



Social prescribing: what is it and is it for your group?

Friday 20 May 2022

Links to useful resources:

<https://www.singingforhealthnetwork.co.uk/social-prescribing>

<https://www.makingmusic.org.uk/resource/social-prescribing-resources>

<https://www.socialprescribingnetwork.com/>

<https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/>

<https://www.singingforhealthnetwork.co.uk/partners-training-signposting>

This is a useful guidance doc: https://hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk/download_file/851/355

Get in touch with our guest speakers:

Baz Chapman singingforhealthnetwork@gmail.com

Sue Moorchild sue.moorchild@nhs.net

Comments from participants:

in Frome we have health connectors

I echo the point about whether not having a geographical base is a barrier to being involved in social prescribing. We are an online and (inter)national choir run by and for people with Long Covid, many of whom are housebound or bedridden.

Our choir draws members from several local areas - we are literally on the border of three NHS trusts! Is that a positive or not?!

Welsh Govt has committed to introducing an all-Wals framework to roll out SP. Multi agency task and finish group in place to develop a national framework. Out for consultation later this year.

I'd echo the comments regarding payment. Currently, people singers attending my sessions pay but I'd imagine it would be more accessible to join if this service was funded through the NHS.

Home Choir-an online choir-is free & open to anyone. Meets 4 times a week

My local surgery had a poster up so maybe just pop in if not on their website?

Also Facebook groups exist such as music for health in Kent which are a good resource

The National Rheumatoid Arthritis Society (NRAS) has run Singing4Wellbeing Courses online at a small cost <https://nras.org.uk/event/nras-wellbeing-course-singing4wellbeing/>

Herts NHS has a website for Social. Prescribing

Anyone welcome to join Home Choir-no singing experience necessary - national & FREE
<https://homechoir.org/>

If you work in Marple or Padiham (Burnley), you can find out about Secret Singers here:
<https://www.secret-singers.com/> I only took over the two groups in Marple and Padiham after Easter, so I'm not listed as a leader on the website yet.

Bolton Belters in Bolton

Hesketh Bank Harmony in Hesketh Bank

Listening sessions are proved to be extremely positive for Alzheimer's patients for instance

Ribble Rousers in Preston

We run groups for people with Parkinson's round the country under Sing to Beat Parkinson's and offer the training sessions for facilitators with Aldeburgh and Morley College.

I agree about the issues of having a national choir & getting information out

The BIG Sing SOUL we have FREE online singing resources for all age groups
Sandra@bigingsoul.org.uk www.big-sing.com/charity

<https://www.singtobeat.co.uk/> this is the link to our website re Sing to Beat session and training under the umbrella of Canterbury Cantata Trust.

Be good if there was a hardship fund to enable less well-off to pay subs

Songhaven has online resources available to all especially those living with dementia at home or in care homes www.songhaven.co.uk

Age Concern have small grants for assisting the elderly relieve isolation.

I'm a Town Cllr and on the board of Wiltshire Music Connect. Early in the pandemic, we recognised there was likely to be a need for mental help for young people and so have co-funded a music therapy studio (The Rhythm Practice) at the Pound Arts Centre in Corsham. Will Lawton, the therapist works with the Corsham School and local GB surgery find referrals of young people who might benefit and he's making a huge difference on a one-to-one basis. But we're looking for ways to expand out into group activities and would love to hear some ideas.

My choirs are full of various levels disadvantaged. Difficult to charge fees that genuinely cover my costs.

Our group (Bring Me Sunshine Trio) put in a proposal to deliver a 5-week course to our local CCG and this has just been accepted this week.

London Social Prescribing Network can be found on line londonplus.org

Churchill Music runs a Sing for Fun group which is primarily aimed at those that want to improve their health. however, we can reach those who have the ability and nouse to come to us, but we need to reach those who need that extra nudge. We have close liaison with the village agents,

West of England Rural Network and our local GP practice social prescribers. Have you any clues about how we can reach those who would like to come but just cannot make that first step. The SP has no time to help.

Social Prescribing Network is all very well-but to advertise with them had eye watering costs & we give a free offering -please pass on our details to patients cant leave home
<https://homechoir.org/>

As a relatively new orchestra, getting known about is our biggest hurdle. SP sounds great, but also sounds like a huge amount of work.

Great idea for people to listen to rehearsals and connect, esp if they can join in the chat at the break etc!

Need flexibility in the listening where people may want to clap/feet tapping etc no shushing!!

Our group started for our own health and wellbeing and we have been amazed at the power of music to help others in care homes, special schools and many other settings.

We are a choir of ~90 members, we let people attend our afternoon rehearsal at no cost

We used to open the final dress rehearsal to all local groups, and the Round Table and Business group drove around collecting the disabled and returned them.

body percussion!

Even if only certain rehearsals were opened up, similar to cinema sessions for people with autism, or babies etc

Thinking of how beneficial listening sessions are for dementia patients

And how that could trigger memory

Like a book club, but with music?

we've launched two daytime choirs last year which are free and they run the group using a weekly pre recorded rehearsal so a community led project for the community and tea and chat gives the social aspect

The link on that page for latest developments in Northern Ireland is broken – this one works:

<https://online.hscni.net/latest-developments-social-prescribing/>

In LA and NYC there is a project called Music Mends Minds, specifically aimed at creating musical sharing environments for professional musicians with dementia. I've participated in singing sessions with them, including their Valentine's Day concert 4 years ago in LA. They sang and played with professional musicians and music students to an audience of 400. Both the able-minded musicians and those with dementia got so much from it. If it interests you, look up www.musicmendsminds.org

I reckon there are lots of people who have a high level of musical skill and would benefit from social prescribing, e.g. people with anxiety or depression or other mental illness; neurodiverse people etc.

We offer a FREE trial to our community choirs and we have volunteers in the choir to support new members as its so daunting

We have in place an initial 6 week period for any new members before an audition.....so that could be an option for groups. We also have a buddy system, starting initially with our Member Secretary and then allocating an individual member within a particular section of the choir.

Potential new members do not pay subs until after their audition.

We have voice reps (SATB)who are responsible for making new members feel welcome - that can be quite effective.

An orchestra member always supports prospective members, and we tell them to bring a friend if they like. We tell them we know that walking into a room of strangers who already know each other is very daunting. First three sessions are free of charge.

So many people feel that they cannot sing therefore they cannot come. It is very difficult to persuade people that it really doesn't matter. We all just open our mouths and let whatever sound comes out. Many people have had a bad experience as far back as school days. Any hints about how to reach out to older people who have had that experience and feel shy about joining a group.

The Natural Voice Network (NVN) is doing a lot of work on cultural inclusivity and cultural honouring. If you are a choir leader it is worth contacting them.

We may need to reach out to minority communities to explore what is needed

We've tried hard to attract more diverse members, but they just don't seem to come.

don't worry about your offer is key!

Drumming has huge health benefits, lots of science to back up group drumming

Our 5-week course has two elements: 1) 4 weeks of lung health, teaching new songs and breathing, 2) 1 week of Bring Me Sunshine Trio end of course concert.

Harps North West run at least 2 absolute beginner's workshops a year, with harps provided and no previous musical experience needed - I feel that this may be the best way for HNW to open themselves to social prescribing...

Our music hub is for school age only and refuse to even talk to us

Both my groups are white and probably middle class. Part of the issue is cost I think, so I'm considering changing the way I charge for sessions, probably to 'pay as you can afford'. There can be issues around music being prohibited, for example by some branches of Islam.

It might be worth running taster sessions (with your regular singers, if possible) at community centres, cafes etc. that are frequented by people from diverse racial backgrounds. I reckon to recruit people from more diverse backgrounds, we'll need to bring our offer to them. That's my experience at least.

It does seem as though the biggest challenge is finding the local link workers as there is no national hub.

For info we source donated instruments, repair and give these to new musicians.