

Yoga on Prescription- Evaluation Report from Hereford Yoga CIC

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1. Introduction and context

This is an evaluation report of a programme of Iyengar yoga classes that were prescribed by three GP surgeries in Hereford as a way of improving and promoting health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities, using non-clinical methods. The programme took place between June 2022 and December 2023 and was devised as a pilot in order to assess outcomes. We believe that this is the first trial of its kind nationally.¹ This report presents both qualitative and quantitative evidence and makes recommendations for future work.

1.1- Overview

Hereford Yoga CIC (HYCIC), a social enterprise, initiated a partnership with WBC Primary Care Trust (WBC) which runs three GP surgeries in Hereford (Wargrave, Belmont and Cantilupe surgeries) to deliver a 'Yoga on Prescription' pilot programme between June 2022 and December 2023. HYCIC secured funds from the following organisations in order to plan, manage, deliver and evaluate the project:

Herefordshire Community Fund	£10,000
E F Bulmer Foundation	£ 3,500
National Lottery Community Fund	£ 3,000
Active H&W Together Fund	£ 2,370
Active H&W Tackling Inequalities	£ 1,610
Sport England	£ 1,000
Total	£21,480

Patients were offered a course of 10 yoga classes prescribed by a GP, nurse practitioner or physiotherapist via the WBC wellbeing team. Patients were referred to the HYCIC social prescribing administrator who made contact with the patients, took relevant details and helped them to identify the best fit for them out of the 13 classes that are run by HYCIC in its studio every week. Patients integrated into the existing yoga community (rather than attending a patient-referral only class). The administrator also liaised with the teachers to ensure that each new patient was expected and welcomed into the class and followed up with reminders for subsequent classes.

As part of the project HYCIC designed, scripted, filmed, edited and distributed educational films for both patients and prescribers to familiarise them with Iyengar yoga, its potential benefits and what conditions it could and couldn't help to treat.

- [Patient information video](#)
- [Prescriber information video](#)

¹ Yoga on prescription was first analysed in a University of Westminster study (Cartwright, T, Richards, R, Edwards, A, & Cheshire, A. (2019). Yoga4Health on social prescription: A mixed methods evaluation. University of Westminster).

This programme is different, in that its emphasis is on promoting engagement through the existing community and classes at Hereford Yoga Centre rather than directing patients through a standardised 10-week course for patients only. Both the UoW and the Hereford project reported good outcomes for many of the participants. See Comparison Section 5.3

The effectiveness of the programme was measured using the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Survey (WEMWBS)- a standardised questionnaire which participants were asked to fill in before starting their first class and after they completed the prescribed course. This was supplemented by qualitative evaluation forms.

1.2- Project aims

The project was aimed at reducing barriers to participation in yoga, which is widely recognised as an effective tool for improving and maintaining health (physical and mental), and is recommended by the NHS and NICE. It is expected that by participating in a course of 10 classes patients will feel improvement in their health and well-being which will, in time, reduce stress on primary care.

By offering Iyengar yoga free on prescription, the project aims were to improve physical and mental health and overall wellbeing, especially for individuals experiencing:

- Financial disadvantage
- Social disadvantage
- Health inequalities
- Loneliness/isolation

2. What we did- Process

2.1- Project development

Project development was undertaken by HYCIC core staff and volunteers. This included but was not limited to project planning, liaising with GP surgeries and other stakeholders, recruiting core staff and volunteers, planning, writing and producing educational films, marketing the project and creating an evaluation plan.

2.2- Referral, prescription and on-boarding processes

The process of referring, prescribing and on-boarding of patients was agreed between HYCIC, WBC GPs and WBC wellbeing services.

1. GPs, nurse practitioners or physiotherapists make a referral during an appointment, which goes to the Wellbeing team.
2. The Wellbeing team issues the prescription to HYCIC's social prescribing administrator (SPA).
3. The SPA contacts the patient, takes health details and other required information, guides the patient to choose the most suitable class and makes the class bookings.
4. The patient receives reminders about subsequent classes.

2.3- Privacy

HYCIC has worked with WBC to ensure the safe recording and storing of sensitive information, consistent with GDPR regulations and with sensitivity to patient confidentiality.

2.4- Delivery

From their initial conversation with the SPA to their final class and offer of reduced price to continue, the aim was to make patients feel welcome as included and respected members of a community.

We decided to integrate patients into regular classes (there are several options, including single-gender classes and a 'Gentle' class for those with mobility issues), rather than offering a 10-week standardised course specifically for patients on prescription. Yoga is effective at improving health and wellbeing as an ongoing activity. By making patients feel part of an existing and supportive community, we hoped to ensure that some would continue to attend, taking those benefits into the future and informing lifestyle choices.

We offered a 'Buddy' scheme, designed to pair up new patients with volunteers who were already regular attendees. None of the patients requested a buddy, so this scheme was not tested. However, we found that the buddying up happened naturally, with more experienced attendees (both those who attend independently and those who were already part-way through a prescription course) looking after newcomers in a helpful, friendly and encouraging way. The HYCIC studio, which has a cafe on site, is particularly suited to this as it increases social interaction after classes.

All classes were delivered by Iyengar yoga certified teachers. Iyengar yoga is a methodology that requires the highest standard of training and certification in the yoga sector. It prioritises inclusivity through use of props and provides a safe, progressive and accessible framework for the integration of body and mind.

3. Evaluation plan in brief

In the following evaluation, we will present data collected via referrals, classes taken, drop-out rates and completion rates. We will compare the referral and completion data from the 3 different surgeries. We will consider patient data according to gender, and where they live. We will look at how many patients requested further classes and how many have attended further classes (post-completion). We will present results on health and wellbeing according to WEMWBS scores and via participant feedback.

Drawing on this combination of quantitative data and qualitative feedback, we will consider what this tells us about the efficacy of the project in fulfilling its aims. We will share the lessons we've learned and make some key recommendations for the future.

4. Evaluation Results

4.1- Classes data

As of 1st December 2023, 611 of 650 available classes have been completed.

As of the same date, we have received 108 referrals, of which 10 patients have not taken up the prescription.

98 patients have started classes, and 611 classes have been completed in total to date, making an average of 6.2 classes per patient (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Infographic to show 6.2 class average for those who started classes.

36 courses of 10 classes have been completed, with 2 being repeat prescriptions (the offer of repeat prescriptions was discontinued early on due to oversubscription of the project). 24 patients (66.7% of those who completed) have chosen to continue classes at their own expense following the prescribed course - 18 of these attending regular weekly classes. A total of 111 full-cost classes, 294 reduced-cost classes (paying a special post-prescription rate offered by HYCIC at £5 off per class) and one workshop have been taken by patients who completed their prescription as at 31/12/23. Others have reported using HYCIC's free online home-learning tools.



Figure 2. Graph to show the number of completed classes by referred patients, including completed courses of 10 classes.

4.2- Patient data

56 patients (51.8%) withdrew from the project after starting classes for a number of reasons including poor health, family and caring responsibilities, inability to attend regularly due to work commitments, or simply found that yoga was not for them. These patients completed an average of 4.5 classes each (Figure 3). 16 patients were unable to start classes, mostly due to transport or health issues. Several of these people expressed disappointment and were keen to join a later cohort if their situation changed. 52 patients (57%) completed 7, 8 or 9 classes, demonstrating a commitment to the programme and that withdrawal was likely due to factors beyond their control.



Figure 3. Infographic to show 4.5 class average for those who withdrew.

Of the 16 who have given reasons for withdrawal, 8 pulled out for medical reasons, 8 due to other commitments. 4 were unable to take up their places due to lack of transport but were disappointed and were keen to try yoga in future if circumstances changed.

Of all patients prescribed 83.3% are women and 16.7% are men.

100% of patients who completed the course said they would benefit from a repeat prescription.

2021 Census recorded 97% of Herefordshire population to be white, which is broadly in-line with the ethnicity of patients referred.

Cross-referencing patients' post codes to the England's Index of Multi-Deprivation (IMD) at the LSOA level (i.e. the most granular level) show that 25% of the patients live in areas that are ranked in the bottom half of the index. One area of Hereford, which is part Newton Farm and part Hunderton and partly in the catchment area of Belmont Surgery, is in the bottom decile of the IMD. Results suggest that patients from this area are under-represented.

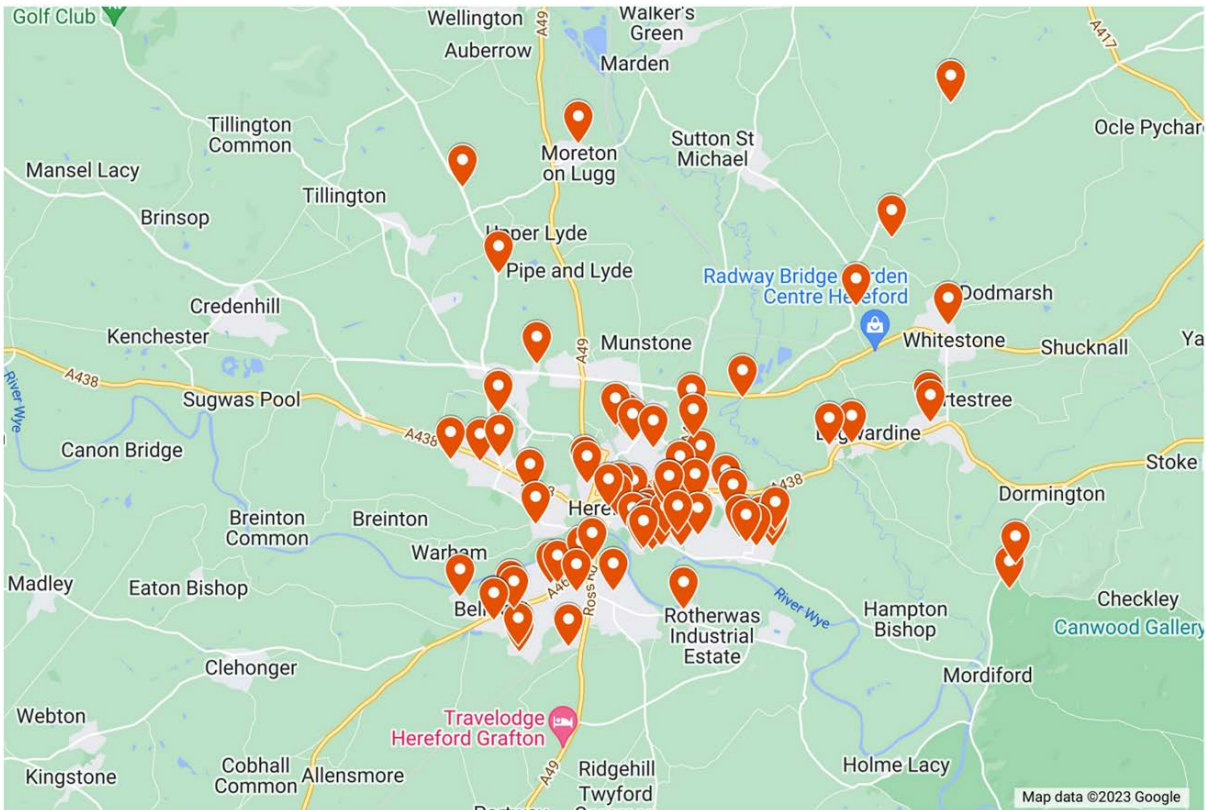


Figure 4. Map to show distribution of referrals across Herefordshire.

4.3- Surgery data

Staff from WBC were made aware of the programme. 58.4% of referrals came from Cantilupe, and 24% from Wargrave and 17.6% from Belmont surgery (Figure 5a). 75% of courses completed were by patients from Cantilupe, 8.3% from Belmont and 16.7% from Wargrave (Figure 5b).

The surgeries had to start turning patients away from the programme due to over-subscription after 3 months, although unused classes were recycled, allowing for further prescriptions.

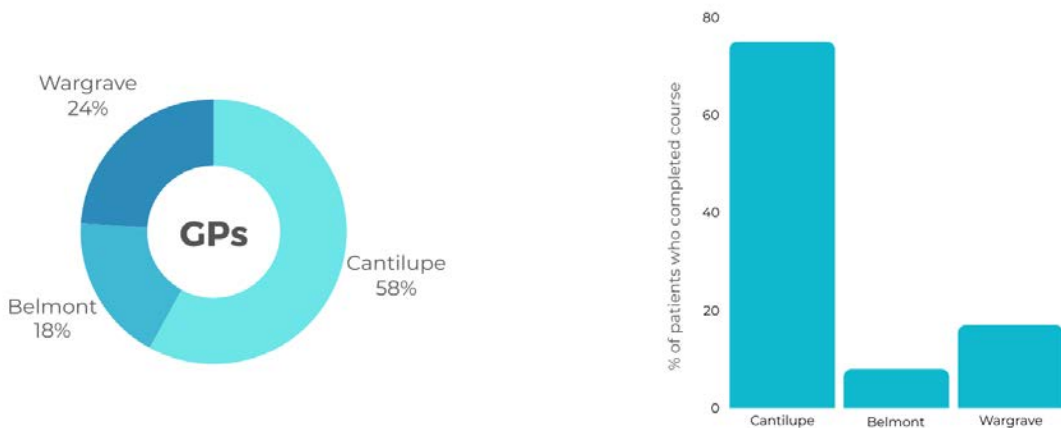


Figure 5a. Graph to show percentage distribution of GP referrals.

Figure 5b. Graph to show percentage of completed courses from respective surgery referrals.

4.4- Health and Wellbeing Outcomes

HYCIC used the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Survey (WEMWBS), a standardised wellbeing self-evaluation, before and after completed courses

WEMWBS Form

Of 36 patients completing 10 classes, 17 or 47.2% completed forms before and after. All (100%) recorded an increase in their wellbeing. The average 'before' score was 41.5 and the 'after' score was 50.1 (Figure 6). Overall in the UK a score of 42 or lower is in the bottom 15% whereas 51.0 is the mean for the population. The scores varied from a low of 23 'before' score to a 67 'after' score, with the largest percentage increase for those with low before scores.



Figure 6. Infographic to show the average WEBWBS scores before and after completion of the prescription.

94.4% of patients who completed courses filled in Feedback Questionnaires. Via the completed feedback forms, 100% of respondents reported an improvement in their physical health. 100% of respondents reported an improvement in their mental health. 33% told us, unasked, that they had reduced or stopped medication and attributed this directly to participating in the yoga programme.

We do not have feedback forms from patients who have not completed the course, although the most common informal feedback is variants of:

'I've really enjoyed the classes and found them helpful, but am unable to come regularly because of other commitments- and I don't want to take a space from someone else'

Via the feedback forms, patients who had completed the course of 10 classes reported a range of benefits including:

- Significant improvements in mental health including reduced need for medication
- Significant pain reduction including reduced need for medication

- Significant improvements in mobility including reduced reliance on mobility aids
- Increased confidence
- Reduction in symptoms of specific conditions including fibromyalgia and plantir fasciitis
- Better sleep
- A sense of community and feeling supported
- An expression of developing choices for a healthier lifestyle
- A significant appreciation of clarity of instruction, personalised adjustments and sense of care given

[Social Prescribing Patient Feedback.mov](#)

See appendix A for collated information from Feedback forms.

4.5- Feedback from prescribers

We were unsuccessful in gaining formal written feedback from GPs, all 3 surgeries involved in the pilot requested a continuation of the project.

We have received requests for the service from Hereford Medical Group, Kingstone Surgery, Taurus Medical Group (an umbrella organisation for all GPs in Herefordshire) and from staff from the Integrated Care Board for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, should the project enter a second phase. See Appendix B for these requests in writing.

5. Commentary on results- what they tell us and lessons learned

5.1- Prescription processes

The 3-part prescription process was in some ways cumbersome and could be streamlined for increased efficiency.

We are aware that WBC received some requests for GP appointments specifically because people had heard about the Yoga on Prescription programme and wanted to directly request a prescription to help with a specific health problem. WBC Wellbeing team have requested that, should the programme continue, they not be the 'sole gate-keepers' of the prescriptions. While we understand that the WBC Wellbeing team do not wish to see an increase in surgery appointments from patients who are just seeking a free course, we strongly believe that it is necessary to have health-professional input to ensure that the right patient is selected and that the patients themselves value the course as an overall part of their treatment. It is to be expected that when a new treatment or drug becomes available, there are those who will request it. While surgery time is taken up with such requests, if the treatment or drug is effective, the surgery will see a reduction in visits in the longer term. As we want the free service to reach those who are most in need, all prescriptions would need to come via a surgery or other health organisation. A question for surgeries is whether the wellbeing team professionals will be able to prescribe yoga without the requirement of a GP referral first.

HYCIC does not have the necessary infrastructure to meet the demand of a self-referral service. For the next phase we will explore potential partners such as Mind, Talk Community (Council-led) and secondary care as well as additional primary care trusts.

The results tell us that far fewer prescriptions were being made via Belmont and Wargrave surgeries. We know that some patients found it difficult to access the programme from Belmont. In phase two, we would explore methods of improving communication with and education of prescribing staff in all surgeries.

5.2- Increase in health and well-being

The overwhelmingly positive results and feedback (100% of respondents reporting an increase in physical and mental health and wellbeing) speak to the efficacy of the programme:

'I'm really impressed and overwhelmed about how much my mental health has improved over the period I have taken up prescription yoga.'

'It has helped me feel more physically able with less aches and pains.'

'It is the most beneficial treatment for fibromyalgia I have ever been prescribed.'

The high take-up, high completion, high continuation and relatively low drop-out rates demonstrate both a need and an appetite for this kind of prescription, which can translate into long-term health benefits. The study shows that a high percentage of patients completing the programme make lifestyle changes and a longer-term commitment to improving and maintaining their physical and mental health with yoga:

'Yoga has given me hope for the future and introduced a sense of balance and a new approach to self-care.'

Recorded reductions in the use of medication for pain and mental health (33% of respondents), and mobility aids, represent real financial savings for primary care.

It is expected that GP visits would be reduced for some patients, and although this study has not had the scope to gather and investigate that data, some patients have expressed that a reduction in GP visits has occurred as a direct result of their participation in the project:

"Undoubtedly it's reduced the number of GP visits I've needed. Undoubtedly."

Patients who have had to drop out of the programme prior to completing have also reported benefits and expressed the intention of returning. Most gave a variation on:

'I was enjoying the classes and found them helpful but can't commit to coming regularly due to family/caring/work commitments.'

Travel was a real barrier for some patients, especially for those from South Wye. If expanding the programme we will consider partnering with a community transport service, and delivering satellite classes in different areas of the city/county.

Feedback demonstrates that the quality of the service offered is key to the ongoing improvement in patient health; as well as benefiting from the tangible physical aspects of increased fitness and mobility, a commitment to build trust between teachers and patients, and a sense of belonging to a supportive community, develops confidence and improves wellbeing.

HYCIC's commitment to excellence in teaching Iyengar yoga, the professional development of its staff, and its organisational structure make it uniquely placed to deliver this innovative service for Herefordshire. Unfortunately the yoga sector overall is under-regulated, so that health professionals often lack confidence in referring or signposting patients to classes. However, HYCIC's growing reputation as a centre of excellence and evidence of the reliability of the Iyengar yoga methodology is based on experiences such as those described below:

'Appreciated that tuition was adjusted to be suitable for each individual and that my limitations were taken into account and yet I was gently encouraged to do a bit more than I thought I could and this built my confidence.'

'The tuition and facilities are excellent. The teachers and the Centre are amazing, they've made me feel welcome and cared for.'

The full, collated results of the 34 completed Feedback forms from patients who completed courses of 10 classes are as follows:

On a scale of: Excellent- Very Good- Good- Unsatisfactory- Poor

1. Experience of programme: 33 excellent, 1 very good
2. Beneficial to physical health? (Y/N) - 100% yes
3. Beneficial to mental health? (Y/N) - 100% yes
4. Experience of communications - 31 excellent, 3 very good
5. Rating of venue - 31 excellent, 3 very good
6. Tuition - 34 (100%) excellent
7. Benefit from a sense of community? (Y/N) - 29 yes, 2 no, 3 other
8. Would you take a repeat prescription? (Y/N) - 100% yes
9. How much would you pay? A variety of responses, though all said they would be prepared to pay. The majority - 53% - said they'd be prepared to pay the discounted amount.

For a collation of written feedback from patients, see Appendix A.

5.3- Cost to funders and value for money

Total funding raised was £21,480 of which £1,000 was for equipment and lighting to upgrade the studio, £1,700 for the introductory videos that can be used for future projects and £500

allocated to training so that the on-going project cost was £18,280. The cost per patient for 10 classes was £281.

5.4- Comparison with Yoga4 Health Study

	Yoga 4 Health	HYCIC
Sponsor	West London CCG	HYCIC, grant funded
Type	Class for patients only, in various locations	Patients given choice of time and day, level of class and specialised classes- all integrated within existing timetable
Date	February 2018- May 2019	June 2022-December 2023
Cost	£107k	£21k
Patients Referred/ Participated > 1 class and %	365/279 76%	96/81 84%
Take up - 1 class, 10 classes	76%, 8%	85%, 33%
Average classes per participant	6.22	6.23
Evaluation Methods	PAM-13, PSS-4, HADS-14, HFS-6,	WEMWBS, questionnaires, recorded comments

	Questionnaires and Focus Groups	
Evaluation Participation	Initial: 66% Final: 51%	Initial: 53% Final: 13% (courses not complete) 50% of patients who completed the course

5.5 Value for Money

- The UoW quoted cost of £308 excludes set-up and evaluation costs. We have calculated ongoing costs of £290, including the evaluation costs. This also compares well with the cost of other social prescribing courses carried out in 2015-2016 quoted in the UoW paper which are stated as £235-£301 per patient. If inflation is taken into account our value for money looks even better.
- UoW study claims 2.19:1 benefits to cost, which is based on reduced GP and other health services demands, increase in employment and increase in well-being as quantified by the participants in 3 month follow-up sessions. The savings were then scaled up to 12 months and compared to the cost of classes
- Hycic has not collected quantitative data in a similar way to the UoW study, so a comparable cost benefit calculation can't be carried out. Kimberlee, cited in a UoW paper (linked [here](#)) published in 2017 reported a mean cost benefit ratio of 2.3: 1 for social prescribing, based on a Social Return on Investment SROI analysis of published studies. There are few more recent studies on the effectiveness of Social Prescribing, but arguably the case for it has been strengthened over the past 3 years by the Covid pandemic and its aftermath, the pressures on GP surgeries and the pressure on household incomes.
- The introduction of Integrated Care Partnerships has highlighted the need for more joined up, patient-led treatment, particularly for patients with long-term health conditions
- Primary care costs continue to rise; a 9 minute GP appointment in 2021/22 was £42 and a trip to A&E £367. [Key facts and figures about the NHS | The King's Fund \(kingsfund.org.uk\)](#). Up to date costs for Talking Therapy are difficult to find, but the £168 quoted by UoW in 2019 is a good guide.
- It would therefore appear that a cost of around £250 per patient is good value if it increases patient well-being and reduces primary care costs, as the results from this pilot suggest. This is before taking into account a probable decrease in prescriptions of medication; patients who provided medical history reported a variety of drugs being prescribed including those in the following categories: Painkillers, Antidepressants, Anti-psychotics, Anti-epileptics, Other CNS drugs, Antihypertensives, Cholesterol Lowering, Antiplatelet drugs, Asthma/COPD, Reflux treatment, Diabetes and Osteoporosis prevention. Although it was not included as a

question on the feedback form, and HYCIC would never recommend a reduction in medication without consulting with a doctor, 33% of respondents reported a decrease in their use of medication as a direct result of attending yoga classes.

6. Lessons learned

6.1- Project development

- Volunteer time was relied upon heavily. A larger budget should be allocated to project development and management.
- A larger budget should be allocated to the SPA role to allow for more hours per patient and management responsibilities.

6.2- Referral process

- There can be improvements made to the processing of prescriptions and on-boarding for patients. This should be designed with a view to reducing stress on surgeries whilst ensuring that those most in need are offered the prescriptions.
- The referral process had 3 stages, which could be streamlined for ease of use for all parties.
- Alternative referral pathways should be explored for the next phase, e.g. through Talk Community/Healthy Lifestyle services/Mind/Secondary Care and also directly through Wellbeing teams in Primary Care.

6.3-Delivery

- We have learnt that some patients, because of their personal situation, are irregular attenders of classes. We will explore ways to encourage continuity, such as breaking up the course up into two parts of 4 then 6 classes.
- Travel to classes continues to be a problem- this is regional, across all sectors. We can explore partnerships with community transport (although understand that these are already over-subscribed) and, importantly, establish satellite classes in different areas of the city. This will increase the percentage of patients accessing the service from areas of higher deprivation.
- The 'buddy scheme' was not in demand- but we have learnt that the promotion of a friendly and inclusive culture is more effective than setting up a formal befriending scheme. If offering repeat prescriptions, we will offer continuing patients the opportunity to volunteer on the programme.

6.4- Evaluation tools and processes

- The WEMWBS and evaluation questionnaires should be made accessible onsite at classes and teachers will have the responsibility of ensuring that all new patients have completed a form prior to starting classes. There is room for improvement in

communications between surgery and HYCIC staff, and patients, regarding the completion of these forms.

- To put Hereford on the map for social prescribing nationally, a next step would be to partner with a higher education institution who would evaluate Phase 2 of the project and have it peer-reviewed, for example University of Westminster, University of Roehampton or University of Rochester Medical Centre, all of which have experience in this area of research.

6.5 Health and Wellbeing outcomes

- The large take-up, low drop-out and significant continuity rates clearly demonstrate both a need and demand for this service from patients via primary care. The health benefits experienced by some patients have been significant and life-changing (see feedback below).
- The project has attracted interest from other GP practices in Herefordshire including the Hereford Medical Group, Kingstone Surgery, Taurus Medical Group (an umbrella organisation for all GPs in Herefordshire) and from the Integrated Care Board for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, all of whom have expressed an interest in participating in phase 2. Non-NHS partners could include Mind, CLD Trust and Talk Community.

7. Recommendations

- The HYCIC project, although small in scale, has produced results which are comparable to the larger CCG-commissioned study in Westminster.
- The project has resulted in proven physical and mental health benefits to patients with a strong indication of ongoing improvements in wellbeing. In addition, by including patients in existing classes it has increased social integration in Hereford, which was a goal of the project.
- Although it was not one of the measurements, results indicate that the programme reduces patients' long-term reliance on medication in some cases; a further study should make this a research consideration.
- While we do not have data that quantifies the cost benefits of the programme, we believe there is sufficient qualitative evidence to support a larger study which will be resourced to measure the reduction in demand of primary care services and medication, and improve the analysis of patients' well-being over time.
- By cultivating a committed and efficient professional team, HYCIC are now very well-placed to upscale the programme and systems.

- It is recommended that funding is sought for a larger programme to meet the demand for yoga on prescription, incorporating the lessons learnt from this pilot study.

8. Appendices

A- Collation of information from Feedback forms

On a scale of: Excellent- Very Good- Good- Unsatisfactory- Poor

10. Experience of programme: 25 excellent, 1 very good
11. Beneficial to physical health? (Y/N) - 100% yes
12. Beneficial to mental health? (Y/N) - 100% yes
13. Experience of communications - 23 excellent, 3 very good
14. Rating of venue - 23 excellent, 3 very good
15. Tuition - 26 (100%) excellent
16. Benefit from sense of community? (Y/N) - 21 yes, 2 no, 3 other
17. Would you take a repeat prescription? (Y/N) - 100% yes
18. How much would you pay? A variety of responses, though all said they would be prepared to pay. The majority - 53% - said they'd be prepared to pay the discounted amount.

'Its been a really positive experience as an alternative to medicating!

An all over amazing experience which I thought at the beginning It would be something I'd never want to do.

I am planning to continue attending the class as I have felt so much better for them.

I have thorough enjoyed getting back into yoga via the Yoga on Prescription. Didn't realise how much I missed practicing yoga, although Iyengar is different to Hatha yoga which I have practiced in the past.

I'm really impressed and overwhelmed about how much my metal health has improved over the period i have taken up prescription yoga. i found the practice seeped into my everyday existence with both mental and physical health improvements, and my general wellbeing. id tried counselling that helped to a degree, medication that i didn't tolerate and didn't want to be defendant on, so yoga has offered a long term support, and equally a sense of community.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the yoga. I already feel more upright as my left leg drags if I don't use my stick. I feel I can walk further without my stick. I have missed 2 sessions due to exhaustion but I have a link to do them which Jenny kindly has donefor me. Jenny is an excellent teacher and I have never felt judged. She also shows me how to do relaxing poses for last 30 mins as 1 hour is usually enough. I am going to book more classes via the app starting next Thursday 16th

February as I have a family funeral this week. I ALSO HAVE 2 FRIENDS WHO WOULD LIKE TO COME IS THERE ANY REDUCTION IN COST FOR THEM? Kind regards Marilyn

Thoroughly enjoyed being taught by Jenny-May, she is such a good yogi and explains and instructs everything soooo well!

It is the most beneficial treatment for fibromyalgia I have ever been prescribed
My plantar fasciitis has improved

Appreciated that tuition was adjusted to be suitable for each individual and that my limitations were taken into account and yet I was gently encouraged to do a bit more than I thought I could and this built my confidence.

I've really thoroughly enjoyed attending yoga. Really benefited from having such an amazing teacher, Jenny-May. She is so good at explaining everything and knows how to get the most out of us. She makes yoga possible for everyone and I love that everything is supplied for you if needed.

This was my first experience of yoga. I would not have participated if it were not for the Scheme. I had no expectation I would derive any benefit from attending. However, I did experience significant improvement in my mental health. The tuition and facilities are excellent and I have recommended the Scheme to others.

The ladies at the centre are amazing, they've made me feel very welcome and cared for, they've never judged me and they show deep care when they talk to you. I would deeply encourage to try yoga I know its not for everyone but i find it calming, I wish I'd had a go years ago. I can't fault the centre in anyway they are outstanding. On a side note its very clean in there and well organised, in short I think there brilliant

Jenny may is an incredible teacher also her empathy and kindness enriches her teaching, she delivers in a very nurturing and supportive way.

Coming to Yoga has definitely helped me with my confidence as well. I am extremely grateful for the prescription programme as I do not believe I would of ever had the confidence to just join.

It has helped me feel more physically able with less aches and pains. It has given me more confidence to try new things, remain calmer and feel less overwhelmed. Communications have been professional, clear, helpful and supportive. The venue is clean, efficient and welcoming. A surprising plus has been a sense of belonging. I would 100% take a repeat prescription as an alternative to medicating to maintain my mental health. This programme of yoga should be supported 100%. I was in a real state before beginning this. I reacted badly to antidepressants and didn't want to be on them. Yoga has given me hope for the future and introduced a sense of balance and a new approach to self-care.

Increased flexibility, better posture, leg cramps and knee pain post-exercise stopped. Better sleep. Venue is very relaxing. Very helpful instructor helpful with individual issues. Currently taking classes using the nhsplus discount. Yoga made me feel more comfortable physically. I enjoy exercising, gardening etc which are easier with the benefits of yoga. .

Better flexibility and posture. Stress relief. Venue is calming and relaxing. Tuition is lovely and helpful.

Improved posture and flexibility. I am able to relax a little more..

It has helped with my plantir fasciitis, which is much improved.

Helped my legs very much. Mental health – been able to get off one medication. Very happy with my class and teacher. Has improved my wellbeing so much..

I have better flexibility and reduced stress. The instructor is lovely and helpful.

It has helped my mental health and I've been able to get off one medication.

It has improved my wellbeing so much.

Increased wellbeing and pain and increased control of my body.

Jenny-May While is the best teacher. I've been privileged to attend these classes.

Very beneficial to me. Jenny is fabulous.

It's made me go. I've loved the time for myself.

Much improved strength, confidence in my previous injury and relaxation.

Jenny-May is amazing, knowledgeable. I've made some great friends. I can't recommend enough. It's a fantastic service and I'm very grateful for this support.

B- Requests for the service in writing

1. South & West Primary Care and Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICB

From: BAILLON, Michelle (NHS HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE ICB - 18C)

<[REDACTED]>Date: Mon, 13 Feb 2023 at 15:33

Subject: Yoga on Prescription

To: <info@herefordyoga.co.uk>

Good afternoon Hereford Yoga Centre,

I am a social prescriber from the South & West Primary Care Network.
I am aware that you are piloting the above, Yoga on Prescription with WBC.
Are there any plans to roll this out across other PCNs?
I had an enquiry from a lady who lives in Kingstone and am aware that she has been in email correspondence with yourselves. Just thought I would email you so that you have my email address, if and when this is likely to be available elsewhere.
Not sure if you are aware of the following available on the Talk Community Directory, thought I would share just in case you aren't aware: Home | Community Funding Support (idoxopen4community.co.uk)
Many thanks in advance.
Kind regards,
Michelle Baillon
Senior Social Prescriber

2. Wye Valley NHS – Social Prescriber

From: WORTH, Shannon (WYE VALLEY NHS TRUST) <[REDACTED]>

Date: Fri, 31 Mar 2023 at 13:34

Subject: Free Yoga across Herefordshire

To: <info@herefordyoga.co.uk>

Hi there,

Thank you for our call.

I am pleased to hear your pilot for 10 free yoga sessions across the WBC PCN went well, I think it would be so useful it was across the whole of Herefordshire.

As a social prescriber I speak to people everyday that may want to get fit or to do yoga as a mental health and wellbeing exercise and unfortunately due to financial hardship cannot always afford to do so. Therefore it would be great if there was a way roles like myself could refer someone for free sessions so they could also benefit from the positive effects of activities such as yoga.

Thanks,

Shannon Worth

Senior Social Prescriber (South West PCN)

Taurus Healthcare

Suite 1, Berrows Business Centre,

Bath Street Hereford, HR1 2HE

t: [REDACTED] m: [REDACTED]

e: [REDACTED]

3. Hereford Medical Centre

From: SPROT, Julia (NHS HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE ICB - 18C)

<[REDACTED]> Date: Thu, 1 Sep 2022 at 10:33

Subject: RE: Update

To: Jenny-May While <jennymay@herefordyoga.co.uk>

Lovely thank you Jenny-May.

I've been asked to feed back to HMG if there was anything the organisation could of done more, when we spoke last year about free classes for HMG.

Was it part of your bid or did WBC support financially as well

Julia Sprot

Senior Social Prescriber Hereford Medical Group PCN Wellbeing Team

m: [REDACTED] e: [REDACTED]

Team e: [REDACTED]

4. Herefordshire FA

From: Alan Darfi <[REDACTED]>

Date: Thu, 9 Feb 2023 at 09:39

Subject: New submission from Contact Us

To: info@herefordyoga.co.uk

4. Individual

From: Karen D [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Date: Wed, 1 Feb 2023 at 15:38

Subject: Prescription yoga

To: jennymay@herefordyoga.co.uk jennymay@herefordyoga.co.uk

Good afternoon

A friend of mine has given me a yoga on prescription leaflet. Is this just limited to the 3 surgeries listed as I am registered at Kingstone Surgery. I am a career for my husband and feel this would benefit me but I could not afford it due to our circumstances.

Thanks

Karen

C- Further infographics to demonstrate evaluative data

HEREFORD YOGA CIC SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PROJECT EVALUATION SUMMARY

- The programme started in June 2022 and was completed in December 2023.
- In collaboration with Cantilupe, Belmont and Wargrave GP surgeries.
- Patients referred to Hereford Yoga Centre received 10x Iyengar Yoga classes on prescription.
- The projected cost of each course of 10 lessons, including administration and evaluation, will be around £280. This compares favourably with many other Social Prescribing studies.
- Evaluation forms were completed by 47% of patients who completed the prescribed course of 10 classes. All data presented here is as of 31st December 2023.

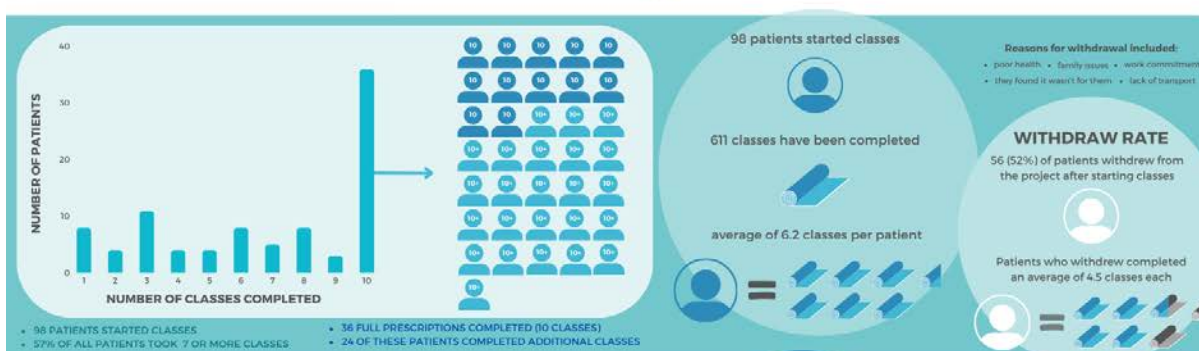


IYENGAR CERTIFIED TEACHERS

FULL EVALUATION REPORT:



PRESCRIPTION & CLASS UPTAKE



PATIENT FEEDBACK

'The tuition and facilities are **excellent**. The teachers and the Centre are amazing, they've made me feel **welcome and cared for**.'

'I'm really impressed and overwhelmed about how much **my mental health has improved** over the period I have taken up prescription yoga.'

'Appreciated that tuition was **adjusted to be suitable for each individual** and that my limitations were taken into account and yet I was gently encouraged to do a bit more than I thought I could and this **built my confidence**.'

'It has helped me feel more physically able with **less aches and pains**.'

It is the **most beneficial treatment for fibromyalgia** I have ever been prescribed.'

'Yoga has given me **hope for the future** and introduced a sense of balance and a **new approach to self-care**.'

100%

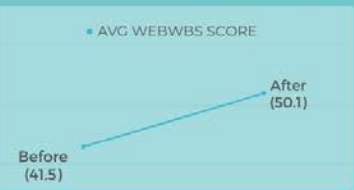
All respondents recorded an increase in their wellbeing, physical health and mental health.

Self-reported reduction in GP visits.

33% commented unprompted that they had reduced or stopped taking one or more prescription drug.

WELLBEING BEFORE/AFTER

In alignment with the Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Survey (WEMWBS), overall in the UK a score of 42 or lower is in the bottom 15% whereas 51.0 is the mean for the population.



This shows that our patients were starting in the **bottom 15% (nationally)** and finishing **above average (nationally)**.

Our preliminary results show similar or better outcomes than the West London CCG Yoga on Prescription trial: (Cartwright et al (2019), *Yoga4Health on social prescription: A mixed methods evaluation*, University of Westminster). Our programme had higher take-up, completion and average class attendance.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR PARTNERS FOR A LARGER STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF YOGA ON SOCIAL PRESCRIPTION.

PLEASE CONTACT JENNY-MAY WHILE, MANAGING DIRECTOR AT JENNYMAY@HEREFORDYOGA.CO.UK



www.herefordyoga.co.uk

info@herefordyoga.co.uk

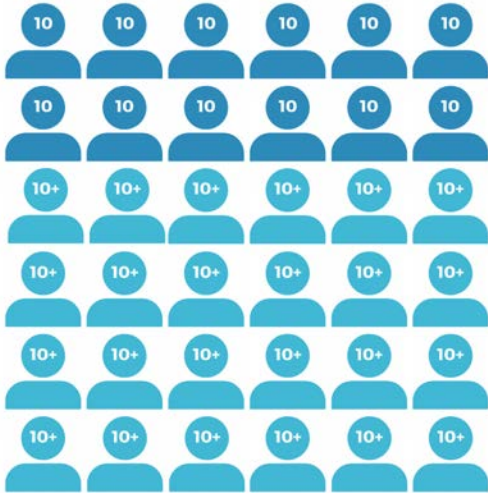
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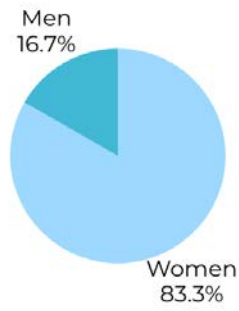
Hereford Yoga Centre,
Unit 10 Foley Trading Estate
Hereford, HR1 2SF

Stay connected, find us on

38 FULL PRESCRIPTIONS COMPLETED
(INCLUDING 2 REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS)



24 OF THESE PATIENTS COMPLETED ADDITIONAL CLASSES

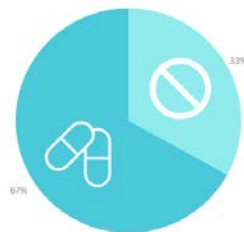


83.3% of patients are women.
16.7% are men.

100% of respondents reported improvements in both physical and mental health.



100% of patients who completed the prescription said they would benefit from a repeat prescription.



33% of respondents reported, unasked, a reduction in medication (in consultation with their doctor) and attributed this directly to participation in yoga classes.