



NHS
The Natural Health Service

**Feasibility Study into
Natural Health Services
in West Wales**

Funded by LEADER Arwain Sir Benfro





NHS NATURAL HEALTH SERVICE

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PART ONE

What is a 'Natural Health Service'?

A natural health service is, quite simply, the use of any aspect of the natural world that is beneficial to health. That could be a walk with friends in the woods, a surf session, kite-flying on the beach, collecting acorns to start a tree nursery, growing vegetables, riding a horse, listening to the birds, camping in the wilds or skimming stones on a river. It is anything that makes use of any aspect of the natural world to achieve a therapeutic outcome.

Many of us never have the opportunity to do these things. We have become a sedentary, largely-urban, society that is far removed from the natural world. It is unnatural for us to live this way and many people suffer the loss of connection with nature without necessarily knowing what it is they are missing.

Those who do recognise the need to recharge their batteries do it in all sorts of ways, perhaps walking the dog, riding a horse, going for a run on the coastal path or lying on the grass and breathing deeply. Sometimes these things are so natural to us, such an inherent part of our lives that we overlook their therapeutic benefit. We only notice when we are prevented from them and our sense of wellbeing suffers. We might recognise the need to keep fit and go running on a treadmill in a gym, or get off a bus one stop earlier so that we can walk a little further along a city street and burn calories in the process. These are better-than-nothing options, but are of limited use.

For example, two people could walk a measured distance, at the same speed, up and down the same gradient, and use exactly the same amount of energy, improving their physical health in the process. However, if one of the two walked along a busy, city street looking at their mobile phone, while the other walker passed through woods, with a dog, or friends, common sense would suggest that the second walker would have a more positive experience.

We hope that this report will show how the sensitive use of nature as a means of boosting health and wellbeing offers the potential to help large numbers of people, at minimal cost.

Finally, a brief note about terminology. Throughout this report a number of different terms are used to describe nature-based therapies and services, including 'eco-therapy' and 'green care'. Generally we refer to 'natural health services', but all terms used relate to the use of nature in its various forms as a tool for improvement in all round health and wellbeing.



PART TWO

Methodology

At the outset, the aim of this study was to demonstrate the value of natural health services, and its potential to deliver benefits in all aspects of health provision.

Given its subject matter, this report has to deal with outcomes that are difficult to quantify. With this in mind, Part Six focuses on evidence gathered by scientists, health professionals and other natural health practitioners. Our study was planned to encompass two key evidence-gathering components, natural health 'Taster Days' and a natural health conference.

The day-long conference was held in August, 2016. It was attended by 32 natural health practitioners and experts who provided valuable evidence and information. In addition, a number of 'Taster Days' were organised to create opportunities for us to observe how various activities might benefit a range of different participants.

Alongside these two strands, a short documentary film about natural health was created. It has been used alongside the study to raise the profile of practitioners, and the ways their work helps people.

PART THREE

Clynfyw Care Farm

Clynfyw has offered a natural health service since the mid-1980s when the farm began to offer holiday lettings in its cottages. The properties were set up in a way that made the countryside more accessible to the disabled, and to people who had been excluded from it - for physical or social reasons, or both.

During their stay many holidaymakers enjoyed helping around the farm. They got involved in tasks like making charcoal, feeding the pigs and hay-making. Many visitors walked in the woods, went badger-watching, helped to clear ditches and paths.

It is important to recognise that many full-time farmers experience poor mental health. The Royal Agricultural Benevolent Institute (RABI, 2016) reported that mental illness among UK farmers was leading to a suicide rate within the industry of one death per week. However, those involved with at Clynfyw at the time say that many visitors benefitted from working outside, and spending time in nature.

In 2011, Clynfyw Community Interest Company (CIC) was established to run the farm as a care farm, supporting a wide variety of vulnerable people. Clynfyw now offers supported tenancies and respite holiday breaks in its cottages. However, the main element of Clynfyw's work now is to offer a Day Service, which uses meaningful projects as tools for learning, engagement, contribution, and fun.

Running six days a week, the Day Service offers horticultural projects, charcoal-making, a drama club, apple-juicing, a food club, a music club, arts and crafts and swimming. Participants can also undertake John Muir Awards and there are special events throughout the year, including monthly coffee mornings for local charities.



PART THREE

Clynfyw Care Farm

A key activity is Clynfyw's 'Wheelie Good Idea' project, which refurbishes unwanted wheelchairs and mobility aids that are then re-homed through partners in sub-Saharan Africa and Syria. In addition, Clynfyw offers Agored Cymru-accredited courses in a range of subjects, including Introduction to Horticulture, Bicycle Maintenance, Independent Living Skills, Crafting, Relationships, Travel Training, Money Handling, Crafts, Cookery, Numeracy and Literacy, Sports, Woodland Skills, and Bushcraft.

In October 2015, Clynfyw also took over management of Cardigan-based Kinora mental health service. Involvement with Kinora has provided an insight into how valuable access to nature can be to people experiencing mental health issues. Kinora has its own allotment plot and runs a soup-making project using its own produce. It also runs weekly health walks and is developing a community gardening service to offer to elderly and housebound people.

Those involved at Clynfyw and Kinora report that the vulnerable people with whom they work thrive in the outdoors. There appears to be benefit to be gained by spending time with motivated people, or working together as equals on meaningful projects, such as repairing wheelchairs, bottling apple juice, or planting vegetables. Similarly, walking in woods to collect conkers and acorns for use in a tree nursery has helped service users to become fitter, more relaxed and happier.

Over a number of years, Clynfyw personnel have witnessed service-users that learn new skills and build stamina and self-esteem. It is our experience that care farming, and the therapeutic use of nature, helps all sorts of people in simple and direct ways.

In addition to its Day Service, Clynfyw welcomes groups on specific visits. These include giving children a farm-related experience with a tractor ride, a chance to feed the pigs, collect eggs and walk in woodland. The care farm also runs bushcraft sessions for West Wales Domestic Abuse Agency, which focus on activities for mothers and sons in the company of 'good male role models'.

During these sessions participants build a shelter, make a fire and cook food. Feedback indicates long-term positive impacts on the mother/son relationship.

SINCE 2011, CLYNFYW HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY BUSY:

Clynfyw now employs 27 people, including 24 frontline staff, most of whom work more than 25 hours per week.

As of December 2016, Kinora provides an additional 180 'engagement days' each month. This number represents a doubling in the numbers of people who accessed the service when Clynfyw took over management of the service in October 2015.

Clynfyw's standard Day Service runs from 10am - to 3pm. The standard Day Service rate for supporting someone as part of a group is £37.57. There is a charge of £14.53 per hour for supporting someone on a one-to-one basis.

The care farm also offers Out-of-Hours support and domiciliary care for people staying in its cottages, either as a supported tenant or on respite providing more than 200 hours of domiciliary care each week. This study focussed on Clynfyw's daytime provision.

It can be assumed that users enjoy, and derive benefit from, their time spent at the farm as they are free to 'vote with their feet' at any time. Clynfyw makes every effort to make participants aware of alternative provision.

Clynfyw's Day Service is currently running close to capacity and it is now seeking to support other organisations in the development of similar services elsewhere. As things stand, need is greater than the capacity of provision in West Wales. Going forward, demand is likely to continue to grow; Welsh Health Survey (2016) statistics show a year-on-year increase in number of people accessing support for mental health related issues.

*Clynfyw publishes annual Social Accounts that provide more detail about what it does, and why. Please get in touch if you would like a copy of its most recent Social Accounts document.

2011

the service supported two people,
employing two part-time members
of staff.

2012

15 people were supported,
including 13 new placements



2013

15 people were supported,
including 13 new placements

2014

35 people were supported,
including 14 new placements with
3,205 'engagement days'.



2015

37 people were supported,
including 6 new placements with
4,081 'engagement days'.

2016

38 people were supported,
including 5 new placements with
over 4,500 'engagement days'.



PART FOUR

Pilot Projects

For this study, five different pilot projects were undertaken to provide opportunities for learning from first-hand experience. The five natural health services activities chosen were:

- 1 Surf therapy with TONIC.
- 2 Bushcrafting with John Fenna.
- 3 Equine therapy with Lluest Horse and Pony Trust
- 4 Community growing for therapy with The Grange, Norfolk
- 5 Walking with Friends with Reconnect

PROJECT ONE: TONIC SURF THERAPY

TONIC has run successful pilot schemes for a unique Oceantherapy programme across West Wales since 2012. The schemes have shown evidence of significant success in improving the confidence, health and wellbeing of a wide range of adults, children and young people with difficulties (including physical disabilities, learning disabilities, mental health problems, cognitive impairment, addiction issues and offending behaviour). The TONIC programme works with people aged 12 to 75+. It has been developed under the auspices of **West Wales Action for Mental Health (WWAMH)** and **Walkin on Water Surf School**.

The taster day provided an opportunity to give two small groups of participants the experience of a TONIC session at Poppit Sands, near St Dogmaels, Pembrokeshire.

The sessions included fitting and changing into wetsuits, assessing individual risks and worries, carrying equipment to the shoreline, teaching sessions on the beach and supported practice sessions in the water.

Participants arrived through Clynfyw and Kinora projects and were a mix of service-users, carers, staff and volunteers. Unlike during longer-term programmes, there was little contact with participants prior to the event.

TONIC staff engaged with each participant during the allocation and fitting of wetsuits and sought to create an upbeat mood around the experience. They also provided individual encouragement and support in the water.

Participants were encouraged to set personal achievement goals. TONIC staff then reinforced the achievements and learning from the day and continued to reflect on the session during the changing out of wetsuits.

The session finished with a barbecue on the beach, which provided an opportunity to reinforce memories of the session and individual achievements. Clynfyw staff involved reported that the sessions had a considerable 'buzz' and there was excitement around the activity. The physical ability of participants varied considerably, with some struggling to walk down to the water's edge. Many had never worn a wetsuit before and the effort involved in getting into their wetsuit was challenging in itself.

Staff reported that some participants focused their energies on trying to learn to surf. Others were happy to float around on their boards, chatting - or simply taking in the view. In the water, the group became quieter and more introspective. Individuals began to open up about previous ocean experiences, their insecurities and fears. In time, TONIC staff urged people into the surf and helped them to experience the rush of catching a wave.

Those involved on the day report that individuals expressed a huge sense of achievement. There was a collective celebration of group members' achievements and the session ended with a shared experience of joy, tiredness and shared adventure.

Some group members did experience standing up and riding a wave for the first time, while others chose to use the time quietly, relaxing and "tuning in".

The study's session was a short taster. Under normal circumstances participants complete a six to eight-week programme, which allows more time for activity leaders to work with individuals and to foster a deeper, shared group experience.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“Great to do something for me,
boosted my self-confidence”

“That’s the first time I’ve ever done
anything like that. I didn’t think I
could do anything like that. I
wonder what else I can do that I
didn’t think I would be able to do?”



PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“When I felt low the ‘brain-washing’
effect really lifted me.
That is, brain out, scrub in sea
water, and put back”



PART FOUR

Pilot Projects

PROJECT TWO BUSHCRAFTING WITH JOHN FENNA

John Fenna is a bushcraft skills instructor. Bushcrafting is, he says, the art of remaining comfortable in the outdoors with minimum reliance on technology, and other everyday props and aids. The aim of sessions is to promote self-reliance, self-esteem and wellbeing in as safe and healthy an environment as is possible without degrading the experience of being in the natural environment, or damaging that environment.

After introductions and safety guidance, the group walked to the site at a steady pace to accommodate all participants and to give time to examine bushcraft resources along the way. Group members were encouraged to participate in the discussion.

At the site, group members collected firewood and kindling and prepared a fire. Types of firewood were discussed and participants made pot hooks with help from staff. Group members also tried whittling and carving, and using saws.

The group spent some time foraging for nettles to make tea and fetched water from a spring for a purification demonstration. Bottled water was used for tea-making. Participants all tried using a flint and steel to light tinder. Once the fire was alight, nettle tea was brewed and sampled. Finally, the fire was put out safely and the group returned to Clynyfw for a debrief.

Clynyfw staff report that at the outset most of the participants were quiet and withdrawn, but that as the day progressed everyone seemed to relax and engage more. Some participants became so vocal that they threatened to 'shade out' others, however with encouragement quieter group members were able to make a contribution to the discussion. As the day went on "happy chat and laughter" was seen to increase.

Staff involved commented that all participants were able to complete practical tasks. There was, they report, particular satisfaction on the faces of those who succeeded in making fire without matches, or lighter.

In his feedback, Mr Fenna commented that group members asked intelligent questions, made pertinent observations and wanted to know more. They were more proactive and helpful in the group setting and applied themselves with care and concentration during tasks that required those qualities.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“Wow! I never thought I could do that.” (on making fire)

•“It has been a privilege to be here.”

“I can't do it... Oh, I can.”



PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“Will there be more bushcraft sessions?”

“Nature does not judge you.”

“It is peaceful in the woods.”

“It is nice here.”



PART FOUR

Pilot Projects

PROJECT THREE EQUINE THERAPY WITH LLUEST HORSE AND PONY TRUST

Llest Horse and Pony Trust is a registered equine charity that provides education and work experience to disadvantaged individuals and groups. The trust runs pilot equine experiential therapy sessions for a range of adults and children, particularly those with mental health issues and learning disabilities. The trust believes that horses help by becoming a mirror to our present emotions, patterns and responses.

On arrival at Llest's base near Llangadog, Carmarthenshire, participants undertook an informal introduction to the day, and each other, before being asked about previous interactions with horses, and how they were feeling about the day ahead.

The group then moved outside to the stabling barn, where they received a safety briefing before meeting the ponies assisting with the day. Each participant had the option to groom and touch a pony they felt drawn to and Llest staff members discussed correct procedures, while supporting and encouraging group members to gain confidence. As time went on participants progressed picking up and cleaning a horse's foot.

Participants were offered the chance to learn about, and get involved in, horse care. Each individual had an opportunity to clean a stable, fill a haynet, provide fresh water and sweep the yard. Each task, and its purpose, was explained by staff and queries about horse care were answered.

Later, all participants had the chance to spend time with a pony one-on-one, walking around the arena with their pony on a lead-rope as well as negotiating simple obstacles. The day ended with feedback from participants.

Clynyfw staff involved report that on arrival participants had mixed feelings about the prospect of interacting with ponies. Some were less enthusiastic, even nervous.

As a result, two group members were hesitant about getting close to a pony during grooming. All group members were initially quiet and reserved and required encouragement from members of staff.

One participant recalled a fall from a horse when she was younger. She said she did not want to touch a pony at all. Over time she was encouraged to reach over the stable wall to touch a pony and, later, she progressed to grooming a smaller pony inside its stable. After observing other members of the group take part in the leading activity she was willing to take part and appeared to enjoy it.

At the end of the session she had spent more time engaging with her pony than the other participants had with theirs. Staff reported that her attitude was more positive and confident, while her communication with staff members was self-initiated, and more fluid. The pony's engagement was very positive throughout the interaction, which was reflected by its willingness to follow the participant when its lead rope was unclipped and it was at liberty.

All participants were seen to grow in confidence during the session, both around the animals and in communicating with staff and each other. Staff observed that by the end of the day the whole group were smiling, and appeared happy with their achievements.

PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“Best thing since sliced bread.”

“Marvellous. I enjoyed brushing them and lifting their foot up.”

“I now like horses.”



PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“Can I work here?”

“Great to see what the benefits were for everyone and interesting to learn about equine therapy.”

“Great place.”



PART FOUR

Pilot Projects

PROJECT FOUR COMMUNITY GROWING

The Grange is a centre that seeks to build personal resilience, and to encourage people to share ideas about building the wider resilience of society at a time of great change. It works mainly with refugees and asylum seekers at its 10-acre (4ha) smallholding near Swaffham, Norfolk.

A group of 18 people attended one of the centre's regular Workday Wednesday sessions. They included asylum seekers, local volunteers and others.

The group were involved in work on a permaculture vegetable garden. They helped dig a pond, plant seeds, transplant asparagus and create raised beds.

All participants were welcomed everyone with a cup of tea followed by a welcome circle activity, during which group members learned each other's names. Small sub-groups were then created, each with a leader, who was either a staff member or regular volunteer.

Work was undertaken by the sub-groups, but all the groups worked in the same area and there was a lot of interaction between group members. Lunch was a shared experience. During the afternoon participants continued to work on the garden in new groups, to encourage mixing.

Staff report that one participant, who was very withdrawn, was encouraged to get involved in simple tasks. He particularly enjoyed broadcasting green manure. As he worked he opened up to a staff member and explained his situation, which helped identify ways that he could be supported in future.

Many of the asylum seekers speak very limited English, but by working together in small, mixed groups the participants were able to express their feelings about the work using basic vocabulary, adding emphasis by pointing to nearby objects.

Several participants reported that they find it difficult to motivate themselves day-to-day due to their circumstances, but said that involvement at The Grange brings peace and hope. They talked about liking physical work and the pleasure of having soil under their fingernails. Although there was no common language among all participants, the garden facilitated conversations and created connections. For example, one asylum seeker from Sri Lanka looked at the completed pond and said he saw hope and beauty in it, things he had not seen for a long time.



PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“The Grange is home, other life is hell.”

“Thank you for making me feel so welcome... It was great to be part of such a lovely group.”

“Being here makes me feel safe and happy.”



PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“I love the atmosphere here and the way that everyone feels welcome and included and supports each other.”

“It’s great to understand the thinking and design behind the garden so that everything we are doing today has a context.”

PART FOUR

Pilot Projects

PROJECT FIVE WALKING WITH FRIENDS

'Reconnect in Nature' is a not-for-profit social enterprise that uses nature-based activities to support people recovering from mental health problems, or from substance misuse. Nature awareness and peer mentor support activities form the core of the engagement, which helps people to improve their mental well-being and be more optimistic about further recovery and engagement.

The taster day took place at Nant-y-Cwm Community Woodland, near Mynachlogddu, Pembrokeshire. The site was chosen because it offered shelter from November's weather, but also provided an open vista into nature. The session began with everyone around the camp fire with a hot drink for an introductory talk, camp safety briefing and an opportunity to for introductions. Participants shared their hopes for the day before gathering wood for the fire. There was then a group discussion about how being in nature can influence well-being and the five principles of 'Reconnect in Nature', which are to:

RECONNECT WITH NATURE
RECONNECT WITH EACH OTHER
RECONNECT WITH ACTIVITY
RECONNECT WITH OURSELVES
RECONNECT WITH OUR POTENTIAL

A mindfulness in nature mediation was then facilitated before the group took a break for a campfire-cooked lunch. The afternoon session began with a nature awareness walk, which was followed by the final activity - creating watercolour nature art while being mindful in nature.

The session was devised to introduce how the benefits of being with each other in nature can improve well-being and to nurture future engagement with nature.

Staff reported that during the initial gathering participants disclosed problems around mental health and well-being. One explained that getting to the event had proved a challenge due to her social anxiety, while another said switching off from work by giving herself a day off had been difficult.

The experience of gathering around a campfire is usually a catalyst for social connections and that was the case during the taster session. Some of the group members had never met before, but staff observed that they were soon chatting and making new friendships.

The mindfulness session appeared to have a significant impact on some group members, who afterwards shared how they were able to tune into the sounds of nature, the scent of the fire and to feel the touch of the wind. It had, they said, helped them switch off from worries and anxieties.

All group members respected and entered into the quiet of the mindfulness session. One subsequently shared with a staff member that her daughter had committed suicide earlier in the year and that she had felt a connection of being at peace with her during the session.

The nature art session proved to be very engaging and the chatty group became quiet while concentrating on the task of painting. Group members reported that they had felt engaged and absorbed by the process, and some said that they had enjoyed the activity.

At the end of the day it was felt that everyone had gained from the experience and could see how nature could play a part in their well-being. Staff report that most participants talked about being inspired to go out more in nature.



PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“Thought-provoking and engaging throughout.”

“I love the woods at Nant-y-Cwm, the shelter is excellent.”

“There’s nothing more grounding than being in the woods with beautiful people.”



PARTICIPANT QUOTES

“The day was cold, but the atmosphere and activities were warm and welcoming.”

“It was a blast.”

“Very anxious prior to the event, soon felt very welcome and relaxed... Would love to go again.”

PART FIVE

Natural Therapy Health Service Conference

NATURAL THERAPY HEALTH SERVICE CONFERENCE

As part of the study, a day conference was organised in August 2016. Entitled '**Clynfyw Care Farm: Natural Therapy Health Service Conference**', the event attracted 34 attendees who generously contributed their time and expertise to this study. The event included a series of talks, which are summarised below.

CASE STUDY1 COLEG ELIDYR

Coleg Elidyr is a specialist College of Further Education and Training near Llandovery, Carmarthenshire. Established in 1973 on a 180-acre (73ha) site, the college provides land-based, experiential and person-centred learning. It provides residential accommodation for its students, an extended curriculum and is a registered charity.

The college has a total of 45 students with moderate to severe learning difficulties as well as emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some of their students also have Downs, Williams or Fragile X syndrome.

Coleg Elidyr supports two programmes for its students, which are:

- **A three-year foundation, which lasts for 37 weeks and is education funded. It is aimed at students who are aged from 19 to 22.**
- **A trainee and transition programme, which lasts for 44 weeks and is social service and health board-funded. It is aimed at students over 22.**

Coleg Elidyr provides students with an individual learning programme, which is destination-led. Progression is measured against baseline assessments with short, medium and long-term targets.

CASE STUDY ONE

Coleg Elidyr, Christine Koeller.

CASE STUDY TWO

Equine Therapy, Graeme Greene of The Mindful Horse.

CASE STUDY THREE

TONIC Surf Therapy, Shon Devey, West Wales Action for Mental Health.

CASE STUDY FOUR

Llest Horse and Pony Trust, Dionne and Marie Rocke.

CASE STUDY FIVE

Clynfyw Care Farm, Jim Bowen.

CASE STUDY SIX

Kinora Mental Health Drop-in Service, George Colville and Jane White.



PART FIVE

Natural Therapy Health Service Conference

The curriculum is diverse, focusing on vocational, craft-work, social and personal development activities. The curriculum is also designed to 'plan for progress' which means students are encouraged to develop both their essential and social skills. Students are also given the opportunity to complete a permaculture design course and develop independent living skills. They also complete work experience placements and undertake both Agored Cymru and City & Guilds-accredited courses.

Sensory Stimulation is a key aspect to Coleg Elidyr's work with a focus on stimulating both the Proprioceptive System (spatial orientation/movement) and the Vestibular system (rhythm, coordination and focus). Coleg Elidyr also fosters a 'Total Communication Environment' to promote engagement with all students; it is achieved through the use of photos, symbols, signing, sequence sliders and reference to objects in the natural environment.

Coleg Elidyr's 'Top Tips' for creating a natural therapy service are to:

- **Help people to become aware and connect to natural processes by creating a culture of celebration. To include the weather, the changing seasons, festivals, animals, bird song, objects that have been made and getting involved with community projects.**
- **Engage participants in meaningful work.**
- **Develop a rhythm and routine to the working week.**
- **Teach and inspire staff.**

Coleg Elidyr is committed to training and coaching its staff. All staff members are required to attend 'Introduction to Sensory Processing' training delivered by an Occupational Therapist (OT). The OT is available as part of the staff team for consultation, supervision and support. Individuals can also be referred to the OT for specific intervention (assessment and treatment) regarding sensory processing difficulties and their impact on engaging and participating in their occupations. It is also important to complete a sensory audit for each learning environment as well as a sensory profile checklist for each learner or trainee.

CASE STUDY 2 THE MINDFUL HORSE

Graeme Green is a trustee and co-founder of the charity HorseHeard, which is based near Kendal, Cumbria. He works as a freelance equine assisted coach, mindfulness and reiki practitioner.

The mindfulness technique pioneered by Jon Kabat-Zinn MBSR has its roots in Buddhism. The fundamentals are awareness, acceptance, non-judgement and 'being present'. In order for participants to communicate and engage with the mindfulness technique, a series of sensory-based activities are conducted in an attempt to help participants be 'in the moment'. Activities include breathing exercises in a natural environment, nature walks, drumming and crafts.

Equine-assisted therapy is a system whereby horses and ponies are used as a conduit to mindfulness. Graeme introduced 'Being Friends' as a case study, which was delivered as part of a structured programme. 'Being Friends' ran over four weeks with additional sessions for teachers, parents and carers. The objectives of the study were to:

- **Develop and maintain friendships and improve relationships.**
- **Increase confidence and self-esteem.**
- **Manage feelings and control behaviours through greater self-awareness.**
- **Increase acceptance of diversity and reduce the risk of bullying incidents.**

The outcomes were measured against 75 children and young people (CYP) and on average all attendees scored themselves as feeling stronger against each targeted outcome. The supporting adults observed improvement against all outcomes and scored more than 70 per cent for confidence. Comments included:

"By the last session and judging by the smiles on every face they were obviously pleased with their achievement. At least three of the children in my judgement experienced marked personal breakthroughs, though I suspect a number of the others also did."

PART FIVE

Natural Therapy Health Service Conference

“This was a superb programme for our young leaders, we saw a real change in their confidence, communication skills and empathy for others.”

Graeme introduced ‘Katy’ as the second case study. Katy has regular one-to-one equine assisted therapy sessions, during which she grooms horses, helps to ‘muck out’ and leads horses in the arena. There were several outcomes for Katy’s scheme of work including practical and life skills, gaining mobility confidence, exploring senses through connection with the horses and developing attention span. Katy received sessions over three months and during that time she was observed to make progress against all outcomes.

It was observed that: **“Katy thoroughly enjoys the time she spends at equine therapy, she shows a real interest in looking after their needs and genuinely cares for them. This shows when she is clearing their stables, grooming, exercising them around their school, giving them food and treats and just recently has learnt how to clean their hooves.”**



CASE STUDY THREE TONIC SURF THERAPY

TONIC works with a variety of people, including those with mental health problems, alcohol and substance addiction, carers, military veterans and people in the criminal justice system. TONIC caters for all abilities with a client group ranging from 11 to 72 years.

Sessions take place on a number of Pembrokeshire beaches. The aim is to reduce stress, ease depression and improve well-being. Each session is a challenge for participants due to the elements of risk and of strenuous physical activity involved.

Due to these challenges participants experience the ‘natural high’ that is commonly associated with being in the marine environment. The TONIC team has categorised how their ‘blue environment’ surf sessions benefit their participants as managing mental health and self-care. Self-care includes physical activity, building relationships, improving self-esteem, providing a meaningful occupation and building both trust and hope.

In 2014, TONIC evaluated its service by producing a chart depicting the percentage change for recovery. Their evaluation showed an increase against all 10 outcomes.

		MIN	MAX	MEAN
1	Mental health	0	100	50
2	Self care	0	800	109
3	Socialising	0	500	94
4	Relationship	0	400	109
5	Addiction	-86	400	131
6	Self esteem	0	250	71
7	Trust/Hope	0	700	100
8	Independence	0	300	49
9	Responsibility	0	150	23
10	Occupation	-12.5	900	102

PART FIVE

Natural Therapy Health Service Conference

Cantref Foyer was introduced as a case study. TONIC worked with young people between the ages of 14 and 22 with four outcomes, namely good overall health, relief from anxiety or depression, improvement in confidence and being a member of a social group. The cost of delivering the programme was in the region of £3,500. According to TONIC's calculations, the sessions with Cantref Foyer made a social impact to the value of £77,636.

Examples of participant feedback:

"Getting all ages of people together, finding common interest and sharing amazing experiences together."

"Friendly, no pressure to perform, go at own pace. Somewhere to float in the sea and talk"

"It's changed my life! I feel alive."



CASE STUDY FOUR LLEUST HORSE AND PONY TRUST

Lleust means 'haven' in Welsh. The centre was founded in 1985 by the late Ginny Hajdukiewicz and she left trust as her legacy. The trust rescues, rehabilitates and re-homes horses, ponies and donkeys who have been the victims of cruelty or neglect.

Horses are helped to recover from traumatic experiences before being passed on to 'Guardian Owners', who care for them in their new homes. Lleust cares for up to 30 equines at any one time on its 40-acre (16ha) farm, near Llangadog. Around 100 others are on long-term loan, while several more live in short-term placements.

Lleust offers supervised sessions with horses, a safe learning environment, volunteering opportunities and support. The trust has been providing sessions on pony care for three years and its trained staff help support individuals who are interested in adopting horses.

PART FIVE

Natural Therapy Health Service Conference

CASE STUDY FIVE CLYNFYW CARE FARM

Lluest's Animal Assisted Therapy work began in collaboration with West Wales Action for Mental Health (WWAMH), which was awarded 'Awards for All Funding' to develop horse and pony care courses. WWAMH was approached by potential service users requesting the provision and decided to use Lluest as a base for the research trials. In collaboration with WWAMH, Lluest has developed the 'Horsing Around Project', which offers equine-assisted therapy for individuals living with mental health problems in Carmarthenshire.

The project has involved training two members of the Lluest staff team in equine-assisted learning, to achieve the accredited practitioner level in Animal Assisted Therapy. Training was undertaken in collaboration with HorseHeard and WWAMH.

The original aim of Lluest was to rehabilitate rescued ponies so that they could be used for riding by people with physical disabilities. A young woman called 'Claire' came to volunteer at Lluest. Claire had grown up in care and suffered from anxiety, low self-esteem and behavioural problems. After several months working with horses, and Lluest staff, marked improvements were noticed by both the staff and Claire herself.

Clynfyw Care Farm's vision is for a society in which everyone is valued, irrespective of learning ability or mental health. Clynfyw helps to make this happen through land-based programmes of meaningful activity that involve adults with learning difficulties, those in mental health recovery, and local people.

A series of therapeutic and practical activities are offered to participants. They include: horticulture, animal care, charcoal making and apple juicing.

Clynfyw also offers accredited training in these areas for participants. Gillian, a horticulture student, said: **"I have really enjoyed my course. I have learnt a lot and feel confident in the garden. I have grown my own vegetables at home due to this course."**

Clynfyw is part of the Care Farming UK network. It defines care farms as **"thriving farms and landscapes providing social, educational, therapeutic and developmental opportunities for all who could benefit"**.



PART FIVE

Natural Therapy Health Service Conference

At the heart of what Clynfyw does is a belief that the social aspects fostered on the farm are key to promoting health and wellbeing. Staff believe that therapy helps, **“but so does sitting around a fire with the people you love and care about”**.

The care farm’s ethos could be summarised as: **“Working with nature, within a social context offering meaningful activities.”**

One of those activities involves offering the opportunity for participants to complete the John Muir Award. Run by the John Muir Trust, an environmental charity, the award offers young people an opportunity to connect with, enjoy and care for wild places.

CASE STUDY SIX KINORA MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Kinora is a drop-in centre in Cardigan, Ceredigion, which offers a variety of activities for people with mental health issues. The centre opens four days a week and is managed by Clynfyw Care Farm.

It runs several projects, including a gardening service, a lunch club using produce grown at Clynfyw, an allotment and outings, which include workdays at Clynfyw.

The gardening service and allotment gardening give Kinora members the opportunity to work in a peaceful, safe and green environment. The centre manager commented that he has noticed improvement amongst several participants after involvement at the allotment or with gardening tasks in local residents’ gardens. He also observed that being involved with the gardening service not only boosted self-esteem and provided a meaningful occupation, but also acted as a stepping stone into the world of work by providing work experience.



SUMMARY

Feedback was sought from attendees (see Appendix A for details). It is clear from the feedback that each case study offered a new perspective into the multiple benefits of nature-based interventions. It was also apparent that few of those who responded were aware of the range of natural health therapies that are available in West Wales. Replicated across Wales, and beyond, there is huge potential for natural health providers to help different people in multiple ways. Feedback to the question ‘How would you like to see a natural health service develop?’ suggests that collaborative working with existing providers will be essential if Clynfyw is to achieve the goal of becoming a centre of training and natural therapy.

PART SIX

Quantifiable evidence of the benefits of natural health services

While we have many anecdotes to tell about how people have engaged in existing schemes and projects, providing hard evidence is important to prove the value of natural health services. On a national scale, there is increasing recorded evidence of benefits, and there is a growing body of supporters, including policy-makers and politicians who see the value of nature-based work.

In 2015, Care Farming UK was commissioned by Natural England to identify practical models and case studies to increase the scale of green care services. The report, entitled **'A Review of Nature-based Interventions for Mental Health Care'** (2016) recommended a range of actions that would help increase awareness and access to nature-based support for mental health care.

At the time of writing, Natural England and the University of Exeter are preparing a series of Health and Environment fact sheets to summarise the most compelling evidence on the impact of the natural environment on a range of health and wellbeing outcomes. Alan Law, Natural England's Chief **Strategy and Reform Officer**, said: **"This report highlights how nature makes a real difference to the quality of people's daily lives. It shows what we can do to improve people's wellbeing, working through new partnerships and offering new services."**

Natural England's report also highlighted compelling evidence that the 'green care' offered by many Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens members helps people with mental ill-health and contributes to a reduction in levels of anxiety, stress and depression.

Working with the University of Essex and MIND, Natural England's 'A Review of Nature-based Interventions for Mental Health Care' called for greater use of green care and therapeutic horticulture, care farming and environmental conservation. Green care is, the report argues, a cost-effective solution for mental health and social service commissioners. The report suggests that green care interventions can provide an increasingly important way of supporting mental health services, with many projects already making a difference to people's lives. The benefits of such interventions include a reduction in depression, anxiety, and stress symptoms, and an improvement in dementia-related symptoms.

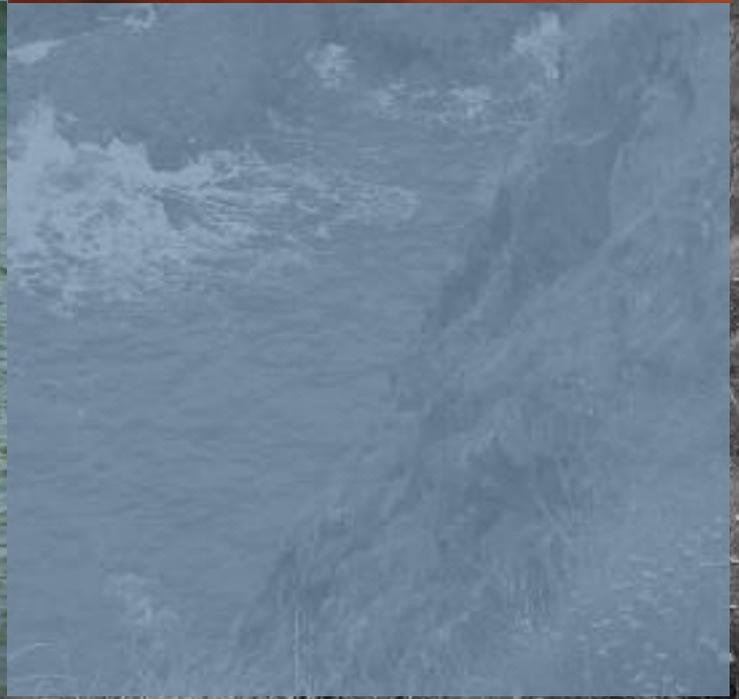
The review focuses on the three main green care interventions that are currently helping people with mental ill-health: care farming; environmental conservation; and social and therapeutic horticulture. It presents evidence that projects in each of the three areas are already making a difference to people's lives and bringing a range of positive benefits for those with existing mental ill-health.

The review also suggests that people involved in these types of green care activities have more social contact and greater inclusion. They also experience a sense of belonging and personal achievement.

At the publication of the report in February 2016, UK Environment Minister Rory Stewart acknowledged the benefit of a wide range of health assets, saying: **"Mental health is one of the most serious and complex issues that we face in Britain today and it is great that we now have clearer scientific evidence that nature is so beneficial for our minds and our sense of self."**

Mental Health Today (2016) reports that ill-health is on the rise and in the UK it is estimated that at least one person in four will experience a 'significant' mental health problem. The new report by Natural England, suggests that green care interventions can provide an increasingly important and cost-effective way of supporting mental health services.

Responding to the comment that the Federation for City Farms and Community Gardens was a key national organisation supporting social and therapeutic horticulture projects and practitioners, Jeremy Iles, former CEO of the federation, said at the study launch in February, 2016, that the study **"reinforces what we already know about the multiple benefits of green care for mental health"**. He added: **"Most community growing projects and farms already offer green care services. We are working to create new opportunities for people to access nature-based therapies at home, in the workplace and at hospitals and schools. We hope this report will raise awareness of green care and act as a springboard for greater collaboration."** Alan Law, of Natural England, commented: **"There is now compelling evidence to show that contact with nature and the outdoors improves physical health and mental wellbeing. Natural England is committed to find ways to help more people access the benefits that come through practical experiences in the outdoors."**



PART SIX

Quantifiable evidence of the benefits of natural health services

More recently, Professor Tim Lang, of the Centre for Food Policy at City University, London, has argued that it is now widely recognised that regular contact with plants, animals and the natural environment can improve physical health and mental wellbeing. **“For the large number of people in our society – children and adults – who live with challenging physical or mental health problems, gardening and community food growing can be especially beneficial. Such activities can relieve the symptoms of serious illnesses, prevent the development of some conditions, and introduce people to a way of life that can help them to improve their wellbeing in the longer term. And even if you are feeling fine, gardening is... well, just a very nice thing to do.”** (Country Living, 2016)

Thrive is a national charity that works to enable positive change in the lives of disabled and disadvantaged people through the use of gardening and horticulture. Working in partnership with Loughborough University, it ran a large-scale research project into Social and Therapeutic Horticulture between 2002 and 2005 (Sempik, Aldridge and Becker, 2003).

The project was prompted by the fact that, although there was (and continues to be) growing interest among health and social and therapeutic value of horticulture, there was little evidence that demonstrates the range of outcomes for vulnerable groups. The Growing Together study included a survey of more than 900 projects, and in-depth case studies and interviews with vulnerable adults who use horticulture and gardening as a form of therapy.

Dr Jo Aldridge, one of the principal researchers, commented: **“Many of those who took part in the research study were on medication for their health problems and had tried a number of conventional treatments. They found that going to the projects regularly and taking part in gardening and related activities actually helped them in other ways. Being outside in the fresh air, undertaking the physical exercise that gardening demands, working with nature and nurturing plants, all helped to improve clients’ health and wellbeing.”**

Dr Aldridge went on: **“Many of those who took part in the study were socially excluded and institutionalised in their daily lives. They had little opportunity to get out in the fresh air and work alongside others. In most cases clients’ social skills and self-confidence increased as a result of taking part in gardening activity at projects.”**

Through the horticulture projects some clients were able to extend their existing social networks, while others made new and significant friendships. Gardening allowed them to meet others in the wider community who share an interest in horticulture and gardening activity. It also helped closer relationships to develop between vulnerable (socially excluded) and non-vulnerable (socially included) members of society.

Carers report that the benefits experienced by the disabled gardeners extend beyond the session itself. Increased confidence is widely noted, gardening becomes a topic of conversation and some individuals even start to garden again at home. Staff working at the gardening projects also noticed improvements in clients’ health, wellbeing and social skills. In a study conducted by Loughborough University’s Department of Social Sciences in 2005, Tim Spurgeon, Head of Advisory Services at Thrive, said: **“Project staff told us that those clients with physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties improved their motor skills through potting up seedlings and plants, and developed their communications skills by working closely alongside other clients and project staff. This research shows that horticulture and gardening can no longer be treated as a trivial activity – it is comparable to any other physical therapy.”**

PART SIX

Quantifiable evidence of the benefits of natural health services

Based on this evidence outline above, GPs in London have been prescribing gardening time in place of drugs since 2013, with the help of Lambeth GP Food Co-operative. It aims to harness the physical and mental therapeutic benefits of gardening while growing more local produce in unused outdoor space.

The Food Co-op's Director, Ed Rosen, says: **"We began this with a specific focus on patients with long-term health conditions, such as diabetes, arthritis and asthma. Our patients tend to be older as they have developed long term health conditions later in life. They also tend to be more socially isolated and lonely than younger people because often their partners have died, or their families have moved away. So we wanted to create a health generating activity that people will enjoy."**

The Food Cooperative cites three reasons for the effectiveness of gardening therapy. They are that:

Soil is an antidepressant.

In 2015, a study by the University of Bristol and colleagues at University College London (Lowry et al.) found that contact with soil has similar effects on the brain as mood-lifting antidepressants. Dr Chris Lowry, lead author on the paper, said: **"These studies help us understand how the body communicates with the brain and why a healthy immune system is important for maintaining mental health. They also leave us wondering if we shouldn't all be spending more time playing in the dirt."**

Gardening incorporates mindfulness.

Psychotherapist Hilda Burke (2015) maintains that gardening is an activity that helps people achieve a 'flow' state. That is that during the activity the gardener does not notice the passage of time, is not simultaneously thinking over other things, making plans or rehashing the past. As such it helps people both to switch off - and switch on to the present moment.

Gardening boosts brain health.

Psychiatry Investigation (2016) reported that the benefits of horticultural therapy include a reduction of pain, improvement in attention, lessening of stress and a reduction in falls.

The contribution made by care farming to the rural economy was recognised in April 2016 by George Eustace MP, Undersecretary of State for Farming, Food and the Marine Environment. At the launch of the Natural England study, he said that the sector spends around £17m a year, but suggested that the figure would be £29m per year if existing care farms were running at full capacity.

Evidence of the benefits that derive from care farming, green care and natural health therapies continues to grow. The authors are proud of the role Clynfyw Care Farm is playing in what is a growing movement by creating meaningful employment and supporting vulnerable people.

We would encourage others to engage more in care farming and natural healing. It works - and it makes economic, social and environmental sense.

PART SEVEN

West Wales Natural Health Service Network by Marie Roche

Throughout this study we have seen the value of providers and practitioners working closely together, supporting each other whenever possible by pooling resources, skills and knowledge. We know that not all natural therapies are suitable for everyone, so the importance of providers redirecting beneficiaries to a more appropriate service cannot be underestimated. A good network of natural health providers is, therefore, essential to help the development of natural health services. We should see ourselves as colleagues, not competitors.

With this in mind, West Wales Action for Mental Health applied for an Awards for All grant in 2015 to trial a Network Development of Eco-therapy Providers called Tir Adferiad. As part of this scheme, practitioners working under the development support of WWAMH and Clynyfw Care Farm began to create a strong and resilient collaborative working group providing eco-therapy-based sessions across Carmarthenshire. The group ran 16 workshops for participants, family members and carers.

Tir Adferiad was designed to introduce individuals to the concept of the environment, its nurturing nature and its place in the recovery of individuals living with mental health issues. Eco-therapy is established through the interactional and integrated elements of the nature-human relationship (Burns, 1998). It assists with creating a 'whole' perception of life and therefore creates and encourages a lifestyle, and life choices, that support the holistic recovery of an individual within the world around them.

There is little work of this sort happening in Carmarthenshire and many of our contacts request workshops and courses that involve eco-therapy and awareness. We currently hold a list of individuals who wish to be involved in eco-therapy work and have good contacts with organisations wishing to refer members into such courses.

Our main objectives are to create awareness of the benefits of eco-therapy in supporting recovery of people living with mental health issues, and to create awareness among organisations supporting people with mental health issues. To that end, WWAMH works to illustrate how organisations could support individuals towards recovery through the use of eco-therapies. WWAMH is achieving these objectives by developing an active network development and fostering collaboration between skilled and experienced professionals.

The Awards for All Lottery funding that WWAMH was awarded collaboratively with Clynyfw Care Farm supported practitioners in starting to deliver the eco-based courses to those in need. The classes run by Tir Adferiad tutors offered the chance to create crafts and learn new skills to put to use with items that can be discovered in nature. Creativity has been utilised to assist in the learning experience. Self-awareness was encouraged by our experienced tutors to help find more creative ways of dealing with people's mental health needs, and therefore improve quality of life.

WWAMH, in collaboration with Clynyfw Care Farm, and experienced providers and volunteers, have shown that these courses were beneficial to those who attended.

The group is currently investigating the best way forward with its work in order to reach more people, and to facilitate more sessions. It is hoped that this work will continue across the counties of Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire, and be further supported by more practitioners and organisations with an interest in offering eco-therapy.

PART EIGHT

Conclusion, and next steps

The aim of this study was to demonstrate the benefits to people of engaging with nature. Through it, we hope to encourage health professionals to suggest natural therapy either as an alternative to prescribed medicine, or to work alongside prescribed treatments. It is also hoped that it will play a part in encouraging people with land, with a relevant skill, or an interest in the natural world, to share their 'asset' with others.

Through the study the authors have seen how people are lifted by their engagements with the natural world, whether that is through a one-day surf session, extended engagement on a growing project, a walking group, or a series of woodland-based arts events. Each activity offers something different, but each provides nourishment to wellbeing that cannot be gained solely through prescription drugs.

For example, there is a place for prescribed anti-depressant drugs in supporting people with mental health problems. However, when a patient is diagnosed with depression and report to their GP that they work in uninspiring employment, live alone and feel isolated, those issues are not addressed by prescribed anti-depressants. With no change to that patient's work, home and recreational life the issues underlying their depression remain unchanged. How much better would it be if the GP involved also encouraged engagement with a natural health service?

Our example should be considered in the light of Government calculations of invisible costs relating to the impact of mental health issues on individuals (Jenkins et al, 2008).

The Treasury considered how mental health challenges impact those living in London, saying: **"The wider impacts result in around £26bn each year in total economic and social costs to London. The public sector spends £7.5bn a year to combat it and another £2bn is lost through taxes, £920m is lost in sickness absences, £1.9bn is lost in reduced productivity and £7.2bn is incurred in increased 'worklessness'."** If the stresses of modern living are so costly to both the economy and mental health, is it time to rethink how we live?

At the close of this study, two key points emerge which will help develop a coordinated natural health service in West Wales. Firstly, the effective dissemination of information to health professionals and commissioners should be a priority. It requires a mechanism that will ensure that the community health councils, local authorities, and local health boards fully understand, and support, natural health therapies. Their support is crucial to ensure the valid information is distributed to general practitioners, social workers and other potential commissioning agents.

Secondly, it is vital that adequate funding be made available to support the development of a coordinated Network of Natural Health Service Providers. It would include creating a constituted group with terms and conditions of membership, enable existing providers to be supported to become mentors to those new into the area of service provision, and guarantee a high standard of service delivery.

The network would be responsible for record-keeping, evidencing, skill-sharing and the dissemination of knowledge. Feedback gathered throughout this study suggests that collaboration would be key to the success of developing an effective network. It would not be led by any individual provider, but be an independent advisory group that is not reliant on provision of natural health services for its financial survival.

West Wales Action for Mental Health, which is based in Carmarthenshire, could become a key player in helping to establish a network. Funding could be secured through grant bids, however secure funding from the Local Health Board would provide greater security and the opportunity for long-term planning.

PART NINE

Clynfyw Care Farm would like to thank:

The LEADER fund for supporting this feasibility study.
Everyone who came to the conference, either as a speaker or attendee. The leaders of the pilot projects and the people who took part in each project. Guy and Sharon, of Space to Create, who made the film that links to this study. Angie Darlington and the team at West Wales Action for Mental Health. Our consultant Julian Rollins and designer Neil Buckland of Zodshop.



PART TEN

Conclusion, and next steps

Care Farming UK: www.carefarmingUK.org
[MORE HERE]

APPENDIX A - FEEDBACK

Which presentation did you find most valuable and why?

- Graeme Green—big potential for young people with mental health (MH) issues.
- Graeme Green, very interesting mix of horses, drumming and mindfulness.
- All had great value and were thought-provoking. Inspiring degree of benefits of the schemes-holistic applicable for all.
- Really liked the TONIC talk as I'd never heard about it.
- Personally, I'm really interested in animal assisted therapy - like the idea of Lluest, with damaged horses and young people being 'healed' together.
- Mindful horse - was unaware of the project
- Tour of Clynyfw
- All were very informative and different
- TONIC—infectious passionate, inspiring, enthusiasm and commitment to the belief that we are here connecting with nature.
- Coleg Elydir, a college provision emphasises the core work of nature awareness.
- Coleg Elydir, the passion that is needed to create and sustain such practices and processes.
- Kinora and gardening in allotments.
- Kinora gardening/allotment for MH.
- Horse therapy, interested myself.

Do you feel your knowledge of natural health services has improved having taken part in the conference. If so, how?

- Yes. Good networking, understanding of local issues
- Yes, by attending the conference.
- Yes. Encouraged to learn that others see it as a 'no brainer' too.
- Increased depth and range of understanding.
- Good reminder of all the work already in place.
- Yes, I have been inspired to connect with the inspirational projects in place in the area.
- Yes, more opportunities and areas are available than I previously knew.
- Yes, particularly regarding the facilities available. The key being get out there and achieve, get involved and use what feels right to open up shared skills to help others.
- Lovely to see the varied resources that I didn't know existed.

- Reinforced what I thought, and gave new ideas to think about.
- Yes, because I've learned about things I didn't know about.
- More knowledge about animal assisted therapies.
- More knowledge of initiatives in the area.
- Yes, I think I need to see broader therapies.
- Didn't know about TONIC or Lluest.
- Yes. Diversity of providers and activities.
- Much more informed.
- Yes, chatting to others.
- Was unaware of what was out there.

What were the three best things you learnt relating to natural health services?

- What services are available at the moment.
- The increasing demand.
- Even more diversity than I thought.
- How many organisations get 'it'.
- Sense of solidarity.
- It's not confined to the therapy couch.
- It's really possible to open what could be very closed lives.
- The enthusiasm for making more of this happen.
- Clearly more people singing from the same song sheet.
- People's reactions to animal-assisted therapy
- I was very struck by the idea of carer and cared-for having terrific shared experiences.
- Inspired by knowledge that MH decision-makers think drug model has failed.
- Importance of meaningful work.
- Lots going on—needs to be promoted.
- Lots of opportunity to work together.
- Clynyfw, perfect to be the hub.
- That there are many different projects going on.
- That participants are all like-minded.
- That all are professional in their approach.
- Networking.
- There are people with real passion and belief out there making things happen.
- Nature gets us out of our heads (in a good way).
- Purposeful engagers.
- The broad range of opportunities.
- The need to get the message out there and engage with social care workers.
- That there is a lot going on which is not mainstream.
- There is a lot of enthusiasm to work with people with difficulties.
- Great to hear there are places like Coleg Elydir.

PART TEN

Conclusion, and next steps

- Two minutes emptying of my mind (referring to the mindfulness meditation that was part of Graeme Green's presentation).
- Connections/folk together.
- Knowledge awareness.
- The potential savings.
- Awareness of different services.
- Benefits of enjoying the outdoors.
- Emphasis on nature awareness.

Please summarise how you think natural health services could be used to better wellbeing.

- Essential for preventing deterioration into a dependency care situation.
- Natural health services are the one thing that could give the National Health Service a sustainable future.
- Connecting the right people to the right therapy.
- Space being created for the self to heal and development with collaborative support and correct social connections.
- Facilitates self-esteem and self-confidence through contribution to community and making a difference.
- It would meet the essential health needs of most people on medication.
- Becoming closer to nature, to food production, and caring for animals can only be beneficial to mankind.
- It reconnects us with our natural selves, engages us with others and helps heal the planet. Win, win, win!
- Cost effective recourse ideally suited to Pembrokeshire that is engaging to all.
- It should be a 'shoe in' — unfortunately funding cuts often mean it's the first thing cut.
- To provide meaningful work and connectivity in the context of the land.
- Use activities instead of drugs. Sense of wellbeing, achievement, gaining skills is cheaper than medicine.
- Needs to be developed and marketed in such a way as to encourage others to experiment.
- A way to introduce people to lasting ways/methods for recovery of MH and overall health and wellbeing.
- More natural way to live.
- The most important development in wellbeing/health care provision.
- Resources for free resulting in happiness. Precious.
- Very important for life on this planet.
- It's a proven alternative to an already failing system.

How would you like to see a natural health service develop?

- It needs to become mainstream thinking. We know smoking is bad for us, everyone will know that natural health services work. We should not need to prove this.
- Open-hearted cooperation for greater good.
- A central commissioning resource point to engage and fund various natural health providers.
- There is need for a central contact to sift and direct people to the appropriate service/therapy.
- Contact the Healing Network in Carmarthenshire promoted by Tim Gasser.
- Should be from the 'bottom up'. What would informed users want and need? Should be client led.
- Have a dedicated network hub.
- Persuade local businesses to take on a community hub function, e.g. a pub, to ease communication.
- Mainstream information into traditional health provision for prevention/restoration of health.
- Needs to be member/service-user led.
- All involved should be open with information and be willing to share knowledge and resources.
- Easy access depository for evidence base of effectiveness (no need to reinvent wheel).
- A service that can help provide preventative resources for health through activities, but in the outdoors for physical and mental wellbeing.
- Commissioners need to understand the 'added value' in natural health services and help providers develop their services. We are all supposed to be on the same side.
- Need to make it easy to access therapy referrals.
- We need to include awareness and include mainstream practitioners.
- Develop partnerships and set up more projects across south Wales.
- Link all natural therapists to one Hub which is accessible to all, even those with no funds.
- Educate public and professionals so all are aware of benefits and GP referrals.
- Grow awareness of natural health. Grow community. Bring people together. Share knowledge.
- Make it accessible to all.
- Develop some animal assisted therapy in Pembrokeshire—possibly coming out of Clynfyw and going into care homes, residential homes etc.
- Map and connect providers geographically e.g. lower Teifi valley network. Realistic geography.

PART TEN

Conclusion, and next steps

- GPs and commissioners need to know what is available and how they can reach providers. Central commissioning, or backing of the health board.
- Needs to be easily accessible to people who need it.
- Everyone needs to cooperate. It won't work if we act alone.
- Funding is the key. If it is not financially viable to run a service it will not last.
- Service need to be mobile to reach the most isolated.
- We need to collaborate and communicate and share resources.
- Local transport is the key to help people access services, and play a part in their community.
- Need to work to enable all providers to be included.
- Clear and transparent signposting is important for both service providers and potential users.

APPENDIX B - REFERENCE LIST

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Feasibility Study into Natural Health Services in West Wales

Funded by LEADER Arwain Sir Benfro



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ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE DESIGN/PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEO