

Practical tips for Social prescribers

With Good Practice Mentor
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Who are we?

- Age UK Camden
- Leeds Older People's Forum
- South Yorkshire Housing Association
- Associate support from Ageing Better delivery partners



Why do we exist?

Continuing the legacy work of [Ageing Better](#)

Sharing wide range of learning, experience and in-depth practice from an established national network

Helping to overcome challenges in reaching, connecting & empowering older people in local communities

Funded April 2023 to March 2026

Our work is influenced by older people's voice but is adaptable for all communities!



A social prescribing model was used throughout the Ageing Better programme (so from 2017 when it was in its infancy really) and we learned some key things about making it work for people.

- Work in a person centred way
- Make it face to face if you can (especially for older people)
- Be prepared to swap clients
- Build trust to help you identify the real barriers or aspirations
- Match people to the right connection or group - keep trying
- Get to know your community and the activities on offer (and keep doing this)
- You might need to build trust by making stuff happen
- Start with achievable steps and build on them
- Review progress
- Accept that success looks different for different people
- Start with an eye to the finish



Work in a person centred way

In the end things always circled back to this - it was no good just offering someone and group or activity handy to where they lived and hoping they'd pop along.

(yes that was what social prescribing was inclined to do in 2018, and then wonder why it didn't seem to work)

This means properly listening to what people actually want to achieve, **and why-** not just looking at what you think they need to improve in their lives.

Find the hook



Practical things to consider

- Make it face to face if you can (especially for older people) - sometime the 'getting to you' barrier is the final straw
- Use a community venue if you can't go to them. If it is someone who isn't already known to services that will be easier for them
- You need to build trust to help you identify **the real barriers or aspirations**. Because of the stigma around loneliness people will tend to offer socially acceptable excuses (like money) before they share their loneliness
- Be prepared to swap clients if you need to to build that trust



What are you prescribing to?

- Match people to the right connection or group - keep trying
- Get to know your community and the activities on offer (and keep doing this)
- Make sure those activities actually offer a Warm Welcome(sometimes they really don't, and you could lose trust and make everything much harder taking someone to an unfriendly activity)
- Take someone the first time in at all possible, or arrange a buddy...



Getting someone from behind their door to the world outside

- You might need to build trust by making stuff happen
- Start with achievable steps and build on them(that might be meeting you in a cafe, then meeting with you and another, and then a bigger group later)
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And Finally

- Review progress (we all forget how we were, it helps people to see where they have come and builds confidence)
- Accept that success looks different for different people
- Start with an eye to the finish



Top tips to help you to work in a person centred way?

- Work with colleagues as a team
- Find the right person to support someone
- Meet in the right place
- Offer flexibility
- Keep Communicating
- Don't just signpost
- Effective referrals require ongoing investment
- Access additional expertise
- Build wide networks and partnerships
- Allow people to re-join a service
- Have strong staff support in place for you and colleagues







Good Practice Mentors can offer more support and training - we can share lots of really practical learning on effective ways to reduce social isolation and loneliness through free Eventbrite sessions and can also offer bespoke support to organisations.

Follow us on [Eventbrite](#) here to see what we offer.

Topics include outreach, better comms, informal popups, co production and using warm Welcome techniques.



How to get in touch

For general enquiries and further questions email our central team gpm@syha.co.uk

Find details of future GPM sessions here; <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/the-good-practice-mentor-team-66357714073>

For specific workshops & sessions you can contact GPMs individually :-

[Jo](#) Age UK Camden
[Jessica](#) Leeds Older People's Forum
[Jennie](#) South Yorkshire Housing Association

