

# Social Prescribing Stories

Paul's Story

Building Support Networks



***“It takes a lot to put my trust in somebody, I’m terrible for it, but I could let Sylvia know about things - without the personal contact, progress would never have happened.” Paul***



***Social Prescribing enables GPs, nurses, and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local services, community groups and activities that support their health and wellbeing. Social Prescribing Link workers focus on the question ‘what matters to me’ and take a holistic approach to health and wellbeing - supporting individuals to take greater control of their lives.***

***Paul’s Story shows the variety of support offered by Social Prescribers and the positive impact of this service.***

***Paul’s Story, was provided by Sylvia Penhaligon, Age UK Cornwall Social Prescribing Link Worker. Read Paul’s Story below.***

## **Paul**

Paul was referred to Sylvia by the surgery paramedic. Paul shared that he was struggling with his mental health, had trouble at work, and that “things are getting a bit too much.”

Paul is a 45-year-old single man. He was brought up in care and has a learning disability. Paul suffers from severe anxiety and depression. Unfortunately, Paul cannot read or write well enough to manage paperwork or use online resources. He also lacked the confidence to make official phone calls.

***Sylvia’s first contact was when she spoke with Paul via telephone - listening to his situation and concerns and putting him at ease. Following several conversations, Sylvia met Paul face to face at the surgery, at his place of work, and eventually at his home.***

It became clear that Paul had reached a crisis point at work - unfortunately, he had been disciplined for his erratic behaviour. He was very concerned that he would have to leave his job.

*He did not have any clear plan/goals - other than he wanted to cope with his feelings.*

## **Supporting Paul**

With consent, Sylvia spoke to Paul’s employer, who helped adjust his shift pattern so Paul could attend a local men’s mental health peer support group.

**Paul is attending regularly and has become a valued member of the group.**

**Paul is beginning to feel more confident about his employment and enjoying his role. He is more open with colleagues about his problems and feels better supported.**

Paul also disclosed his long-standing heavy cannabis use. He didn’t like to be reliant on the drug and realized it had adverse effects on his mental health - he was also finding the cost unsustainable.

Paul had been in touch with drug services before but didn’t feel that he was able to make any changes. After several discussions with Sylvia, Paul decided he wanted to be cannabis-free.

Sylvia supported him to self-refer with the local drug service agency, [We Are With You](#) - a charity that provides free, confidential support to people who have issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health.

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## Supporting Paul

After several calls, where Sylvia and Paul worked through the administration process, Paul was allocated a support worker. We are with you are working with Paul to help him reach his goals, keep healthy and take positive steps along the road to recovery.

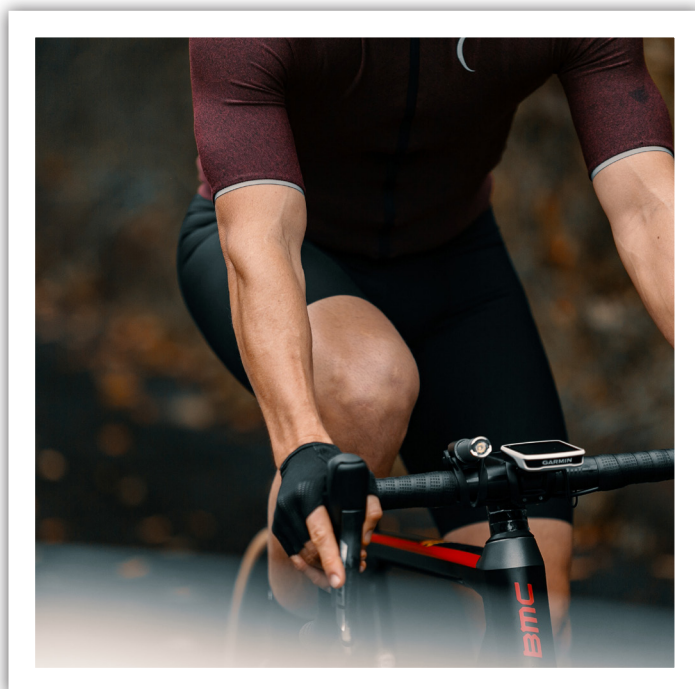
Paul can not drive a car, which makes travelling to work (roughly two miles) very difficult. Paul has a bicycle to support his travel needs, but the bike was broken and badly in need of a service, Paul didn't know how to fix it.

Sylvia referred Paul to the [Cornwall Bicycle Project](#)- who got in touch with him and happily repaired his bike. Paul is now enjoying using the bike again - cycling to work and helping him keep active and healthy.

Paul also asked for help with his finances and if we could help him claim PIP (Personal Independence Payment). Sylvia supported him by requesting a form - linking him with [DIAL](#) - who have helped Paul complete the form over the phone. He is now awaiting a decision.

Paul still struggles with his anxiety and mental health, but by working with local charities, community initiatives and agencies we have been able to source appropriate help and build a network that will improve his mental and physical wellbeing. Sylvia will keep in contact with Paul until the New Year when he's more established with his We Are With You support worker. **Paul feels more confident and has identified future goals that will help him continue his journey positively.**

**Paul has happily given this feedback about Sylvia and Social Prescribing Service:**



*“ I didn't know which direction to go, and my head was in a mess- now I've had support to go in the right direction- proper help like the men's group. I feel I've been given the confidence to carry on.”*

*“It takes a lot to put my trust in somebody, I'm terrible for it, but I could let Sylvia know about things - without the personal contact, progress would never have happened.”*