



# THE SCOOP

The social prescribing newsletter for Well Up North PCN



## CASE STUDIES INSIDE

What social prescribing can do?

Meet the Team

**SPECIAL FEATURE – THE POWER OF MUSIC**

Vaccination clinics

## THE SOCIAL SOLUTION

Jane Cannam

Historically, before the pandemic (remember then) it was thought that around 1 in 5 GP appointments could be taken up by social issues that could not be treated by medical intervention alone. A more sophisticated understanding has developed to see that there are "wider determinants of health" and social prescribing is that response. At the time of writing, if the pandemic has done anything, it has made us all aware, even the most fit and healthy, that factors like community connectivity, access to appropriate housing, access to the job market and education, relational support and family connections can affect our overall health and wellbeing. At the heart of social prescribing is the desire to support patients with non clinical needs like these. Patients are given time and opportunity to talk and the support in co developing solutions. This is done via one to one support with a GP Link Worker and effective signposting to specialist organization and more often the voluntary and community sector. Healthcare is becoming more and more person-centred then community focused and social prescribing is the linking force.

## MEETING THE TEAM

The Well Up North PCN has employed 7 GP Link Workers  
FOR WOOLER AND BEWICK

Lorna Chappell, lorna.chappell@nhs.net

Carol Gunn, carol.gunn2@nhs.net

FOR DEMENTIA SPECIALISM ACROSS THE PCN

Janette Casson, janette.casson@nhs.net

FOR ALNWICK, COQUET, BELFORD AND ROTHBURY

Jane Cannam, jane.cannam@nhs.net

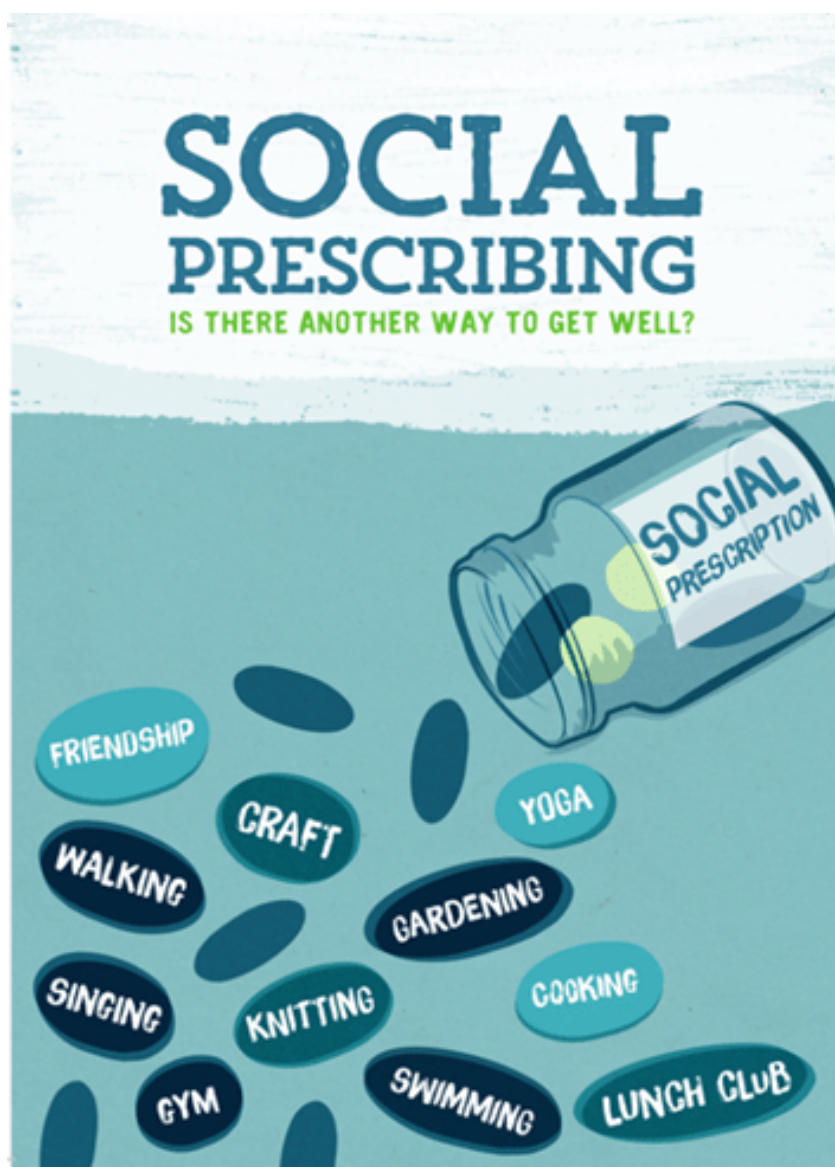
Anne Shilton, anne.shilton@nhs.net

FOR FELTON, WIDDRINGTON AND MORPETH

Miranda Sheehy, miranda.sheehy@nhs.net

Andy Foley, andrew.foley1@nhs.net

Coming from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds the team of GP Link Workers comes with a whole range of skill sets - we have those experienced in adult social care, those dedicated to the care of others from cradle to grave, those with experience of working with people with dementia, those with employability and welfare backgrounds, those with fitness and exercise backgrounds. We've a former health trainer, a ex town councilor, a volunteer manager, a customer service advisor, a trouble shooter. a youth worker, a dancer, an activities coordinator. Many have strong local knowledge and others are new to area. All are committed to supporting patients and closing the inequalities in health and wellbeing promoting self care, social engagement and community action.



## WITHOUT LIMITS

### CASE STUDY BY LORNA CHAPPELL

With support from her GP Link Worker who arranged partnership working with Rural Us and the local voluntary forum, one of our patients has become the catalyst for the development of a group for those aged 35 to 65 who have experienced a "life altering" condition. Having had two strokes in her 50's our patient was forced to stop work as a paramedic. She had accessed the local Stroke Club but wanted something more age and interest appropriate and in herself she needed "a project" - with the support, encouragement and dedication of her Link Worker the group called "Without Limits" became just that. She now actively participates in the steering group for this, looks after the Facebook group and is the welcoming face and voice for new members. Of her social prescribing support she says this - *"Lorna has helped me in a ways I never thought possible and if it wasn't for her going 'that extra mile' I would not be in the position I am in. Lorna's natural listening and communication skills she gave me the help that I needed to get me back on track."*

If you have patients interested in Without Limits contact Janey Dixon Without Limits [janey.dixon.withoutlimits@gmail.com](mailto:janey.dixon.withoutlimits@gmail.com) or visit the Without Limits Facebook Group.

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**..if it wasn't for her going the extra mile I would not be in the position I am in"**

**Janey Dixon**



### FRIENDSHIPS OUT OF ADVERSITY CASE STUDY BY ANNE SHILTON

**Two female patients had moved to Northumberland with their husbands for their retirement years. Unexpectedly and suddenly, both patients found themselves as widows in a new area, during lock down, so tackling grief as well as being in a new area but not being allowed to socialise. I was supporting them both separately but thought that they may get along well together. With their individual permissions, I exchanged their names and phone numbers so that they could become 'telephone buddies' offering mutual support. Despite the age gap of around 10 years, a strong and flourishing friendship has formed. They were both dreading Christmas alone for the first time, so they got together on Christmas morning for a socially distanced walk. They are continuing to support each other during their first year of bereavement and meet up for walks regularly. They are looking forward to getting out and about more frequently as the lock down eases.**

## SELF MANAGEMENT AND SELF WORTH THROUGH CREATIVITY

### CASE STUDY BY JANE CANNAM

Following a knee operation and struggles with low mood this lady was referred to social prescribing. Her GP Link Worker spent time getting to know her and talking about her sense of self – we gave her some affirmations to use and we talked about the things she enjoyed doing like baking or going to the beach, reading or upcycling and encouraged her to intentionally timetable these into her week. She came to the Well Up North Bookclub once and has now joined an on line art group on Facebook and found a group of accepting and welcoming artists who are encouraging her in her creativity – they think there is a touch of the Van Gogh's about her work!! It's been wonderful to see the patient grow in her ability to manage her condition to value herself more and to explore her creativity to the ends of better health and wellbeing. She still has difficult days but has a valuable toolkit of coping strategies she knows how to implement and has chosen these over a Talking Matters Northumberland TMN referral.



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**The patient has chosen self care and management instead of the TMN referral.**

**The Well Up North BOOK CLUB meets every 2nd Thursday in the month on Zoom.**

**e-mail**

**[jane.cannam@nhs.net](mailto:jane.cannam@nhs.net) for an invite**





## MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING AND EFFECTIVE SIGNPOSTING - A WINNING COMBO

### CASE STUDY BY MIRANDA SHEEHY

A young male patient was referred to his GP Link Worker with anxiety and low mood. In our discussions we uncovered the contributing factors to this were unsuitable housing, lack of employment, previous trauma, low weight and lack of proper nutrition. We worked together to develop a plan of action to tackle some of these issues, to set goals, and to monitor progress. He consented to being referred to Bridge Northumberland for employability support, to a Support Planner to help rewrite his housing application and to a Health Trainer to try and gain weight in a healthy way. We also set up some counselling sessions with Mind to deal with his previous trauma. The patient stated that he found the weekly appointments with his GP Link Worker very helpful to focus on his goals, reflect on his progress, and feel supported and motivated with his action plan. He is currently engaging well with these services and progressing towards suitable housing and employment. The patient is so pleased with his support that he has recommended to friends that they self-refer, telling them that - "social prescribing really helps you to take control over areas of your life that are negatively affecting your health". He said "I had no idea this sort of help was available."



## IT'S GOOD TO TALK

### CASE STUDY BY ANDY FOLEY

A patient suffering from low mood and anxiety and panic attacks who hadn't left the house for over two years was referred to social prescribing. Speaking for the first time was a difficult thing and the patient was shy and very nervous of the service that we provide. An overview of our services was given with the assurance that it was on her terms. One hour later she was cracking jokes and at ease. Her whole tone changed, her positivity flooded out and she expressed a desire to be part of her community again and to give something back. By connecting her with Age UK she has been given additional support to keep her going through the tough times and through our support call she has remained positive, engaged and enthusiastic and she is now looking at volunteering as an over the phone befriender.



The power of conversation can sometime be just the kickstart we all need !



### INTRODUCING JAN CASSON - DEMENTIA SPECIALIST

BY A FAN!!!

Jan Casson joined the Well Up North PCN last year as a Dementia Specialist GP Link Worker and works across all twelve practices. In her short time with us she has actively developed a service to support those patients with a Dementia diagnosis and their carers. She is acutely aware of the effect of lockdown on this patient group and is seeing first hand the challenges for these patients caused by the closure of day services or clubs. Jan is however uniquely placed in community to support effective signposting as and when things become available and her one to one support and partnership networks have been invaluable. Jan is currently developing a music group for Dementia patients and believes passionately in the power of music to support her patient group ( see page 7 ). If you have patients who might benefit from Jan's expertise please contact [Janette.casson@nhs.net](mailto:Janette.casson@nhs.net) but be aware that her caseload is already quite full so there may be a waiting list.

THE WELL UP NORTH KNIT AND NATTER GROUP which meets on a Fridays at 12noon on zoom has recently been supporting Jan and our ladies have knitted Twiddle Muffs for her patients which give patients sensory and visual stimulation and calm anxiety levels. She will distribute to GP Practices when able. These are pictured above. The Knit and Natter group has a long legacy originating from AMG and Well Close surgeries but the Social Prescribing angle made the knitting world news!! We thank AMG patient, Jackie Bartlett for promoting and coordinating this group.

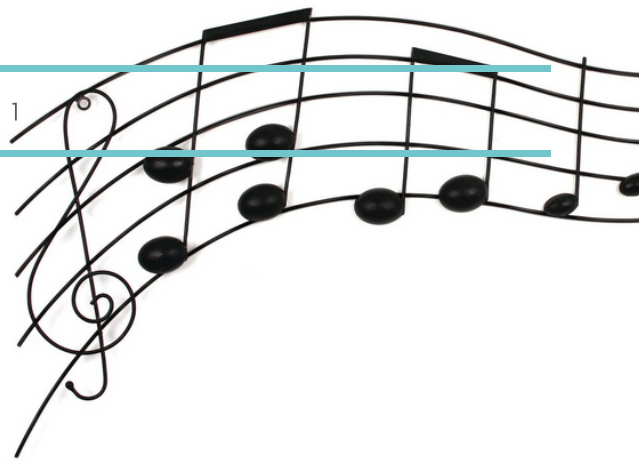


**WELL UP NORTH  
KNIT and NATTER -  
as featured in JAN  
2021 edition of  
SIMPLY KNITTING!!"  
coordinated by  
Patients for patients**

## SPECIAL FEATURE

THE POWER OF MUSIC TO HELP AND HEAL

BY JAN CASSON



As we start to return to some level of normality, now more than ever we need the power of music in our lives, hence the idea to set up a new music group in our local theatre which is already committed to supporting people living with dementia, through their accessible screenings of musicals and classic films, when permitted.

The building is accessible and warm, has a studio where we can set up chairs and tables encouraging informality, somewhere to serve refreshments provided by the in-house cafe and a place where people can chat and then sing together. The building has accessible toilets and a lift to all floors; it has an adjacent car park where taxis and mini buses could drop off their passengers to allow access to the most rural of residents.

Many people use this theatre from across north Northumberland and the Scottish Borders, and we will be encouraging cross border participation, advertising this group through agencies such as Alzheimer's Scotland, Berwickshire Housing Association who manage a number of independent living complexes, and other locally led voluntary groups with regular contact with older people living with dementia.

The group will be run by a professional music tutor and we hope over time to recruit volunteers to either take on the role of lead, or support the lead going forward. All partners will signpost people to the group and we hope to contract a local taxi firm to do the town area pick-ups and a voluntary sector provider such as the RVS to do the more rural pick-ups.

The plan is to run the group every other week, same time on the same day of the week, for around two hours per session. We'll start with welcome and chat with refreshments (coffee and tea plus tray bakes provided in-house) then music and singing for around an hour and finish with plans for the next session.

We don't have many activities for those living with dementia in the Berwick area, so we want to ensure there is no clash with other groups that operate in the town and surrounding rural areas. Hence the needs for a partnership approach: this way we widen the number of activities and at the same time safeguard delivery by all the partners.

The Alzheimer's Society-Singing for the Brain session is currently on line, but once lockdown is lifted and groups re-open, the nearest group will be over 30 miles away.

This new group will be managed by the North Northumberland Voluntary Forum, which has a number of projects which will support the group. We are very passionate about music in our local area, which has a rich heritage of bands and individuals playing a wide range of music from pop to country, traditional to emerging music, we want to harness that heritage, using live musicians whenever possible adding to the richness of the offer and including local school children and young people.

In north Northumberland we have a proven track record of innovative and creative partnerships, using local skills and knowledge to complement an active voluntary and community sector. We have less opportunity to apply for funds, as many are biased towards urban deprivation and poverty issues. Our local area suffers similar issues, but these are compounded by low population numbers, a demographic that tends towards older people, and a large rural hinterland, including the Scottish Borders, where even an appointment at a hospital means a 100 plus mile round trip for some. People often choose to move to this beautiful part of the world, but rural isolation, a low waged economy and a lack of opportunities can make life more difficult as people grow older and diseases such as dementia become part of their lives.

'Listening to music can help reduce anxiety and depression' Dementia Wellbeing in the Covid-19 Pandemic - NHS 2020

We want to enrich some of those lives, through using music, we want to add another dimension to the local offer, and use the power of music to support friendships, conversation, laughter and fun. We have all seen the difference music can make to people living with dementia, the joy of a remembered song, the fun of singing together and the way music can help recapture some of what has been lost, but can be rekindled through song and music



## .....AND FINALLY CONGRATULATIONS AND VACCINATIONS!!

### **GP LINK WORKERS CONTINUE TO PLAY VALUABLE ROLE IN VACCINATION CLINICS**

All 7 your GP Link workers have been drafted in to support the roll out of the vaccinations against Covid 19 and have found it a great privilege to be involved in what will go down in healthcare history. We've been manning car parks, welcoming people and checking them in, marshalling people round the clinics effect one way system, keeping people cheery in the observation tents and just generally mucking in!

We hope you've enjoyed hearing a little about what the team has been up to but its Toorah for now!

