Social prescribing is a way of enabling people to make positive changes in their lives and within their communities by linking people to activities, voluntary and community groups and public services.

These activities can help them to:

* feel more involved in their community
* meet new people
* make some changes to improve their health and wellbeing

Social prescribing enables local agencies to refer people, with their agreement, to a link worker. Link workers give people time and focus on what matters to the person as identified through shared decision- making or personalised care and support planning. They connect people to community groups and services for practical and emotional support. Link workers collaborate with local partners to support community groups to be accessible and sustainable and help people to start new groups.

GPs, nurses, housing providers, social care teams and even family members can refer people to our link workers or ‘navigators’, who will work with each person to identify non-medical opportunities in the community that may be of benefit, e.g. social activities, interests/hobbies, peer support groups, dietary support, relaxation, exercise, voluntary opportunities or other lifestyle changes that could improve health and wellbeing.

Social Prescribing is ideally suited to:

* Someone over the age of 18
* A person who has given their consent to the referral
* A person who is actively willing to engage in self-care/self-help activities
* Someone who is struggling in one way or another to manage some of their social issues
* Someone who is classed as having mild-moderate frailty
* Someone whose medical needs are managed/stable; this includes their physical and mental health
* A person who has been identified as requiring a non-clinical service

Link workers can offer one-to-one support, to help people connect with what they’re interested in – anything from arts/craft groups to activities that involve physical exercise, such as gardening and dance clubs. It can also involve simply putting people in contact with services that can provide practical help and advice with issues such as debt, benefits and housing.

Voluntary Centre Services is working in partnership with NHS and social care services, Public Health and the Lincolnshire West Clinical Commissioning Group to offer social prescribing in the west area of Lincolnshire. Our role is to enable health and care professionals to connect people with community services and opportunities that support wellbeing.

Contact the Social Prescribing Team on 01529 308450