**HOW SOCIAL PRESCRIBING WORKS**

Social prescribers have recently joined the team in GP practices, and their work has been so successful that more social prescribers are now being employed in local surgeries. The role may be unfamiliar to a lot of people as this is a relatively new service, so here's an explanation of what they do.

Taking care of your health and wellbeing involves more than just medicine. It's not unusual for a patient attending the practice to have real life problems such as:

* loneliness
* lack of physical activities or mental stimulation
* benefit, housing and financial issues
* not knowing where to go and who can help.

These difficulties can often lead to mental and physical health problems which need to be addressed with the right kind of support. That is where social prescribers come in. They can:

* take time to get to know you
* use their knowledge of local groups, activities and support networks to help you make choices
* advise on who can help with money, employment, training and education
* help you plan your next steps.

They will then support you in getting started on those next steps. With their skill and knowledge, and their understanding of your problems and your wishes, they can help you to choose what you would like to do. And they may stay in touch for a while as your confidence grows.

If you think the social prescriber could help you then why not ask any member of staff at your local GP practice to refer you.

*Sent by Dr Virmani and Dr Bedi's patient participation group*