

To: ICS/STP system leaders

05 October 2020

Dear colleagues

Embedding green social prescribing across systems to improve mental health and wellbeing: call for expressions of interest

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of being outdoors to people's mental and physical health, as well as the inequality of access to green space.

The NHS Long Term Plan commits to significantly expand the number of social prescribing link workers in primary care, and we are well on track to exceed our commitment to 1,000 additional link workers by April 2021. Social prescribing and community-based support enable local agencies to refer people to a link worker who gives people time and focuses on what matters to the person. Green social prescribing links people to nature-based interventions and activities, such as local Walking for Health schemes, community gardening and food-growing projects.

In July 2020, Environment Secretary George Eustice MP announced a new £4 million [government investment for green social prescribing](#). Working closely with DEFRA and other national partners,¹ NHS England and NHS Improvement are developing a two-year project (April 2021-23) to explore how green social prescribing can be embedded into local social prescribing schemes at an individual, community and whole-system level. This project also helps to tackle climate health and supports our [commitment to deliver a 'net zero' NHS](#).

¹ The national partnership includes DEFRA, NHS England and NHS Improvement, Natural England, Public Health England, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, DHSC and the National Academy for Social Prescribing.



NHS England and NHS improvement and partners are looking to develop four 'test and learn' sites across England. Over £2 million of resource will be available to support project delivery across the four sites.

Along with partners, NHS England and NHS Improvement are now inviting local systems to submit an expression of interest in becoming a 'test and learn' site. This provides an exciting opportunity for extensive partnership working at local and system level, across the NHS and with wider public and voluntary sector organisations, to improve mental health outcomes, reduce health inequalities and reduce demand on the health and social care system.

[Further information about the project can be found here.](#) Expressions of interest should be submitted to england.greensocialprescribing@nhs.net by 23 October 2020.

To discuss this opportunity, please contact england.greensocialprescribing@nhs.net.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Sanderson', is written over a light grey rectangular background.

James Sanderson
Director of Personalised Care
NHS England and NHS Improvement

NHS England and NHS Improvement

