



Evidencing the Impact and Social Value of the Wellbeing Enterprises 'WE Connect' Social Prescribing Service

Executive Summary

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Overview

WE Connect is a place-based, community-rooted social prescribing service that supports Halton residents to live well. Delivered by Wellbeing Enterprises CIC and funded by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside, the service works closely with individuals to address social, emotional, and practical needs through a holistic, person-centred approach. WE Connect helps people develop personalised wellbeing plans, access local services, build confidence, and strengthen community connections.

To assess the service's effectiveness and value, Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) conducted an independent analysis of WE Connect data, collected by the service between February 2022 to April 2025. This included statistical analysis of validated wellbeing measures, qualitative case study review, and Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation used:

- Quantitative measures: SWEMWBS and ONS4, completed at first and final appointments
- Service data: Referral volumes, action plans, and demographic breakdowns
- Qualitative insights: Patient journeys and case studies across multiple quarterly reports
- SROI modelling: Using financial proxy values, adjusted for deadweight and attribution, to calculate social value creation

The evaluation was conducted by Dr Hannah Timpson, Reader in Socioeconomic Engagement in Health, Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). SROI outcomes and proxy values were independently verified by Beccy Harrison, Research Fellow (and SROI Practitioner Trainer), LJMU.

Key Findings

Reach and Engagement

- 7,260 people referred to the service
- 4,393 engaged in ongoing support
- 3,236 received follow-up and holistic care
- Over 11,600 onward referrals made to 77 local organisations

User Profile

- Majority female (62.7%)

- Over 92% White British
- Most aged 54–65
- High levels of unemployment or retirement (55.3%)

Top Reasons for Referral

- Mental health (24.2%)
 - General wellbeing (20.2%)
 - Stress and anxiety (13.2%)
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Outcomes

Mental Wellbeing (SWEMWBS)

- Average score increased from 18.09 to 23.37 (statistically significant, $p = .000$)
- 69.6% of participants experienced *meaningful improvement* (a change of +3 points or more)

Emotional Wellbeing (ONS4)

- Statistically significant gains in:
 - Life satisfaction
 - Sense of purpose
 - Happiness
 - Reduction in anxiety

Broader Social Benefits

- Increased confidence, independence, and social connectedness
 - Reduced loneliness and isolation
 - Increased engagement in volunteering, training, and employment
 - Improved financial stability for some users
 - Improved family relationships and life control
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Social Return on Investment (SROI)

- Between February 2022 and April 2025, for every £1 invested, WE Connect generated between £46.67 and £74.68 in social value
- Over 3 years, this equates to a net social impact of £4.89 million, even after accounting for deadweight and attribution
- On average, the service creates a social value of between £14.74 and £23.58 over a 12-month period

This places WE Connect among the highest-impact, best value-for-money social prescribing interventions nationally, backed by independently validated data.

Lived Experience - A Brief Insight

"Before WE Connect, I was stuck in a really low place. They listened without judgement, helped me believe I could take small steps. I've joined a community group, got help with my money situation, and I don't feel invisible anymore."

- Former WE Connect recipient

The qualitative data paints a picture of deep, relational, and life-changing support. Participants describe WE Connect as a turning point - not only helping them cope but rebuild and flourish.

Strategic Implications

This evaluation confirms that community-led, relational models of care not only work - they deliver outstanding value across systems. The findings have major implications for:

- ICSs and Place-Based Partnerships looking to shift investment upstream
- VCFSE commissioning strategies seeking evidence-based innovation
- Prevention and health inequality programmes under pressure to deliver impact
- Social value procurement and public investment benchmarking

WE Connect exemplifies a model that reduces demand on statutory services while improving population wellbeing and inclusion.

Call to Action

At a time when health systems face rising demand, staff burnout, and widening inequality, investing in what works at community level is not optional - it's essential.

Wellbeing Enterprises is keen to work with partners to:

- Scale the WE Connect approach in other localities
- Shape new collaborative funding and delivery models
- Inform local and national policy with robust, real-world evidence

The full report is available on request for funders, commissioners, and partners exploring high-impact, value-driven approaches to prevention and wellbeing.

Key contact

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