

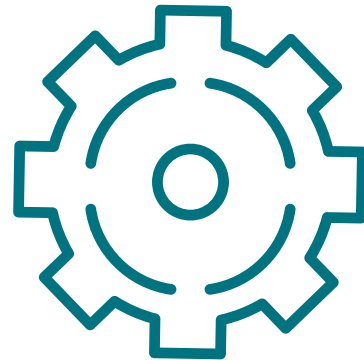
National
Academy
for Social
Prescribing

Annual Report 2022-23





Contents



A welcome from our Chair and CEO	4
Our vision	6
Recent developments in social prescribing	7
Highlights and stats	8
Connection	9
Thriving Communities	9
Regional Leads	10
Supporting the workforce	15
Social Prescribing Champions	16
Partnerships	18
National Leads	18
Older People	18
Historic Environment	19
Natural Environment	20
Green Social Prescribing	21
Arts and Culture	22
Physical Activity	23
Global	24
Accelerating Innovation	25
Investment	27
Thriving Communities Fund	27
Power of Music Fund	28
Evidence	29
New evidence published in 2022-23	29
Profile	30
Communications	30
Webinars	31
Our partners	32
Our people	33
Financial summary	35



A welcome from our Chair and CEO

This report showcases the incredible breadth, diversity and impact of our work over the last year to develop social prescribing. As a relatively new organisation, operating in very challenging times and championing an innovative approach, the achievements outlined are remarkable, and reflect the significant benefits of working collaboratively. Everything we do at the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) is with others: global, national, regional and local partners, individuals and organisations.

Our NHS Social Prescribing Champion Programme has been a catalyst for change, empowering multi-disciplinary clinical and non-clinical staff to take significant actions that positively impact the health and wellbeing of communities. The breadth of examples, from personal practice changes to service redesigns, and the diversity of activities, from professional development events to public engagement, are truly inspiring. Moving forward, we will continue to identify, connect and support Champions across the NHS and beyond, so that social prescribing becomes ‘business as usual’ in healthcare.

We worked closely with the Uteley Foundation to support over 100 local community choirs and singing groups, reaching many thousands of people living with dementia. Our next phase of the work will see more partners join as we launch The Power of Music Fund, aiming to distribute £5 million over the next few years, not just channelling resources to local organisations but ensuring that they are connected to healthcare systems and can operate sustainably. Our focus is on system transformation and culture change; that means not just short-term support and grants for social prescribing and local groups, but changing structures, commissioning and policy so that community-led provision is valued, funded and integrated with wider healthcare structures. The Power of Music will generate the data, evidence and knowledge needed to enable this.

England has undoubtedly led the way for social prescribing; we were the first in the world to resource and embed social prescribing as a universal offer in primary care, and there have been 1.6 million referrals by March 2023. But the rest of the world is quickly catching up, and interest in social prescribing as a solution to complex challenges in modern healthcare is rapidly growing. The Global Social Prescribing Alliance now has more than 30 different countries engaged, and 18 of these were represented at our international study day event in March to share best practice and discuss mutual issues and opportunities. We are privileged to be able to share the learning and innovation from our global partners, especially because it shapes our own approach, ensuring social prescribing continues to develop at pace in England.

We are proud to continue to work closely with national partners to progress developments in key areas including arts and culture, physical activity, natural environment, heritage and older people. These partnerships may be diverse, but they all seek to better connect assets and resources in communities to healthcare and ultimately to the people who could most benefit from activities to improve wellbeing. Moving forward, we hope to fully establish social prescribing as a core priority for a wide range of national partners and continue to convene and lead this incredibly powerful movement.

James Sanderson, our founding CEO, stepped down in 2022 and we would like to express our sincere thanks to him for all his tireless work, and for leading NASP with such vision through our first few years. We would also like to recognise and thank Jim Burt and Sunita Pandya for acting as joint interim CEOs until March 2023.



Helen Stokes-Lampard,
Chair



Charlotte Osborn-Forde,
Chief Executive

Our vision

Our strategy for 2023-26 builds upon the work we have already been doing, as we continue to move and mature into our next phase as an organisation.

We are driving forward five key ambitions.



Connection

A connected social prescribing system enabling easier access to activities and information



Partnership

Local, national and international partnerships driving innovative ideas and approaches



Investment

Boosted investment in community activities directly supporting people's health and wellbeing



Evidence

The best evidence shaping social prescribing policy, practice and research



Profile

A raised profile of how social prescribing changes lives and strengthens communities

Our vision remains unchanged: we want to help people live the best life they can through social prescribing.

Recent developments in social prescribing

Social prescribing and similar approaches have been practiced in England for decades, from the “Peckham Experiment” in the 1930s through pioneering programmes in primary health including at the Bromley-by-Bow Centre, Ways to Wellness in Newcastle and Edberts House in Gateshead.

Social prescribing was enshrined as a key component of national health policy in England in 2019, with the publication of the NHS Long Term Plan. The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) was founded in the same year.

There have been huge strides since then:

- More than 3,400 Social Prescribing Link Workers were in post by March 2023
- There have been almost two million referrals to Link Workers since 2019
- The cross-government Green Social Prescribing programme has successfully tested how to scale up and embed nature-based social prescribing, with the evaluation due later in 2023
- Social prescribing is embedded in national policy plans. For example, the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan includes an ambition to have 9,000 Link Workers in post by 2036-37
- There is a rapidly growing evidence base, including more than 15 evidence reviews compiled by NASP’s academic partners. The National Institute of Health Research will publish a full evaluation of the Link Worker programme in 2024
- NASP worked with partners to launch the Global Social Prescribing Alliance - and social prescribing is now developing in more than 30 countries across the world

At NASP, we published our new strategy in 2022 and received further funding from the Department of Health and Social Care to March 2025.

Highlights and stats

Over **10,000 people participated** in social prescribing projects through the **Thriving Communities Fund**.



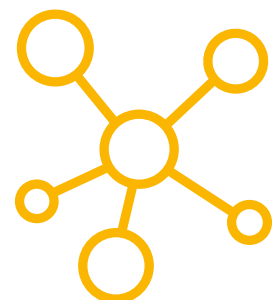
102 Social Prescribing Champions representing 22 clinical and non-clinical disciplines worked across all 7 NHS regions in England

£100,000 of small grants were distributed to **100 dementia choirs**, in partnership with The Utley Foundation



Hosted over **40 international guests** from 18 different countries for **Social Prescribing Day 2023**

Connected 135 voluntary organisations through the Accelerating Innovation Community of Practice



Published **9 new evidence reports**

48% increase in social media followers



11 webinars delivered to **6,836 people**

Connection



Thriving Communities

Supporting grassroots organisations delivering social prescribing

The Thriving Communities programme continued to be a fundamental part of our work, with a focus on building a connected, place-based social prescribing system. The work was delivered by a core group of seven regional teams, made up of members of the local voluntary sector as well as representatives from our national partners. The programme was committed to supporting the voluntary sector and those organisations who are receiving social prescribing referrals.


The Thriving Communities Fund supported over 10,000 people across the country, and strengthened links between the health and care system, activity providers and the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sectors. The impact of the fund is described on [page 27](#).


The Learning Together programme continued to form a primary part of the Thriving Communities regional work, offering voluntary and community sector partners and social prescribers information and connection through themed webinars, networking meetings, Action Learning Sets, group contact and one-to-one meetings.



Regional Leads


NASP commissioned a host organisation in each region to develop and deliver work under the Thriving Communities programme. The selected highlights below provide a snapshot of the broad range of initiatives undertaken by these teams.

 **North East & Yorkshire**
- Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE)

 **North West**
- Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS

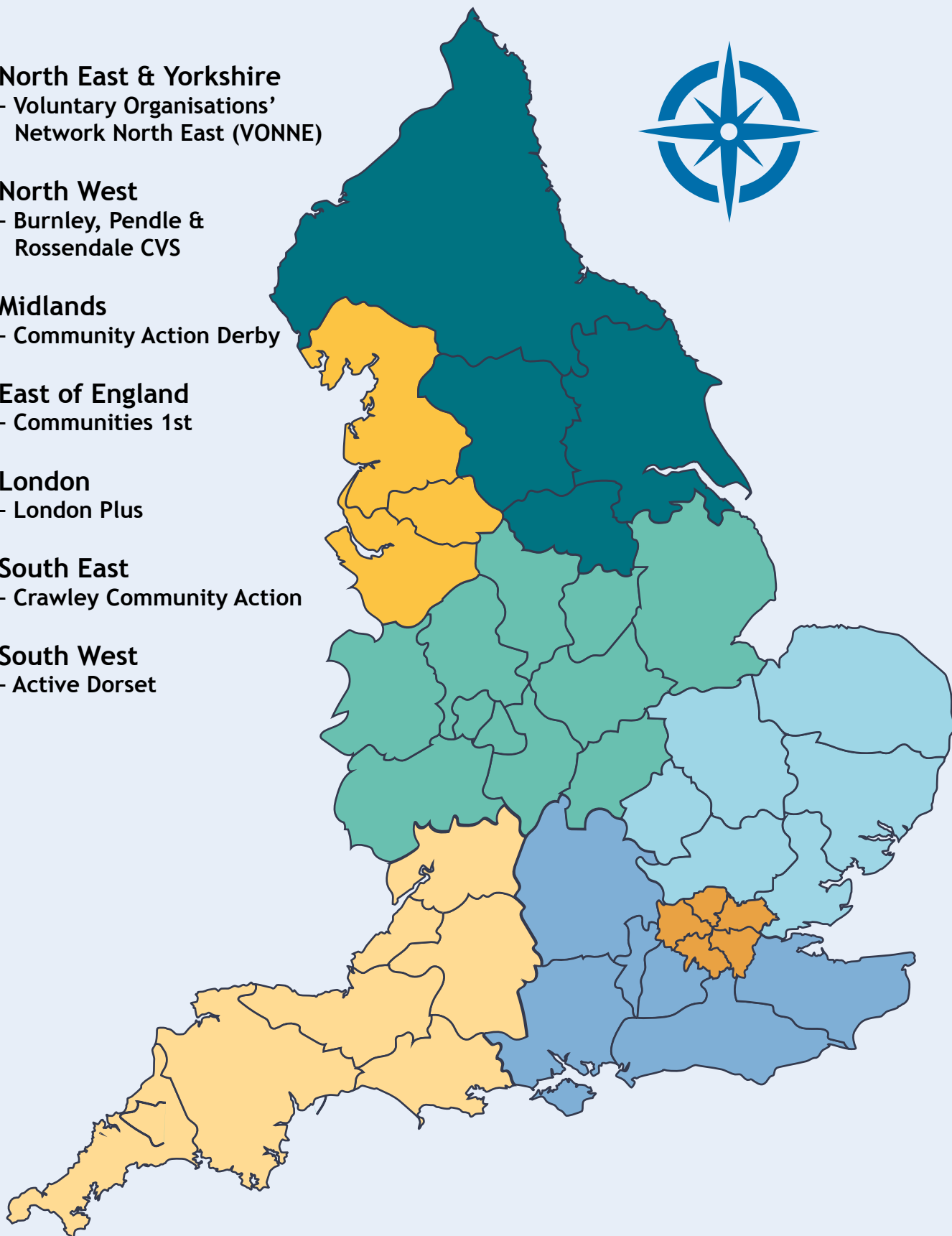
 **Midlands**
- Community Action Derby

 **East of England**
- Communities 1st

 **London**
- London Plus

 **South East**
- Crawley Community Action

 **South West**
- Active Dorset





North East & Yorkshire - Voluntary Organisations' Network North East (VONNE)

Reading for Wellbeing - Through a project founded by author Anne Cleeves and supported by libraries and local authorities, we worked with a network of libraries to host Community Reading Workers within libraries in disadvantaged communities across the region, which supported access to reading and books to improve wellbeing.

Local partnerships - We worked strategically with the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) Alliance (called the Partnership Programme), which enables VCFSE organisations to engage and collaborate with health and care system structures at all levels; we also worked closely with the regional Personalised Care team, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) colleagues and other Integrated Care System (ICS) workstreams.

Healthy Communities and Social Prescribing workstream - We secured investment from the NENC ICS to facilitate a cross-sector social prescribing network for the North East and North Cumbria.



North West - Burnley, Pendle & Rossendale CVS

Partnership working - We worked as a partnership of four infrastructure organisations across the region; this brought localised knowledge and experience, allowing us to develop a connected social prescribing system.

System level work - We worked as core members of the VCFSE leadership in the development and delivery of the ICS/ Integrated Care Board's social prescribing plans.

Place level work - Building upon a sustainable local social prescribing system, we worked to deliver Integrated Health and Care Neighbourhoods, and champion exemplars in our region.





Midlands - Community Action Derby

Midlands Local Infrastructure Organisations Partnership - We worked with more than ten local infrastructure organisations (LIO) across the Midlands, meeting weekly to cover key themes of Communication, VCSFE support, ICS updates, and developments in social prescribing. The partnership drives sharing of ideas, developments, and approaches.

Derbyshire Investment Resource - We supported the development of an 'investment resource' for, run, and led by the VCSFE sector on a local ICS level, to support local development with national investment opportunities.

ICS Strategy - We responded to specific Integrated Care System areas, working with the Integrated Care Board and cross-sector for the development of social prescribing in Birmingham & Solihull and Leicestershire & Rutland (particularly within the city of Leicester).



East of England - Communities 1st

Pilot Working - We developed a Financial Literacy Pilot in partnership with Bank of England and the Money & Pensions Service, to improve the local financial wellbeing offer.

Arts & Culture - We delivered writing workshops in partnership with the Royal Literary Fund for VCSFE and Link Workers, providing skills and activities, and building connections.

Regional Social Prescribing Conference - We held an extremely successful event to bring together regional social prescribing leaders, enabling us to build local partnerships.



London - London Plus

Reporting - We worked with the Ubele Initiative, an African diaspora-led infrastructure plus organisation, to produce a report on *Reimagining Social Prescribing: Perspectives and Experiences from Black and Racially Minoritised Communities*; this aimed to identify and understand some of the gaps and barriers preventing access and take-up of social prescribing within these communities.

Social Prescribing Connected - We created a database of cross-sector organisations involved in social prescribing including local authorities, housing associations, social prescribing services and NHS key contacts per borough; this was important to drive local partnerships and connection.



South East - Crawley Community Action

Children & Young People - We allied to peer network groups and worked on the Community of Interest in the region, including making a connection to the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities; in addition, we ran a peer network and hosted two NASP webinars on the subject.

Mapping Social Prescribing Link Worker Host Organisations - In the South East we began a project to map all of the Social Prescribing Link Worker Host Organisations, working closely with social prescribing leads in the region. This is important to improve the connectivity of social prescribers with each other when people move between services, with other professionals such as hospital discharge teams and with the local voluntary and community sector.

Whole Community Approach: Crawley - We worked with Living Healthier Lives, an outreach project to support diverse communities' engagement in social prescribing and work on developing a whole community approach to social prescribing.



South West - Active Dorset

Investment - We provided match funding to establish two park yoga sites in areas of deprivation in Cornwall. On average, each week 44 participants are attending Bodmin and 93 are attending the site at Par. Residents have been delighted with the yoga sessions as opportunities in their local areas are limited.

Knowledge and Understanding - There have been over 1,300 views of the South West Social Prescribing Services Map since publication earlier this year, which displays organisations who host a Social Prescribing Link Worker as well as other Local Infrastructure Organisations who support social prescribing. There has been hugely positive feedback from users who mention the map helps them to make sense of their system.

We supported two Acute settings (Dorset & Devon) to explore the role social prescribing can play within their hospitals. Of particular interest was the potential for social prescribing to enable more collaboration between primary and secondary care.



Supporting the workforce

Our work this year has included the development of practical resources for Primary Care Networks (PCNs), including Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme (ARRS) guidance. We are also proud to have developed a Link Worker Advisory Group (LWAG), which has been instrumental in the delivery of our forthcoming Link Worker Induction Guide. The LWAG are a group of seasoned link workers with a wide range of backgrounds. NASP intends to expand the group for a wider reach to include regional representation and specialisms.

We co-designed a guide for primary care decision makers using ARRS funding to recruit Advice Link Workers, with our partners Money and Pensions Service. This will enable PCNs to maximise the ARRS funding to support communities experiencing poor health due to their financial issues.

We worked with NHS England to support the delivery of the NHS England Social Prescribing Workforce Development Framework. This included our commissioned work, the Portfolio of Evidence, for Social Prescribing Link Workers to evidence their skills and practice in line with the NHS England competency Framework.

We intend to continue to codesign practical resources for workforce, healthcare infrastructure and voluntary sector providers. We also have a growing global portfolio of international workforce development, where we support workforce implementation support offers.



“I have really enjoyed being in the Link Worker Advisory Group as it has given me a chance to talk to others who work in the same sector and learn new ways of doing things. The group has given me the confidence to take part in more events and to know my knowledge can be shared with others. Everyone has been so friendly and given great feedback.”

Sarah Caulfield
Social Prescriber/Wellbeing Team Lead at
Foundry Healthcare Lewes

Social Prescribing 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. Participants in the programme were offered a range of opportunities to connect with their peers and to develop their skills in championing change. These were coordinated by NASP, with input from NHS England.

Applications to join the programme were received by over 200 people. After an eligibility review, 70 were appointed as champions in May 2022 and supported by an additional 32 champions previously involved in the 2021-22 pilot. Champions represented 22 different disciplines and all seven regions of the country.

Champions were asked to report briefly on up to three significant actions they had taken directly, because of their participation in the programme, demonstrating the success of the programme in building connections, partnerships and elevating the profile of social prescribing.

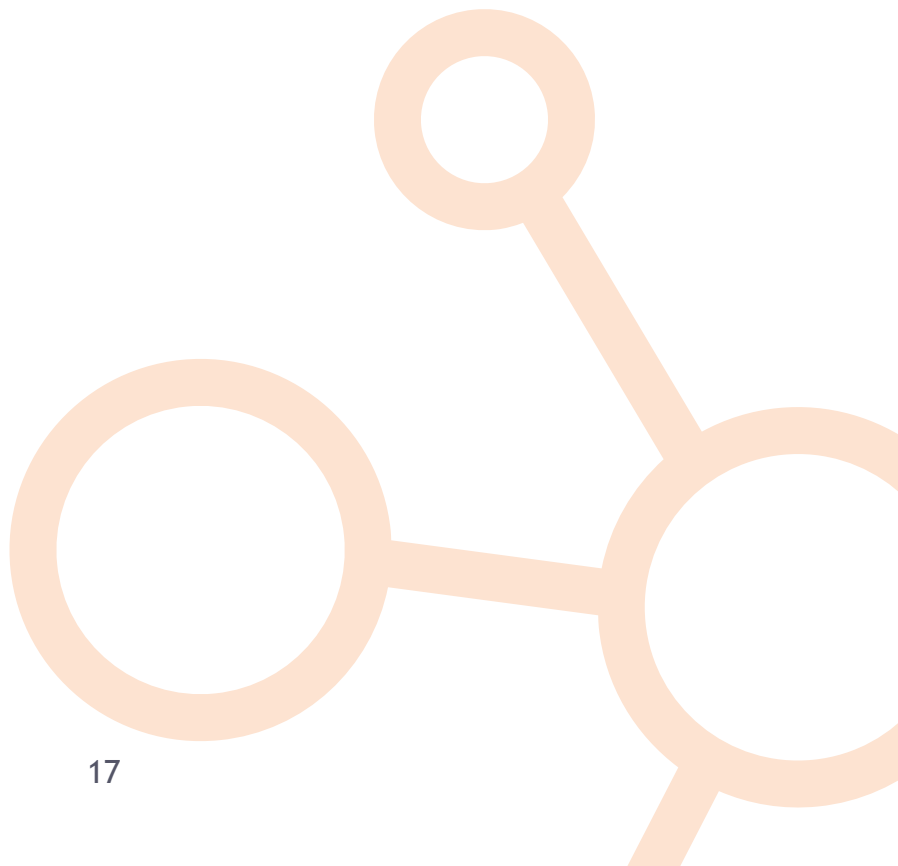




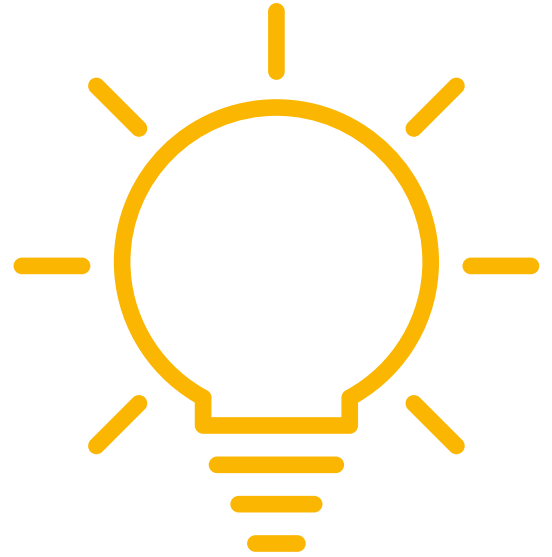
“I became a Social Prescribing Champion to support as many people as possible across my local area to become aware of and receive access to social prescribing for support around the wider determinants of health and connection to services to help address non-medical needs. My ambition was to work with hospital teams and services to train them on what social prescribing is, case studies, the benefits, how they could refer patients via Elemental and how people can self-refer into the service.

The Social Prescribing Teams and I ran ‘Grand Rounds’, a lunch and learn session for clinicians and other hospital staff, with all information on the services sent to staff across the hospital. We implemented an information stand at the hospital entrance for a day to let people know about social prescribing, self-referral and everything they can offer. I have chaired monthly Elemental meetings with all services who use Elemental as a referral system, to ensure collaborative learning and best practice between Social Prescribing Teams, Macmillan Information & Support Service, Active Tameside and more.”

Amber Henthorn
Programme Support Manager at Personalised Care Tameside,
Tameside & Glossop Integrated Care Foundation Trust



Partnerships



National Leads

We continue to drive innovative ideas and approaches through national partnerships; this work is delivered by a core team of National Leads across Physical Activity, Arts and Culture, Heritage, Older People and the Natural Environment.

Older People

- 3 evidence products published
- 2 pilot projects commissioned
- 2 Skillshare workshops delivered
- 1 Advisory group convened

In partnership with Independent Age, we commissioned two pilot projects 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. These projects in Hastings and Leicester will help to create more connected social prescribing systems for older people, particularly those experiencing financial hardship and those from marginalised communities.

Working with academic partners, we commissioned a rapid evidence review of social prescribing initiatives supporting older people experiencing poverty or financial hardship. Stakeholders were also surveyed to produce a snapshot of social prescribing for older people, identifying enablers, barriers, gaps and opportunities. All these findings are available on our website and informed the development of the older people's work programme, including the pilot projects.

Older People was a theme of the Skillshare programme which focused on supporting the needs of older people.

Social prescribing story: John



After losing someone close to him, John was struggling, with grief having a significant impact on his mental health. After discussing it with his GP he was introduced to Jackie, a link worker.

John said: “I was in a very dark place and Jackie introduced me to a number of activities that she thought would help. They certainly did!”

This included a group called ‘The Bereavement Journey’ run by a church in Melksham. Over the six sessions, they used films and discussion to help guide John through the most common aspects of grief.

John said: “The course turned me around from darkness to light, so great was the change.”

Historic Environment

- 4 social prescribing pilots underway, supported by funding from Historic England for 2022-23
- 27 heritage organisations are members of the Heritage and Social Prescribing Community of Practice, with 12 actively delivering social prescribing
- 4 major presentations given as part of conferences and workshops across the country, raising the profile of NASP and social prescribing

This year saw the publication of Historic England’s Wellbeing and Heritage strategy, which has paved the way for more health and wellbeing work in the sector as well as collaboration opportunities on social prescribing. We have supported Historic England on the development and evaluation of two social prescribing pilot projects: one testing the concept of heritage connectors in Frome and the other testing the concept of heritage buddies in Nottingham. These projects will contribute to growing evidence on the health and wellbeing benefits of heritage as well as the testing the connectivity infrastructure in social prescribing systems.

We led and facilitated the work of the Heritage and Social Prescribing Community of Practice, enabling heritage organisations across the sector to further their understanding of social prescribing and access resources and support. Working with those organisations, Heritage and Social Prescribing Guidance is now in development to offer information and support to heritage professionals, social prescribing link workers and the public.

We also participated in the Heritage and Wellbeing conference at the University of Bournemouth in March 2022 to raise the profile of social prescribing within the sector and to facilitate further innovative collaborations.

Natural Environment

- 1 toolkit developed
- 4 evidence infographics developed

This year we have continued to support the national Green Social Prescribing Test and Learn programme to tackle and prevent mental ill health to its conclusion in March 2023. Working with NHS England and other partners, a green social prescribing toolkit has been developed and is now available on our website. We are continuing to work with partners to explore and maximise options to support the scale and spread of the learning.

We have also been working with Natural England to design and test the concept of Nature Buddies to support people to connect to social prescribing activities and we have provided expertise on the development of green community hubs. Four evidence infographics were also produced on the benefit and role of nature and the natural environment in social prescribing.

A webinar on health inequalities and wellbeing through food was delivered to highlight the opportunities for social prescribing in growing food, flowers and other plants.



Green Social Prescribing

Launched in April 2021, the £5.77 million cross-government Green Social Prescribing programme was supported by the [Treasury Shared Outcomes Fund](#) with additional funds from [NHS England](#), [Sport England](#) and National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP), with support from Natural England and several Government departments.

The project set out to test how to embed green social prescribing into communities in order to improve mental health outcomes, reduce health inequalities, reduce demand on the health system and develop best practice. The programme supported 7 test and learn Integrated Care Systems.

- Over 8,500 people have been referred to a green social prescribing activity during the programme from April 2021-March 2023
- 85% of green social prescriptions were taken up when offered
- Interim evaluation findings showed positive improvements in mental health and wellbeing and strong engagement in communities experiencing high levels of social inequalities that affect health and wellbeing
- Green social prescribing continues to be delivered in all seven of the test and learn sites, demonstrating a lasting impact of the programme

Social prescribing story: Ian



Ian attended Trust Link's therapeutic gardening project, Growing Together, after being referred by a mental health practitioner at his local GP surgery.

As someone who lives with agoraphobia, anxiety and emotional disorder, he struggles to be around lots of people and outside of the house.

Ian said: "I didn't go out much after leaving school due to frequent bullying. I used to have to have someone with me to leave the house. I'd been stuck inside my house for so long. Growing

up I never wanted to be trapped indoors, or working in an office, and Trust Links has given me an opportunity to be outside more."

A valued member of the community garden, Ian was inspired to get his Horticultural NVQ and now support the running of Trust Link's horticultural course, supporting people in the way that he himself was supported when he first arrived.

Arts and Culture

- Over 3,300 people participated in Art by Post: Poems for our Planet in 2022-23
- Distributed £100,000 worth of small grants to 100 choirs in partnership with the Utley Foundation, for those living with dementia

With the support of Arts Council England, this year we appointed a new National Lead for Arts and Culture to understand the needs and develop stronger social prescribing systems within the creative health sector. We have built relationships across the sector, particularly with libraries to support their current provision of health and wellbeing activities and to enable them to support the expansion of the social prescribing offer in these settings.

Working with Southbank Centre, NASP fully funded the second iteration of Art by Post. 'Poems for our Planet' combined the benefits of arts and culture activities with green social prescribing, using nature connectedness to inspire the participants' creative writing, drawing and painting.

Social prescribing story: Evrill



Evrill found lockdown hard. Stuck in her house in Manchester, she couldn't do any of the things she used to love: singing, dancing, spending time with her family and her church community.

It was only when she mentioned these feelings in passing to her GP that she found out about social prescribing, and that there might be a way to feel better after all.

After spending some time talking to a link worker - explaining how she was feeling - they referred her to a community music organisation called String of Hearts. Every few weeks, they would ring her up and sing songs down the phone. A life-long music fan, she looked forward to the phonecalls every week. It was a small thing but made such a difference.

Now lockdown has lifted, she regularly attends the singing sessions in person.

Evrill said: "When we sing together in that room, it's so marvellous.... it brings people together."

Physical Activity

More Than a Game was formally launched this year, a programme designed to improve collaboration between the health system and the sport and physical activity sector. At the launch event, we brought partners together from NHS England and football community trusts to better understand the needs of each sector and enable place-based collaboration. This has led to successful integration in a number of areas across the country.

Working with the Department for Transport, we have also supported the development of active travel social prescribing pilots. This is a three-year pilot programme to provide a wide range of cycling and walking interventions to improve physical health and mental wellbeing through social prescribing.

We worked with the health workforce to understand their needs and build supportive trusted pathways to local sport and physical activity provision. In response to this a social prescribing physical activity blueprint is being built, linked to the Royal College of GPs' Active Practice Charter to support those working in primary care.

Social prescribing story: Linda



When Linda's husband died ten years ago, she had barely left home without him for decades. An avid traveller, she was just beginning to find her feet, and take solo trips abroad when COVID-19 trapped her inside.

Meeting Linda now, you'd never guess she was in such a dark place just a few years ago. One of the regulars at a weekly 'Walk and Talk' along Fleetwood seafront, she is a friendly face for nervous newcomers.

Like many of the newer walkers, Linda found out about the group through a local Social Prescriber - Wendy. Wendy persuaded her to go along on the walk and soon she was out every week.

Linda said: "This group has made a big difference, not just me but to everybody. It's just grown and grown. And now we have over 30 people... It's changed my life."

Global

On a global scale, the National Academy for Social Prescribing has engaged in monthly conversations and partnership with international colleagues from over 32 countries.

In 2022-23, the Alliance aimed to build this global community to work collaboratively to raise awareness of social prescribing, build capability, infrastructure and evidence.

Together with World Health Organization (WHO) colleagues and international partners, NASP published the Social Prescribing Around the World Report in March 2023. This report explores social prescribing in 24 countries.

The International Partners Community of Practice has taken place every six weeks, with members from a total of 32 countries sharing best practice and innovative models of implementing social prescribing in different settings around the world.

The Global Alliance: the year in numbers



An in-person international learning trip was also hosted for over 40 international partners from 18 different countries. This was a first of its kind convening of key stakeholders interested in accelerating social prescribing efforts across the globe hosted by the Global Social Prescribing Alliance in collaboration with NASP.

Accelerating Innovation

The Accelerating Innovation Programme - established by NASP, Royal Voluntary Service and NHS England - ended in March 2023. It helped national voluntary organisations work together alongside local communities to increase the scale and impact of social prescribing activities.

The programme's achievements include:

- Forming a Community of Practice with 135 members from charities, social enterprises, umbrella bodies and others. Many members are formed of a handful of staff and volunteers who support people with unique needs, while others are large national charities that support many thousands of people across the country
- Hosting webinars covering topics such as financial wellbeing, health inequalities, evaluation and evidence, as well as other informal catch-ups
- Deep-dive working groups which cut across sectors and organisations, where members of the Community of Practice worked together with others in the social prescribing movement to share learning and make recommendations for developing new initiatives. This led to the publication of three resources co-produced with members and sector partners
- Publication of a 'Volunteering for Wellbeing' guide, to help volunteer-involving organisations support people who may come to volunteering as part of a social prescribing journey. This was co-produced with 100 people (Community of Practice members, volunteer managers, volunteers, link workers, and sector experts)
- 'How to get started with co-production in Social Prescribing' was published, in partnership with the co-production Collective and the NASP co-production group of over 30 people from large and small charities, link workers, commissioners, academics, and people who have experienced social prescribing
- Publication of 'Innovations in social prescribing: the role of social housing', in partnership with HACT and Housing LIN, and members of the Community of Practice
- Social Prescribing Skillshare: a pilot programme to support organisations to increase their skills and confidence to enable them to provide quality social prescribing activities

We are continuing to prioritise innovation across the organisation, including through the Skillshare Programme and the development of a new Innovation Network.



Social prescribing story: Chris



When Chris developed a bad back meaning he could no longer work, his health spiralled, which led to him becoming bedbound for almost four years with two diabetic ulcers on his leg that eventually needed to be amputated. He felt incredibly isolated at that time and was becoming very depressed.

It was only when his GP referred him to a local social prescribing service set up by the charity, Involve Kent, that he received “three phone calls that would change my life”.

The conversations led to him taking part in ‘Actively Involve’, a programme that encourages people to get outside and be more active in the local community. He started volunteering in the local allotment and loved it. When a position as a Horticultural Wellbeing Coordinator at the charity became available, he applied, and got the job.

He said: “Now I’m one of the people who has those conversations, like the ones that saved my life...”.

He said: “It’s always hard to motivate yourself when you’ve got an illness... it’s much more difficult to motivate yourself when you’ve got no contact from friends or family. The friends I’ve made at Involve have supported me massively, aided my recovery and I cannot thank them enough.”

Investment



Thriving Communities Fund

2022-23 saw the completion of projects delivered under 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 & Pensions Service, Natural England, NHS Charities Together, Sport England, and NHS England.

The Fund supported 37 projects across England, delivering 3,772 sessions. 414 volunteers participated, contributing an average of 300 volunteer hours per project.

The evaluation shows the life-changing impact of social prescribing, with activities supported by the fund reaching over 10,000 people.

The programme was successful in reaching groups more likely to experience poor health and less likely to get the health support they need:

- 45% had a long-standing health condition or disability - nearly twice the national rate
- 39% lived within the top 30% of the most deprived communities in England
- 34% were from black and global majority backgrounds

Another success of the programme was building new and better connections between healthcare networks and the voluntary sector:

- 88% of projects said that the Thriving Communities Fund had led to improved pathways to community support
- 91% said it had made alternative support more accessible in their community
- 88% of projects said that the Thriving Communities Fund had improved links between link workers and Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise organisations
- 82% said it had improved the local social prescribing offer
- Two-thirds of the projects involved volunteers

Power of Music Fund

Following the publication of the Power of Music report, this year saw the rapid development of the Power of Music Fund. Working with a wide range of partners including the Utley Foundation, we distributed £100,000 worth of small grants to 100 dementia choirs and singing groups in response to cost-of-living increases.



The next phase is a new Power of Music Fund which aims to provide a single funding stream for music and dementia social prescribing provision. By developing a mixed economy of funding, kickstarted through an initial £1 million grant from the Utley Foundation, we have used our unique place at the intersection of health and community to establish this programme.

Throughout 2022-23 we have been developing the aims and outcomes of the fund seeking further investment to launch the fund in 2023-24 financial year.



Evidence



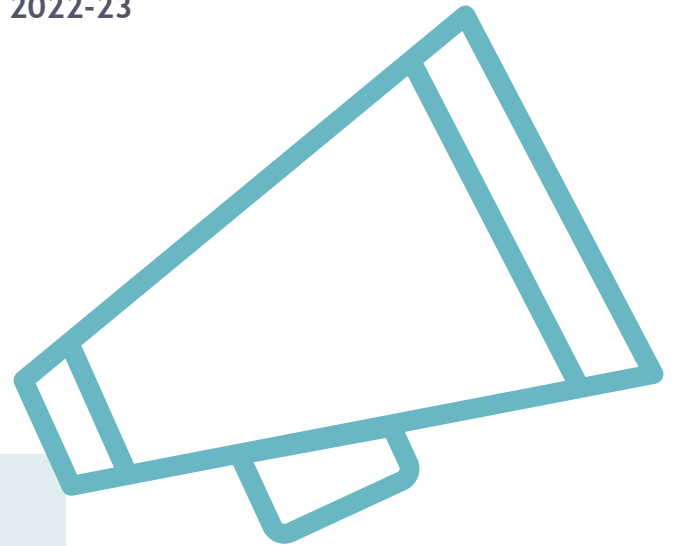
New evidence published in 2022-23

During 2022-23, we worked to identify and address key evidence gaps for social prescribing policy and practice in the UK. We have done this through collaboration, being convenors of evidence, and increasing NASP's own capabilities for evidence-based activities. We have developed our cross-sector International Evidence Collaborative, including the delivery of a programme of webinars and the creation of three International Coordinator roles in Portugal, Canada and Australia. We have worked with our evidence collaborative to produce accessible evidence products on a range of identified evidence gaps for policy and practice in the UK, with published briefings and rapid evidence reviews on:

- **Older people:** Evidence shows that social prescribing can support older people with poverty in five main ways: supporting food insecurity; supporting fuel poverty; supporting financial management; supporting digital inclusion; supporting social vulnerability
- **Arts, culture and creativity:** The evidence consistently shows a positive link between better health and wellbeing and time spent taking part in arts, heritage and cultural activities. The UK is considered a leader in 'Arts on Prescription' and there is a growing demand for home and community-based arts and culture related activities
- **Physical activity:** A referral to take part in physical activity can lead to a wide range of benefits, including improvements in physical and mental health, increased patient empowerment, and a reduction in health service use and costs
- **Financial, social and legal social prescribing:** A key part of social prescribing is to help people deal with practical issues. Support with finance, social welfare and legal advice has been shown to have a positive impact on health and wellbeing
- **Nature:** Nature-based social prescribing can have positive effects on health and wellbeing. The reduction in loneliness and development of a nature connection was particularly found in people likely to be experiencing health inequalities

Our academic partners also delivered four evidence reviews on health, wellbeing and the natural environment, published by Natural England.

Profile



Communications

The public profile of social prescribing has continued to rise. We carried out a survey with UK adults in March 2023, and 17% had heard of the term “social prescribing” - a rise from 12% in March 2022. In England, 10% of respondents were aware that there was a Social Prescribing Link Worker available through their GP practice, a rise from 6% the previous year.

While these numbers remain relatively low, they appear to be growing fast. Many people understand that social prescribing exists, even if they are not familiar with the term. In a separate survey commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care, 61% of people said that they were aware that healthcare professionals can refer people to non-medical support for their mental health (e.g. support groups or community activities).

In 2022-23, our Communications work has included:

- Developing a **new website**. This launched in January 2023, and is intended as a one-stop shop for all things social prescribing. NASP saw 26% more users on the website in 2022-23 compared to 2021-22
- Growing our social media following by **48%** between 2021 and 2022
- NASP was mentioned **677 times in UK media**, and supported a range of features about social prescribing in the national press
- NASP made **10 new films about social prescribing**, including about Green Social Prescribing, music and dementia and the role of link workers
- Dr Radha Modgil has led on work with **Ambassadors** and presented our popular Podcast on Prescription
- This year’s **Social Prescribing Show** sold out within days of tickets going on sale - and **#SocialPrescribingDay** had a potential reach of more than 16 million people on social media
- We also developed the **Social Prescribing & Me campaign**, to raise public awareness about social prescribing, which launched in Spring 2023

Webinars

NASP has continued to programme free webinars covering a range of topics and inviting speakers from a broad spectrum of industries and backgrounds.

Some examples include:

- Overcoming barriers to engagement
- Exploring funding models in the VCFSE sector
- Measuring and communicating results with impact
- Volunteering for wellbeing through social prescribing
- Take a breath - Yoga and social prescribing
- Health inequalities: Wellbeing through food
- Thriving Communities Fund celebration
- Social prescribing - Digital and virtual remote support
- Churches and social prescribing
- What is the evidence for social prescribing?
- Exploring social prescribing across the life course



Our partners

We would like to thank our national partners, including:

Arts Council England
Historic England
Money and Pensions Service
Natural England
NAVCA
NHS Charities Together
NHS England
Royal Voluntary Service
Independent Age
LEGO
Music for Dementia
Sport England
The Utley Foundation
Universal Music
The Social Prescribing Network

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 people

SMT:

CEO - Charlotte Osborn-Forde
Chief Operating Officer - Sunita Pandya
Executive Director of Programmes & Partnerships - Jim Burt
Director of Finance - Nigel Lee
Director of Communications - Nick Harrop

Corporate Affairs:

Head of Corporate Affairs - Jared Ashe
Corporate Affairs & Projects Officers - Bea Walker / Hannah Beck
Administration Assistants - Alexis Colón / Niamh Lynch
Consultant: Funding & Revenue Generation - Elizabeth Cody
Executive Assistant & Board Secretary - Olivia Tilley

Communications:

Head of Communications - Charlotte Bell
Media, PR & Corporate Affairs Lead - Rosie Stephen
Social Media Lead - Ashra Stark
Ambassador Lead - Radha Modgil
Communications & Corporate Affairs Assistant - Sabah Nazir

Programmes:

Head of Evidence - Anne Hunt
Senior Evidence Specialist - Lou Baxter

Head of Accelerating Innovation - Ingrid Abreu Scherer
Accelerating Innovation Network & Events Lead - Wendy Horrobin

Head of Thriving Communities - Joshua Ryan
Community Connections Lead - Monica Boulton
Thriving Communities Network & Events Lead - Poppy Learman

Head of National Programmes - Gráinne Nolan
National Lead for Older People - Emily Cousins
National Lead for Arts & Culture - Tola Dabiri
National Lead for Historic Environment - Desi Gradinarova
National Lead for Physical Activity - Tracey Lines
National Lead for Natural Environment - Dave Solly

Head of Global Programme - Bogdan Chiva Giurca
Development Officer - Global - Hamaad Khan

Head of Workforce & Infrastructure - Najnin Islam

Regional:

Regional Lead - North West - Christine Blythe
Regional Lead - North East & Yorkshire - David Cowan
Regional Lead - Midlands - Sarah Paine
Regional Lead - East of England - Tom Watkins
Regional Lead - South West - James Day
Regional Lead - South East - Esther Watts

Board of Trustees:

Professor Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard PhD FRCGP - Chair
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Financial summary

Balance sheet as at 31 March 2023

(as extracted from audited accounts)

	2023		2022	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Tangible assets		31,273		41,272
Current assets				
Debtors	402,091		394,855	
Cash at bank and in hand	844,639		618,498	
		1,246,730		1,013,353
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		(519,127)		(821,318)
Net current assets		727,603		192,035
Total assets less current liabilities		758,876		233,307
Income funds				
Restricted funds	449,856		233,307	
Unrestricted funds	309,020		-	
		758,876		233,307



National
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Get in touch

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Charity number: 1191145

Company number: 12275770