

Better Connected



A free social prescribing service
for over 65s in Medway

A new season for our social prescribing service!

Welcome to our spring issue of the Better Connected newsletter! The Better Connected social prescribing team from Medway Public Health are here to work with those over 65 who are struggling with loneliness and social isolation. Through our link worker intervention we are supporting and empowering older people to reconnect with their community and to improve their health and wellbeing by engaging in new activities.

It has been a difficult winter for many and we have all felt the impact of isolation on our lives. Despite this, we have still been able to find ways to support our clients and have seen a huge difference in well-being for those using our service. As restrictions begin to lift we are mapping out what is available for service users to connect with in their locality and continuing to spread the news about the help that we can offer to older people in Medway.

IN THIS ISSUE

**SUNLIGHT CENTRE'S
NEW 'WILD AND
RECYCLED' GARDEN**

**FREE TRAINING
AVAILABLE ON SOCIAL
PRESCRIBING**

**WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY
ABOUT OUR SERVICE**

**HOW TO MAKE A
REFERRAL TO OUR
SERVICE**



Focus on: The Sunlight Centre's 'Wild and Recycled' Garden Project

In each of our newsletters we are shining a spotlight on one of the fantastic community projects we can refer our clients to as part of their social prescription. This issue we are focusing on a new community garden project from the Sunlight Development Trust on Otway Street in Gillingham.

We went for a visit at the garden to have a look around and to meet Tracey and Malcolm who told us more about how people can get involved. The idea behind the garden is to create a space for people to come together to do a little gardening, perhaps make something for the garden like

a bird box or a bench from reclaimed materials and generally enjoy being outdoors and getting some fresh air.

Those who want to come along can bring a flask of tea or coffee with them and just spend some time enjoying nature, having a friendly chat and getting their hands dirty with some gardening.

The garden opens to the public on the 5th of April and participants will need to register with the Sunlight Centre before they come along for the first time. For more information contact the Sunlight Centre on 01634 581 511



DO YOU RUN A GROUP OR PROJECT WE COULD INTRODUCE NEW MEMBERS TO?

We are always looking to map out what is available in the community for older people to engage with. Do you run a group, activity or service that you think could help an older person to build up their social networks and improve their wellbeing?

If so, we would love to hear from you and find out more about how we can help to introduce new participants from the local area. You can contact us at better.connected@medway.gov.uk or call on 01634 333013

For Wendy, a referral into the Better Connected team made all the difference at a time when social isolation hit older people very hard.

Working within the social distancing guidelines at the time, Wendy was supported to access befriending services and a walking group where she made great friends and even ended up becoming a volunteer befriender herself.

We asked Wendy what was her favourite aspect of being involved in the programme;

'Feeling I mattered and chatting to such nice people who were helping me reach out, and especially having a befriender who is amazing; we really click and enjoy our chats.'

I really don't know where I'd be if it wasn't for this service

Wendy, 70 years old, Rainham



Do you know someone who could benefit from this support?

Anyone can refer into Better Connected including self referral, just follow these steps . . .

- 1. Make sure the person is eligible for the service.** We work with those who are over 65 and in need of some support to build up their social networks. We cannot work with those who are under 65, in palliative care or in need of a more clinical intervention.
- 2. Talk it through with them and make sure they consent** to the referral. It can be hard to talk about loneliness or feel like you deserve some support. Reassure the person that there is help available and make sure they are happy to have their details passed on to us.
- 3. Fill out our [online referral form here](#)** or call us on 01634 333013. You can scan our referral QR code below with your smartphone camera to link straight through to our referral form. The form should take no more than 5-10 minutes to complete



What is social prescribing?

FREE TRAINING AVAILABLE

What is social prescribing and how does it work?

What is the difference between signposting and social prescribing?

What does a link worker do and what difference can this support make to an individual?

The Better Connected team are delivering free training webinars on social prescribing and a bespoke session can be booked for you and your team to find out more and understand how our service works. If you would like to register your interest for this free training please contact abigail.oborne@medway.gov.uk

How to contact us . . .

Our email: better.connected@medway.gov.uk

Telephone: 01634 333013

Referral form: [click through here](#)

Webpage: [click through here](#)

