**K’s Journey, as told by his Primary Care Networks Link Worker:**

***Working together***

K is in his early 40s and was referred to me by his GP. He had moved to the area during lockdown, following difficulties in the family home and struggles with his mental health. K has family in the area but no social network. He was diagnosed with Autism in his teens and has a history of depression. He was keen to socialise and improve his mental wellbeing.

***How GSP helped K***

I recommended K consider two Green Social Prescribing opportunities: volunteering as a Walking Buddy and taking part in Horse Assisted Therapy.

K started the Walking Buddy volunteering first. He was given details of people waiting for Buddies and was able to choose who he thought was the best fit. The individual he 'chose' is of a similar age, also has Autism, as well as a visual impairment. They were unable to get out much due to anxiety and other mental health issues. After their first meet-up, they have been out nearly every week since for a walk together. K has reported the exercise has made him fitter, it gets him out and about to new places and he really enjoys his Buddy’s company. He reports that every week it lifts his mood.

The Horse Assisted Therapy programme involved six 1:1 sessions. K has found it really beneficial. He reports that:

*"being with the horses made me feel closer to nature, calmer, and has helped me with both confidence and assertiveness".*

***Wider impact of GSP for K***

Following the above, I referred K into an Employment Support Programme. Volunteering as a Walking Buddy has enabled K to expand his CV. It's given him both experience and an organisation to give him a reference. K has now secured employment as a Support Worker, helping people with Learning Disabilities to gain independent living skills. He reports that without the confidence he has gained through both GSP activities, he never would have felt able to consider such a job.

He also identifies he now feels more confident to go to groups and activities, where previously his anxieties and poor mental health may have inhibited him. He also feels he has more awareness of the benefits of doing such activities, as he can clearly see the positive impact it has had on his own mental health.

*"Without my Social Prescriber I would have never known all these things were out there".*