

"Seeing them feel empowered and more in control of their well-being is incredibly rewarding."

Grace has used her background in public and mental health to make positive change in people's lives as a social prescribing link worker.

Grace Namwanje

Social Prescribing Link Worker

Employer or university

Dudley Integrated Health and Care NHS Trust

Salary range

Band 5 (£25,000 - £30,000)



How I got into the role

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Before I became a social prescribing link worker, I worked in NHS hospital and mental health services for five years. It meant I already had a strong background in public health and mental health before I applied for my current role.

When I saw the social prescribing vacancy on NHS Jobs, it felt like the right fit. I'm a passionate problem-solver and love analysing situations, thinking creatively, and thinking about I can help people overcome challenges.

The biggest driver to apply was to address health inequalities and ensure everyone has access to the support they need to live and thrive. This role has deepened my commitment to improving people's health and well-being for all.

What I do

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Being a social prescriber is like being a detective! I need to get under the skin of how I can help people.

Other healthcare professionals, such as GPs refer people to me so I can get an understanding of what's impacting on their health beyond medicine. I then connect them with some amazing community services such as housing, employment, food banks and friendship and exercise groups, giving them the power to improve their health and well-being.

During the pandemic, it was tough on many people's mental health, including my own. I had to get creative in how I helped people. Much of this has continued beyond the pandemic, such as better use of telephone and digital services, allowing me to connect people with online courses such as mindfulness and relaxation techniques as well as apps that help people manage their mental wellbeing.

The best bits and challenges

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The best part of being a social prescriber is the positive impact my work has on people.

Whether I'm working with people who are isolated and helping them find a community group or guiding a non-English speaker to learn English at a local college, seeing them feel empowered and more in control of their well-being is incredibly rewarding.

I also feel inspired when I see people benefitting from simple things such as reminding them that they're not alone and showcasing the available support in their community. It's like unlocking a treasure chest of community support.

It's not always easy. Seeing the challenges people face every day can be heartbreaking. Poverty, inadequate housing or a lack of access to healthy food can be difficult to address directly as a social prescriber. All these factors can impact on a person's health and well-being, and at times it can feel frustrating that I can't do more.

Life outside work

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I am parent of two girls. I love teaching them about the world through adventures.

I also love getting lost in a good book. With all the information available online, I dive deep into topics that spark my curiosity.

I also like travelling to old towns to learn history, culture, and natural wonders of every corner of England.

Social prescribing made me fall in love with nature, so I indulge in nature walks to find balance, improve mood and clarity.

Top tips for others

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If you crave a career that makes a real difference, look no further than social prescribing!

You get to use your problem-solving skills alongside a passion for helping others. You'll uncover social factors impacting health and connect people with the right support. You'll empower people and witness their transformation. It's incredibly rewarding.

If you are ready, then keep an eye on jobs.nhs.uk ^[1] for vacancies and look for volunteering opportunities. It can be in the voluntary sector or the NHS. Volunteering really helps you gain knowledge of local community services, people's health and well-being needs, and how to personalise care to the individual.

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Links

[1] <https://jobs.nhs.uk>