, PCNs can also recruit Health and Wellbeing Coaches and Care Coordinators to widen the personalised care support provided to the local population.

For more information on these roles, you can visit the NHS website for the most up to date workforce development framework.

[Health and Wellbeing Coaches](#)<sup>11</sup>

[Care Coordinator](#)<sup>12</sup>

If these roles are also present in your PCN it is important in your role that you connect with them to provide a blended team offer and see how you can work together.

There is a growing body of resources and information on the individual roles, and how you can work effectively together.

Here are some useful links to get you started:

[https://www.transformationpartnersinhealthandcare.nhs.uk/our-work/personalised\\_care/arrs-roles/](https://www.transformationpartnersinhealthandcare.nhs.uk/our-work/personalised_care/arrs-roles/)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/directed-enhanced-service-personalised-care-March-2022.pdf>

<https://www.personalisedcareinstitute.org.uk/the-new-personalised-care-roles/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/workforce-development-framework-health-and-wellbeing-coaches/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/workforce-development-framework-for-care-co-ordinators/>

## Acronyms

As a new Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW), you may come across a variety of different acronyms used in everyday language at work.

To help you familiarise yourself with these, below is a brief list of some of the more frequently used acronyms you might hear. This is in no way a full list but rather a guide to get you started.

Abbreviation	Definition	Abbreviation	Definition
<b>AHP</b>	Allied Health Professionals	<b>ICS</b>	Integrated Care Systems
<b>ARRS</b>	Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme	<b>IIF</b>	Investment and Impact Fund
<b>ASC</b>	Adult Social Care	<b>LA</b>	Local Authority
<b>CAMHS</b>	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	<b>LW</b>	Link Worker
<b>CC</b>	Care Coordinator	<b>MECC</b>	Make Every Contact Count
<b>CD</b>	Clinical Director	<b>MHST</b>	Mental Health Schools Team
<b>CE</b>	Child Exploitation	<b>MSK</b>	Musculoskeletal
<b>CIN</b>	Child in Need	<b>OT</b>	Occupational Therapist
<b>CMHT</b>	Community Mental Health Team	<b>PCN</b>	Primary Care Network
<b>CN</b>	Care Navigator	<b>PC</b>	Personalised Care
<b>CP</b>	Child Protection	<b>PCSP</b>	Personalised Care and Support Plan
<b>CSC</b>	Childrens Social Care	<b>PIP</b>	Personal Independence Payment
<b>CVS</b>	Council for Voluntary Service	<b>PM</b>	Practice Manager
<b>DES</b>	Directed Enhanced Service	<b>QI</b>	Quality Improvement
<b>EHCP</b>	Education Health and Care Plan	<b>QOF</b>	Quality Outcome Framework
<b>EMIS</b>	Educational Management Information System	<b>SNOMED</b>	Systemised Nomenclature of Medicine
<b>FSS</b>	Family Support Service	<b>SPLW</b>	Social Prescribing Link Worker
<b>GDPR</b>	General Data Protection Regulation	<b>UC</b>	Universal Credit
<b>IAPT</b>	Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programme	<b>VCSE</b>	Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise
<b>ICB</b>	Integrated Care Board		

## Getting Started

The induction process forms an important part on the start of your journey as a Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW). This guidance document will give you an outline of some of the main aspects that you should expect to cover during the first few weeks in the role, with practical tools you can use to support your work.

To hear about the experiences of the induction process from Social Prescribing Link Workers click the below video links.



Training and Development



Tips to support Social Prescribing



Asset Mapping



Supervision



Last words of advice

Over the page is a visual outline of some areas that you might expect to cover during your induction process in the first few weeks. Depending on who your employer is (e.g. Local Authority or PCN), you may notice some differences in what is covered.



# Induction Roadmap



START

## Checkpoint 1 ●

### Welcome and Introductions

- Welcome and introduction to the organisation (PCN, Local Authority, VCSE)
- Meeting colleagues (Clinical Director, Practice team)
- Booking introductions at practice /clinical meetings and MDTs

## Checkpoint 2 ●

### Organisational overview

- Organisational structure, vision, culture, and values
- Workplace policies and procedures/code of conduct
- Copy of employment contract, company handbook and HR manual
- Work Health and Safety information (layout of premises, including fire exits, first aid facilities)

## Checkpoint 3 ●

### Administration

- Setup of workstation/laptop and systems
- Provided with tools of trade (ID, name badge, swipe card, mobile phone, log in details for SystemOne/EMIS)
- Copy of contact staff list

## Checkpoint 4 ●

### Mandatory Training

- Set up accounts to access essential training (e-learning modules)
- Receive copy of list of training resources and local training hubs

## Checkpoint 5 ●

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Copy of job description
- Guidance on the role of an SPLW
- Shadowing SPLW in a session if appropriate

## Checkpoint 6 ●

### Asset Mapping

- Introduction with key stakeholders in the community and providers of services
- Copy of local directory of services

FINISH

## Induction Checklist

An induction checklist can act as a supportive tool to make the process as helpful as possible. Your line manager should oversee your induction and provide you with some organisational guidance on tasks and actions that need to be covered once you start your role. This can include meeting the team, I.T. set up (accessing data systems such as SystmOne and EMIS), understanding your role, policies and procedures and any mandatory training you may need to complete.

You may find it helpful that both you and your line manager have a copy of a checklist and keep it up to date.

Below is a link to a template created for you and your line manager to use, which can be adapted to meet the needs of you and your employer.



[Link Worker Induction Checklist](#)



## Training and Development

Access to training and development is an essential part for any new role and should give you the skills to be able to carry out your role confidently.

To have a good understanding of standardised social prescribing practice, visit the NHS England website to access the Workforce Development Framework for SPLWs and the Competency Framework.

Click below:

[NHSE Workforce Development Framework for SPLWs<sup>13</sup>](#)

[NHSE Competency Framework for SPLWs<sup>14</sup>](#)

There is a growing number of training opportunities for new SPLWs. A good place to start is completing any initial training that is mandatory.

According to the Network Contract Directed Enhanced Service, SPLWs employed in or by primary care networks (PCNs) must:

- Complete the mandatory Health Education England (HEE) e-learning programme, found at: [HEE e-learning for healthcare](#).
- Enrol in, undertake or qualify from appropriate training as defined by the Personalised Care Institute (PCI).
- Attend the peer support networks delivered at place or system by the integrated care system (ICS) and/or NHS England in the region.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/workforce-development-framework-social-prescribing-link-workers/#summary>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/workforce-development-framework-social-prescribing-link-workers/#9-competency-framework>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/workforce-development-framework-social-prescribing-link-workers/#5-training-and-development-in-post>



Below is a comprehensive checklist of training and development opportunities for you to get started. The checklist is editable and allows you to update when training is complete.

[HEE - e-learning Programme](#) - Click here to access the site.

1. Introduction to the social prescribing link worker role
2. Developing personalised care and support plans with people
3. Developing partnerships
4. Introducing people to community groups and VCSE organisations
5. Safeguarding vulnerable people
6. Keeping records and measuring impact
7. Supporting people with their mental health through social prescribing
8. Social welfare, legal support, and money guidance
9. Social prescribing for children and young people
10. Supervision
11. Social prescribing and the Armed Forces Community
12. Culturally responsive practice

### **Additional Essential Training**

[e-learning for healthcare](#) (modules are free)

A platform that offers several training modules to support the health and care workforce. Below are some key modules you may want to consider completing to support in your role. Visit the website to view all the modules on offer.

1. Safeguarding Adults Level 1
2. Safeguarding Children and Young People Level 1
3. Communicating with Empathy
4. Making Every Contact Count (MECC)
5. Person centred Approaches (PCT)

### **Additional Training and Development Opportunities**

[FutureNHS Collaboration Platform](#)

NHS England have created an online platform for the social prescribing community that gives access to forums, useful information, and a catalogue of resources. To sign up contact [england.socialprescribing@nhs.net](mailto:england.socialprescribing@nhs.net)

[National Academy of Social Prescribing](#) (NASP)

Access to a catalogue of resources such as useful insights, webinars, and podcasts around social prescribing.

## Suggested Reading List

[NHS England Social Prescribing Link Worker Welcome Pack](#)

[NHS England Workforce Development Framework](#)

[NHS England Competency Framework](#)

[Network Contract DES](#)

[Fair Society Healthy Lives \(The Marmot Review\)](#)

[The Kings Fund](#)

[Bromley by Bow Centre](#)

[National Academy of Social Prescribing \(NASP\)](#)



## Social Prescribing in Action

As a Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW), you will be playing an important role in supporting individuals to gain more control over their health and wellbeing. SPLWs do this through building trusting relationships that allow individuals time and space to reflect on what matters to them.

To hear more about the role of a link worker and the positive impact social prescribing has on the individuals accessing support, click on the following link to hear Sarah's inspiring story.



Below are practical tools and information that you may find helpful when carrying out your work as a SPLW.

Included in this section of the pack are:

- Templates to support one to one sessions with patients
- Information on how to manage your caseload
- Guidance on data inputting and monitoring
- Tips for asset mapping



# Roadmap of the SPLW/Patient Journey



START

## Checkpoint 1 ●

### Referral pathway

- Receive a referral from the PCN or other local organisations.
- Contact patient to confirm the reason for the referral, explain the support offer and book an initial appointment.
- You may want to access patient medical notes and review possible interventions (according to reason for referral) ahead of the session.

## Checkpoint 2 ●

### Initial personalised conversation

- Prepare the 1 to 1 space, whether in person or over the phone (e.g. private area for confidentiality).
- Discuss what matters most to the patient.
- Together, create a shared plan to meet their needs and agree realistic goals.
- Agree next session if appropriate.

## Checkpoint 3 ●

### Measuring Impact

- Use of evaluation tools in a session to measure impact (baseline and follow up).
- NHSE validated tools include ONS4 and PAM.
- Follow up carried out after the intervention has ended.

## Checkpoint 4 ●

### Keeping Accurate Records

- Good practice to update session notes after the session to manage caseload effectively.
- You may need to update a referrer on progress of session.
- Use of SNOMED coding.

## Checkpoint 5 ●

### Link into the Community

- Carve out some time to search local services/activities in line with the personalised support plan.
- Where appropriate, make an onward referral or signpost and let the patient know so they have all the information.

## Checkpoint 6 ●

### Check in and follow up

- Contact patient to check on progress of goals set.
- Find out if patient has engaged with activity/service if referred.
- Review whether a further session is required.
- If ending intervention arrange a follow up to complete final evaluation.

FINISH

## Personalised Support

Providing person-centred support is at the core of what you will be doing as a new Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW), but what does this look like?

Your aim as a SPLW during one-to-one sessions is to help people produce a simple personalised support plan that shows what support needs they have identified and together looking at strategies and goals that will address them.

We have created a simple template you can use in the sessions to help guide the conversation.

We have also included a wellbeing goal setting worksheet. This is helpful if there are more specific goals individuals may want to set for themselves around wellbeing.

Both templates are editable and can be adapted to suit you.

To support you to manage conversations we have created a list of tips and techniques that can support you.



Individualised Personal Support Plan



Wellbeing Worksheet



Active Listening Skills List



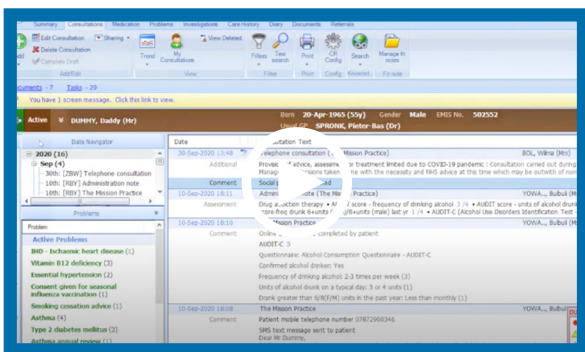
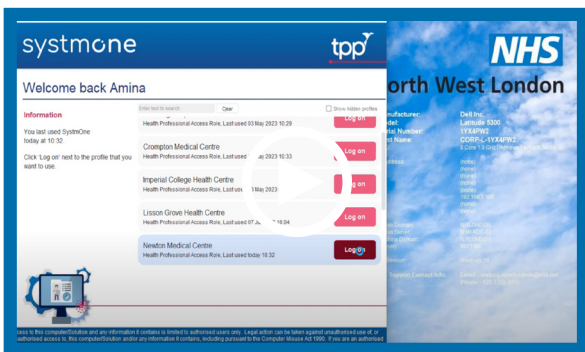
Boundary Setting and Managing Endings

## Recording Data

Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) embedded in a PCN should have access to clinical IT systems that enable you to record activity with the people you support. If you do not have access to these systems, your line manager should implement the necessary processes you will need to manage referrals and update information.

The two most common systems used across primary care are SystmOne and EMIS.

For information on how you can navigate these systems you can view the below recorded tutorials.





## Measuring Data Impact

Measuring the impact of social prescribing allows you as a SPLW to show the difference you are making to people's lives and serves as a good way to prove the benefits.

In accordance with the [Network Contract DES 2023/2024](#)

“A PCN must ensure referrals to the Social Prescribing Link Worker(s) are recorded within GP clinical systems using the new national SNOMED codes.”<sup>16</sup>

SNOMED coding can be inputted into GP I.T systems such as SystmOne and EMIS. As a link worker inputting these codes should be carried out as part of your role.

The two main codes track the number of referrals into social prescribing and act as a good measure to monitor demand of the service.

**871711000000103 - Social prescribing declined (situation)**

**871731000000106 - Referral to social prescribing service (procedure)**

As the need for capturing the benefits of social prescribing increases NHS England will be introducing a national minimum data set for social prescribing and will include the following new codes:

**1373501000000105 - the needs and concerns**

**1373511000000107 - support received by people being socially prescribed**

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/network-contract-des-contract-specification-for-2023-24-pcn-requirements-and-entitlements/>

## ONS4 Wellbeing Tool

ONS4 is a validated tool that is free to use and has four outcome measures, with individuals being asked four questions around their wellbeing. Typically, these are asked at the start and end of a social prescribing intervention to measure the impact on a person's wellbeing using the service.

As a new SPLW, it may be helpful to think about how you incorporate these questions into your sessions.

The four ONS questions include;

1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
2. Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
3. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
4. On a scale where 0 is “not at all anxious” and 10 is “completely anxious”, overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

Below is a role play recording of a link worker demonstrating the ONS4 questions in practice.



## Social Prescribing Information Standard

NHS England and NHS Improvement recently commissioned the [Professional Records Standards Body](#) to publish a social prescribing information standard that would allow the sharing and recording of the whole social prescribing journey. This would include from the point of referral, the period of the social prescribing intervention to the end point of summarising the journey to the referrer.

This is a useful guide to keep in mind when thinking about the information you record as part of your work.

For more details on the standard visit the [social prescribing standard](#).

## Managing your workload

As a new Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW) it's helpful to plan how to manage your workload in the role. This will enable you to create a healthy work balance, control your time and support your overall wellbeing.

Below are some tips you may find helpful:

**1**

**Divide your work week into your different areas of work for e.g.**

**3 days - Patient facing work including any follow up.**

**1 day - Attending team meetings, MDTs, clinical meetings etc.**

**1 day - Training and development, including asset mapping.**

**2**

**Build in time after a social prescribing session to carry out any follow ups. E.g. writing up case notes, any data entry required or phone calls to referral organisations.**

**3**

**Referral and Caseload management - It might be helpful to keep a basic spreadsheet of people referred to you to keep track of their journeys including when people are engaged in support or when it has ended.**

**4**

**Use platforms like peer support to discuss effectively managing workload with colleagues in similar roles to exchange ideas.**

**5**

**Remember to speak to your line manager if you are ever feeling overwhelmed by your workload.**

## Caseload Management

To have an idea on the number of people you should be supporting in a year, the NHS England reference guide for SPLWs states that a typical annual maximum caseload for a link worker is 200 - 250 people depending on complexity.<sup>17</sup>

Your employer may have the I.T. systems in place to manage your caseload so you can keep track of support you are providing. We have created an editable caseload spreadsheet template that you can use if needed.



SPLW Caseload Template

## Managing Concerns and Crisis Support

As a Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW) you will be supporting individuals with varying complexities and needs. You may also come across moments when you are concerned about an individual you are supporting.

It is important that you understand the procedures in place in your organisation when wanting to raise a concern or safeguarding issue and who your point of contact is. You may already have documents in place to record this. If you don't, you may find the below helpful.



Concern Response Plan

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/social-prescribing-reference-guide-and-technical-annex-for-primary-care-networks/#:-:text=The%20social%20prescribing%20link%20worker%20role,-The%20social%20prescribing&text=Give%20people%20time%20to%20have,250%20people%2C%20depending%20on%20complexity>



## Asset Mapping Tips

As a Social Prescribing Link Worker (SPLW) part of your role is connecting individuals to community-based support. Focusing on the strengths and resources of a community is commonly referred to as asset mapping.

You should build in time in your role to build networks and gather information on what support is available in the community, so you are better informed when supporting people.

Below are some tips on how to get started. You may want to add to this.

**1**

**Arrange a walk through the local community to map out locations of services and activities.**

**2**

**Create a directory of services, incorporating information from your own research and what is already available to you.**

**3**

**Research into the local population you are working with, looking out for unmet needs that inform you of ideas in gaps in services.**

**4**

**Try setting up a networking breakfast with other SPLWs in your PCN for local providers to share what they are doing in the community.**

**5**

**Set up 121 meetings with key organisations (community centres, mental health services, advocacy, and advice support) and find out what is available and how to make referrals.**

**6**

**Brainstorm services in the community that might be helpful to individuals accessing social prescribing. A good place to start is matching services of support to the most common referral needs.**

## Support for Link Workers

### Access to Supervision

All SPLWs will require supervision from their employer and this may be provided in various ways. The [NHSE Social Prescribing Workforce Framework](#) sets out guidance on supervision for SPLWs, with specific guidance in Network Contract DES for primary care SPLWs. This includes:

- The PCN's member GP practices must each identify a first point of contact for general advice and support for the SPLW.
- PCNs are required to appoint a GP supervisor, if different from the first point of contact, to provide supervision for the SPLW.

Some SPLWs may have non-GP supervisors in addition to a named GP supervisor that manage day to day responsibilities. The Social Prescribing Workforce Framework also helpfully provides guidance on the types of [supervision](#) that include:

**Workplace Supervision** - The day-to-day oversight of the SPLW by GP supervisor and line manager.

**Clinical Supervision** - Reflecting and developing on professional practice

It is also encouraged to use the [Portfolio of Evidence](#) in the NHSE Social Prescribing Workforce Framework so SPLWs can evidence their skills and practice.

### Peer Support

Peer support is a great way to meet with colleagues in similar roles and discuss any concerns and client issues in a supportive space.

It allows for joint problem solving as well as an opportunity to learn from colleagues.

You may find it useful to set up a more localised peer support group with other link workers in your PCN or neighbouring PCNs.

Click on the following link to access a reflective practice tool that can be used in peer supervision.

**NASP PORTFOLIO OF EVIDENCE -  
Reflective practice tool for peer supervision**

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/reflection-tool.png>

## Managing your Wellbeing

Link workers do an amazing job at supporting people to manage their health and wellbeing, and taking care of your own allows you to continue to do your role effectively.

### Wellbeing Tips from Link Workers for Link Workers

<https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/resources/link-worker-wellbeing-tips/>

## Line Manager Support

This section of the guide aims to provide some practical tools for you to share with your line manager on how they can support you in the first few weeks of your role. Some of these templates may already be in place for you, and your employer may have their own specific organisational processes. The following can act as a helpful guide on where to start if these are not in place.

You may want to also consider viewing this section yourself.



## Getting Started

Whether you're an experienced manager or new to supporting Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs) there are growing developments in the access to information and resources in social prescribing available to you.

Below are links to useful readings to support new and existing employers of SPLWs.

Network Contract DES

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/network-contract-des-contract-specification-for-2023-24-pcn-requirements-and-entitlements/>

NHS England Social prescribing: Reference guide and technical annex for primary care networks

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/social-prescribing-reference-guide-and-technical-annex-for-primary-care-networks/>

NHS England Annex A - Implementation checklist for introducing social prescribing link workers into PCNs

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/social-prescribing-reference-guide-and-technical-annex-for-primary-care-networks/>

NHS England Workforce Development Framework for Social Prescribing Link Workers

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/workforce-development-framework-social-prescribing-link-workers/>

NHS England Competency Framework (Annex A)

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/workforce-development-framework-social-prescribing-link-workers/#9-competency-framework>





Induction checklists can act as a useful tool to make it easier to prepare new staff for work activities that need to be actioned in their first few weeks.

Earlier in the induction pack we have given access to a template induction checklist for link workers to use, which can be edited to meet the requirements of their role and organisational set up.

Here we have created a similar checklist template that includes specific workflow actions that you may want to consider as a manager of a new link worker.

We have also included a weekly timetable template that you can edit. The document can act as a useful tool to give your new link worker an overview of the tasks and actions that need to be actioned in their first week, including any booked meetings, training to be undertaken, etc.

The document is editable to allow you to include any items specific to your organisation.



Line Manager New Starter Induction Checklist



Weekly Induction Timetable Template



## Supporting Social Prescribing Link Workers (SPLWs)

Creating a work environment where SPLWs are valued, respected, and supported enables them to feel motivated and effective in their roles. This can result in a happier workforce and ultimately better outcomes for the people being supported.

As a manager there are a few processes that you can embed that can help you to foster this support.

### Supervision and Caseload Management

Implementing effective supervision allows link workers to feel safe to carry out their role effectively.

As a direct line manager, the type of supervision that is implemented might cover the day-to-day aspects of the role. One area that you may want to discuss in supervision is the management of a link worker's caseload, as this makes up a significant part of their role.

Guidance on supervision can be found on the [NHS England Social Prescribing Workforce Framework](#) and in earlier section of supporting SPLWs.

Below we set out some guiding principles which may be considered for supervisor roles, both for workplace and clinical supervisors.

### Review Link Worker Caseload

1

Consider SPLW caseload referrals and active caseload. Consider reviewing case notes from recent patient sessions and identify any complex care needs that may require additional support.

### Challenges and Successes

2

Encourage SPLWs to share their experiences and reflection on their work with clients. Discuss any challenges or areas where they feel they could improve, as well as any successes they have had in meeting client needs.

#### Example Open questions

Do you feel you made a difference to that patient?

Do you think there is anything else I need to know at this point?

What would you have changed to improve the outcome?

**3** Identify any areas where SPLWs may need further training or support to develop their skills, such as cultural awareness, new therapeutic techniques, or confidence building.

**4** Social prescribing can be a challenging role, dealing with potential emotional stress and mental health issues. Ensure that your employees always have protective measures in place, such as self-care techniques, and offer regular check-ins.

### Encourage Collaboration

**5** Encourage embedding SPLWs in relevant Multi-disciplinary (MDT) teams allowing for collaboration with wider team.

### Setting Targets and Goal Setting

**6** Consider coproducing goals in relation to patient outcomes and provide support in reviewing progress and outcomes achieved.

### Reflection

**7** Encourage reflection opportunities for SPLWs, ensuring regular supervision meetings are focused, constructive, and remain supportive. Encourage SPLWs to discuss any concerns or challenges they are experiencing and be open to feedback on your practice as line manager.

### Portfolio of Evidence

**8** The NHSE Social Prescribing Workforce Framework encourage use of the [Portfolio of Evidence](#) where SPLWs can evidence their skills and practice in line with the SPLW competency framework.

For more information on supervisor roles and skills visit the Personalised Care Institute who have developed recommendations on supervision for staff supporting SPLWs. Information on this can be found in Annex C of the Competency Framework.

## Supporting Wellbeing

Promoting the wellbeing of link workers can reduce work-related stresses and create more positive work environments that allow individuals to thrive.

Implementing regular check-ins can support in addressing any wellbeing needs.

Below is link to a wellness action plan template that you can use to encourage open conversations about things that are important for the health and wellbeing of your team.

This can be reviewed quarterly or yearly.



Wellness Action Plan

See below for a list of services you can direct staff to.

NHS England Staff Mental Health and Wellbeing Hubs

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/supporting-our-nhs-people/support-now/staff-mental-health-and-wellbeing-hubs/>

MIND Charity

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/>

All Health Matters

<https://www.allhealthmatters.co.uk/employee-wellbeing-resources>

National Academy of Social Prescribing (NASP)

<https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/resources/link-worker-wellbeing-tips/>



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