**Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Adult Mental Health JSNA Profile 2024: Social Prescribing and Green Social Prescribing Services**

This supplementary document includes information on Social Prescribing services (pages 1 to 2) and Green Social Prescribing Services (page 3 to 6) in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

## Social Prescribing




As of October 2024, 82.5 Social Prescribing link workers are embedded with the primary care work force – every GP surgery across Nottingham & Nottinghamshire should provide access to a social prescribing link worker. The link workers are employed directly by the GP surgeries, via GP federations and voluntary sector organisations – referrals tend to go via the surgery or health care staff.

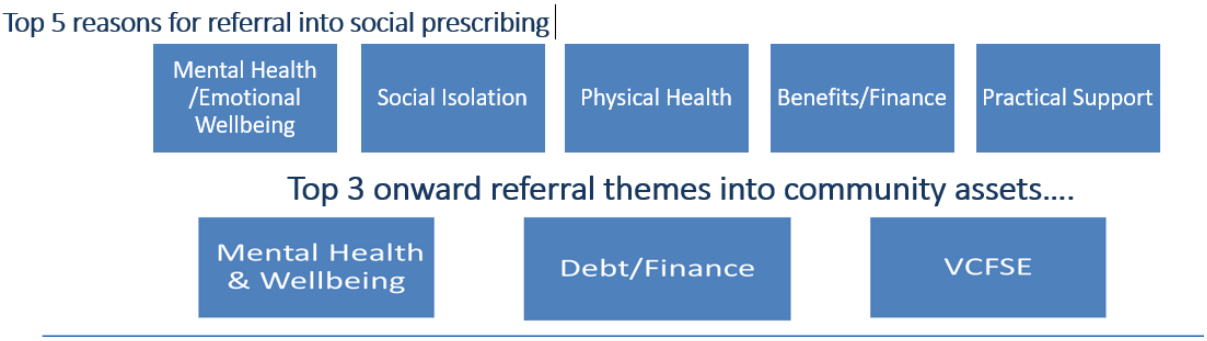
Social Prescribing and Community Based Support - NHS Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICB

- Social prescribing enables both primary care and secondary care staff, and local agencies to refer people to a link worker.
- Link workers use a personalised approach, they give people time and focus on 'what matters to the individual' – they work together to coproduce personalised care and support plans.
- Link workers manage and prioritise their own caseload in accordance with the health and wellbeing needs of the local population – often linked to population health management data – they will offer support around the wider determinants that impact on health issues in a flexible way.
- They also connect people to community groups and agencies for practical and emotional support.
- Link workers work within multi-disciplinary teams and they work closely with the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector (VCFSE) who can support and identify suitable community groups, and where possible help people build the confidence to start new groups and activities – they work together to ensure safe referral processors for both the individual and the groups.
- The priority is to support people to address the wider social and economic issues that cause an impact on physical & mental wellbeing.

Social prescribing can support a wide range of people:

- 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, such as finance, housing, employment, family situations.

25,118 referrals were made into social prescribing from March 2023 – Oct 2024




Impact of social prescribing

93% of social prescribing case study examples states that 'Wellbeing Scores' have **improved** and 'Anxiety levels' **decreased**

When asked - What did you most value about the support from a link worker - **71% said the time invested by the link worker to understand my concerns and situation....**

**Green Social Prescribing**
Green social prescribing supports people to take part in nature-based activities to improve their mental and physical health. Social prescribing link workers, or other professionals, connect people to community groups and organisations for practical and emotional support. Green social prescribing includes both what is known as green and blue activities. These could include local walking schemes, community gardening projects, conservation volunteering, green gyms, open water swimming or arts and cultural activities which take place outdoors.

**Evidence for social prescribing and green social prescribing**
Evidence shows that being more connected to nature and, through doing this, connecting with other people, plays an important role in improving mental and physical health and reducing loneliness.

The National Academy for Social Prescribing' briefings and visual guides give a clear overview of existing evidence. The nature briefing sets out what the evidence currently tells us about nature, mental health and wellbeing.

Research undertaken by Natural England, the National Association for Social Prescribing, NASP, and UCL found that:

- Living near natural environments is associated with lower stress and faster recovery from mental health issues.
- Spending at least 120 minutes per week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing.
- Gardens and gardening in context of social prescribing had a significant effect on mental wellbeing, physical activity, and reduced social isolation.
- Exposure to natural environments, achievement, enjoyment, and social contact were important pathways to positive mental health outcomes.
- Nature-based initiatives for people with mental health issues gave returns from £2.35 to £10.70 per £1 invested.

Links between natural environments and mental health (EIN065) published by Natural England on 7 November 2022

*"Urban green spaces alone support 2.1 million people in meeting their weekly physical activity needs. This is estimated to be worth £5.6 billion and to avoid health service costs of around £1.4 billion. We are also seeing a huge increase in the recognition of how regular contact with nature is beneficial to people's health and well-being, and the role this can play in the prevention or treatment of a range of long-term health conditions."*

Green Infrastructure: delivering quality of life and environmental benefits for communities. David Drake, Director, People & Nature at Natural England August 2024

**Cross government Green Social Prescribing Programme**
'Preventing and Tackling Mental Ill-health through Green Social Prescribing' was a £5.77m cross-governmental project that was launched in October 2020 and completed delivery in March 2023. The programme set out to test how to embed green social prescribing in mental health pathways and across integrated care systems to improve

mental health and tackle health inequalities. It provided valuable learning to help health and care systems, providers and local communities develop green social prescribing. Seven Test and Learn sites across the country were supported to test the ways in which connecting people with nature can improve their mental ill-health.

A national evaluation of the Test and Learn programme, was managed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, DEFRA, to assess how to spread and scale green social prescribing in inform policy and practice. The final report was published in 2024. Here is a summary of the findings from across the seven Test and Learn sites.

**Key statistics about the Green Social Prescribing Project**

- 8,339 people with mental health needs were supported to access nature-based activities.
- 57% of participants were from the most socio-economically deprived areas.
- 21% of participants were from ethnic minority populations.
- Statistically significant improvements in wellbeing (ONS4) following nature-based activities:
  - Happiness increased from an average of 5.3 to 7.5.
  - Life satisfaction increased from an average of 4.7 to 6.8.
  - Feeling that life is worthwhile increased from an average of 5.1 to 6.8.
  - Levels of anxiety reduced from an average of 4.8 to 3.4.
- In one pilot Depression symptoms reduced from 8.1 to 5.6 and anxiety decreased from 11.1 to 8.5 (Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale).
- In another pilot levels of physical activity following a nature-based activity increased from 84% to 95%.
- Estimated social return on investment of £2.42 per £1 invested by HM Treasury Shared Outcomes Fund and national partners. If resources leveraged by the Test and Learn sites are included, the estimated social return on investment is £1.88 for every £1 invested in the project overall.

**Green Social Prescribing in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire**

Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System (ICS) was selected to be one of the seven Test and Learn sites. Nottingham Community and Voluntary Service, NCVS, led the pilot locally, working with system partners across the city and county to connect people, places and projects into a green network offering something for everyone, no matter their ability or where they live. Locally the programme is called GreenSpace.

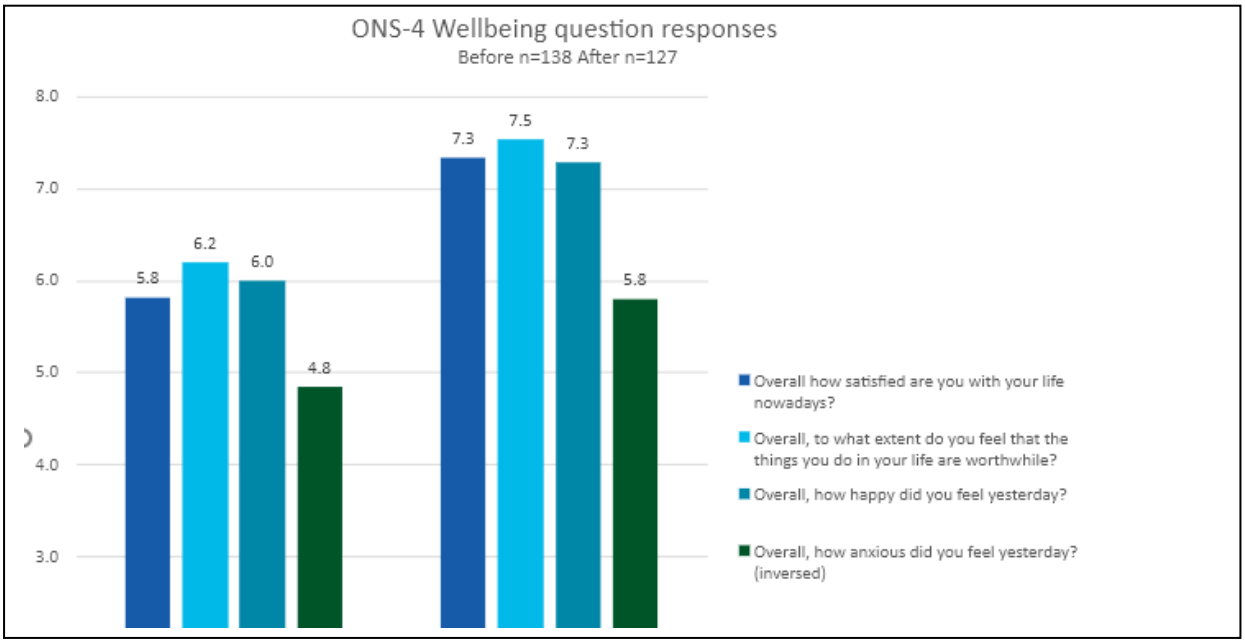
GreenSpace participant reviews during the Test and Learn programme using the Short Warwick Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale showed that after attending green social prescribing activities:

- 55% felt more relaxed
- 66% were able to think more clearly
- 36% were feeling more useful
- 64% felt more optimistic
- 36% were able to deal with problems well

Here are two video case studies from participants talking about the impact of attending green social prescribing activities:

- Peer Support Dementia Hub at Highbury Hospital Community Garden
- Wellbeing Waterways: Canal & River Trust

*Figure 1 Feedback from the Wellbeing Waterways Activities delivered by the Canal & River Trust for GreenSpace*




Since the end of the test and learn phase in March 2023, NCVS have continued to advocate for and support the adoption and embedding of green social prescribing across our local system.

The cross-government programme received continuation funding from the HMTs Shared Outcomes Fund for a one year extension to focus on addressing gaps and barriers to the ultimate national roll-out of GSP as a mainstreamed intervention for mental ill health within the health service. This extension period runs from April 2024 to 31 March 2025 and will continue to be led locally by NCVS.

The focus of the GSP extension programme is across three elements, all of which GreenSpace are delivering against.

- Element 1: Enhanced quantitative and qualitative data on the value for money and benefits GSP delivers.
- Element 2: Data tracking through the full GSP pathway, to understand end-to-end experience, and develop models for how to link data up across the whole GSP system and demonstrate sustained outcomes
- Element 3: Stronger evidence and models on how to achieve a sustainable long-term investment model, allowing us to move away from central government funding.

GreenSpace are working with eight cohorts across the city and county to deliver against these three elements of the extension programme. Learning from this work will support

the further embedding of green social prescribing into the local health and social care system as an intervention of choice for healthcare professionals.

**Support and resources for green social prescribing**

Here are some resources to help develop an understanding of green social prescribing and to support the development and implementation of green social prescribing locally.

- Nottingham CVS GreenSpace programme
- Nottingham City Big Green Book: a directory of nature-based activities and opportunities in Nottingham City
- Rushcliffe Big Green Book: a directory of nature-based activities and green spaces in Rushcliffe
- Connection to Nature – The benefits of being outdoors video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfXZaNasjkA&t=80s
- Download the Green Social Prescribing toolkit, designed to help communities, organisations and health professionals who are looking to set up green social prescribing programmes. This toolkit was developed with learning from the seven Test and Learn sites, including GreenSpace.
- Video: Green Social Prescribing Nottingham and Nottinghamshire: People's journey to GSP
- National Academy for Social Prescribing: Nature and Social Prescribing
- Nature Buddies toolkit – helping organisations and providers to set up a Nature Buddies programme, supporting people to take part in nature-based activities

