

National Women's Council

Job Description

Job Title: Social Prescribing Project Lead

Responsible to: Head of Policy

Contract: Fixed term, 4 days per week (18-month contract)

Purpose

The National Women's Council's (NWC) Social Prescribing Project Lead will coordinate and project manage an 18-month Equality Proofing Project to evaluate HSE-funded social prescribing sites. The aim of this Equality Proofing Project is to assess and enhance access to social prescribing for women who are underserved, including women in midlife, young women, and women from ethnic minority groups and other marginalised communities. This project aligns with NWC's commitment to ensuring health services are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of women across their life course.

The successful candidate will oversee the design and implementation of the project plan but will not be responsible for conducting the research to inform the Equality Proofing Project. Instead, the Project Lead will be the key point of contact for the commissioned researcher and provide strategic insight and project management coordination. They will convene and lead a Project Advisory Group, which will be established by NWC to guide inclusive and meaningful engagement with relevant stakeholders, including the HSE and civil society groups. The Project Lead will also ensure project milestones are met, and that the final report delivers strong, actionable recommendations that can inform a future HSE implementation plan. The findings from the research will be launched at the end of the project, with the Project Lead having responsibility for organising and coordinating this Showcase Event.

The successful candidate will be part of NWC's existing Women's Health Team. This 18-month project is funded by the HSE and the Department of Health's Women's Health Fund.

About Social Prescribing

Social prescribing recognises that health is heavily determined by social factors such as poverty, isolation, and loneliness. Social prescribing offers GPs and other health professionals a means of referring people to a range of non-clinical community supports which can have significant benefits for their overall health and wellbeing.

Social prescribing is one of six health and wellbeing initiatives under the HSE's [Sláintecare Healthy Communities \(SHC\) Programme](#), active in 24 communities nationwide. It is a priority in the HSE National Service Plan 2025 and other national health strategies. Evidence shows social prescribing can improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce isolation and loneliness. The [HSE Social Prescribing Framework](#) aims for national coverage, with services in each of the 96 Community Healthcare Networks.

In 2023, women made up 68% of users in SHC social prescribing sites. The most common referral reason was social isolation and loneliness (60%), with highest participation among women aged 65+ (41%). However, there was low representation of groups such as Traveller women (<1%), disabled women (20%) and carers/supporters (4%). Most participants were White Irish (84%).

These figures suggest that many underserved women – particularly those experiencing isolation or lacking support networks – may not be reached by current services. Without intentional design and monitoring, social prescribing initiatives risk reinforcing existing inequalities. To address this, the HSE and NWC – supported by the Department of Health’s Women’s Health Fund – are undertaking this Equality Proofing Study and supporting six demonstration projects with funding aimed at improving access for all women. The goal is to inform future service design with a strong equality and inclusion focus.

Key Responsibilities

Project Leadership & Management:

- Lead the implementation of the social prescribing Equality Proofing and Evaluation Project on behalf of NWC.
- Coordinate internal oversight and strategic direction, ensuring alignment with NWC values and strategic plan.
- Serve as the main point of contact for the commissioned external researcher, ensuring adherence to agreed methodology, timelines, and ethical standards.
- Liaise with the six HSE-funded demonstration sites, where necessary. This could include facilitating their connection with the research team.
- Convene and coordinate meetings of the Project Advisory Group, ensuring effective engagement from stakeholders including the HSE and community partners.
- Provide regular project updates to the HSE, flag emerging issues, and contribute to monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes.
- Oversee the development, completion and design of the final research report
- Oversee the agreed budget for the project.

Policy & Strategic Engagement:

- Work with NWC’s health and wider policy team to integrate findings and learnings from the project into policy positions, submissions, and advocacy work.
- Advise on national policy processes related to social prescribing, health inequalities, and women’s health, and represent NWC in relevant external fora.
- Identify opportunities for NWC to support the HSE and Department of Health policy to support more equitable, gender-responsive service delivery.

Communication & Events:

- Coordinate NWC’s contribution to the Showcase Event for the project in 2027, working closely with

the HSE and NWC's communications team.

- Support the development of communications outputs to amplify findings and raise awareness of women's experiences in accessing social prescribing.
- Ensure that all outputs (reports, presentations, communications) reflect NWC's commitment to plain language and accessibility.

Essential Experience and Skills

- Minimum 3 years' experience in a similar role in the NGO or other relevant sector.
- Proven experience managing multi-stakeholder projects, including external researchers, service providers, advisory groups, and funders.
- Excellent communication, facilitation, and relationship-building skills.
- Strong organisational skills with the ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines.
- Commitment to feminism, human rights, and equality.
- Skills in event management and public engagement.

Desirable Experience and Skills

- An understanding of women's health, mental health, health inequalities, and the social determinants of health.
- Knowledge of the Irish health system, including community-based and preventative services like social prescribing.
- Experience of working with diverse communities and centring lived experience in programme or policy design.
- Experience working on evaluation or equality proofing projects.
- Familiarity with research projects.

Core Competencies

- Project management and organisation.
- Effective communication and stakeholder engagement.
- Event management.
- Delivery-focused with strong attention to detail.
- Team player with a collaborative, inclusive approach.
- Strong problem-solving and adaptability.
- Commitment to continuous learning and feminist values.