

NHS Social Prescribing Champions Phase 2 (2023-2024)

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1.Introduction and Background

The importance of Clinical and Non-Clinical Champions

Clinical and Non-Clinical have been at the forefront of the Social Prescribing movement, since its inception. Be it through advocacy, local pilots, evaluation or hands-on delivery of social prescribing, champions have led the way to advocate and advance social prescribing through case studies, knowledge sharing and inspiration, thus building a long-lasting cultural shift, one that advocates for community-based integrated care that ensures people’s true needs are being met.

The history of the NHS Social Prescribing Champions Scheme

The NHS Social Prescribing Champions Scheme was launched in 2015 and its chief aim was to support trainees and students in learning about social prescribing. In the Spring of 2022, following a year-long pilot, a new programme was launched for both clinical and non-clinical NHS staff hosted by the National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) with funding from NHS England. The aim is to foster enhanced peer networking and effectiveness in raising awareness and optimising the use of social prescribing in the NHS. 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 and NASP staff, alongside invited influencers and experts. Evaluating the experience and the impact of the programme was important, especially to help inform decisions regarding future developments.

The Social Prescribing Champions Scheme has successfully contributed to the continuous professional development of its participants, raised awareness of social prescribing, and facilitated the development of resources, materials, and events relevant to social prescribing. The champions involved in the programme have become advocates for social prescribing, promoting a more holistic approach to health and care within their locality and place of work. Further details and full evaluation can be accessed [here](#).

Our intention is to build on the success of the scheme and launch Phase 2 and progress based on learnings from our pilot. Our future direction is to ensure that the scheme remains a valuable resource for those involved, providing ongoing support and development opportunities. We believe that by doing so, the scheme will continue to make a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities across the country.

2.NHS Social Prescribing Champions: Phase 2

Introduction to Phase 2 of the scheme

Building on last year's success and our years of developing and leading social prescribing champions, we are launching the second phase of the scheme aiming to ensure its long term sustainability. Our desire is to foster two-way communication in a transparent and open way, to facilitate collaboration and give a voice to frontline workers who are involved in the delivery of social prescribing. We are conscious busy practitioners will have competing priorities, therefore this new phase of the scheme has been purposely designed to be non-onerous and to provide an opportunity for clinical and non-clinical leaders involved through the opportunities it provides.

Purpose and Aims

The scheme aims to develop a cohort of multidisciplinary team members across England, to promote the delivery of social prescribing (SP) across the health and social care sector. This will be achieved by expanding knowledge, providing learning opportunities for other health and care professionals, and by working with champions to achieve the following aims:

- Raising awareness of Social Prescribing within the workplace, locality, region, and/or nation
- Connecting with social prescribing link workers to co-design solutions to local challenges
- Supporting consistency of messaging and latest evidence on Social Prescribing
- Connecting multidisciplinary team members
- Supporting primary and secondary care collaboration for Social Prescribing

Who can be a Social Prescribing Champion?

The scheme is open to all healthcare workforce and NHS staff regardless of profession, seniority or year of training. This includes multidisciplinary team members, medical and nursing staff, allied healthcare professionals, link workers, and those in non-clinical roles (such as discharge coordinators, general practice managers) with an interest in social prescribing and a passion for teaching others. The scheme is also open VCSE staff funded and/or commissioned by the NHS.

Champions are recognised and selected following a nomination process which has been described in detail below. In short, champions are individuals involved in the set-up, delivery, evaluation or facilitation of social prescribing services.

Examples of champions include (but are not limited to) clinicians, ICS / ICB staff, PCN staff, allied healthcare professionals, individuals with lived experience, social prescribing link workers, care coordinators, health coaches, discharge coordinators, general practice managers, secondary care staff, community-based NHS staff, and so on.

The scheme is also open to students in health-related subjects (extending beyond medical students to allied health professionals, nursing, midwifery, and all other health related university courses).

Nomination and Recruitment Process

Social Prescribing Champions are identified through a structured nomination process. Both external nominations (from colleagues, organisations, or friends) and self-nominations are accepted.

The National Academy for Social Prescribing welcomes nominations on a continuous, rolling basis, without any set deadlines.

1. Application Submission:

Begin by filling out our straightforward nomination form. This form will request essential details about the nominee, including their name, role, and organisation. Additionally, please provide a brief description detailing the reasons for nominating them as a Social Prescribing Champion.

2. Monthly Review:

The National Academy for Social Prescribing team undertakes a comprehensive review of all nominations on a monthly basis to identify the most deserving candidates.

3. Communication of Outcome:

Post-review, every nominee will receive an email notification informing them of the outcome of their nomination. This ensures transparency and timely feedback to all participants.

4. Champion Induction:

Successful nominees, now recognised as champions, will be furnished with an official letter of confirmation detailing their new status. To further accentuate their role and achievements, a set of resources, along with a lanyard and pin badge, will be dispatched to them. This serves both as a token of appreciation and a symbol of their pivotal role as a Social Prescribing Champion.

Thank you for considering nominating an exceptional individual who showcases the values and dedication that epitomises a Social Prescribing Champion. Your effort in identifying and uplifting such individuals ensures that the mission and vision of social prescribing continue to thrive.

-process of onboarding

The NHS Social Prescribing Champion Role

As a Social Prescribing Champion, you have a big part to play in helping us to spread the word about the value of social prescribing within your workplace and ensuring healthcare professionals understand what 'good' social prescribing looks like.

Being a Champion

Social Prescribing Champions are NHS staff and NHS funded 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. They support social prescribing link workers, ensure consistency of messaging, and ensure busy practitioners consider social, emotional and practical support needs alongside biomedical interventions for patients. Another key element of the champions is to support the dissemination of best practice and up-to-date guidance documents into local systems.

Resources and Support for Champions

- **Informational Materials:** This includes infographics, communication materials, evidence summaries, and videos to provide a comprehensive understanding of the initiative.
- **Identification Kit:** A social prescribing pin badge and lanyard to help Champions identify themselves and raise awareness about the initiative.
- **Priority Access:** Champions will receive early access to crucial information such as best practices and the most recent guidance documents.
- **Collaborative Opportunities:** Champions will have the chance to co-design emerging strategy documents, providing hands-on input.
- **Communication Toolkit:** Guidance for social media and effective communication strategies to amplify the message of social prescribing. (see previously developed communications toolkit)
- **Exclusive Access to Expertise:** Champions will have the privilege to access the National Academy for Social Prescribing's internal expertise, webinars, newsletters, and the community of practice , facilitating a culture of shared knowledge and continuous learning.

Expected Outcomes for Appointed Champions

Being part of this scheme will benefit you, your colleagues and your patients. Membership is intended not to be onerous, but there are some expectations.

- a) Champions commit to a set of values (outlined in full below)
- b) Providing feedback to the National Academy for Social Prescribing by completing a simple 5 minute yearly online survey
- c) Optional involvement in webinars, podcasts, case study development and other social media opportunities provided by the National Academy for Social Prescribing and NHS England.

Core values

Core values held by Social Prescribing Champions (in no particular order). A commitment to:

- Ongoing learning
- Sharing best practice
- Providing personalised care
- Reflecting on own practice and the practice of others
- Collaboration and transparency
- Being respectful of others
- Building inter- and multi-disciplinary working relationships

3. Conclusion and Summary

Who is leading and is involved in the NHS Social Prescribing Champion Scheme?

The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) in collaboration with NHS England are facilitating the scheme delivery.

Nominating a Social Prescribing Champion

In our efforts to further the social prescribing movement, the involvement of both clinical and non-clinical staff is crucial. By aligning with our clinical engagement strategy, we aim to uncover innovative practices and facilitate shared learning. Local and regional advocates in this field, who are championing social prescribing in various settings, play a vital role in this process.

By nominating these professionals, we can highlight their contributions, share their expertise, and learn from their best practices. If you know of an individual who has demonstrated dedication and innovative approaches in personalised care and social prescribing, we encourage you to nominate them through the [following link](#):

Get in touch

For further questions or any additional detail please get in touch directly with us at spchampions@nasp.info