



Social Prescribing

Information for Health Professionals



What is social prescribing?

The aim of social prescribing is to connect people with community groups, organisations and statutory services for practical and emotional support via the support of a social prescribing link worker, with the overall purpose of improving health and wellbeing. There is a growing body of evidence that social prescribing can lead to a range of positive health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce social isolation and loneliness.¹

Social prescribing is a free service and has a number of key components:

- a) a referral from any healthcare professional/other professional or self-referral into the service
- b) an intervention between the service user and a social prescribing link worker.
- c) supporting the service user to access local voluntary community and social enterprise organisations or services through discussion and joint decision making
- d) measuring the impact of the social prescribing on the person, the wider community and the health service.

Social prescribing is for adults over the aged of 18 years, including (but not exclusively) people:

- with one or more long-term conditions
- who need support with their mental health
- who are lonely or isolated
- who are frequent GP/ED attendees and may benefit from other social supports outside of clinical services
- who have complex social needs which affect their health and wellbeing.

1. Chatterjee, H. J., Camic, P. M., & Lockyer, B. (2018). Non-clinical community interventions: a systematised review of social prescribing schemes. *Arts & Health*, 10(2): 97–123.



Is social prescribing available nationally in the HSE?

HSE-funded Social Prescribing services are now available in over 40 locations around the country. These services are delivered in partnership with community and voluntary organisations. The HSE Social Prescribing Framework outlines how social prescribing will be further mainstreamed and integrated within the HSE over the coming years.

About the social prescribing service

The social prescribing link worker works in true collaboration with a person over an average of 6-8 sessions to address their needs and goals using a personalised coaching and co-production approach. The social prescribing link worker can motivate and support individuals to achieve the change(s) that they want to achieve. The focus is on 'what matters to the person' rather than 'what is the matter with the person'.

The community and voluntary organisations and services that people are referred to are broad and diverse and depend on the existing options available locally. These include physical activity initiatives like parkrun or walking groups, reading groups/ books for health, library services, stress prevention/ management programmes, self-help, adult education, financial advice services, men's sheds, community gardening, arts and creativity, and many more.

It is important to highlight that social prescribing is not a replacement for adequate clinical services, nor is it a social work or counselling service.



How can I refer people to Social Prescribing?

In order to make a referral please contact your local social prescribing link worker (details below).

Case studies

'Social prescribing made such a big difference to me and my mental health. A year later when my dad passed away, I was already linked into many interests and people in my community. It came at the right time as I would hate to think where I would be if I had not made that initial phone call'
(Katie Service User, 49 years, Mayo).

"Thank you for all your fantastic work with the client I referred. You have opened doors for him in his local community and given him the helping hand he needed to make relevant connections and move forward. You have put a realistic plan in place with him to help him to socially engage, learn more and work in his community. I honestly believe Social Prescribing is providing a wonderful, badly needed service, particularly in these difficult times, to help isolated people to connect and expand their world and improve their mental wellbeing"
(HSE Counsellor).

Contact details of your local social prescribing link worker



Additional information

<https://allirelandsocialprescribing.ie/>