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Dispensing wellbeing: Social prescribing as part of pharmaceutical care.

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Welcome



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Objectives

- Explore the history of social prescribing
- Discuss who can “do” social prescribing
- Describe some examples of community initiatives
- Consider how pharmacists could become involved in social prescribing
- Q&A



Introduction

Activities/hobbies

Mental or physical health

Meet new people



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September 2026



Loneliness in early motherhood: 'I can't keep calling my mum up here every day'

Irish Times readers on their experience of loneliness – and of finding community – in their first months as a mum

Thu Sept 03 2026 - 06:01



'I'm happily married with three young children - but loneliness has become a feature of my life'

Tell Me About It: Responsibilities of parenting and work have entirely curtailed what I now see was a more social existence

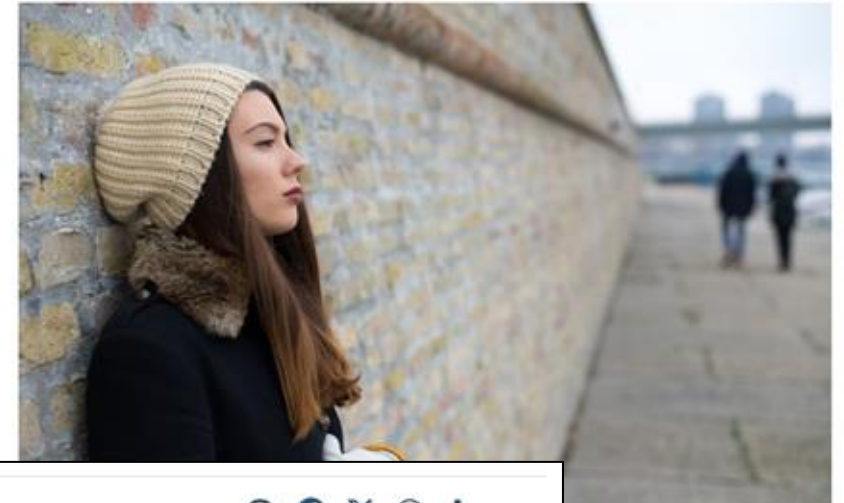
Wed Sept 02 2026 - 06:01

THE IRISH TIMES

Your Wellness

'Loneliness and isolation are among the most alarming challenges young people now face'

Persistent loneliness can have a profound impact on young people's mental health – but there are ways to address it



Sheila Wayman

Tue Sept 01 2026 - 06:01 • 5 MIN READ



“I’m [lonely](#)” are some of the hardest words to say for young people who are supposedly living their best life through late teens and early 20s.

Yet it is consistently one of the top five issues raised with the youth information organisation SpunOut in its free, 24/7 text support service (text Hello to 50808).

Loneliness is commonly paired with [anxiety](#), [sadness](#) or [stress](#).

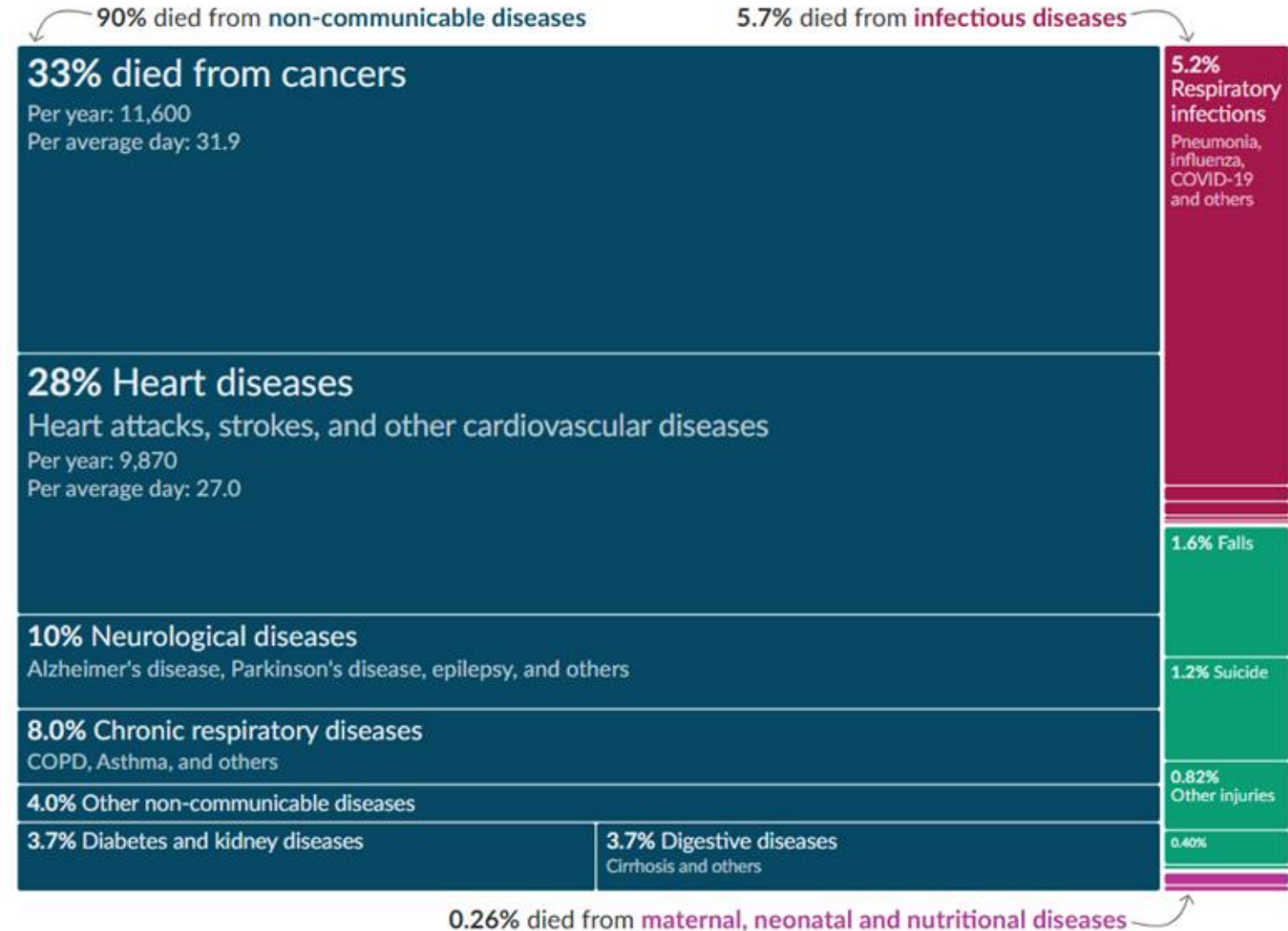


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What did people in Ireland die from in 2023?

Our World
in Data

The size of the entire visualization represents the total number of deaths in Ireland in 2023: 35,600. Each rectangle within is proportional to the share of deaths due to a particular cause.

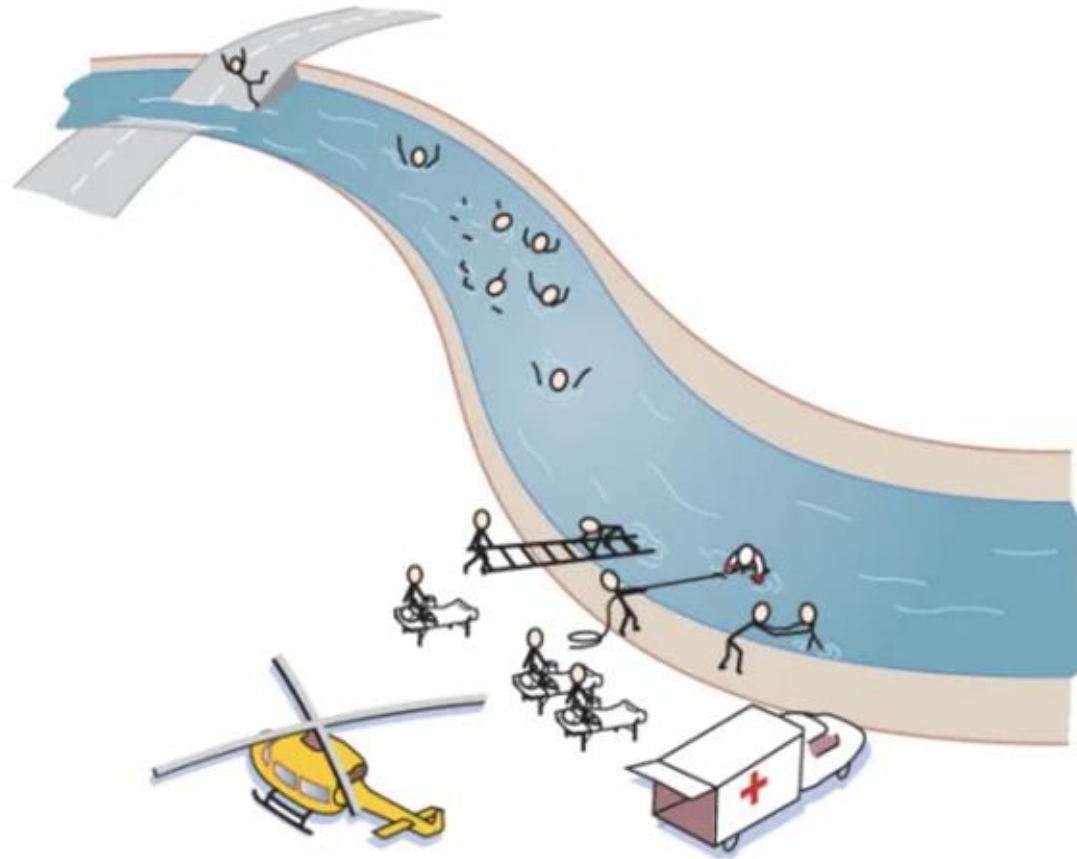


Data source: IHME, Global Burden of Disease (2025)

<https://ourworldindata.org/profile/health/ireland>

CC BY

Upstream determinants of health



Social capital and health

Bonding and bridging capital (Putnam, 2000).

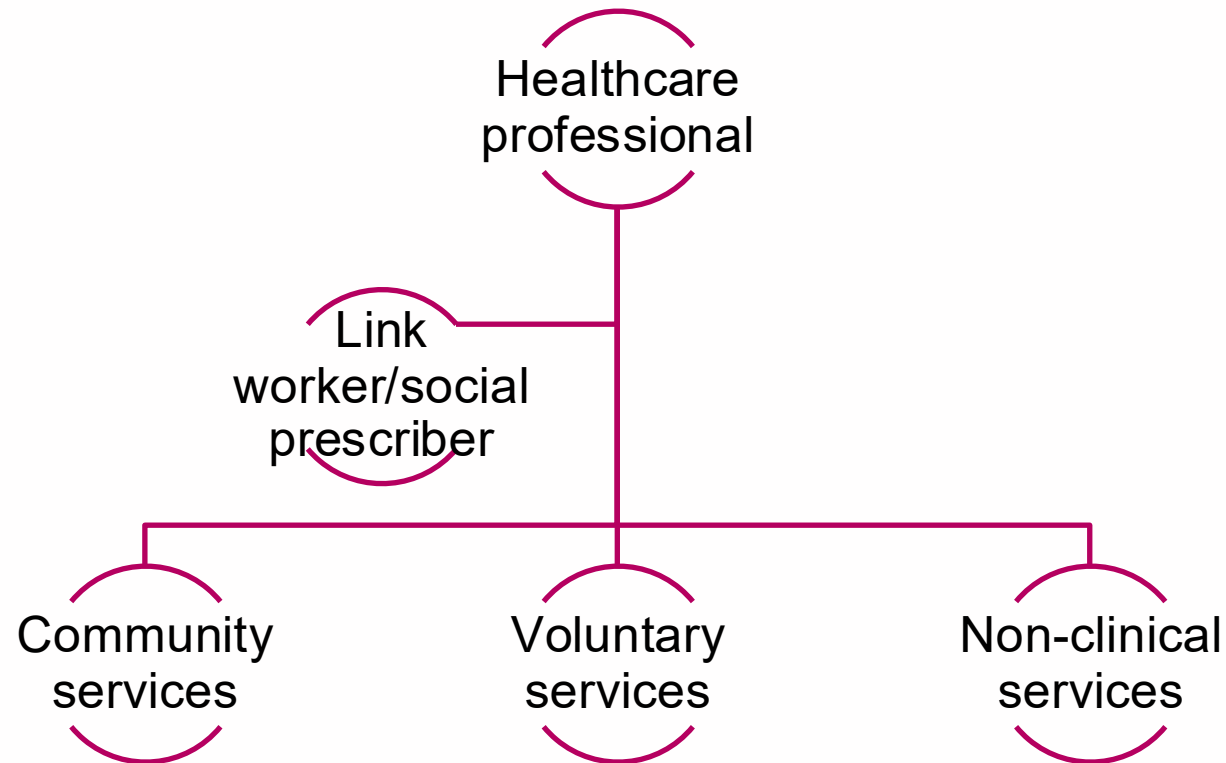


Photo credit: Padraig Fahey, parkrun volunteer

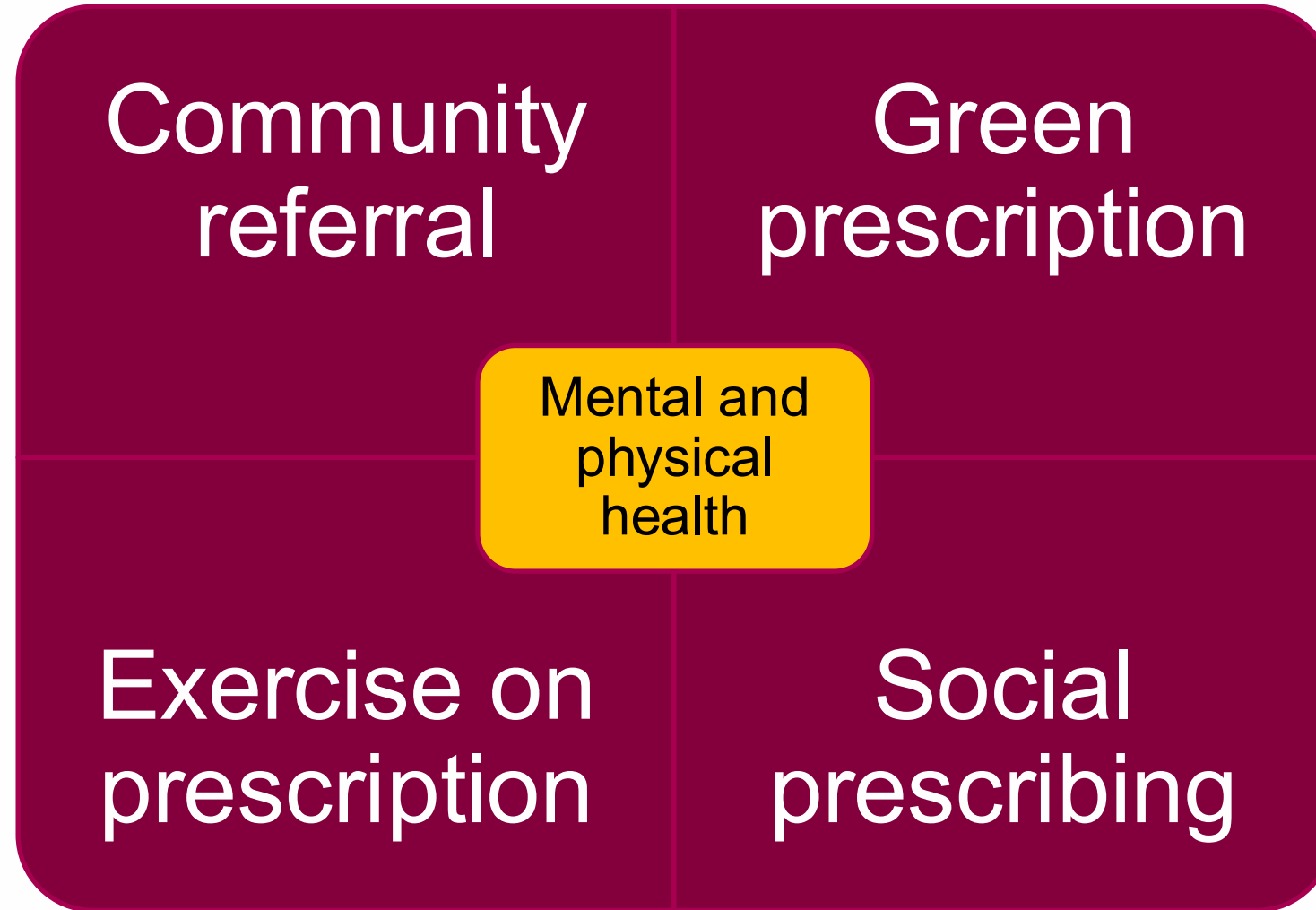


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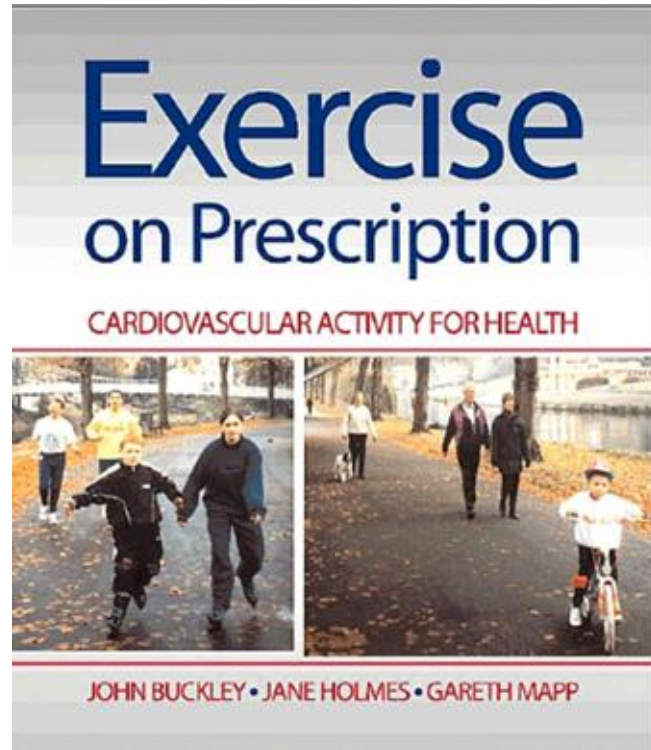
What is social prescribing?



Social prescribing evolution



Related to...



IMPORTANT NOTES FOR PATIENTS

Green Health Activities
Being outdoors is known to help with a range of health issues, without any side effects. Joining in can reduce your need for medication and inspire you to better living, for good.

Dial-OP & GO
The Dial-OP & GO operator provides information on activities available to you through your Green Health Prescription. You will then have the option to contact the activities directly or should you wish we can do this on your behalf.

Accessibility
If you require help with attending the initial sessions we have fully trained volunteers available to accompany you to your group session, through our GO Project, just ask for more details when you call.

GREEN HEALTH PRESCRIPTION (DUNDEE)
Your Green Health Prescription is brought to you by the Dundee Green Health Partnership in collaboration with DVVA, NHS Tayside and Dundee City Council.

Our Natural Health Service is a national initiative led by Scottish Natural Heritage and supported by national and local partners including:



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Who benefits from social prescribing?

Those who benefit most include;

- people with one or more long term conditions
- people who need support for mental health
- people who are lonely or isolated
- people who are frequent health service users with complex social needs



Case study: Terry

- Spent 50 years sitting behind the wheel of a truck
- Getting up at 4am on work mornings
- Spending his day driving from one end of the country to the other.
- When he retired he felt like he'd been “thrown on the scrapheap”.
- He passed whole days just sitting on the couch, talking to no one.
- Two years ago his health hit rock bottom.
- He was overweight.
- Worried that he was slipping into depression.



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Terry Wilders attends the F2 Centre in Dublin's Fatima district every day. Photograph: Nick Bradshaw for The Irish Times

Case study: Terry

- Referred to Family Resource Centre in Rialto's F2 by his GP
- At the F2 he met community development worker Adrienne Dempsey, the social prescriber
- She makes the connection between social prescription needs and what the centre has to offer.



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Terry Wilders attends the F2 Centre in Dublin's Fatima district every day. Photograph: Nick Bradshaw for The Irish Times

Case study: Terry

- “There are days I’d love to stay in bed but I can’t. I get a phone call or a text saying where are you,”
- Says he wouldn’t have walked through the door “in a million years” without the referral from his GP.
- Swims every morning and later in the week he’s thinking of trying his first Pilates class.
- He’s an enthusiastic member of the Men on the Move group which comprises about a dozen similarly aged men. They have great fun, travelling around the city and further afield on trips, walks and outings.
- Terry has lost weight
- Cut down dramatically on his drinking
- Is enjoying this new chapter.



Terry Wilders attends the F2 Centre in Dublin's Fatima district every day. Photograph: Nick Bradshaw for The Irish Times



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<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/health-family/what-is-social-prescribing-and-how-it-can-benefit-your-health-1.3840354>



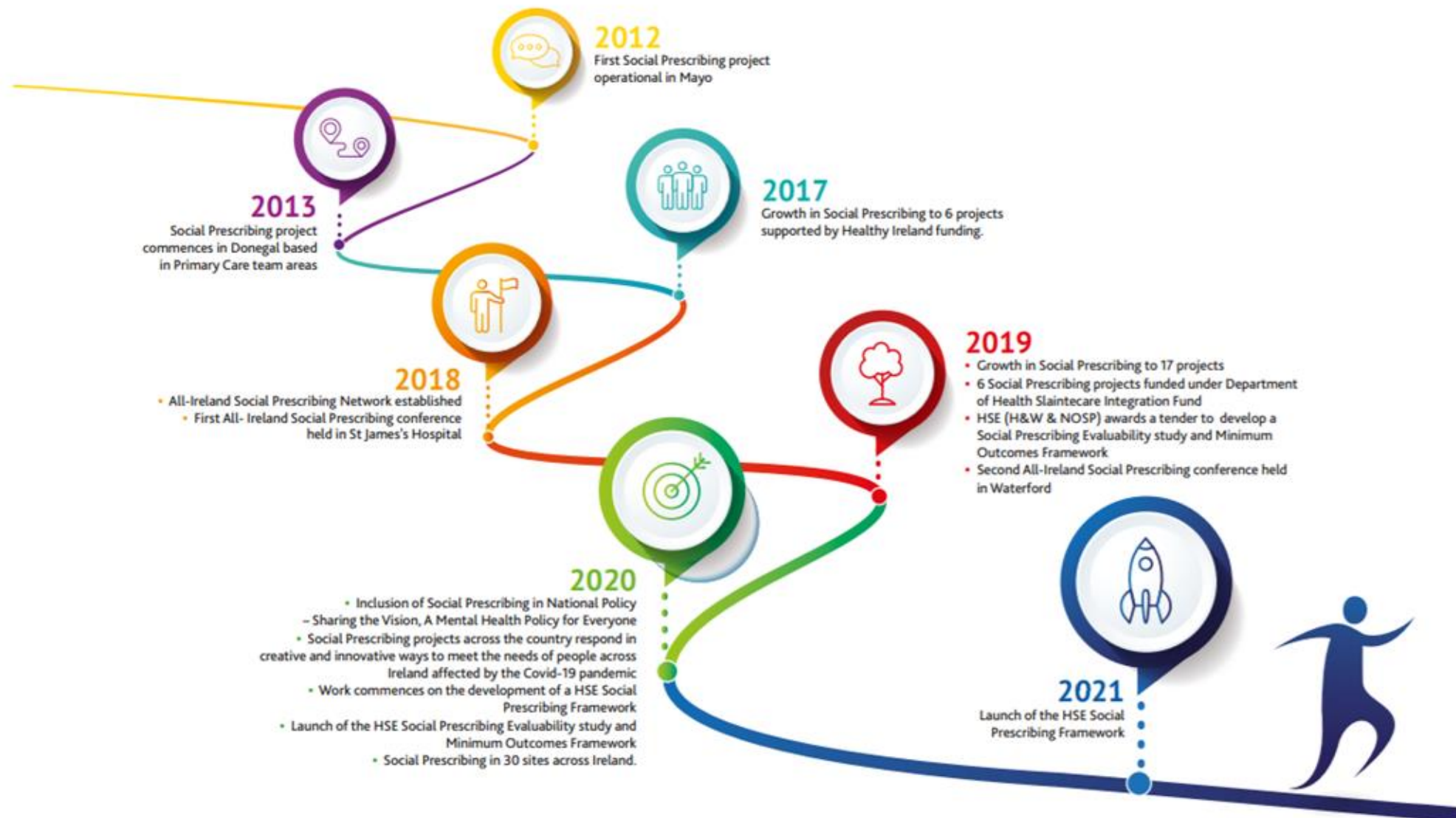
HSE Social Prescribing Framework

Mainstreaming social prescribing
in partnership with community &
voluntary organisations.



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<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/mental-health-and-wellbeing/hse-social-prescribing-framework.pdf>



Core principles from S.P. Framework

- Holistic approach
- Health is determined by a range of social, economic and environmental factors
- Promotes health and wellbeing and reduces health inequalities in community setting
- Addresses barriers to engagement and enables people to play an active part in health
- Utilises and builds on the local community assets
- Aims to increase people's control over their health and lives



Referral pathway



Referral pathway: pharmacist input



Poll

Do you know who your local social prescribing link worker is?

(Note: job title may vary)

Yes

No

Unsure



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HSE Social prescribing poster

Social Prescribing Improve your Health and Wellbeing

Would you like to try something new?
Meet new people, improve your
confidence and your health? Take up
a new hobby?

Need support but not sure where to go?



What is social prescribing?

Social Prescribing is a new free support offered by the HSE and our partners in the community that aims to reduce social isolation and improve people's health and wellbeing. We can give you information on social groups, exercise classes, relaxation sessions, volunteering opportunities, support services and much more all in your local area.

How Does It Work?

Step 1: You can contact the Social Prescribing Link Worker yourself or be referred by a health professional or community worker.

Step 2: The Link Worker will arrange to meet with you.

Step 3: The Link Worker will listen to what you are interested in and give you information on what is available locally.

Step 4: You will choose the activities and supports that are right for you.

Step 5: The Link worker will contact you to see how you are doing and if your experience is a happy one.

Further details



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Example of social prescription

Appendix 1: Sample of Personalised Health and Wellbeing Plan

Name and contact details for person:

PART ONE – TO BE COMPLETED TOGETHER AT THE START

What matters to me

How best to support me: what people need to know about me and my life

Any health conditions that agencies need to know about

My goals:

Summary of support that I am being connected to, including what I can expect from support

What I can do to support myself to meet my goals:

Review – when will we check in to how it's going?

PART TWO – TO BE COMPLETED AFTER 3 MONTHS

What changes have taken place?

I am happy to share my personal story?

Yes ☐ No ☐

I am willing to complete a satisfaction survey?

Yes ☐ No ☐

I am happy to participate in ongoing data collection and evaluation? Yes ☐ No ☐



Social prescribing – who can do it?

Wide variety of backgrounds:

- Health promotion
- Community development
- Social work
- Health and social care
- Others with correct skills – not a protected profession.

YOU!!!



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Choirs

Findings from Batt-Rawden and Anderson (2020):
“Choral singing can affect women’s perceptions of their wellbeing in four distinct ways:

- (i) through the joy of singing,
- (ii) experiencing singing as essential for survival,
- (iii) group singing as a route to social connection ... increased self-confidence and self-esteem
- (iv) through promoting social inclusion.”



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Health Promotion International, 2020,35:140–150
doi: 10.1093/heapro/day122
Advance Access Publication Date: 2 February 2019
Article

OXFORD

‘Singing has empowered, enchanted and enthralled me’-choirs for wellbeing?

Kari Batt-Rawden^{1,*} and Sarah Andersen²



Something to Sing About



Sligo



Clonmel



Galwa



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Nature

 **"FREE" Walking Programme, through the woodlands of Merlin Woods.**
NATURE FOR HEALTH
"The Community Mental Health Fund, supported by the Department of Health"

The weekly walks are a guided social outlet with elements of art, mindfulness and nature.

Starting **Monday 11th October**
From **10am to 12pm**
Participants must be over **18 years old** and places are limited to max. 10 people.

To register or find out more information contact;
Vera on 085 8536 614 or email: vera@ardfrc.com

Subject to Covid 19 Guidelines Supported by  Galway City



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Arts

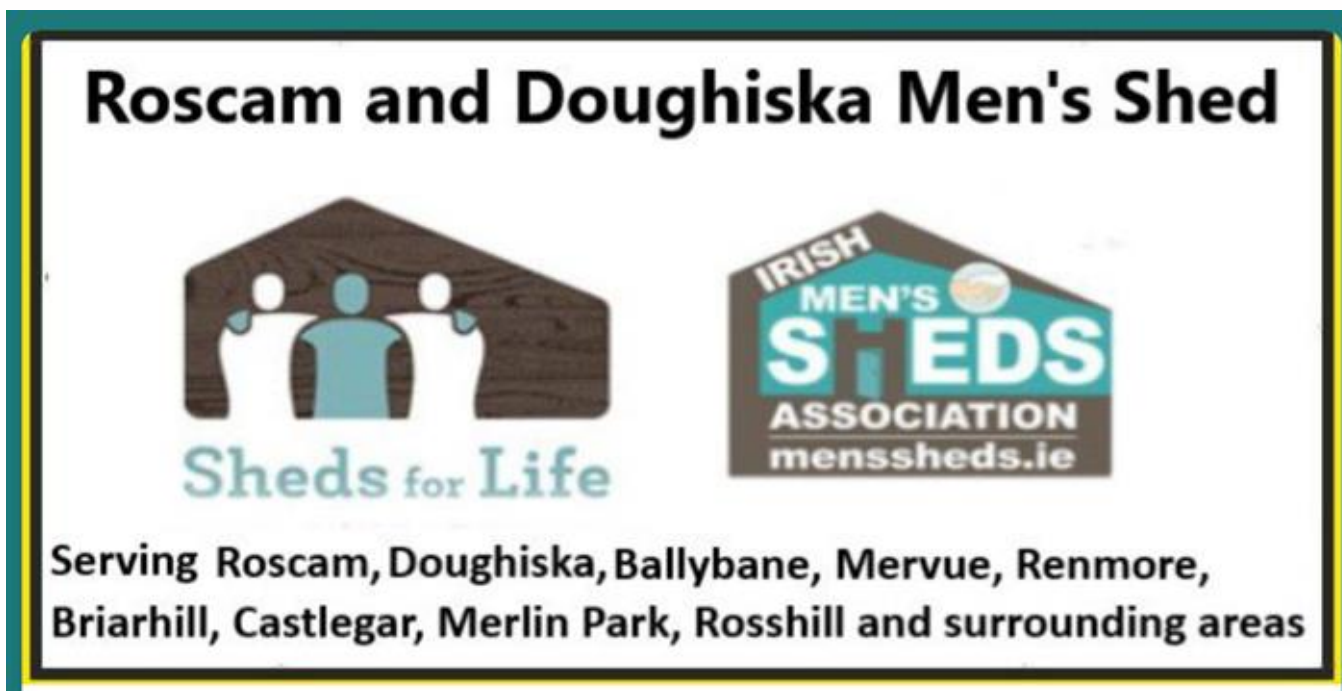
Psychological, physical, and social outcomes:

- Improvements in self-esteem and identity formation
- Cognition
- Physical balance
- Physical conditioning



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Men's Sheds



Men's sheds as an alternative healthcare route? A qualitative study of the impact of Men's sheds on user's health improvement behaviours

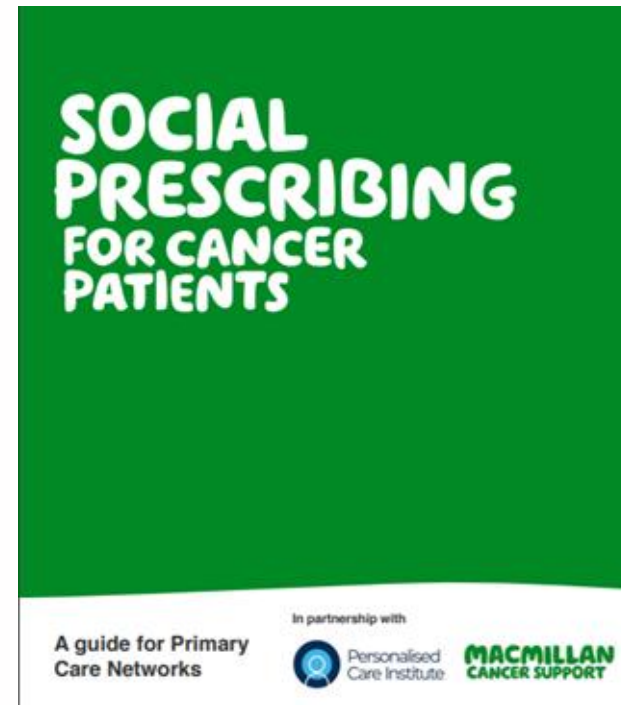
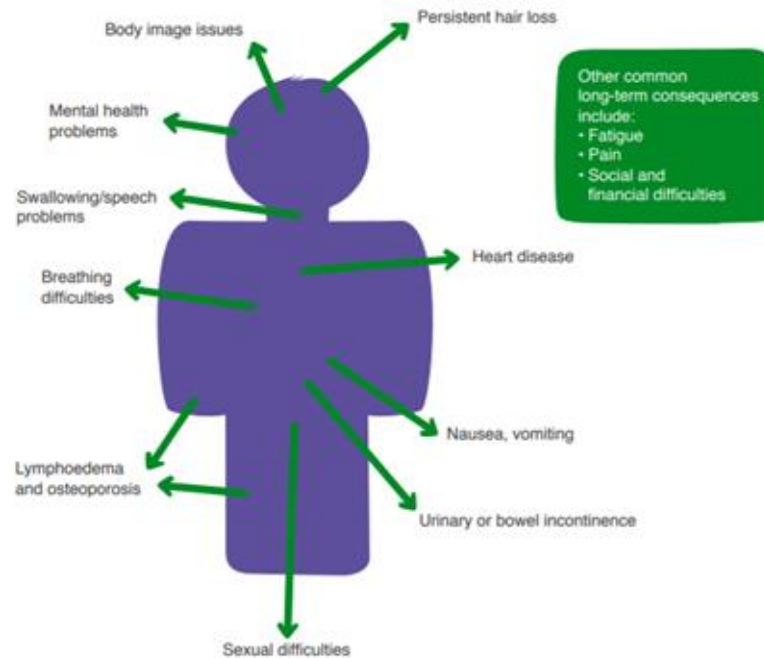
[Danielle Kelly](#) , [Artur Steiner](#), [Helen Mason](#) & [Simon Teasdale](#)

[BMC Public Health](#) **21**, Article number: 553 (2021) | [Cite this article](#)



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Social prescribing for cancer survivors



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Activity

Write down three community initiatives that are local to your place of work.

If you can't do this now, it's your homework!

Community initiatives

- 1
- 2
- 3



Case study. Community initiative: *parkrun*



Benefits of parkrun

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Social connections
- Community engagement
- Support of natural environment



Dunne, A., Quirk, H., Bullas, A., & Haake, S. (2024). 'My parkrun friends.' A qualitative study of social experiences of men at parkrun in Ireland. Health promotion international, 39(3). <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daae045>



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Who could be referred to parkrun?

- 70 year old man, lonely and isolated. Lives near to park but doesn't know many local people. Could walk at parkrun, or volunteer (social support).
- 55 year old woman, overweight, doesn't like going to the gym but would like to exercise more (cardiovascular exercise).
- 40 year old woman with recent cancer diagnosis. Used to enjoy running but is nervous about returning following feeling weak from chemotherapy (cardiovascular exercise).
- 32 year old man with learning disabilities. Wants to contribute to local community and learn new skills for confidence building (community links, mental wellbeing).



ICGP: parkrun practice

parkrun Ireland launches parkrun practice initiative



parkrun Ireland teams up with the Irish College of General Practitioners (ICGP) to prescribe active lifestyles to patients and practice staff.

parkrun
pharmacy
champion?



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Want to get more involved?

[Resources | All Ireland Social Prescribing Network](#)



ALL IRELAND
SOCIAL PRESCRIBING
NETWORK



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Conclusion

- Formal and informal methods of social prescribing
- Your pharmacy team will already have a wealth of local information to draw on
- Added value to your pharmacy service
- Potential for formal pharmacy referral processes in the future



Useful resources

<https://youtu.be/W4pDq3t1bn0?si=LQwTk4OH0mN62Bob> HSE podcast

<https://www.hse.ie/eng/about/who/healthwellbeing/our-priority-programmes/mental-health-and-wellbeing/hse-social-prescribing-framework.pdf>

<https://youtu.be/E6amLcAT3HE?si=OASI4h3tI3RvXZEj> YouTube – social prescribing in secondary care

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/healthcare-professionals/news-and-resources/guides/social-prescribing-for-cancer-patients-a-guide-for-primary-care-networks>

<https://allirelandsocialprescribing.ie/resources/>

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**Thank you for your
attention
Any questions?**

