

York CVS Social Prescribing teams and loneliness

April 2022 to March 2024

1. Context

Social Prescribers links people to non-medical sources of support to improve their health and wellbeing. Social Prescribers develop tailored plans led by the person and their priorities, connecting them to community resources, groups and support services; learning and volunteering opportunities and peer support networks.

Between April 2022 and March 2024, York CVS provided Social Prescribing through a number of teams including:

- **Primary Care Link Workers:** Social Prescribers based in GP surgeries across York, working alongside individuals to get to know them, and ultimately help them improve their health and wellbeing
- **Ways to Wellbeing:** Provided social prescribing to individuals who were referred by local NHS secondary care services, including York and Scarborough District Hospital and Foss Park Hospital. The Ways to Wellbeing social prescribing contract was decommissioned in spring 2024.
- **Extra Discharge Support Service:** A partnership of voluntary sector organisations working together to support patients on discharge from York Hospital. The team includes a Social Prescriber.
- **Proactive Social Prescribing:** Providing proactive outreach to individuals with long-term respiratory conditions.

Loneliness is a primary issue for many individuals referred into the social prescribing teams, for example:

- 69% of individuals referred into the Ways to Wellbeing team in 2023-24 had social isolation listed as a reason for referral
- 46% of people working with the Proactive Social Prescriber identified isolation as a priority issue they wanted to address

2. Number of people supported by York CVS Social Prescribing teams between April 2022 and March 2024

The table below outlines the number of people supported by York CVS's Social Prescribing teams between April 2022 and March 2024.

York CVS Social Prescribing Team	2022-23	2023-24
Primary Care Link Workers	3,541	4,003
Ways to Wellbeing	421	242
Extra Discharge Support Service	17*	119
Proactive Social Prescribing	n/a	52
Total	3,979	4,416

*Provision started in March 2023

3. Outcomes

3.1. Primary Care Link Workers outcomes

Measure	2023-24
Percentage of respondents reported an increase in how satisfied they were with their lives following input from the social prescribing team	94%
Percentage of respondents reporting an increase in the extent to which they felt that the things they did in their life were worthwhile	82%
Percentage of respondents who felt happier after having input from the social prescribing team	94%
Percentage of respondents who felt less anxious after having input from the social prescribing team	86%

3.2. Ways to wellbeing outcomes

Measure	2022-23	2023-24
Percentage of respondents identifying as less socially isolated and / or more part of the community since working with their social prescriber	91%	96%
Percentage of respondents who have been to any new groups or services since working with their social prescriber	90%	81%
Percentage of respondents identifying improved wellbeing since working with their social prescriber	89%	99%
Percentage of respondents identifying increase in confidence since working with their social prescriber	82%	99%

4. Case study

York CVS's Social Prescribing team run a monthly craft group in York for individuals who are working with a social prescriber. The group is kept small and often provides a stepping stone for individuals before attending larger groups or attending groups without a social prescriber present.

The social prescribing team received a referral for a woman who was recently bereaved. She felt lonely, struggled to make friends and found it difficult to adapt to life with no full time caring responsibilities. The social prescribers used the craft group as a starting point to allow the individual to build their confidence, explore her hobbies and interests and to start building relationships with others. Attending the group also provided an opportunity for the individual to build their confidence with accessing public transport.

Another woman who was feeling lonely, and struggling with her recent retirement from work was also referred to the team. Again, the craft group was used as a first step for the lady to

work out what she would like from social prescribing, if social groups were for her and whether she would be confident attending a group alone.

Through the craft group the two individuals created a solid friendship, have been proactively helping each other and have started doing things together. This friendship has allowed them to get out more, improving their physical health, as well as helping to reduce feelings of loneliness.