



Be Well Social Prescribing

Case Study

Executive summary

[Be Well Children and Young People \(CYP\)](#) is a social prescribing service operating in Greater Manchester (GM). Commissioned from September 2023 to March 2025, the service supports young people aged 13–25, particularly those from deprived and underserved communities across Manchester.

The programme is designed to improve mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing by connecting young people to community-based activities and tailored support, rather than solely relying on medical interventions. A core focus is improving access to early intervention and providing ‘while you wait’ support for children and young people on mental health waiting lists, through social prescribing and mental wellbeing coaching.

The service addresses wider social determinants of health, prioritises equitable access, and actively advocates for youth voice, while maintaining strong partnership working across GM.

What did we do?

Be Well CYP provided targeted social prescribing and mental wellbeing coaching for young people aged 13–25 in Manchester who required additional support beyond clinical pathways. The focus was on strengthening resilience, building confidence and connecting young people to community-based opportunities that could support their wider wellbeing.

In response to high levels of need, the team incorporated lower-level mental health tools, including CBT-informed techniques, to offer practical coping strategies and structured goal-setting. This allowed coaches to support young people experiencing challenges such as anxiety, low mood or social isolation, while helping them take manageable steps towards activities and support within their local communities.

Given the complexity of need within this age group, delivery required a coordinated and partnership-based approach, which shaped how the service operated in practice.



How did we do it?



The service was delivered through strong partnership working across Manchester. Referral partners were supported with an initial meeting before referrals began, followed by regular updates and shared communications including data summaries and case studies. Additionally, we introduced a frontline worker meeting every six weeks for CYP professionals across Manchester, creating space to discuss themes, share updates and coordinate referrals between services.

Support was delivered within local communities, with staff based in referrer settings and community venues for a minimum of three days per week. In-person appointments were prioritised, with occasional home visits and outdoor sessions where appropriate. All under-16s received an initial face-to-face assessment, with parents invited to contribute at the outset. Assessments also explored young people's 'ACE activities' (achievement, connection and enjoyment) to inform strengths-based support plans.

Equitable access remained central to delivery. The team adapted sessions for young people with disabilities or neurodiversity through increased Autism and ADHD awareness, alongside the use of visual aids and sensory tools. Delivery was also targeted towards the most deprived neighbourhoods, with additional partnership work with Natural England to explore barriers to accessing local green spaces.

Staff were also trained in lower-level mental health tools, including CBT-informed techniques, enabling coaches to provide practical coping strategies alongside social prescribing support for young people awaiting specialist services.

What did we find?

Between September 2023 and February 2024, the service achieved the following outcomes:

274

young people supported.

96%

set at least one personal goal.

87%

reported improvements in social determinants of health.

70%

strengthened their community connections.

85%

showed improvements in mental and physical wellbeing (SWEMWBS).

Numerous case studies highlighted meaningful changes in confidence, wellbeing and engagement with community activities.

The work has also gained recognition across Greater Manchester. The Greater Manchester Integrated Care Partnership (GMICP) has invited the team to share learning as an example of good practice with practitioners and commissioners. Insights from youth-led research by 42nd Street further highlighted the importance of practitioners understanding the experiences of 18–25-year-olds. In response, the team developed a two-hour CYP awareness training programme for adult services to strengthen knowledge and improve support for this age group.

“I had never had a coach before, so the experience was brand new to me. But I couldn’t have asked for someone better. She was patient, kind and understanding – and that is something I valued and appreciated. Being diagnosed with autism, it gets difficult to compartmentalise my thoughts, but my coach helped to set out a clear plan. That is something I found really helpful.”

Be Well client



Key challenges & lessons learned

The main challenge was short-term funding. We typically only had funding secured for up to 12 months at a time, which made it difficult to embed ourselves in the community and schools. This led to over 20 referrer responses when funding ended, highlighting the gap it created for local CYP.

However, we promoted our values to commissioners and held quarterly 'target planning' meetings to exceed expectations for future funding. While Manchester City Council financial constraints limited this, it built a strong reputation and example of best practice for CYP social prescribing, influencing local professionals. This highlights the importance of prioritising youth voice, working person-centred, and building on individual and community strengths.

If you want to know more visit [Be Well Social Prescribing](#).

For more information visit the [mental health and wellbeing support website](#) or scan the QR code below.

