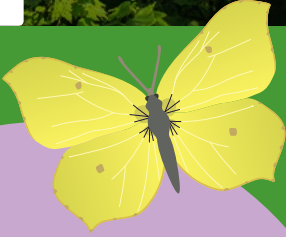




INTRODUCTORY GUIDE TO

# Green Social Prescribing

**For healthcare and community professionals**



Health inequalities, physical and mental health conditions and social isolation all have a huge impact on our quality of life and life expectancy, and reconnecting with the natural world and people can have a transformative effect on our health and wellbeing. As practitioners, we can encourage people to boost their own wellbeing through nature connection activities.

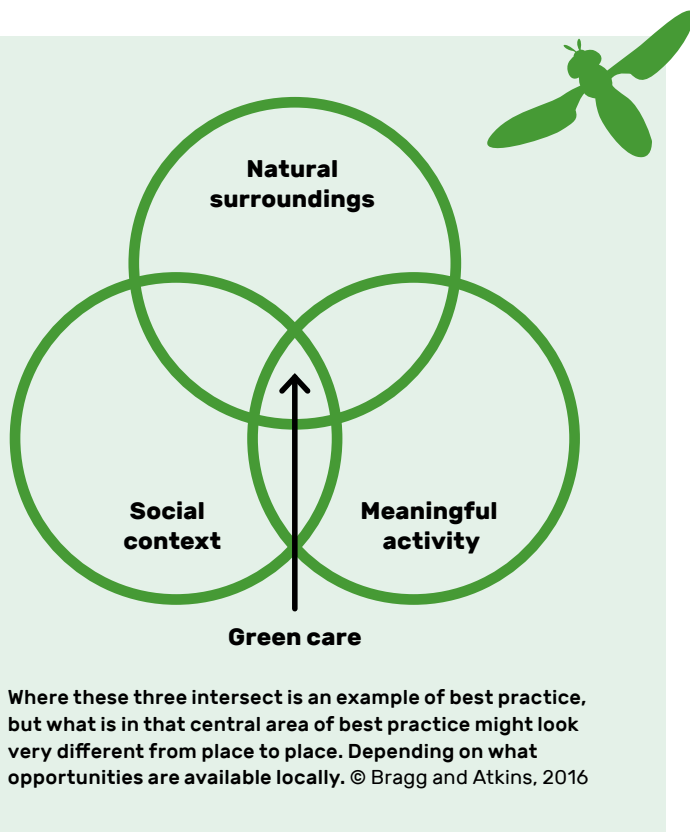
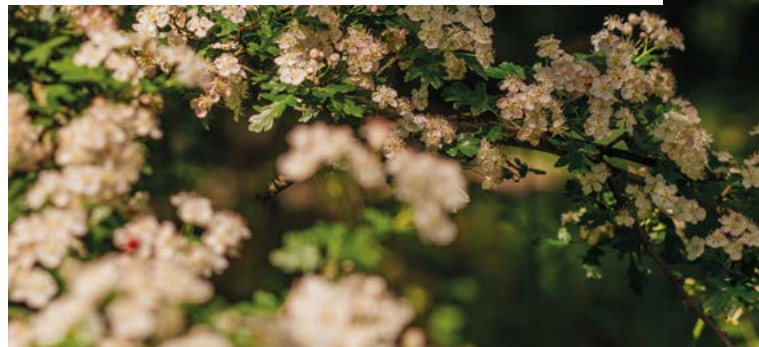


**Sheffield & Rotherham**  
Wildlife Trust



# What is 'Green Social Prescribing'?

In this introductory guide, we aim to clarify what is meant by Green Social Prescribing and how you can make it work in your practice, so that you feel confident to make successful and appropriate referrals to community-based nature activities.



In general, when we are more connected with nature, we tend to be happier and are more likely to be flourishing and functioning well psychologically.

It is important to note that Green Social Prescribing cannot substitute for adequate clinical services, social work or counselling.

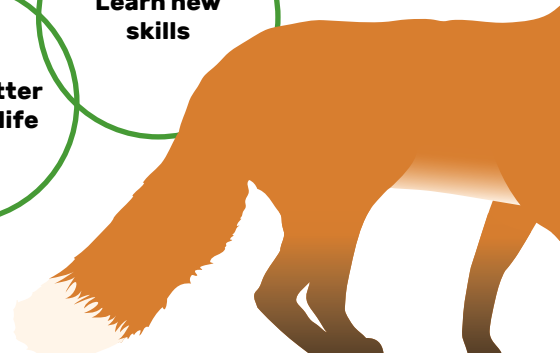
Green Social Prescribing (GSP) is the practice of assisting people who have care and support needs, to engage in nature based social activities which can improve their mental and physical health.

It can be as simple as encouraging a person you are supporting to join in with an existing community-based activity with a nature focus. We need to ensure that person's level of required support, matches what is offered by the Green Prescribing opportunities.

**Activities might include:** Community Gardens, Walking for Health or Men's Sheds projects. The ideal social prescribing opportunity/activity comprises three elements:

- **High quality green space** - like a park
- **Meaningful activity** which appeals to the person
- **Social context** - a person's peer group is often preferable.

## Benefits of green activity



# Examples of GSP

**A green environment means natural landscapes, woodland, parks and gardens, whereas a blue environment means lakes, rivers, reservoirs and the sea.** GSP opportunities can be through formal referral pathways, or informal suggestions and encouragement from trusted professionals.

## SANDRA, ROTHERHAM

**Sandra came to Wild at Heart following a referral from a link worker. Recently bereaved and in recovery from poor health, isolated and lonely, Sandra was nervous about contact with people and afraid to go out.**

*"I was referred to Live Inclusive where my support worker Julie, encouraged me to take that first step that I needed to make. I could not have walked into that room without her support."*


Sandra loved the warm welcome from Wild at Heart staff, the non-judgmental atmosphere, the gentle walks in nature and the simple but rewarding nature inspired activities. She quickly built friendships with other group members and brought her own creative skills and experience of hospitality to the group.

Sandra says:

*"My fear of infection and being in a group of people has now almost disappeared. This group has been a life changer and a life saver!"*

## KATE, THERAPY ASSISTANT ON THE LONG COVID TEAM, TICKHILL ROAD HOSPITAL, DONCASTER

*"I can see the benefits of Green Social Prescribing and how it's going to help with recovery from their long-term conditions, as well as mental health, emotional health, and general wellbeing. I hope to be able to do some nature-based activities with my patients too."*



You need to research what is on **your own local patch**. Visit and meet the providers to find out exactly what they do, what level of support they offer. **Build trust and relationships** with the providers so that queries from the referral process can be overcome.

## NATURE BASED ACTIVITY GROUPS

### Wild at Heart, Rotherham

[wildsheffield.com/wild-at-heart](http://wildsheffield.com/wild-at-heart)

## WALKING FOR HEALTH GROUP

### Darnall Wellbeing Walks

[darnallwellbeing.org.uk/dwbactivities/darnall-health-walks](http://darnallwellbeing.org.uk/dwbactivities/darnall-health-walks)

## WILDLIFE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERING

### Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust

[wildsheffield.com/getinvolved/volunteering](http://wildsheffield.com/getinvolved/volunteering)

## COMMUNITY GARDENS

### Springvale Community Gardens

[springvaleonline.com](http://springvaleonline.com)

## COMMUNITY ALLOTMENTS

### Hope Community Allotment, Wincobank

[facebook.com/tcvallotment](https://facebook.com/tcvallotment)

## WOODLAND EXPERIENCE GROUP

### Woodland Confidence Course, Manor and Castle

[manorandcastle.org.uk/health-wellbeing/woodland-confidence-course](http://manorandcastle.org.uk/health-wellbeing/woodland-confidence-course)

## CYCLING GROUPS

### Sheffield Cycling 4 All

[sheffieldcycling4all.org](http://sheffieldcycling4all.org)

## COMMUNITY LITTER-PICKING

### Sheffield Litter Pickers

[facebook.com/groups/SheffieldLitterPickers](https://facebook.com/groups/SheffieldLitterPickers)

## OUTDOOR SWIMMING

### Thrybergh Country Park

[swimyourswim.com/swim-venues/thrybergh-country-park](http://swimyourswim.com/swim-venues/thrybergh-country-park)

## CARE FARMS

### Greave House Farm, Stocksbridge

[greavehousefarmtrust.org.uk](http://greavehousefarmtrust.org.uk)

## OUTDOOR EXERCISE GROUPS

### Enjoy Outdoor Fitness, Sheffield

[enjoyoutdoorfitness.com](http://enjoyoutdoorfitness.com)

## FISHING CLUBS

### Treeton Dyke Angling Club, Rotherham

[facebook.com/groups/496822770480447](https://facebook.com/groups/496822770480447)



# Making it work

## Typical Referral Pathway: Link Worker Model

**Link workers play a key role in delivering social prescribing by giving people time, focusing on 'What matters to me' and taking a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing, in order to connect them to appropriate community groups and services.**

Different models co exist across the UK. Social Prescribing Link Workers play a pivotal role by developing trusting relationships and providing personalised support.

### LINK WORKER MODEL

**Each Primary Care Network has at least one link worker to help the clinical staff support their patients' health.**

- Patients present to GP with a complex variety of medical and non-medical needs, which are impacting on their health.
- Once the GP has looked at the medical needs, the patients are best supported with their non-medical needs outside of the GP appointment.
- The link worker has conversations with the patient about their situation and links them to other sources of community-based support. Such as help with claiming benefits, debt advice, housing and family and relationship support. This sign posting relies on the link worker building a strong knowledge and relations with other community-based organisations so then they can make successful and appropriate referrals.
- One area they might consider is if the person could benefit from some support in making social connections and making friends. Green or Nature based activities are a fantastic opportunity for this. It is important to find out what that person is interested in as a starting point.
- Based on the person's interests and balanced with what is available locally, the link worker can refer them to a Green Social Prescribing Group. Patients build relationships with community members and increase confidence and self esteem and rely less on medical interventions.
- The link worker will check in regularly with the person and review their progress and further assist if necessary.





# Barriers to patient engagement

These may be as basic as finding out where the nearest toilets, benches, shelter and refreshments can be found. People are often anxious to know these things before they go to a new place.

They may also have unmet care and support needs, low confidence, complex circumstances, financial worries and long-term health conditions. Transport can also be a major barrier.

This is where having early conversations with the patient is so important to ensure appropriate and successful referrals.

## BENEFITS TO THE NHS

Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust's **Wild at Heart** Project runs a Green Social Prescribing Group doing nature based activities. Analysis found healthcare cost savings of £38646 on 82 participants over a year. For every £1 invested there is £1.19 of additional benefit in terms of reduced costs to the NHS.

Read the full report. A natural Health service: Improving Lives and saving money, here: [tinyurl.com/natural-health-service](https://tinyurl.com/natural-health-service)



Watch a film on social prescribing:



### References:

Leavell, M.A., Leiferman, J.A., Gascon, M., Braddick, F., Gonzales, J.C., and Litt, J.S., (2019), 'Nature-Based Social Prescribing in Urban Settings to Improve Social Connectedness and Mental Wellbeing: A Review,' *Current Environmental Health Reports*, 6, pp. 297-308, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40572-019-00251-7>

Coventry, P.A., Brown, J.V.E., Pervin, J., Brabyn, S., Pateman, R., Breedvelt, J., Gilbody, S., Stancliffe, R., McEachan, R., Piran, C. and White, L., (2021), 'Nature-based outdoor activities for mental and physical health: Systematic review and meta-analysis,' *SSM - Population Health*, 16 (100934), pp.1-14, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2021.100934>

Bradley, E., (2021), 'Nature Prescriptions: Supporting the health of people and nature,' Edinburgh, RSPB, Available at: <https://www.rspb.org.uk/globalassets/downloads/documents/nature-prescriptions/Edinburgh-pilot-final-report.pdf> (Accessed 22.09.2023)

## USEFUL LINKS

**NHS England:** [england.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing](https://www.nhs.uk/personalisedcare/social-prescribing)

**Wild at Heart:** [wildsheffield.com/wild-at-heart](https://wildsheffield.com/wild-at-heart)

**Padlet:** [padlet.com/jking278/green-and-blue-social-prescribing-dj8elmne4isjpmi](https://padlet.com/jking278/green-and-blue-social-prescribing-dj8elmne4isjpmi)

**NHS Green Social Prescribing Toolkit:**  
[socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/3ozd3tv2/nhs-green-social-prescribing-toolkit.pdf](https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/3ozd3tv2/nhs-green-social-prescribing-toolkit.pdf)

**Institute of Outdoor Learning Statement of Good Practice file:** [www.outdoor-learning.org/standards/collective-knowledge/outdoor-mental-health-outdoor-therapy.html](https://www.outdoor-learning.org/standards/collective-knowledge/outdoor-mental-health-outdoor-therapy.html)

**SYICS:** [syics.co.uk/green-social-prescribing](https://syics.co.uk/green-social-prescribing)

## VIDEOS **Successful GSP area videos:**

**RSPB and Barnsley Stroke Survivors Nature Calendars** [youtube.com/watch?v=m3giM0glKZ4](https://youtube.com/watch?v=m3giM0glKZ4)

**Flourish at Woodfield Park, Doncaster**  
[youtube.com/watch?v=dPAryZafhSO](https://youtube.com/watch?v=dPAryZafhSO)

**Experience of a green social prescribing training day** [youtube.com/watch?v=rFxS4e9opKA](https://youtube.com/watch?v=rFxS4e9opKA)

**Rhubarb Farm** [youtube.com/watch?v=i8vPGlpMR8E](https://youtube.com/watch?v=i8vPGlpMR8E)

**Fisherman's Friends** [youtube.com/watch?v=n-vebQt8ITwY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=n-vebQt8ITwY)

## TIPS

### Know your local patch

- Exploring what is going on locally in your area. Work with your colleagues by creating a local directory of the contact details and how to access various Nature Based community activities.
- Network with community colleagues by joining organisations such as the South Yorkshire Green Network

### Understand the patient's needs

- Ensure that the organisations or community group is able to meet the needs of the patient

### Is the patient is ready for and wanting to try the opportunity?

- Work with the person to over their personal barriers which might prevent them from attending, such as supporting the person to attend the first few sessions to help build confidence.
- Explore boundaries and limitations with the person (cost, transport etc)

## Get in touch:

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 WildatHeartproject

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