

GREEN PRESCRIBING

why you should and how it works!



Social prescribing is a holistic care approach providing person centred care, acknowledging that many factors contribute to a person's health. It is a well recognised mechanism for linking patients in primary care with sources of support within the community. [1]

Green space is an essential resource that can bring both mental and physical benefits to the patient. The term green prescribing is used to describe the social prescription of nature-based interventions.

Why is green prescribing important

Nature based interventions including walks, farming and horticulture activities can bring improvements [3] to cognition [4], mood [5] and attention [6]. Participating in green prescribing has been shown to improve physical health [7] and self esteem. [8]

Green gym participants in parks in north London showed reductions in anxiety and stress [9].



A UK study found that after 3 to 4 months, 80% of patients referred to a social prescribing scheme had reduced their use of A&E, outpatient appointments and inpatient admissions.[2]



25%
reduction in
A&E admissions

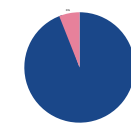


+ health
+ self esteem
- depression
- stress

St Austell Healthcare, a GP practice in Cornwall, has prescribed green space to more than 250 patients, with initial good results [10].

After 12 weeks it was observed that:

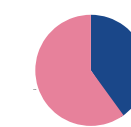
a) 94% of participants experienced an increase in well-being;



b) 68% of overweight patients lost weight;



c) the GP surgery saw a 40% drop in associated visits.



What is the process ?

1

A patient visits the GP with a physical or mental health complaint which can be treated by green prescribing.

2

The GP refers the patient to a link worker or physical activity coordinator.

3

The link worker explores the patient's needs and creates a support plan in conjunction with the patient.

4

The link worker connects the patients with community groups and activities that are available locally. They also identify the green space that can be accessed independently. The link worker will follow up on attendance and progress on a regular basis.

To find out more about green prescriptions contact:
The Centre for Sustainable Healthcare - info@nhsforest.org

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References

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10. *Case study, Five social prescribing models green sector organisations can follow*: <https://www.hortweek.com/case-study-five-social-prescribing-models-green-sector-organisations-follow/parks-and-gardens/article/1524589>

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