



THE SCOOP

The Social Prescribing Newsletter for Well Up North PCN

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING DAY 2024

Social Prescribing Day is an annual celebration of social prescribing, recognising Social Prescribers, local community groups and regional and national organisations which support people's health and wellbeing.

To mark the day our Social Prescribers shared resources and hosted events in GP practices and community venues across Northumberland to promote the support social prescribing can provide.



Photo: Left to right -
Jan Casson, Lorna Chappell and Carol Gunn



Photo: Linda Harvey



Photo: Left to right -
Lisa Baker and Miranda Hughes



To find out more about social prescribing support in your surgery speak to reception or email:
nencicb-nor.socialprescriberswun@nhs.net



ADVANCED CARE PLANNING

by Lorna Chappell



The Carer was delighted to have gotten to know about Power of Attorney and it highlighted to me how extremely valuable it is for me to talk through Advanced Care Plans.

I have supported an elderly couple who have multiple problems, both medically and socially, who weren't very sure why they had been referred to social prescribing.

During conversations I was able to let them know what support could be available to both of them and we ended up discussing their Advanced Care Plans.

They were very proud of the fact that their wills were up to date and DNRs were in place, but neither of them had ever heard of 'Power of Attorney'. Once I had explained what it was, they discussed it with family who agreed it would be a positive step to take and they arranged to meet with a solicitor.

At our next appointment, they told me that via the solicitor it was to cost £600 each for a Power of Attorney to be set-up. With their agreement I was able to refer them to Age UK instead, a charity which supports older people through completion of the form at a cost of £82 each! In addition, they were also supported to claim Attendance Allowance.



SOCIAL PRESCRIBING CERTIFICATE

Congratulations to Miranda Hughes and Lisa Baker who have been awarded their Level 3 in Social Prescribing Qualification.

Their hard work over the last year has given them a greater knowledge of social prescribing and the positive benefits patients can experience from accessing this support.

ARMED FORCES VETERAN FRIENDLY ACCREDITED GP PRACTICES



Armed Forces veteran friendly accredited GP practice

Congratulations to Greystroke Surgery and Well Close Surgery who have become accredited Armed Forces Friendly GP practices with the assistance of the Social Prescribing Team.

If you are ex-forces, please let your GP practice know to ensure you receive the help you need and any extra support you are entitled to.



HAPPY 5TH BIRTHDAY WELL UP NORTH



On Wednesday 20 March the Well Up North Primary Care Network came together at Alnwick Garden to celebrate becoming 5 years old and to recognise the achievements of the various teams who form Well Up North... the Social Prescribers, Health & Wellbeing Coaches, Clinical Pharmacists & Pharmacy Technicians, First Contact Physiotherapists and Mental Health Practitioners.

Congratulations to Tom Henderson, Health & Wellbeing Coach for being awarded the 'Mentorship Award' for being a positive role model and supporting career growth & development within the team, and to Jan Casson, Social Prescriber for Dementia who received the 'Innovator Award' for always thinking creatively and imaginatively!



Photo: Left to right -
Dr Richard Hills, Tom Henderson and Dr Saul Miller



Photo: Left to right -
Dr Richard Hills, Jan Casson and Dr Saul Miller



Photo: Well Up North Primary Care Network Team

To find out more about Well Up North Primary Care Network visit - www.wellupnorth.co.uk

COACHES CORNER

Health and Wellbeing Coaches

by Helen Hindhaugh

Cold water 'therapy' The benefits of cold showers and open water/wild swimming



While more research is needed to make conclusive claims about cold water therapy, preliminary studies demonstrate compelling potential mental and physical health benefits.

I love nothing more than the sense of achievement and exhilaration I feel during and after being in the sea and most especially with the group of friends who are with me on this, what some people view as, a slightly mad adventure. But it feels fantastic, and I feel fantastic, yes there's a buzz and such a feeling of well-being and happiness and it's not just the laughter and being with friends or the occasional shared small portion of chips afterwards.

You don't have to go into the sea, jump in a river, have an ice bath, or go the whole way to cold water immersions. For most of us just turning the shower down a bit cooler each time to acclimatise till you can manage a couple of minutes cold showering on most days, is enough to get the health benefits of cold-water therapy.

It may help to cut down on muscle soreness, cool down after a sweaty workout, aid your immune system, boost your metabolism, and improve your mood.

Some advocates say it can also decrease inflammation, improve your sleep, and sharpen your mental focus. But more research needs to be done to determine if these benefits are supported by science.

Cold water can have profound effect on your circulatory system, and you need to plan for short immersions and gradual warmups afterward. Because cold water immersion (Wim Hoff Method) affects your blood pressure, heart rate, and circulation, it can cause serious cardiac stress.

Discuss the risks with your doctor and make sure it's safe for you to immerse yourself in cold water before you try it.

Also, because your reasoning and emotions can be affected by dangerously cold-water temperatures, make sure someone is on hand to monitor your condition, especially if you choose to swim in open water.

There are lots of open water and wild swimming groups in Northumberland that you can join in with if you are planning to swim, as it's always best to make sure someone knows where you are and can advise on the best places, days and times to go in the water. Safety is paramount! Check out Outdoor Swimming Society for further information and tips.

To find out more about the benefits of cold-water therapy or other methods that could help your health and wellbeing please speak to your surgery about a referral to the Health & Wellbeing Team.

A PATIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

by Rosemary Woodcock

I have been a member of Union Brae Surgery Patient Participation Group (PPG), for a number of years and was aware of the concept of 'Social Prescribing'. I was impressed by this service and how it helped patients, in a non-clinical way, to improve their health and wellbeing. I did not however, envisage that I would need the service.

But in May 2022, my husband died. We met in 1973, and we had a long and very happy relationship and marriage. When he died, my whole pattern of life changed. He had had a range of medical issues, but due to the wonders of medical science, had many years of good health and enjoyment of life. I had been his primary carer for many years with, on occasions, some Social Care support services. In addition we had dogs, for whom I was the main 'dog walker'. At the beginning of July 2022, I lost the last remaining dog.

With these events, my life suddenly became more isolated and, as I have no family nearby, I became a bit lost and felt very alone. My husband and I did not have children and, with my family living some distance away it was very hard to cope.

Then Carol stepped into my life. My GP had referred me to Carol who is a Social Prescriber in Berwick. During our meetings, Carol assessed my needs and interests and from this, was able to give me some ideas and pointers to opportunities that fitted with my personality and interests. She knew I like to walk and was, normally, quite sociable, so these were her first starters.

One of the first proposals Carol offered was the facilities offered at Berwick Hospice Care premises. The service offer Bereavement Drop-in sessions twice a month and is staffed by trained counsellors and volunteers. I started attending and I have found the service to be life changing. The service offers support and guidance in finding ways to cope with grief; allowing attendees to share their experiences in a safe and secure environment and always provides lots of tea, coffee and tissues! From this group, I have met some lovely new friends, which in turn has helped me cope with loneliness.

Carol's other good idea- she was full of them! - was realising that I was a keen walker as I would have our dogs out 3 times a day - hail, rain, shine and snow! She gave me details of the Guide Dogs for the Blind - Sighted Guide Service. I applied to be a Sighted Guide and after an interview and screening, I was accepted onto the scheme. I had to undergo some rigorous training to ensure I conformed to the ethos and values of Guide Dogs. I have been allocated two 'Buddies' locally and it has been one of the best things I have done. It has been good for me, but more importantly it means that my two 'Buddies', who were isolated and unable to get out & about into the community, now have a pal to go out with for walks, have coffee and generally a good chin wag.

I am now in a much better place and it is thanks to Carol and Social Prescribing that I have progressed so far.

I still have my moments, but knowing that the services of the Bereavement service is available anytime and getting out into the fresh air & doing something positive for others has been medicine in itself!





Well Up North PCN is a collaboration of 7 GP Practices working together to improve healthcare outcomes and reduce health inequalities for our patients in North Northumberland.

They are:

**Alnwick Medical Group
Belford Medical Practice
Gas House Lane Surgery
Greystoke Surgery
Union Brae & Norham Practice
Well Close Medical Group
Wooler Health**

**To find out more about social prescribing support
provided by Well Up North at these surgeries
please email:
nencicb-nor.socialprescriberswun@nhs.net**