

**REPORT OF THE HEALTH, WELL-BEING, RECREATION AND TOURISM  
POLICY OFFICER**

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**SUBJECT: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING INITIATIVES**

Purpose of Report

1. To report on the Draft Report: National Parks Wales: Together for Health and Well-being Delivering Priority Actions and Case Studies February 2018 'with specific reference on work completed which meets the Priority Actions.
2. To accompany this report there will be a presentation by the Policy Officer on the Authorities work on health and well-being.

Background

3. National Parks in Wales provide intrinsic health benefits such as improved air-quality, carbon storage and biodiversity. Through the enjoyment and experiences in the environment they also provide direct physical and mental health benefits, for local and national communities.
4. First published in 2016 'National Parks Wales: Together for Health and Well-being', the attached report updates the original and highlights the key contributions National Parks Wales make to health and well-being.
5. A final version will be agreed by National Parks Wales for publication to be circulated to key partners including local authorities, health boards, welsh government and third sector bodies
6. The presentation at Committee on the day will illustrate how the work of the Authority is contributing to local needs, policy and practice development. It will illustrate the partnership work of the Authority in coordinating:
  - The West Wales Nature Based Health Service Network
  - Let's Walk Pembrokeshire initiative

Financial, Risk & Compliance Considerations

7. The Authority has a statutory responsibility to deliver on the well-being goals of the Future Generations Act (Wales) 2016.
8. The Report and Presentation supports the duty of the National Park Authorities to 'foster the social and economic well-being of local communities'.

### Human Rights/Equality Issues

9. Projects described in the report and presentation will have been developed with human rights and equality issues in mind and contributing to National Park Authorities in Wales delivering on their strategic Equality Plans.

### Biodiversity Implications/Sustainability Appraisal

10. Where applicable the work of the trainees, volunteers, National Park Authority Staff and partners contributes to the practical management of the National Parks and raises public awareness of the special qualities within them.

### Welsh Language Statement

11. No issues have been identified. Projects will have been delivered bilingually when appropriate.

### Recommendation

**That Members note the report and presentation.**

### Background documents to this report

- National Parks Wales: Together for Health and Well-being June, 2016 (attached)
- Draft Report: National Parks Wales: Together for Health and Well-being Delivering Priority Actions and Case Studies February 2018 (attached)
- West Wales Nature-based Health Service Newsletter November 2017 (attached)

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# National Parks Wales: Together for Health and Well-being

A Position Statement and Priority Actions: National Parks are Assets for Health and Well-being for the people of Wales, and beyond



July 2016



## **Position Statement**

The three National Parks in Wales deliver health benefits for the nation. They provide intrinsic health benefits such as improved air-quality, carbon storage and biodiversity. They also provide direct physical and mental health benefits, for local and national communities, from enjoyment of the environment.

## **Summary**

National Parks are rich in natural and historic heritage and collectively offer a unique health and well-being resource. The National Park Authorities (Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia) are uniquely placed to take a role in addressing health. The Authorities have a key role in helping conserve the Parks and enabling access to and within them. They play two vital roles:

- National Parks provide settings for activities promoting good health and well-being, including 'active' benefits such as walking and 'passive' benefits like those derived from 'tranquillity' and inspirational scenery.
- National Parks support good quality environments and a flourishing, diverse ecosystem essential to maintaining clean air, drinking water and land.

National Parks are 'health assets': in that they offer access to resources with the potential to enable individuals and communities to maintain their health and well-being. National Parks Wales are well placed to deliver on the goals of the 'Well-being of Future Generations Act': a prosperous; resilient; healthier; more equal Wales; with cohesive communities; and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

The three Authorities are unlocking the health benefits the countryside offers. Recently public health and social care sectors in Wales have moved to tackle some of the root causes of ill health and look to deliver health and social care beyond the traditional service models. Evidence shows that accessing the National Parks can have a positive impact on health promotion generally and particular benefits for individuals living with and managing long term conditions such as heart disease, dementia, diabetes and mental health conditions.

**National Park Wales' 3 priority actions for Health and well-being are:**

- Raise awareness of the health and well-being benefits opportunities of National Parks
- Continue to develop evidence-based policy and practice in relation to health and well-being and the natural environment and landscape features
- Maximise opportunities for all people in Wales to access the health and well-being benefits of the natural environment and landscape features of National Parks

## **Background**

National Parks and their administering Authorities play an important part in promoting good health and addressing poor health and associated well-being issues for the people of Wales and visitors from the rest of the UK and overseas.

The designation of a National Park gives the greatest level of protection a landscape can receive in the UK, and as such provides protection for and support to the quality environments essential to maintaining vital clean air, water and land.

The Welsh Government links the social and economic well-being of the nation and social inclusion with well-being and good health. National Parks Wales are well placed to deliver on the goals of the 'Well-being of Future Generations Act'. Wales has higher than average levels of physical inactivity and poor health in comparison to other European countries, and some communities in Wales have mortality rates among the highest in Europe. Statistics suggest a third of Welsh children live in poverty. National Park Authorities can address the barriers (e.g. transport, information, exclusivity) to the Parks experienced and perceived by socially excluded communities and individuals who may be less familiar with National Parks. Reducing these barriers will help people feel welcome in our National Parks so that they can access the benefits offered by the landscape, heritage and contact with nature.

## **National Park Wales: Our Understanding of Health and Well-being**

Those most disadvantaged by poverty in our society experience disproportionate levels of ill health. Public health and social care sectors in Wales want to tackle the root causes of ill health and deliver health and social care beyond the traditional service models.

Developing the tools to measure health and well-being benefits is challenging. The benefits from contact with environmental settings and undertaking outdoor exercise result are an interaction between social, environmental and individual variables. Outcomes are often longer term. It is important that National Parks Wales monitors the (often subjective) outcomes of health and well-being work. Such data may include user feedback, films and digital stories. These are useful evaluation tools to help shape services and inform others.

## **AIMS**

To develop National Park Authorities activities to support public health and social well-being:

- Everyone is entitled to experience National Parks, this includes the opportunity for easy access to National Parks,
- The experiences available within National Parks can reduce the negative impacts of poverty and improve opportunities for social inclusion and better health,
- Interaction with nature must be achieved sensitively so as not to compromise the special qualities and landscape of National Parks for future generations.



## 5 Ways to Health and Wellbeing in National Parks\*



- A set of 5 evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and overall wellbeing of the whole population.
- Understands and defines the health and well-being agendas to be dependent on the wider determinants of health
- Grounded in theory that the wellbeing of individuals and communities as a whole will only be achieved if the well-being of the whole population is nurtured.
- Promotes resilience, moving away from a health care model that focuses on 'treatment' to that of 'prevention' and ultimately towards a healthier happier society as a whole less vulnerable to ill-health.
- Is 'doubly-cost effective' as cost of treating the sick is reduced and also that by improving society as a whole less people get sick.



Feeling close to and valued by other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. Social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages

Examples of how National Park Authorities enable this:

- Using the Local Development Plans to protect green community space for play and learning recreation.
- Volunteering with National Park Authorities and/or other local conservation agencies
- Partnership with other organisations including National Trust and Local Authorities and other local groups and networks to support access projects ( see below) Sustainable Development Fund support for community projects that help bring people together for their own benefit and the benefit of the wider community i.e. tree planting, beach cleaning, wildlife monitoring and rubbish collection



Regular physical activity is good for physical health on a wide range of factors and is proven to have a positive impact upon mental health including preventing dementia and depression. Physical activity is also a great way for people to connect with others.

National Park Authorities can:

- Provide spaces for active pursuits e.g. promotion, improvement and maintenance of the Rights of Way footpath and bridle way networks and management of sites with public access
- Provide opportunities for learning and participation at National Park sites, centres and community locations
- Visitors Centres and outreach provide face to face and telephone information service enabling visitors of all abilities and with diverse needs to get out and enjoy the Park



Being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm people's life priorities. Heightened awareness also enhances people's self-understanding and allows them to make positive choices based on their own values and motivation.

National Park Authorities can strengthen and broaden awareness by offering:

- Interpretation resources and direct opportunities for people to access places that encourage them to pause and 'take in the view' via literature (digital and print), organising viewpoints etc.



- Ongoing local and national campaign to engage with people with seasonal wonders of nature e.g. lambing, ospreys in flight, the beauty of autumn forests etc. through social media,
- Bespoke publications to support interpretation targeting special needs groups ie touch maps for people with visually impairments.



Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Evidence shows that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift people out of depression.

The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

The National Park Authorities can support learning by:

- Activities and Events organised by Authorities and with partner organisation including 'wildlife sightings', historic talks, school and community education projects,
- Training to local groups to increase knowledge and understand of local area –eg through Walkability, Cynefin a Chymuned programme or John Muir Awards,
- Accredited and informal training programmes and networks such as Rural Skills Project, health and wellbeing, outdoor schools.



Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is

associated with an increase in wellbeing.

National Park Authorities can offer opportunities to participate through:

- Volunteering and charitable opportunities with the park foster a greater sense of 'looking after' the environment. Volunteers days across three National Parks for 2013/14 were in excess of 115,000 hours
- Work undertaken by Authority projects and services on the ground and with communities
- Opportunities for volunteering and participation in external Sustainable Development Fund supported community projects.

## Citations

Welsh Government (2015) Wellbeing of Future Generations Act ( Wales) 2015

Welsh Government (2015) Building Resilient Communities: Taking forward the Tackling Poverty Action Plan

Public Health Wales NHS Trust (2012). The Wider Determinants of Health 2012  
<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/922/page/60502> (accessed 27/06/16)

Welsh Government (2012) Together for Mental Health - a strategy for mental health and wellbeing in Wales

UK National Ecosystem Assessment (2011)  
 "The UK National Ecosystem Assessment Technical Report". UNEP CMC, Cambridge  
<http://uknea.unep-wcmc.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=S901pJcQm%2fQ%3d&tabid=82>  
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Welsh Government (2011) Together for Health: A Five Year Vision for the NHS in Wales

National Parks Wales (2010) Position Statement on Social Inclusion  
[http://www.nationalparkswales.gov.uk/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/352507/national\\_parks\\_wales\\_position\\_statement\\_-\\_champions\\_of\\_social\\_inclusion.pdf](http://www.nationalparkswales.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/352507/national_parks_wales_position_statement_-_champions_of_social_inclusion.pdf) (accessed 27/06/16)

Welsh Assembly Government (2010) Creating an Active Wales

New Economics Foundation (2008) Five Ways to Wellbeing: The Evidence





Here are just a few examples of the some of the innovative projects the Authorities have delivered - working in partnership with community groups, health and social care.

## Case Studies

### National Park Champions - Brecon Beacon NPA:



The National Park Champions project worked with socially excluded communities less familiar with the National Park to encourage them to gain health and wellbeing benefits from the National Park and wider environment by offering training for group leaders, visits for groups, and supporting future visits..

It introduced the benefits of National Parks to a range of groups including: Youth Services (Ebbw Vale, Ystradgynlais ,Abergavenny, Brecon), Merthyr 3 Gs project, Powys Carers and Leaving Care Team, Kaleidoscope, Merthyr Housing Association, Gwalia Care and Support and others. Many live close to or in the National Park but had not accessed it. The health and wellbeing benefits speak for themselves: Group Leaders rated the resulting mental health benefits for participants at 10/10 and physical health benefits at 9/10. Participants from earlier projects were supported to develop skills in the scheme, with one going on to receive the National Navigation Award

*"We have had very worthwhile, enjoyable experiences, including enabling children to learn through play and activity, Increasing the health and fitness of our young people"*

Group leader, St Johns Family Centre  
(Action for Children)

*"We both enjoyed the day and the skills we learned will be handed down to others in the walking group which we are hoping to start at Gwalia."*

(Group leader, Gwalia Care and Support).

Natural Resources Wales and Brecon Beacons National Park Authority funded the project

Children and young people visiting after their group leaders received training from project staff.





## Walkability Project - Pembrokeshire Coast NPA



Walkability, part of the Exercise Referral Scheme, is an activity program designed for those who are currently not active or are exercising less than three times per week. And for those suffering mild to moderate medical conditions (such as high blood pressure, arthritis, depression) or identified as being at risk of developing them. Walkability provides a programme of varied fortnightly walks, participants are referred by a health professional and are registered with the scheme. The individual participant's relevant medical details are shared with instructors who carry a defibrillator. Walkability :

- Encourages and supports individuals to walk as an alternative beneficial exercise
- Provides participants with
  - skills and confidence to go walking independently
  - greater fitness to take longer and/or more intense walking routes

Evidence indicates these goals are achievable and that walking is an effective, enjoyable way to improve health outcomes. The demand for the programme has outstripped supply. Funding is dependent on an annual bid. £300 p.a per participant compares well with other medical interventions.





## Eryri Walking Club for blind and visually impaired people - Snowdonia NPA



'The walk is the highlight of my month!'

The scheme is now in its ninth year and was initiated at the Eryri Disability Equality Forum, when a blind member mentioned the lack of countryside walking opportunities for blind and visually impaired people. Monthly walks vary between 3 and 7 miles. In 2014 the group climbed Snowdon. Club Members are recruited through the Guide Dogs Society and North Wales Society for the Blind who provide training on visual awareness and guiding. The project aims to improve participants' physical and mental health and wellbeing. ***"There is no price you can put on the freedom to walk without fear"*** (One of the participants)

The project is reliant on its fantastic volunteers. They state that they also receive substantial benefits from group walking. Recent evidence from the University of East Anglia backs them up showing walking in groups can be more beneficial than going alone - 'People who walk in groups also tend to have a more positive attitude toward physical activity, a shared experience of wellness, and say they feel less lonely and isolated'.

The project is funded by Snowdonia National Park Authority

# **National Parks Wales: Together for Health and Well-being**

## **A Position Statement and Priority Actions**

**National Parks are Community Assets for Health and Well-being for the People of Wales, and Beyond**

*Original published June 2016, revised February 2018 Position Statement and Priority Actions unchanged)*

### **1. Position Statement**

The three National Parks in Wales deliver health benefits for the nation. They provide intrinsic health benefits such as improved air-quality, carbon storage and biodiversity. They also provide direct physical and mental health benefits, for local and national communities, from enjoyment of the environment.

### **2. Principles**

**To develop National Park Authorities' activities to support public health and social well-being we believe that:**

- Everyone is entitled to experience National Parks, this includes the opportunity for easy access to National Parks.
- The experiences available within National Parks can reduce the negative impacts of poverty and improve opportunities for social inclusion and better health.
- Interaction with nature for the benefit of health and wellbeing to be done sensitively so as not to compromise the special qualities and landscape of National Parks for future generations.

### **3. Priority Actions**

National Parks Wales (NPW) priority actions for Health and well-being are:

- Raise awareness of the health and well-being benefits opportunities of National Parks.
- Continue to develop evidence-based policy and practice in relation to health and well-being and the natural environment and landscape features.
- Maximise opportunities for all people in Wales to access the health and well-being benefits of the natural environment and landscape features of National Parks.



#### **4. National Parks Wales: Our Understanding of Health and Well-being**

4.1 National Parks are rich in natural and historic heritage and collectively offer a unique health and well-being resource. The National Park Authorities (Brecon Beacons, Pembrokeshire Coast and Snowdonia) are uniquely placed to take a role in addressing health. The Authorities have a key role in helping conserve the Parks and enabling access to and within them. National Parks play two vital roles by:

- providing the settings for activities promoting good health and well-being, including 'active' benefits such as walking and 'passive' benefits like those derived from 'tranquillity' and inspirational scenery;
- supporting good quality environments and a flourishing, diverse ecosystem essential to maintaining clean air, drinking water and land.

4.2 National Parks are '**health assets**': in that they offer access to resources with the potential to enable individuals and communities to maintain their health and well-being.

4.3 Recently public health and social care sectors in Wales have moved to tackle some of the root causes of ill health and look to deliver health and social care beyond the traditional service models. Evidence shows that accessing the National Parks can have a positive impact on health promotion generally and particular benefits for individuals living with and managing long term conditions such as heart conditions, dementia, diabetes and mental health conditions.

4.4 Gathering the evidence to show the health and well-being benefit of National Parks can be challenging. Developing the tools to measure health and well-being benefits can often be both complex and often lengthy. The benefits from contact with environmental settings and undertaking outdoor exercise are an interaction between social, environmental and individual variables, outcomes are often longer term. It is important that National Parks Wales monitor the (often subjective) outcomes of health and well-being work. Such data may include user feedback, films and digital stories. These outcomes are useful evaluation tools to help shape services and inform others.

#### **5. Policy**

5.1 The designation of a National Park gives the greatest level of protection a landscape can receive in the UK, and as such provides protection for and support to the quality environments essential to maintaining vital clean air, water and land. National Parks and their administering Authorities play an important part in promoting good health and addressing poor health and associated well-being issues for the people of Wales and visitors from the rest of the UK and overseas.

5.2 Wales has higher than average levels of physical inactivity and poor health in comparison to other European countries, and some communities in Wales have mortality rates among the highest in Europe. Those most disadvantaged by poverty in our society experience disproportionate levels of ill health. Statistics suggest a third of Welsh children live in poverty. National Park Authorities can address the barriers experienced by excluded communities and individuals (for e.g. transport, information, cultural) so that they can access the benefits offered by landscape, heritage and contact with nature found within the National Parks.

5.3 The Welsh Government links the social and economic well-being of the nation and social inclusion with well-being and good health. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 places a duty on National Park Authorities to set out their Well-being Objectives and to demonstrate how these contribute to the Welsh Government's Seven Well-being Goals.



5.4 The evidence shows that our Authorities are unlocking the health assets of National Parks and have an important role in improving the health of the Nation. Public health and social care sectors in Wales want to tackle the root causes of ill health and deliver health and social care beyond the traditional service models. This is being applied through approaches such as social prescribing, principles of prudent health care and co-production<sup>1</sup> that are to be described in the legislation.

## 6. *Additional Citations*

Public Health (Wales) Act 2017  
 Well-being and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015  
 Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014  
 National Outcomes Framework (wales) 2015

<sup>1</sup> **Social prescribing:** is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical support.

**Prudent health care:** 4 Principles 1. Achieve health and wellbeing with the public, patients and professionals as equal partners through co-production; 2 Care for those with the greatest health need first, making the most effective use of all skills and resources; 3 Do only what is needed, no more, no less; and do no harm. 4. Reduce inappropriate variation using evidence based practices consistently and transparently.

<http://www.prudenthealthcare.org.uk/principles/>

**Co-production:** means delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.

## 7. Reporting on the Priority Actions

Work undertaken to support the Priority Actions up to February 2018

7.1 Priority 1: Raise awareness of the health and well-being opportunities of National Parks	
Key Data	
<b>40</b>	Easier access walks available on the PCNPA website out of 200+ .
<b>28</b>	Easier access walks on the Brecon Beacons Destination Website out of 50.
<b>6</b>	Easier access walks on Snowdonia website out of 36.
<b>54</b>	Youth & community leaders trained to lead Geocaching by BBNPA's Geocaching project
<b>6</b>	PCNPA Walk leaders trained
<b>193</b>	Teachers participated in Outdoor Schools training led by PCNPA
<b>600</b>	Residents involved in the Opening Doors to the Outdoors project supported by SNPA
Examples	
<b>Let's Walk Pembrokeshire Initiative PCNPA</b>	Coordination of the multi-agency Let's Walk Pembrokeshire initiative which aims to encourage people of all ages and abilities to walk more, more often. The initiative develops training and events, an online walking directory and webpages.
<b>Inspironment BBNPA</b>	The Inspironment programme – see <i>Case Study p. 14</i>
<b>The Snowdon Partnership SNPA</b>	The Partnership received a Sustainable Innovation in Public Service Award, awarded by Sustainable Wales for raising awareness amongst tourists and visitors on the health and well-being benefits the National Park has to offer. Coordinated by SNPA
<b>Sensory experiences PCNPA</b>	<b>After Dark Adventures</b> Ranger led 3 night walks for local youth clubs. <b>Barefoot trail</b> PCNPA – Castell Henllys – barefoot trail - walkers experiences several different textures underfoot, great for child and sensory development.
<b>Geocaching BBNPA</b>	Project train community and youth group leaders to enable them to access the National Park and wider and natural environment for low cost activities with groups of young people.
<b>Enjoy Pembrokeshire PCNPA</b>	Website Promotes sustainable outdoor recreation with specific health and wellbeing information for each activity from kayaking to dog walking.
<b>Map boards for the NHS BBNPA</b>	9 map boards and additional walking information to show the National Park and access points/car parks, in healthcare settings: GP surgeries, physiotherapy departments and leisure centres.
<b>Opening Doors to the Outdoors SNPA</b>	Programme of outdoor activities for residents in the National Park. Activities included a range of inclusive and adaptive taster sessions in paddle sports, climbing, mountain biking, sailing and hillwalking
<b>Dolgellau Townscape Heritage Project SNPA</b>	SNPA community led project to develop a leaflet and an App with details of three Town walks. Students from the Meirion Dwyfor College will work out how many calories are used to complete the various walks.
<b>Day of Discovery PCNPA</b>	Authority teamed up with support organisations from across the county to host an activity day for carers of all ages at Carew Castle and Tidal Mill.



## 7.2 Priority2

Continue to develop evidence-based policy and practice in relation to health and wellbeing and the natural environment and landscape features

### Key data

<b>88%</b>	Of respondents to PCNPA Country Path Users Survey 2015/16 main reason for walking was to "Enjoy the Natural Landscape"
<b>42%</b>	Of all visitors to BBNPA say they come to improve well-being, physical and mental health
<b>75%</b>	Of visitors say they visit Snowdonia National Park to enjoy the landscape, countryside or beaches (Beaufort Research)
<b>1</b>	MSc research project on older people, health wellbeing and National Parks - BBNPA and PCNPA
<b>189,814</b>	Numbers of walkers recorded on PCNPA monitored Paths 2017 (calendar year)
<b>86%</b>	Of PCNPA Rights of Way open and accessible and meeting the quality standard in 2016/17
<b>713,607</b>	Numbers of walker on Snowdonia monitored paths
<b>89%</b>	Rights of Way open in the Brecon Beacons
<b>69%</b>	BBNPA - 69% of ROW are signposted and 57% are easy to use
<b>4416</b>	Total kilometres of Rights of Way routes in WNP

### Examples

<b>Creating an Active Wales</b>	Supporting the Welsh government vision <a href="http://www.wales.nhs.uk/documents/100121activewalesen.pdf">www.wales.nhs.uk/documents/100121activewalesen.pdf</a>
<b>ALL WNP</b>	<p><b>Active Outdoor Events</b> All WNP have guidance to help event organisers promote safe, sustainable and enjoyable outdoor and sporting activities in the NP.</p> <p>All WNP have a key role in supporting and maintaining the Rights of Way network. Rights of Way including footpaths and bridleways are a key health asset for communities and visitors alike in that they promote active travel, physical activity and are gateways to places where landscape can be appreciated and experiences with nature be had</p> <p>Across all WNP efforts have been made to make the Rights of Way network more accessible, including removing styles, signposting, developing circular routes, grading paths on accessibility as well as proving or supporting mobility supports such as wheelchairs, beach wheelchairs, mobility scooters and all terrain scooters for public use. To support this work WNP produce print and webased literature such as Walks for All PCNPA.</p>
<b>Actif Woods Wales (Snowdonia) SNPA</b>	Strives to improve the health and well-being of people from the most deprived communities by organising regular woodland activities including woodland walking and woodland gym, bush craft, fire lighting and green woodwork. Actif Woods monitoring and evaluation methods are used as case examples for shared learning good practice at the WWNHS Network.
<b>West Wales Nature-based Health Service Network PCNPA</b>	Authority jointly coordinates with WWAMH all WNP are members. One of the Networks key objectives is to support the development of evidence based practice and research – See PCNPA case study p. 13

<b>Green Health and Social Prescribing WNP</b>	All WNP attended a conference and follow up event coordinated by the Welsh Government Sustainable Development Change Programme.
<b>CUROP study BBPA</b>	Cardiff University School of Social Sciences organised a CUROP study of BBNPA work "Using Geocaching as a motivation to increase physical activity".
<b>Research workshop All WNP</b>	All WNP presented at the Research in National Parks organised by BBNPA workshop November 2017 bringing together academic and delivery partners.
<b>Research working group BBNPA</b>	Authority coordinates a workgroup on health and wellbeing includes Powys Teaching Health Board, PAVO and academic partners.
<b>Research Cardiff university BBNPA PCNPA</b>	Brecon Beacons and Pembrokeshire Coast supporting PhD study into Gender, Health and Sustainability in using natural resources. A case study is currently being researched to better understand the use and potential sustainable use of the National Parks in Wales for health.
<b>Evaluating the Outdoor Learning Experience Toolkit BNPA</b>	BBNPA worked in partnership with Cardiff University to develop the toolkit for practitioners in Evaluating the Outdoor Learning Experience. The research also highlighted the importance on the National Park for physical and mental health well-being.
<b>A health Impact Assessment (HIA) SNPA</b>	<b>Eryri Local Development Plan Policies – a HIA</b> has been carried out on the Authority's Deposit version of Revised Local Development Plan - it will be an iterative process to ensure that the Plan has a positive impact on health.
<b>Eryri Equality Forum SNPA</b>	Provides a platform for Individuals and groups which represent the interests of people who are protected by the 2010 Equality Act – and who have an interest in the Authority's work to support, challenge and inspire the Authority to operate in a fair manner on issues relating to Equality.
<b>Walkability PCNPA</b>	Used as a case study example by The Health and Social Benefits of Nature and Biodiversity Protection Committee of the Regions, Brussels 2016
<b>Snowdonia Giving Rhodd Eryri SNPA</b>	Public consultation led to a money raising scheme in the area. Money raised will be used to maintain Snowdon's paths; develop the low level Snowdon circular route; and help young people to develop traditional rural skills.
<b>Green Infrastructure Study PCNPA</b>	PCNPA in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council who is leading on a Green infrastructure Study which will identify improvements to local green infrastructure. Green infrastructure delivers a wide range of proven social and environmental benefits offering recreation and health services for all.

### 7.3 Priority 3: Maximise opportunities for all people in Wales to access the health and well-being benefits of the natural environment and landscape features of National Parks

#### Key data

<b>22445</b>	Total volunteer hours across all WNP in 2016/17
<b>21540</b>	Number of school children in all WNP participating in school programmes and education experiences
<b>100+</b>	Voluntary Wardens and Rangers in PCNPA and SNPA

2284 +	Number of participants 2016/17 who participated in targeted projects/social inclusion
	<b>Examples</b>
Volunteer Opportunities	<p>Voluntary Wardens and Rangers – PCNPA and SNPA - work includes advising the public, work parties and litter patrols, benefits includes friendship groups, physical activity and sense of wellbeing and empowerment</p> <p>SNPA - Yr Ysgwrn Project depends on a group of around 30 local volunteers to help with welcoming visitors to the farmhouse and the café/shop.</p> <p>PCNPA provides volunteering opportunities for a whole range of groups including Duke of Edinburgh's Award participants to local community groups, for example the Freshwater East Reserve for Nature Groups.</p>
Education Projects	<p>All National Park Authorities work with local schools to engage both pupils and teachers in developing knowledge and skills in conservation and nature – see 5 Ways to well-being.</p> <p><b>Mission Explore project</b> SNPA organised 8 sessions for primary school children and teachers. The project aims to encourage children to explore and have fun in nature.</p> <p><b>Pembrokeshire Outdoor Schools Partnership</b> The partnership was established to promote outdoor learning in Pembrokeshire. A project coordinator is supporting the development and delivery of a new programme of training and support for schools to deliver outdoor education.</p> <p><b>National Park Ambassador Schools</b> - BBNPA programme was established to support schools in becoming connected to the National Park and the outdoors and to enable schools to increase their capacity to benefit from these assets.</p> <p><b>FairPlay Project</b> - The Brecon Beacons project supports schools in covering their transport costs to bring learners to the park. In 2016/17 over 400 learners visited the park that would not have otherwise. Schools participating ranged in 25-40% of their pupils receiving Free School Meals.</p> <p><b>Dolgellau Townscape Heritage Project</b> SNPA As part of the HLF project school children have been taking part in an inter-generational oral history project with older people in the community</p>
Young People	<p><b>Youth Rangers Scheme</b> PCNPA, continues to engage young people in conservation projects and other opportunities enabling them to learn and develop new skills, meet like-minded people and have outdoor based fun.</p> <p><b>John Muir award</b> - PCNPA – a skills development programme to support conservation, learning and personal development.</p> <p><b>Get Into the Brecon Beacons</b> BBNPA - 12 NEET young people participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> Get Into training round of the new BBNPA/ Princes Trust Cymru skills project in 2017. Delivered with Princes Trust that offers training in rural skills and conservation.</p>
Community	<p><b>Pathways Project</b> - PCNPA - aims to enable increased and sustained use of the outdoors amongst disadvantaged communities with a particular emphasis on individual health and wellbeing. The project focuses on the benefits of volunteering including supported opportunities</p>



	<p>to join in voluntary activity across the National Park and will also build capacity of local groups and organisations to support disadvantaged in volunteering.</p> <p><b>John Muir Family Award</b> – PCNPA - a bespoke resource developed that engages families in outdoor, conservation and wildlife focused activities – helps with family wellbeing, improves physical activity and helps develop positive parent-child interactions</p> <p><b>Community Sports</b> PCNPA support and advise the organisers of a number of community sporting or fitness events from Lamphey Primary School's 'Dune Dash' at Freshwater East Beach to the 'Preseli Beast' and 'Beast Bach' fell running races in Maenclochog, beach runs at Newgale.</p> <p><b>The Snowdonia Slate Trail</b> – SNPA which was partly funded by the Cronfa Eryri and with the support of the Authority's Access staff has created an 85 mile trail from Bangor to Penmachno – passing through 16 communities in Snowdonia. The project was community led and included interpretation, brochure and trail guide.</p>
<b>Health and Social Inclusion projects</b>	<p><b>Early Onset Dementia Group</b> Partnership between the Authority and with the Nurse Specialist for Younger People with Dementia, South Gwynedd within Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board, a number of activities have been organised for the Group including walks, visits and art activities.</p> <p><b>Eryri Walking Club for Blind and Visually Impaired People</b> - SNPA Guided walks for people with sight loss.</p> <p><b>Hafal</b>– SNPA works with this charity which offer support for people living with Mental health issues. Walks and activities have been organised, including eco – therapy at Plas Tan y Bwlch.</p> <p><b>Walkability</b> – PCNPA – Project to support walking in groups for with health and social needs.</p> <p><b>Geocaching</b> – BNPA – see above</p> <p><b>NHS Health info boards</b> – BBNPA – see above</p>
<b>Dark Skies in National Parks</b>	<p>All the WNP recognise the importance of dark skies for both plant, animal and human health. The Discovery in the Dark initiative provides opportunities for physical activity but also to enhance the natural environment which in turn supports biodiversity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BBNP - designated Dark Sky Reserve</li> <li>• SNP - designated Dark Sky Reserve</li> <li>• PCNP - has a necklace of Dark Sky Discovery Sites</li> </ul>

## 8. The Five Ways to Well-being Model:

- A set of five evidence-based public mental health messages aimed at improving the mental health and overall wellbeing of the whole population
- Grounded in theory that the wellbeing of individuals and communities as a whole will only be achieved if the wider determinants of health are addressed and the well-being of the whole population is nurtured.
- Promotes resilience, moving away from a health care model that focuses on 'treatment' to that of 'prevention' and ultimately towards a healthier happier society as a whole less vulnerable to ill-health.

(New Economics Foundation 2011)

### **8.1 Five Ways to Health and Wellbeing in National Parks (updated 2018)**

The five ways to wellbeing are integral to many activities that WNP promote, care about and enjoy

## 8.2 Connect

***Feeling close to and valued by other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. Social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental ill health for people of all ages***

- Using the Local Development Plans to protect green community space for play and learning recreation.
- Volunteering with National Park Authorities and/or other local conservation agencies
- Partnership with other organisations including National Trust and Local Authorities and other local groups and networks to support access projects (see below).
- Support for community projects that help bring people together for their own benefit and the benefit of the wider community i.e. tree planting, beach cleaning, wildlife monitoring and rubbish collection.

## 8.3 Be Active

***Regular physical activity is good for physical health on a wide range of factors and is proven to have a positive impact upon mental health including preventing dementia and depression. Physical activity is also a great way for people to connect with others.***

- Provide spaces for active pursuits e.g. promotion, improvement and maintenance of the Rights of Way footpath and bridleway networks and management of sites with public access
- Provide opportunities for learning and participation at National Park sites, centres and community locations
- Visitors Centres and outreach provide face to face and telephone information service enabling visitors of all abilities and with diverse needs to get out and enjoy the Park
- Organise outdoor sport activities such as beach runs to encourage communities to be more active
- Develop walks and trails in NP communities

## 8.4 Take Notice

*Being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances well-being and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm people's life priorities, enhances self-understanding and promotes making positive personal choices.*

National Park Authorities can strengthen and broaden awareness by offering:

- Interpretation resources and direct opportunities for people to access places that encourage them to pause and 'take in the view' via literature (digital and print) .
- Ongoing local and national campaign to engage with people with seasonal wonders of nature e.g. lambing, ospreys in flight, the beauty of autumn forests etc. through social media.
- Bespoke publications to support interpretation targeting special needs groups i.e. touch maps for people with visually impairments.

## 8.5 Keep Learning

*Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life and helps to lift people out of depression.*

The National Park Authorities can support learning by:

- Activities, Events and Courses organised by Authorities and with partner organisation including 'wildlife sightings', historic talks, school and community education projects.
- Training to local groups to increase knowledge and understand of local area –eg through Walkability, Cynefin a Chymuned programme or John Muir Awards.
- Accredited and informal training programmes and networks such as skills in conservation and land management, health and wellbeing, outdoor schools.

## 8.6 Give

*Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy.*

National Park Authorities can offer opportunities to participate through:

- Volunteering and charitable opportunities with the park foster a greater sense of 'looking after' the environment.
- Work undertaken by Authority projects and services on the ground and with communities, such as programmes with Portfield School (PCNPA), and Eryri Walking Club for the Blind and visually impaired.
- Opportunities for volunteering and participation in externally supported community projects.



## **9. Case Studies 2017/18**

WNP examples of the some of the innovative projects the Authorities have delivered- working in partnership with community groups, health care and social work

### **9.1 Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority**

#### **West Wales Nature-Based Heath Service Network**

The West Wales Nature-based Health Service Network was established in 2015. The Network is coordinated by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and West Wales Action for Mental Health and has over 70 members from health, social care and environmental sectors – including officers and staff from Pembrokeshire County Council. It is a mutually supportive network for practitioners, but welcomes academics, researchers and lay people interested in advancing the principles of nature-based health as well as clinicians and managers from health and social care sectors. The Network offers peer support and guidance and is a platform to share and learn for all.

The Network is founded on the understanding that experiences in nature have beneficial impacts on human health and well-being. The extensive membership of the Network demonstrates that this type of work is not only an emerging area of practice but also delivers an established and informed approach by many practitioners, projects and services to service users.

So far the Network has hosted seven network meetings across West Wales. Meetings have combined more formal presentations and discussion groups in the morning followed by opportunities to participate in practical activities in the afternoon. This combination of more formal working with informal activities has worked well in enabling participants to not only experience different nature-based activities but has also been a good way to enable people to share experiences and ideas.

There is a Network Action Plan and Terms of Reference. The Network also has published its first Newsletter. As there is a great deal of diversity of practice within nature-based health services, Six Communities of Practice have emerged to delve a little deeper into each practice and to support collective learning and development:

- Ocean based
- Woodland based work
- Animal Assisted Interventions
- Care Farm/Gardening
- Evaluation and monitoring – across all the practices
- Arts and nature

Communities of Practice will identify research and policy interests – such as social prescribing, self-care and early intervention and recovery principles, share funding opportunities and will collate a ‘product’ or summary sheet of each practice that can be shared with others including organisations involved in health and social care.

## 9.2 Snowdonia National Park Authority

### Early Onset Dementia Group

The partnership between Snowdonia National Park Authority and the South Gwynedd Early Onset Dementia Group was established following the first meeting of the North Wales Dementia Network. The Network was facilitated by the Dementia Services Development Centre at Bangor University.

It has been shown that it can be difficult for younger people living with dementia and their care-givers to organise and sustain social events with their peers. The group was set up by specialist early onset dementia nurse, Mari Ireland in order to help alleviate the problem. The group comprises up to 12 people and includes individuals living with early onset dementia and their carers.

Since that first meeting during the summer of 2016 SNPA has helped to organise walks, visits and various activities in Snowdonia and a good working relationship has developed with the group. Group members are encouraged to chat and reminisce while they walk and the various activities have increased their opportunities for social networking. Experiences in the National Park where individuals have contact with natural cultural and historic heritage has been of great benefit in helping individuals share their stories and experiences with one another to both reconnect with the past but also build relationships and memories for the future.

Glenda Roberts, one of the participants said:

*"I think this walking group is wonderful, I really enjoy the scenery. It's great to give people the chance to talk to each other and realise there are plenty of us in the same boat. It should be nice for the family members, who also come, as they can share ways in which they have helped and ideas that have worked."*

As a result of the collaboration, relevant members of staff have had Friends of Dementia awareness training.

Recently the Authority has secured funding for a 5 day workshop with 3d artist, Luned Rhys Parri. The workshops, which will take place at yr Ysgwrn will form part of the Age Cymru Gwanwyn Festival. The artwork will take its inspiration by both the landscape of Snowdonia and personal memories.

The art will be photographed on an ongoing basis and this will form part on the public exhibition of the works. The group intends to exhibit their work at Yr Ysgwrn and at the local hospital in Tremadog. The artwork will then be given to the people who created them as keepsakes and hopefully will become family heirlooms. The group have said that they want to inspire others and challenge the stigma attached to their diagnosis, therefore exhibiting their work will be a celebration of them as individuals as well as highlight what people with dementia and their carers can achieve.

## 9.3 Brecon Beacons National Park

### Inspironment

Inspironment is a social inclusion project which aims to develop awareness and understanding of what the Brecon Beacons National Park can offer to leaders of and participants in groups working with disadvantaged people. In particular the National Park has a unique offer of being both an inspirational yet safe place. These qualities have been repeatedly identified by participants visiting the National Park on previous inclusion programme.

The project objectives are to:

- increase the skill levels of individual group leaders to enable them to act as inspirational figures within their groups.
- support the delivery of replicable low cost activities.
- promote the benefits the inspirational Brecon Beacons National Park environment offers to disadvantaged groups.
- improve the involvement of disadvantaged people in outdoor activity.
- better understand the role of high quality landscapes in inspiring and enabling immediate well-being and health benefits for socially excluded groups.

Inspironment started as a Natural Resources Wales funded project, completing in March 2016. Since the end of the NRW funded project, Inspironment has continued on an income-generating basis. The Sustainable Communities and Community Development Staff have worked with groups to source funding for continued delivery, transport and in some cases for Agored accredited units for participants.

Participating groups have included children, young people and older people, including services for recovery from substance misuse, mental health groups, young carers, youth intervention services, isolated elderly groups and others.

Groups have used the project support to test and extend their own boundaries. Cardiff People First is a self advocacy organisation run by and for people with a learning disability. With BBNPA support the group has completed a series of 10 increasingly challenging walks in the National Park, used public transport from Cardiff.

Project evaluation explored areas including barriers to previous involvement and impact of the project, including sometime after their involvement:

- 100% of respondents to the post activity survey they thought Inspironment activities would benefit them.
- 67% of respondents had tried the activities again since their visit.
- 65% had tried other outdoor activities including: walking, geocaching, other sports, litter picking and photography.





# The West Wales Nature Based Health Service Network

AUTUMN 2017 NEWSLETTER  
November 2017



Awdurdod Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro  
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority





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## **The West Wales Nature-based Health Service Network**

The West Wales Nature-based Health Service Network was established in 2015. The Network is based on the understanding that experiences in nature have beneficial impacts on human health and wellbeing. The extensive membership of the Network demonstrates that this type of work is not only an emerging area of practice but also delivers a well informed ethos and approach to many practitioners, projects and services.

The Network is coordinated by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and West Wales Action for Mental Health and brings together over 50 members from health and environmental sectors. It is a mutually supportive network for practitioners, but it welcomes academics, researchers and lay people interested in advancing the principles of nature-based health as well as clinicians and managers from health and social care sectors. The Network offers peer support and guidance and is a platform to share and learn for all.. The Network is also committed to making change and will actively support the development of projects on the ground.



## **What are Nature-based Health Services?**

Nature-based health services include any activity which engages people with the natural world directly with the aim of promoting health and wellbeing. This embraces a diverse range of health and wellbeing related activities that often have both physical and mental health benefits, while connecting with community development and can also be a form of 'social prescribing'.

Deciding what language to use has been tricky. We have come to the phrase 'nature-based health service' to include terms like 'ecotherapy', 'eco-health', 'green care' and 'green gym'. The wide range of terms relating to this topic reflects the diverse range of activities beneficial to health supported by outdoor environments and experiences with nature.



## The meetings and events so far

So far the Network has hosted six network meetings across West Wales. The events have been very well attended with an average attendance of of 30 participants . The all day events have focused on presentations and discussion in the mornings followed by a practical activity in the afternoon. There have been presentations on projects, evaluation and monitoring methods, and research findings. The topics for discussion groups have been driven by participants.

In the afternoons there have been opportunities for participants to take part in practical activities that showcase the work within nature-based health service network. These sessions have included workshops in somatic movement, nature connection through mindfulness, walking, the therapeutic benefits of working with animals and art in the outdoors. These sessions have been excellent opportunities to experience what nature-based health service can provide , especially for those working in policy or involved in planning or commissioning services.



## Network Action Plan

The Network objectives focus on improving understanding of nature-based health services in the West Wales region and co-operation between members so that the sector can grow and develop robust approaches to address health and wellbeing needs. (A full summary of the Network Objectives can be found in the Terms of Reference.)

Using Results Based Accountability (RBA) the Network has agreed an Action Plan. This Action Plan will help the Network coordinators ensure that the Network develops to be responsive to the needs of the Members and is able to monitor and deliver its objectives. The documents are useful for members to share with others to let them know about how 'nature-based health services' are working together in West Wales. Copies of the Results Based Accountability summary sheet and Action Plan have been emailed to all Network members, but if you would like copies please let Angie or Hannah know.



## Communities of Practice

As there is a great deal of diversity of practice within nature-based health services, Six Communities of Practice have emerged to delve a little deeper into each practice and to support collective learning and development:

- Ocean based
- Woodland based work
- Animal Assisted Interventions
- Care Farm/Gardening
- Evaluation and monitoring – across all the practices
- Arts and nature

Communities of Practice will identify research and policy interests, share funding opportunities and will collate a 'product' or summary sheet of each practice that can be shared with others including organisations involved in health and social care. These sheets will be useful in helping raise awareness of the benefits of the work. Contacts for each Communities of Practice are available from Angie or Hannah and new Communities of Practice may emerge in time.

## Research Reports


A list of useful research findings and reports about the mental health and wellbeing benefits of engagement with nature has been compiled. This is very helpful if you need evidence for funding bids. If you would like a copy please contact Jan at [Jan.batty@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:Jan.batty@wales.nhs.uk). And if you would like to add to this list please contact Jan.

## Developing Standards in Nature-based Health Services

Shon Devey from the surfing and wellbeing project Tonic has been looking into how standards in nature-based health services can be developed. The standards will look to cover both governance standards such as qualifications, training, environmental awareness and risk management and practice standards that relate to the content and conduct of sessions on the ground. For more information contact Shon Devey at [ceredigion@wwamh.org.uk](mailto:ceredigion@wwamh.org.uk)



## **Project Examples**

 **Morydau Magic** a woodland situated on the coast in West Wales near Carmarthen. Accessible by public transport and with a small car park for visitors.

The activities are facilitated by experienced, qualified professionals - Phil and Vivien. Phil has a lifetimes' experience of working in the environment, he holds a BA Hons and is an experienced artist/tutor/sculptor and woodland manager; Vivien has extensive experience working with people and holds a BA Hons, PGCE and MAAT, she is a practicing artist/tutor and professionally registered art psychotherapist.

Taster sessions for small groups/individuals available:-forest gardening, woodland crafts, mindfulness and more....Art Therapy 1:1 sessions also available.

**Morydau Magic** has been set up as an Eco/Art Therapy Woodland the sessions provide an opportunity to improve mental and physical wellbeing and has already had a beneficial effect on participants. It utilises the woodland and the coast so that people can connect with the natural environment. Small groups or individuals attend the sessions. The sessions are tailored to the participants; some people are referred by professionals, others independently arrange to attend sessions.

They provide training days, craft sessions and structured courses which are often linked to the seasons and work with the Celtic calendar.

Participants came to the project in small groups. A pattern emerged during the sessions:

- meet and greet
- health and safety
- fire and warm drinks
- people's stories
- mindfulness
- Activities
- comfort break
- resume activities
- walk onto beach before leaving.

During the people's stories element the participants talked about their lives. This was a very important part of the participants' experience. Over a period of time the participants interacted more and many said that they felt they were in a safe place when they came to the sessions. They talked about their social isolation and the barriers to education and employment. It was noticeable how their confidence increased; for some this meant eating lunch with the group, where in the earlier sessions they had taken themselves away or sat with their back to the group, for other it was physical fitness and confidence, noticing how much further they were walking during the beach walk. The beach and estuary are wonderful places to see and hear an amazing variety of birds and one of the participants on the project was able to share their ornithology knowledge. It was a rewarding experience for everyone.

Since the funding, and hence the sessions, have come to an end, some of the participants have been asking if they can come back. They are hoping that funding will come so that they can access the project again. These are people that travelled on a mini bus and a seventy mile round trip to access the session. They were people who otherwise on other days were not getting out of bed until late in the day because they were finding their day unbearably long.

Those who could get to the woodland by themselves have asked to be volunteers, and arrangements are being made for a volunteer day.



Our aim is to increase access and availability of outside spaces.

There is potential for projects like this to really make a difference. This is long term work, which is needed for people who have spent a long time being unwell.

Here is link to a short film about the project

<https://youtu.be/k-3vqZw8bAU>

For information please contact :- [vivmorgan@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:vivmorgan@hotmail.co.uk)

### ■ **Explore and Walk Movement**

James Moore coordinates the **Explore and Walk Movement** on behalf of Welsh Government. They provide physical and literal space to individuals and teams to help them grow and develop.

Research shows being outdoors helps us to be kinder and more compassionate and more connected with the world and other people. **Explore and Walk** offer courses to public service and third sector organisation in Wales – see website for more information about training, resources and networking opportunities

<https://academiwales.gov.wales/pages/explore-walk-archwilio-cherdded>



## **Network Developments**

There have been a number of interesting developments for the Network and Nature-based Health Services in general ranging from policy developments through to practical action on the ground.

### **Local**

In the Pembrokeshire area there have been meetings with Partnership for Local Action and Network for Enterprise and development (PLANED) to see what opportunities there may be to support the development of nature-based health services, there are opportunities via LEADER.funding to explore potential project ideas.

PLANED as the administrative body for LEADER funding have seen numerous projects within social prescribing come in to the Arwain Sir Benfro team, which has funded projects in Pembrokeshire with over £781,000 to date. The LEADER programme is part of the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014 – 2020,

which is financed by the Welsh Government and European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The next step is for Animation Officer, Jessica Morgan and Project Officer, Annie Slater, to work with a group of applicants, who have been in touch with them to look at potential co-working opportunities within social prescribing, outside of the projects already approved in this theme. For more information please email: [annies@planed.org.uk](mailto:annies@planed.org.uk)

Current projects including Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary services (PAVS) AV's Community Connectors Project and Health Advocates and Lifestyle Advisers working within Hywel Dda Health Board which also promote opportunities for self care and referral to nature-based health projects.

Pembrokeshire's Creating an Active Wales multi-agency working group are promoting walking as a key activity to improving health and wellbeing for all as part of the Let's Walk Pembrokeshire initiative. As well as promoting walking for recreation the initiative seeks to encourage people to incorporate regular walking in their everyday lives. If you would like to get involved or are interested in training or information about the health benefits of walking contact [Hannahb@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:Hannahb@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) or see website for details [www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=784](http://www.pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk/default.asp?PID=784) and <http://enjoy.pcnpa.org.uk/details.asp?hbid=18>



## Regional

### Other Networks

As awareness of nature-based health services grows, smaller localised networks are also establishing themselves. This includes the Dyfi Valley Network and Fishguard's 'Y Ffwd Byrlymus' or 'Bubbling Springs'. If you would like to know more about these local networks or are planning on something similar in your area please let us know.

### Mind Aberystwyth; Environmental Social Enterprise Feasibility Study

Wavehill has been commissioned to work with the mental health charity Mind Aberystwyth on a study of the feasibility of models for delivering various types of ecotherapy services in Ceredigion. The feasibility study aims to establish the practicality and methodology of



developing a local site in Ceredigion such as a woodland or similar local environmental asset into an Environmental Social Enterprise community hub based on a core of ecotherapy services and activities.

The study will consist of both desk-based research and field-based research, such as site visits and community consultation events. There will be a final report designed to identify the viability of any proposals and the possibility of attracting funding for potential development of a project.

A stakeholder group has been set up comprising Mind Aberystwyth, Cynnal y Cardi, Coed Lleol, WWAMH and Ceredigion County Council Tourism department. A separate group comprising Mind service users will also be set up to provide comments to the Steering Group. For further information contact Meleri Richards, Rural Communities Coordinator Meleri Richards Meleri.Richards@ceredigion.gov.uk

## **National**

On a national level the Mid Wales Healthcare Collaborative has identified the potential of these natural resources to improve quality of life and life expectancy for local people and communities and hosted a Green Health in Practice conference in March 2017. The event was well attended by practitioners and leaders of services and showed just how much work was happening on the ground. Importantly it also highlighted that at a strategic and policy level models of health care beyond traditional medical interventions are being taken seriously. To view presentations from the day and the final conference report see <http://www.midwalescollaborative.wales.nhs.uk/event/9878>

## **Social Prescribing**

There has been a great deal of interest in social prescribing as a way of improving health, wellbeing and economic outcomes for the people of Wales. Social prescribing recognises that the wider determinants of health (social, economic and environmental factors) and not just biological or psychological factors need to be addressed for overall health and wellbeing. Social prescribing is essentially a holistic approach to health that also aims to support individuals to take greater control of their own health.

Social prescribing is a means of enabling GPs, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local, non-clinical services. Consequently opportunities for 'social prescriptions' may come from a range of sectors including the arts, volunteering and community work facilitators, debt and legal advisors, recreation and tourism and of course those working in nature-based health services.

The Public Health Wales Primary Care Hub is looking into social prescribing. ([www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/social-prescribing](http://www.primarycareone.wales.nhs.uk/social-prescribing)). What is important to remember however that opportunities to access nature-based health service can also be done on a 'self-management' basis and people do not need to be given a prescription in order to access benefits from the natural environment. Nature-based Health Services are also those that can be accessed informally and projects can be participating in their delivery simply by offering experiences in nature.

Jetske Germing from TYF in St Davids has been researching what West Wales based opportunities there may be for a social prescribing service or broker similar to Wellbeing Enterprises. ([www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk](http://www.wellbeingenterprises.org.uk)). Multiple benefits can be identified through the social prescribing of outdoor activity – not only in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for recipients but also to imbed resilience and skills set in the outdoor recreation sector. By retaining staff projects can operate all year and equipment that would otherwise be underutilised outside of the tourist season can be put to use. Watch this space for more information!

## **Opportunities for Research and Learning**

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority has links with various academic institutions and has been developing more formalised links with Swansea University in particular. This has led to a number of interesting research summaries from the University some of which may be of interest to Network members. Current research topics under discussion include horticulture and medicinal plants, self-esteem and outdoor experiences, connecting older people with nature, supporting student wellbeing through nature, and developing frameworks for monitoring and evaluating nature-based interventions. If you are interested in finding out more or would like to discuss a potential research idea please email [Hannahb@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:Hannahb@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)



## **Useful Links**

- Welsh Government's Together for Mental Health strategy was released in October 2016  
The delivery plan can be found here:  
<http://gov.wales/topics/health/nhswales/plans/mental-health/?lang=en>
- Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015  
<http://thewaleswewant.co.uk/sites/default/files/Guide%20to%20the%20WFGAct.pdf>
- Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014  
<http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160127socialservicesacten.pdf>
- Together for Mental Health Strategy (October 2016)  
<http://thewaleswewant.co.uk/sites/default/files/Guide%20to%20the%20WFGAct.pdf>
- A dose of nature - practical guidance and an evidence report amongst other things.  
[www.adoseofnature.net](http://www.adoseofnature.net)
- Green Infrastructure information produced by Wildlife Trust Wales  
[www.wtwales.org/greeninfrastructure](http://www.wtwales.org/greeninfrastructure)

## **For more information**

### **Contact:**

- Hannah Buck – [Hannahb@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:Hannahb@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)  
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority
- Angie Darlington – [director@wwamh.org.uk](mailto:director@wwamh.org.uk)  
West Wales Action for Mental Health



Parc Cenedlaethol Arfordir Penfro  
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park



This newsletter is a partnership publication on behalf of West Wales Nature-based Health Service Network. Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and West Wales Action for Mental Health coordinates the Network however this publication is independent from both organisations.