

Creating social prescribing spaces

As an estates and facilities provider to the NHS with a national portfolio, NHS Property Services is in prime position to support the growth of social prescribing by meeting local needs for dedicated social prescribing spaces.

We are working with NHS colleagues to transform vacant indoor and outdoor space into vibrant community hubs. These can be used, free of charge, for voluntary and community organisations connected to social prescribing networks. In doing this, we are supporting NHS

social prescribing objectives as set out in the Long Term Plan, reducing demand on primary care services, addressing the root-causes of health concerns and ultimately creating greater social value from vacant space.

Engagement with communities and NHS stakeholders is firmly at the heart of our approach. We will involve local communities in the design and work closely with commissioners to ensure that spaces make a valuable contribution in addressing local health and social needs.



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Our offer

We will work with NHS colleagues to identify and set up social prescribing hubs and green spaces for use, free of charge, by voluntary and community groups.

Social prescribing hubs



Vacant space
with no other
immediate use

Vibrant community hub supporting a range of wellbeing activity addressing local health and social needs, such as social groups for isolated elderly people, one-to-one sessions on weight management and mental health volunteer support groups

The designated sites will provide free of charge space for community activity connected to social prescribing networks. We are looking for predominately internal sites, ideally with some external space, that are fully accessible with good transport links.

CASE STUDY:

Michael Burke Wellbeing Centre, Hartismere Hospital, East of England

We converted the decommissioned birthing unit in an underutilised community hospital in the rural community of Eye, Suffolk, into a dedicated social prescribing space. Working with the CCG, local authority and representatives from the community sector, we created a space for a range of services connected to the emerging social prescribing network.

The centre provides indoor space for community groups to host large (20-30 person) sessions, smaller one-to-one meetings and provides office space for the commissioned link worker for the local area. Facilities also include a small kitchen, children's play area and accessible toilets. Outdoor space at the site has been turned into allotment beds, a sensory garden and an outdoor gym.

Opened in late July 2019, the centre currently hosts ten regular user groups



running a range of health and wellbeing activity, including weight management sessions for women recovering from breast cancer, stop smoking workshops, Stroke and MS support groups, and 'painting for pleasure' sessions to reduce isolation in the elderly, as well as ad-hoc bookings.

Green spaces



Poor quality,
unused
outdoor space



Raised bed allotment gardens, sensory gardens, wellbeing spaces, outdoor gyms, wildflower meadows, dementia gardens

We are looking for external space that can be converted into community growing spaces and wellbeing gardens. These would be used by patient groups and by voluntary and community organisations, therefore improving patient and colleague environments.

CASE STUDY:

Community garden, Houghton-le-Spring Primary Care Centre, North East and Yorkshire

We transformed a run-down garden at Houghton-le-Spring PCC into a useable growing facility for the local community. NHSPS volunteers worked with charity partner Groundwork to create multiple allotment beds, a growing tunnel and seating space within the plot.

After completion of the work in April 2019, the garden is now in use by Sunderland Recovery College who run 12-week courses for people living with or recovering from mental health conditions.

The college runs two sessions a week with an average of six students attending each. Students have said:

“ I love coming here as it gets me out of the house and I can clear my mind of all my worries for a couple of hours ”

“ It's good for me to meet like-minded people and it's safe and enjoyable ”

“ I have no garden at home so I come here to meet people and learn a little ”

