

### **What is Social Prescribing?**

Social prescribing is a national NHS England programme, and is a way for local agencies to refer people to a link worker. Link workers give people time, focusing on 'what matters to me' and taking a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing. They connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support.

Social prescribing works for a wide range of people, including people:

- with one or more long-term conditions
- who need support with their mental health
- who are lonely or isolated
- who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.

Southern Brooks, in partnership with DHI, has been commissioned to deliver support within GP Practices in South Gloucestershire. Our Social Prescribing Link Workers are based within the Practice, and GPs can refer patients directly to them. Patients are offered 4-6 one-to-one appointments with their Link Worker, who will help them to access relevant services, support, and community groups.

NHS England has produced a summary guide to Social Prescribing, which you can read [HERE](#).

If you would like to be referred to a Social Prescribing Link Worker, please speak to your GP.

### **Social Prescribing During Covid**

The Social Prescribing Service is continuing to run remotely throughout the COVID-19 social distancing measures.

The link workers continue to be able to access, sign post and refer into the necessary services to improve people's wellbeing.

Social Prescribing was designed to reduce levels of social isolation, and despite current restrictions we are continuing to do so. Social distancing measures do not mean that we have to be disconnected and the link workers are working with people that are struggling through this period.

We have been helping people struggling with family matters, helping with money and welfare issues; including helping to secure grants for those in financial hardship, and have gained support for mental health and well-being from a variety of organisations and community groups.

Now that restrictions are lifting, our link workers are meeting people out in their communities for face to face conversations where social distancing measures can be followed safely.

We are busy building a portfolio of 'green' activities and community groups that can be joined and enjoyed while adhering to government advice.

**Feedback for the service:**

*"Genuinely cared, Good to have regular contact, helped to speed things along with the council and PCLS, Genuinely brilliant"*

*"The social prescriber was really good, helped a lot with making onward referrals and liaising with the GP surgery about certain issues"*

*"Really nice, was really good at dealing with the Asperger's and anxiety, good rapport, good just having someone to talk to, found it a helpful experience, found the social prescriber to be incredibly informative and was good at supporting the family as well".*