Social Prescribing in Sunderland: 
A Holistic Approach to Health and Wellbeing

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Introduction
• The University of Sunderland Health Sciences department work to combat health inequalities on a community level
• Colleagues include doctoral students, volunteers, and community leaders
• Special interest in voluntary organizations

Objective of Internship
I worked to foster health and wellbeing in Sunderland through social prescribing—a holistic treatment model relying on communal support to improve mental health rather than drub-based clinical treatment.

Work profile
• Evaluate voluntary organizations on their ability to help improve health through social prescribing
• Direct field work (helped set up events), data-based research, and interview-based evaluations
• Had a chance to contribute to PhD-level research papers

Reflection
• My contributions to interviewing and researching voluntary organizations in Sunderland will allow the University to have a clear vision of the current state of social prescribing and take further steps to improve this up-and-coming treatment model

• I learned that health and social isolation can be drastically improved by fostering a sense of community pride (for example, holding events like a jubilee tea, pictured on the left)

• The importance of building a network of different organizations that work well together and can refer patients to one another cannot be overstated

• Beyond just the experience of learning about a different healthcare system than the United States, I was also able to immerse myself in the culture of Sunderland

• I am so thankful for the opportunity to engage with a novel approach to health and wellbeing and enrich my worldview

Looking ahead
• As I apply to medical school, I hope to continue taking holistic approaches to health like social prescribing into consideration when I practice medicine

Questions
• How could the United States move towards having something like social prescribing, and where would the funding come from?

Conclusion
• Relying on one’s community to promote health and wellbeing can provide incredible results, and social prescribing is the future of health research.

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