



National Association of Link Workers
CONNECT LINK

Code of Practice for **Employers of Social Prescribing Link Workers** and
Social Prescribing Link Workers

Introduction

National Association of Link Workers Code of Practice for employers of social prescribing link workers and social prescribing link workers sets the core standards expected of high quality social prescribing practice.

The Code of Practice are a response to the significant requests we have received for expert guidance on best practice and concerns raised by our members.

The codes have been produced from the ground up, Informed by our March 2019 link worker report and link worker peer group clinical supervision sessions.

The Code of Practice is non-model specific which increases consistency in professional practice, ensures professional competence and public confidence.

Code of Practice for Employers of Social Prescribing Link Workers

1. As an employer, the Code of Practice for Employers of Social Prescribing Link Workers sets out your responsibilities for making sure your social prescribing link workers are competent and supported to achieve the Code of Practice for Social Prescribing Link Workers

How to use the codes

Employers of social prescribing link workers and social prescribing link workers should use the code of practice:

- To inform high quality social prescribing practice
- As a reflective tool for both employers and social prescribing link workers
- As a self assessment tool for improving practice for both employers and social prescribing link workers
- To identify learning and development needs for both employers and social prescribing link workers

Code of Practice for Social Prescribing Link Workers

2. As a social prescribing link worker, the Code of Practice for Social Prescribing Link Workers sets out your responsibilities for meeting the standards and ensuring professional competence

**Code of Practice for
Employers of Social
Prescribing Link Workers**

1

As a social prescribing link worker employer, you must make sure people are suitable and are the right fit for your social prescribing model

You will

- 1.1** Ensure local key stakeholders, including health and social care professionals, service beneficiaries and referrers understand the need and limitations for the role.
- 1.2** Use good practice recruitment processes to make sure that only suitable and competent people with personal attributes, experience, values and behaviours, and the potential to gain the necessary knowledge and skills, are recruited for your local social prescribing model.
- 1.3** Carry out appropriate criminal record checks and follow relevant guidance when assessing whether a person is capable of carrying out the duties of the job they have been selected for. You must do this before you appoint them.
- 1.4** Seek appropriate references relating to a person's suitability to work in social prescribing services.
- 1.5** Give workers clear information about their role responsibilities, boundaries, the referral pathways, the policies and procedures they must follow in their work.
- 1.6** Ensure staff appraisal guidance is linked to the job description. Staff appraisal becomes subjective when it is not linked to the job description.

2

**As a social prescribing link worker employer,
you must have the infrastructures and
systems in place to support social
prescribing link workers to meet their Code
of Practice**

You will

- 2.1** Regularly review written policies and procedures, particularly about risk assessment, quality assurance, lone working on/off site, safe referrals, home visits and reporting safeguarding concerns.
- 2.2** Provide service delivery tools, time and flexibility required for link workers to carry out their job effectively and safely including, developing and maintaining relationships with the community assets, robust community and workforce referral pathways for your social prescribing model.
- 2.3** Have systems in place to listen to and consider feedback from link workers, people who use services, carers and other relevant people, to shape and improve services.
- 2.4** Have systems in place for social prescribing link workers to report inadequate resources, gaps or difficulties which might have a negative effect on the delivery of high quality experience to people.
- 2.5** Have systems in place to constantly review service capacity, social prescribing link worker workload in line with demand.
- 2.6** Have provisions in place for social prescribing link worker wellbeing including access to a qualified therapist if needed.
- 2.7** Be committed to ensuring social prescribing link workers are remunerated fairly in line with similar roles of equal value.
- 2.8** Support social prescribing link workers to meet the standards in their Code of Practice.
- 2.9** If you employ link workers from other professions, support them to meet their own professional codes.

3

As a social prescribing link worker employer, you must provide learning and development opportunities to enable social prescribing workers to enhance their skills, knowledge and build resilience

You will

- 3.1** Ensure staff know about the Code and how it applies to their conduct and practice.
- 3.2** Provide effective induction, learning and development opportunities to help social prescribing link workers do their jobs effectively and prepare for new roles, changing roles and responsibilities.
- 3.3** Ensure social prescribing link workers are aware of roles, expertise of organisations, community groups and workers from other professions they will work in partnership with.
- 3.4** Ensure social prescribing link workers have access to continuous professional development, their training needs constantly reviewed and acted upon.
- 3.5** Provide on-going, effective, formal and regular clinical supervision or professional supervision independent of social prescribing link worker line management.
- 3.6** Enable staff to keep updated with local service provision.
- 3.7** Support staff to attend the annual national social prescribing link worker conference to keep abreast with professional practice and national sharing of best practices.
- 3.8** Provide access to peer networking and support.
- 3.9** Support social prescribing link worker education and career progression.

As a member of National Association of Link Workers, I will observe the standards of professional practice as set out in this Code, as they may be reviewed and reissued from time to time

Code of Practice for Social Prescribing Link Workers

1

As a social prescribing link worker, I will promote the holistic wellbeing, rights and interests, of individuals and carers

I will

- 1.1** Be non-judgemental in listening to what matters to people.
- 1.2** Work in partnership with people to help them identify their non medical holistic needs and solutions.
- 1.3** Jointly create action plans and goals with people to meet their needs from a holistic perspective.
- 1.4** Work in partnership with colleagues, other professionals, communities and organisations to promote the well-being and choice of individuals and carers.
- 1.5** Respect and, where appropriate, promote the views and wishes of people who use services and carers.
- 1.6** Support the rights of people who use services to take control of their lives and make informed choices about the services they use.
- 1.7** Respect and maintain the dignity and privacy of people who use services.
- 1.8** Work in a way that promotes equality, diversity and respects different cultures and values.

2

**As a social prescribing link worker,
I must build and maintain the trust
and confidence of people who use
services and carers**

I will

- 2.1** Be truthful, open, honest and trustworthy.
- 2.2** Communicate in an appropriate, open, accurate and straightforward way.
- 2.3** Respect confidential information and clearly explain my employer's policies about confidentiality to people who use services and carers.
- 2.4** Be reliable, dependable and flexible in my approach.
- 2.5** Honour work commitments, agreements and arrangements and, when it is not possible to do so, explain why to people who use services, carers and my employer.
- 2.6** Listen to what matters to people, make sure my personal views and preferences do not influence my judgement or practice.
- 2.7** Use agreed referral pathways and refer to good quality community organisations and groups based on people's preferences.

3

**As a social prescribing link worker, I
must promote the independence of
people who use services while
protecting them, as far as possible,
from danger and harm**

I will

- 3.1** Promote the independence of people who use services, empower them to understand and exercise their rights and advocate on their behalf.
- 3.2** Use established processes and procedures to report safeguarding concerns.
- 3.3** Follow practices and procedures designed to keep me and other people safe from violent and abusive behaviour at work, including lone working and offsite working.
- 3.4** Tell my employer, or the appropriate authority, about any resourcing, gaps or operational difficulties that might get in the way of providing high quality service.
- 3.5** Keep to my employer's policies including those relating to lone working and be aware of national guidance.
- 3.6** Enable people who use services and carers to give feedback. Take feedback seriously and either respond to them or pass them to the appropriate person.

4

**As a social prescribing link worker, I
must act with integrity, uphold
public trust and confidence in the
social prescribing link worker
profession**

I will

- 4.1** Commit to straightforwardness, honesty and integrity in my dealings with clients.
- 4.2** Set the right expectations with my client within my role boundary.
- 4.3** Not put myself or other people at unnecessary risk.
- 4.4** Not abuse the trust of individuals and carers or the access I have to personal information about them, or to their property, home or workplace.
- 4.5** Not form inappropriate personal relationships with individuals, their families, carers or pets.
- 4.6** Not discriminate unlawfully or unjustifiably against individuals, carers, colleagues or other people.
- 4.7** Not behave in a way, in work or outside work, which would call into question your suitability to work in the social prescribing link worker profession.

5

As a social prescribing link worker, I am accountable for the quality of my work and will take responsibility for maintaining and improving my knowledge and skills.

I will

- 5.1** Be proactive in keeping abreast with local assets and service provision.
- 5.2** Maintain clear, accurate and up-to-date records in line with procedures relating to my work.
- 5.3** Recognise the limitations of my role and maintain professional boundaries.
- 5.4** Ask for assistance from my employer if I do not feel able or confident in carrying out any aspects of my job or increased responsibilities.
- 5.5** Recognise and respect the roles and expertise of organisations, community groups and workers from other professions and work in partnership with them.
- 5.6** Undertake on-going, effective, formal and regular clinical supervision or professional supervision independently of line management.
- 5.7** Undertake relevant learning to maintain and improve my knowledge, skills and contribute to the learning and development of others.
- 5.8** Listen to feedback from people who use services, carers and other relevant people and consider that feedback to improve my practice.
- 5.9** Seek out ways to increase personal resilience so that I am able to work with client's concerns without being personally diminished.

**As a member of National Association
of Link Workers, I will observe the
standards of professional practice as
set out in this Code, as they may be
reviewed and reissued from time to
time**

Appendix

Who is a social prescribing link worker?

Social prescribing link workers undertake varying roles and responsibilities dependent on the local social prescribing model. However these generic core summary applies.

Someone who:

- ✓ Uses a strength based approach to increase people's confidence to take control of their health wellbeing
- ✓ Builds trust and relationships with people
- ✓ Gives people time to talk about what matters to them
- ✓ Actively listens to understand what matters to people from a holistic perspective
- ✓ Co-creates solutions with people
- ✓ Enables and supports access to solutions
- ✓ Facilitates joined up care and social inclusiveness
- ✓ Is knowledgeable about the range of local support available to help with people's wellbeing issues



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