

## West of England Practitioner Network for Nature and Health

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14.00 – 16.30, 12 November 2020, online

Practitioners met online for the tenth meeting of the Practitioner Network for Nature and Health.

Michéal Connors (Natural Academy) and Emily Malik (EcoWild) welcomed attendees to the meeting and invited everyone to participate in a brief grounding exercise, taking time to notice the environment surrounding them at home. Participants were then asked to briefly introduce themselves.

### UPDATES

Stuart Gardner (WENP Manager) provided an update to members on the work of the West of England Nature Partnership (WENP):

- WENP is working with Active Ageing Bristol, WellAware and other partners to produce a 'Social Prescribing' directory, which will include a section on nature and health. The Practitioner Network will be crucial in collating content for this Directory.
- There are currently significant opportunities for funding of nature-based projects, including the [Green Recovery Challenge Fund](#) and the proposed creation of a Bristol Avon 'Catchment Market' for environmental services. WENP has produced a 'Nature Recovery Network' Prospectus of strategic projects that would restore nature in the West of England, with a view to facilitating funding of these projects.
- WENP is continuing work to produce a Tree and Woodland Strategy for the West of England, which should be published in Spring 2021.

Michéal noted the need to explore how to integrate nature and health into nature-based projects.

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Michéal provided an update on Practitioner Network membership, reminding the Network that a Community Interest Company ('Nature and Health Practitioners') had been set up as part of the move to set up the Practitioner Network as a membership organisation. Membership is currently voluntary but could develop to integrate accreditation into its offer. There are currently around 25 members; once there are 50, it is planned to seek others want to step in to the roles that Michéal and Emily currently undertake.

There is, therefore, an open door for members to become 'Officers' of the Network, providing support for running the network, and members will need to have a strong voice in its future direction. Emily noted that CICs have directors, and so there is an opportunity for officers to act in this capacity. Anyone with an interest in becoming an officer should email [info@natureandhealthpractitioners.com](mailto:info@natureandhealthpractitioners.com).

There is a desire to grow the network, and eventually to have other networks around that we can connect to and that grow out of this, with the same aims. Sarah Witts noted that she was looking to develop a similar network in Cornwall, and that there was a need to make clear how this network could support others being set up. SGa noted that Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) could be a useful network to build upon.

Emily provided an overview of the work of the Diversity Sub-group:

- The Subgroup is an opportunity of furthering approach to this topic as professionals, building on this year's momentum.
- A statement acting as a touchstone for the network is on the website.
- The first meeting of a subgroup was held recently, which was kept brief and concise with a focus on the aims of the subgroup. At future meetings, the subgroup will look at what's happening already, and examples of good practice, and aim to utilise skills in the Network.

- The group is open to anybody, and notes will be circulated to the whole network. Anyone interested in joining the subgroup should get in touch with Emily ([emily@ecowild.org.uk](mailto:emily@ecowild.org.uk)).

AK noted that there seems to be a community of people looking to professionalise and received accreditation. However, there is another group who may work on mainstream settings, have had some training, but are struggling to know how to embed nature in their own practice/setting (e.g. in mental health, working with people with learning difficulties, education). People may not see themselves as nature-based but want to integrate nature into what they do.

A subgroup could be set up to work with people in this situation and would fit in with the 'professionals' section of the website.

## **GREEN PRESCRIBING FUND**

SGa provided an update on the £4 million Green Prescribing fund announced by government, which will fund 'test and learn' sites for Green Social Prescribing, designed and delivered over two years in four representative sites, effectively testing and refining all parts of the Social Prescribing model and the provision of 'nature-based services'.

Healthier Together, the Sustainability Transformation Partnership for Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG), was successful in its submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) for the Government's [Green Prescribing Fund](#). A more detailed bid is being worked up with support from WENP for the second stage of applications, which will include the role of the Practitioner Network in scaling up Green Social Prescribing. The result of the application is expected to be received on 16 December 2020.

Michéal noted the importance of the voice of practitioners being included in the bid, through the Practitioner network. The need for a development post to build the infrastructure in the long-term should also be recognised, providing an interface between the health service and the service providers.

SGa added that the National Trust are interested in using spaces for delivery and that they will be invited to the next meeting to discuss this. It was added that the Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust also have spaces that could be used for delivery.

*Post-meeting note: the second stage application was submitted by Healthier Together on 27<sup>th</sup> November.*

## **NEXT MEETINGS**

The date for the next Practitioner Network meeting will be confirmed shortly but will likely be in February 2021.

## NOTES FROM ZOOM CHAT (ORGANISED BY MEETING TOPIC)

### Updates

From Sarah Witts to Everyone: 02:45 PM

Is the green prescription funding the same as the funding for the nature recovery network?

From Alan Kellas to Everyone: 02:52 PM

Water from Somer Valley goes downstream to most of us too.....NB: most health trusts have biodiversity plans/aspirations, sustainability strategies and the local declaration of climate and ecological emergency is helping: AWP NBT are both keen to link up..

From Sarah Witts to Everyone: 02:55 PM

It feels like that's why the 2 funds are separate as there isn't a clear enough understanding of reciprocity based nature and health interventions. In the future hopefully they'll be seen as one and the same–

could we get more info about what support is needed in the network please?

From karen price to Everyone: 03:19 PM

Is there a recognised qualification for practitioners? Having been burnt once in the past by spending a lot of money on a formal qualification that has since been devalued, I am cautious in investing again in another costly / lengthy qualification.

From Natural Academy to Everyone: 03:33 PM

we discussed accreditation and setting up a framework for this.

From Ruth Taylor to Everyone: 03:35 PM

Sarah and I spoke about a space for sharing details about different organisations which help set up your business (e.g. plans, funding) and also a section on CPD. That's it in short I think....

From lhamerston to Everyone: 03:35 PM

In a rapidly developing area of interest the Practitioners Network can offer quality, consistency and clarity of qualification provision.

From karen price to Everyone: 03:38 PM

For me I had to pay for a professional post graduate qualification which was a requirement for youth and community workers, but has now been almost dismissed. However, interestingly, last week I was in a SW youth work practice network where they are talking about the need to a quality assurance scheme as many of the core youth work skills have been lost

### Membership Update

From Alan Kellas to Everyone: 03:53 PM

we discussed whether all members do want accreditation....and how far commissioners want this....I wonder if it would be worth inviting Helen Jackson Brown to talk about commissioning and social care as she is v experienced in this field ...how to make your practice into a business as a topic

if people want feedback and ideas on what they are doing, they could ask for a circle of support/feedback...and how to find a partner in a more mainstream setting who might be looking for a partner

WENP could set up a find a partner scheme...eg I am looking for ...someone with ....experience....

Stuart is it easy for folk to know what local sites are owned by local NGOs/NT/FE etc

From Larissa Fry to Everyone: 03:54 PM

and Woodland Trust...

Love the idea of 'find a partner' matchmaking

From Alan Kellas to Everyone: 03:55 PM

“Find a health or nature local buddy or partner”?

From Me to Everyone: 03:55 PM

More info on the Green Prescribing Fund: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/green-social-prescribing-call-for-expressions-of-interest/green-social-prescribing-call-for-expressions-of-interest>

From Sarah Witts to Everyone: 03:59 PM

so is too late to apply now? how do we find out who we need to speak to in our area/local areas?

From Emily Malik to Everyone: 04:00 PM

its only to be submitted by the CCG/ STP/ ICS leaders sarah for this one

and it is on 2nd stage now, but there are other big funds arising

From Sarah Witts to Everyone: 04:01 PM

Thanks Emily :) So we'd need to find out who they are and if theres a way for us to get involved?

From Alan Kellas to Everyone: 04:06 PM

yes there are lots of local community green space projects who are doing great things...city farm/community allotments and river/harbourside projects

From Me to Everyone: 04:13 PM

Link here: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/thriving-communities-fund#section-1>

From Alan Kellas to Everyone: 04:13 PM

Stuart, someone working with you (2 days a week) and WENP would save alot of wasted time learning about the networks ...they could be someone from this network...Mersey Forest coordinated something like this: Jonny Wood went up to Liverpool and talked to Paul Nolan then Ian Barrett about how Avon could replicate things that have worked up there..Sheffield IWUN is other exemplar...corporate funding: well done Amanda for looking into this...good luck...and island based approach linking arts and nature sounds great..

From Sarah Witts to Everyone: 04:14 PM

Could there be a poster made by the network for putting in GP practices? I have never seen one telling people about 'green prescriptions' and perhaps this would help spread the knowledge to everyday people.

## **Green Prescribing Fund**

From Jane Wright to Everyone: 04:15 PM

I think we should be looking at doing that as part of training for GPs in Somer Valley in the new year

From Me to Everyone: 04:15 PM

The idea of a dedicated post within the bid is one that Selena and I raised and the CCG is receptive to. Will need to try and persuade them that a good amount of time per week would be necessary

From Alan Kellas to Everyone: 04:15 PM

Sarah, The wildlife Trusts have these...and a video by Dr Amhir Khan for waiting rooms..

From Sarah Witts to Everyone: 04:17 PM

Thanks Alan. This is Alice :) they don't seem to have made it into gp surgeries down here

From Alan Kellas to Everyone: 04:17 PM

Emily and I were part of GP training in BANES recently....Becca Hall and Alice Boden keen GPs and there is a national green prescribing project...some links to Centre for Sustainable healthcare..who host NHS forest (Carey Newson)