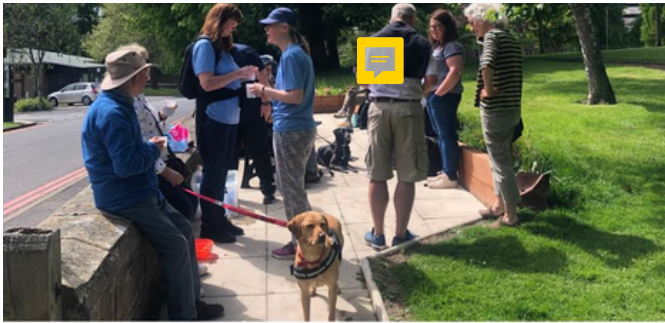




# THE SCOOP

The social prescribing newsletter for Well Up North PCN



**Mind and Sole**

Alnwick's Walking & Talking session

Every Tuesday  
@  
10.30am

Meeting at Alnwick Column  
at the seats opposite the hospital  
Please note there is no parking allowed at the GP  
surgery or Hospital ground.

Come along and enjoy a gentle walking group, with  
experienced leaders, offering peer to peer support.

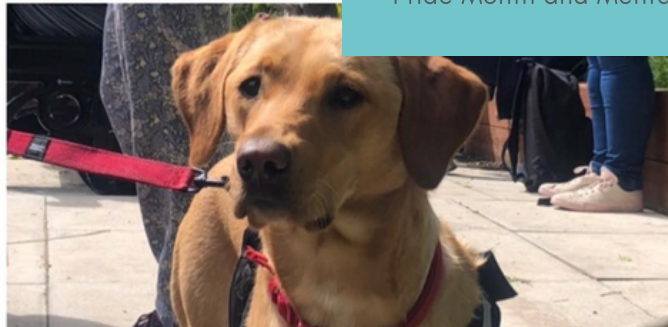
**Mind and Sole**

*win*



## WHAT'S INSIDE?

- SPECIAL FEATURE - **PRIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH**
- Social prescribing case studies
- New Knit&Natter Group
- Allotment project
- Carers Champions
- Vaccination clinics update
- Pride Month and Mental Health



## PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN ACTION

by Jane Cannam

Social Prescribing at its core works best where the health service is actively able to signpost patients to social groups going on in community already. The impact of finding a group who enjoy what you enjoy where you are able to engage in an activity, talk with people and build relationship is so positive and boosts our health and wellbeing.

With many groups forced to close face to face meetings, this has been a real challenge for the GP Link Worker team, so when restrictions started to lift we were keen to engage with Mind and Sole who were offering to lead walks from surgeries to encourage people out and about in a safe and well structured way.

“

...I just love coming to this...it makes my week.”

“

..I'll be back next week...I really need this

The success of these walks has been expediential, and patients have been coming in great numbers to enjoy gentle exercise and good company...plus tea and biccies! Meeting from surgeries so far in Alnwick, Amble and Morpeth, with plans for Berwick, Widdrington and Felton, the PCN are so grateful to Chrissy Smith from Mind and Sole for this positive intervention.

## HAPPY OUTCOME

CASE STUDY BY LORNA CHAPPELL

A patient who was suffering constant back pain for eight years was referred due to low mood. Previously this patient had been very active and was a keen walker until she had suffered a brain haemorrhage in her early sixties. She had contracted pneumonia during her recovery and has, since then, needed to use inhalers. As a result of her poor health, she had to give up her house because the garden was too much for her. This made her very unhappy as she has felt "like a prisoner in her current home" during lockdown as she was unable to enjoy walking and there was no outside space.

She noticed on a leaflet from the pharmacy that back pain could be a one in ten side effect of using some inhalers and as a result of her enquiry, recently was prescribed a different one. The difference was almost immediate for her and now she is able to be out and about, although she is not as strong, nor does she have the same stamina as she had previously. Having been involved with this patient both before and since the prescription change, I cannot stress enough, the difference in this patient's general demeanour and physical abilities. Now, having initially provided a "listening ear" on the telephone to a deeply unhappy person, we are able to "walk and talk" happily on a regular basis while her strength and stamina are being built up again. The patient also felt delighted to join our Knit and Natter group in the Library where she can have contact with others. This is something she would not have been able to do previously.



“

**I cannot stress enough the difference in her general demeanor and physical abilities"**

**Lorna Chappell**

## CAKES AND CROCHET

CASE STUDY BY JANE CANNAM

Referred to the GP Link worker by the GP as a patient with low mood and chronic pain, this charming patient spent some time with her link worker talking about her situation, her existing carers support and her hopes for the future and current interests. Together they devised a happy list, full of things that, when pain levels enabled, the patient could enjoy. We discovered a keen baker and an enjoyment of crochet, patchwork and drawing and this has now developed with the patient taking commissions from friends and family for crocheted mini little pooches!! Should this take off as a little business perhaps on Etsy or similar the GP Link worker was also able to advise the patient on Permitted Work so that she might earn a small amount and not have her benefits affected. The GP Link Worker was also able to send her information for gentle seated exercises to encourage gentle mobility increases and also information for on-line mental health support and community connection from the Womens Workshop who have a fascinating programme of events currently.

[www.womensworkshop.net](http://www.womensworkshop.net)



## EFFECTIVE SIGNPOSTING

### SHORT AND SWEET SUCCESS STORIES

BY ANNE SHILTON

- Speaking to a recently bereaved lady who was having problems understanding and paying her energy bills, a Link Worker put her in touch with the Citizens Advice team, who are helping her reduce the payments and making sure she's on the best tariff.
- When a mother who was concerned about her son with special needs was referred to social prescribing, the Link Worker put them in touch with the Bridge Northumberland programme, helping the son gain confidence and hopefully finding employment.
- Working with a fiercely independent lady in her 90s, she admitted that the odd household adaptation, such as rails by the front door, might be helpful. A Link Worker arranged for a home assessment from social services and her independence continues, with a little help from special equipment.
- A young, male adult found the lockdowns particularly tough, combined with struggling to manage his medical conditions. Following the Link Worker's suggestion, he now walks regularly with the Mind and Sole group and is gaining confidence.



## THE WELL UP NORTH BOOK CLUB...



...meets every 2nd Thursday in the month on Zoom.

e-mail [jane.cannamenhs.net](mailto:jane.cannamenhs.net) for an invite

## KNIT & NATTER, BERWICK

Berwick area Well up North Knit and Natter are meeting face to face again in the Library on a Friday between 2 and 4. However, Northumberland County Council would like us to keep our numbers to 6 initially until further notice. We will be very happy to keep your name on a waiting list until we are allowed to increase the membership. We are currently making items for premature babies. Please do think about joining us for a natter and a cuppa while you crochet or knit. We also welcome people who either wish to work on their own projects or just come along for the chat. If you are starting to feel that you need to get out and about and see other humans, please contact Lorna Chappell, GP Link Worker on 07485314254 or at [lorna.chappell@nhs.net](mailto:lorna.chappell@nhs.net)





## COMMUNITY ALLOTMENT - ALNWICK

by Jane Cannam

The GP Link Workers at Alnwick, Jane Cannam and Natalie Arnold have been involved in the community allotment project with Alnwick Town Council, Gallery Youth Project and Engage for over a year now, and are in the process of bringing patient sessions under the umbrella of the Northumberland Recovery College. It is hoped that these volunteer-led sessions will be open to patients who sign up to the Recovery College to come and enjoy this fabulous outside space. In addition it is hoped that participants will learn some horticultural skills and hopefully associated cookery skills with the produce. The council are just installing a water supply, Alnwick Town Council and Mental Health Concern kindly helped fund our new greenhouse, and we are again applying for funds for a new shed via the local Co Op. This is a fantastic project which we hope will benefit many patients in the years to come.



**THE WELL UP NORTH KNIT AND NATTER GROUP, ALNWICK** normally meets on a Fridays at 12noon on Zoom, but on the 23rd June its members were invited to Alnwick Gardens to see how we might be able to get involved in the Yarn Bomb. It was such a positive event with some members making this their first trip out after shielding.

## SPECIAL FEATURE CARER'S CHAMPIONS

by Karen Armstrong

**Practices across the PCN are encouraged to have a Carers Champion** to act as a voice for carers within the practice and be a key point of contact for carer information within the general practice where they work. The carers champion is able to act as the main contact person for carers, other staff members and local carers organisations. They will maintain the practice resources for carers and take a lead in developing new initiatives. Their main objectives are...

- To promote the identification of patients who are also carers
- To promote engagement with carers across their practice team
- To work with all other members of staff to ensure that records are kept of patient carer numbers eg. through a carers register and /or a flagging system on patient records
- To maintain relevant and up to date information about resources available to carers by eg. setting up a carers information board or by liaising with a local carers support organisation
- To take part in networking appropriate to the role such as forums or champion meetings
- To draw attention to any national or local developments relevant to supporting carers
- To be aware of carers rights and entitlements especially those outlined in the Care Act 2014
- To act as a point of contact for external and internal communication on the subject of carers.
- To support and encourage carer awareness training for practice

Jane Cannam writes that " the role of Carers Champion is closely related to social prescribing and as a service are keen to actively promote and support our Carers Champions across the PCN, Carers often need benefits advice, effective signposting to local organisations and information about respite care and it is here that we can assist."

### Contact details of Carer Champions at the GP Practices within the Well up North PCN

- Alnwick Medical Group: Karen Armstrong and Kimberley Robinson 01665 656000
- Union Brae and Norham Practice: Helen Henderson 01289 330333
- Belford Medical Practice: Lynn Morton 01668 213738 (on maternity leave until August)
- Well Close Square, Berwick: Rachel Driver 01289 333240
- Cheviot Medical Group: Caroline Douglas 01668 281575
- Rothbury Practice: Lesley Hesler 01669 620339
- Gas House Lane Surgery: Joanne Hodge 01670 513657
- Greystoke Surgery: Kate Stephenson 01670 511393
- Widdrington and Felton Surgery: No Carers Champion as yet
- Coquet Medical Group: Rebecca Dawson 01665 710481

“

**I have worked for the practice for over 20 years, but since doing this job I have learnt more about the PCN, NCC and local services than ever" - Karen Armstrong AMG**





# PRIDE MONTH AND MENTAL HEALTH

by Miranda Sheehy



As we reflect on the summer so far, a big event that stands out is Pride Month. June 2021 was dedicated to celebrating LGBTQ+ communities all around the world, although it looked a little different this year due to social distancing and lockdown regulations. However, the celebrations are just as important as ever, and provides an excellent opportunity to focus on mental health within these communities.

Being LGBTQ+ doesn't cause mental health problems. However, there are things that LGBTQ+ people are more likely to experience that will have a negative impact on their mental health, meaning that they are statistically at a higher risk of poor mental health than people who do not identify as LGBTQ+. Figures for depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts and attempts are all higher in these communities.

Someone who identifies as LGBTQ+ is more at risk of being the victim of a hate crime than someone who isn't. These crimes can be driven by homophobia, transphobia, discrimination or social rejection. LGBTQ+ people are more likely to avoid certain healthcare treatments for fear of discrimination, with one in eight people from this demographic reporting experiencing unequal treatment in healthcare.

It is really important to be aware of the reluctance and fears people may face when it comes to accessing healthcare, and to ensure that our organisations are champions for fair treatment. For those of us whose work often involves supporting people's mental health and wellbeing, being aware of the additional risk factor for LGBTQ+ people can make us improve our practice and ensure everyone is getting the best quality care available.

**Source for statistics: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/)**

# ...AND FINALLY

## GP LINK WORKERS CONTINUE TO WORK ON THE FRONT LINE OF THE VACCINE ROLL OUT

Vaccination centres at Well Close and Swan Centre Berwick, Alnwick Cricket Club and Amble Health Centre continue to roll out the vaccines. As infection rates are rising in the North East but Freedom Day is upon us, we know that the vaccine is our best defence to the coronavirus, but let us stay vigilant and as Ben Burville is often heard saying - "keep up your drills".....Hands - Face - Space - and Ventilation are still, and always will be, good sensible measures to fighting the virus.



### Contact details for your local social prescribers:

Morpeth, Widdrington, Felton, Alnwick, Amble, Rothbury, Coquet: [miranda.sheehy@nhs.net](mailto:miranda.sheehy@nhs.net),  
[jane.cannam@nhs.net](mailto:jane.cannam@nhs.net), [natalie.arnold1@nhs.net](mailto:natalie.arnold1@nhs.net)

Berwick, Wooler, Belford: [lorna.chappell@nhs.net](mailto:lorna.chappell@nhs.net) and [carol.gunn2@nhs.net](mailto:carol.gunn2@nhs.net)

