



Report to Healthier Communities and Adult Social Care Scrutiny & Policy Development Committee January 2022

Report of: John Macilwraith (Executive Director - People)

Subject: Green Prescribing

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Summary:

This report is in response to the Scrutiny's request to understand more about green prescribing

The term '*green prescribing*' (and blue prescribing – water) has been in use for over 5 years but its definition has been refined to mean '*connecting to nature*' rather than '*activities that are outside*'

Sheffielders are fortunate to live in such a green city, where proximity to local green space is not as much of a barrier as in other large cities. However, we know that different parts of the city are served to different levels (in terms of number of sites, access and quality) and we continue to work hard to close this gap. This is captured in our 'Sheffield Standard' and public health investment that has gone into improvements as well as Better Parks programme.

Type of item: The report author should tick the appropriate box

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

There is an emerging national body of evidence that connecting with nature improves people wellbeing and mental health.

As outlined in the report above there is a strong foundation of community wellbeing, green activities and green assets to develop green prescribing further

Scrutiny committee are asked to note the report

Background Papers:

List any background documents (e.g. research studies, reports) used to write the report. Remember that by listing documents people could request a copy.

[Coronavirus lockdown: We need nature now more than ever before | NHS Forest](#)

[Green social prescribing: call for expressions of interest - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Category of Report: OPEN (please specify)

Most reports to Scrutiny Committees should be openly available to the public. If a report is deemed to be 'closed', please add: **'Not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph xx of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).'**

Report of the Director of Adult Social Care, Alexis Chappell **Green Prescribing (how nature support and mental health** **and wellbeing)**

1. Introduction/Context

1.1 This report is in response to the Scrutiny's request to understand more about green prescribing

1.2 NHS Forest have been promoting for over 10 years that green spaces improve physical and health as well as wellbeing.

[Coronavirus lockdown: We need nature now more than ever before | NHS Forest](#)

1.3 The use and importance of natural landscape was evident during the pandemic and highlighted how being outdoors and connecting to nature contributed to people's wellbeing.

[How has lockdown changed our relationship with nature? - Office for National Statistics](#)

1.4 This report sets out:

- Brief outline of community wellbeing (People Keeping Well) and social prescribing in Sheffield
- Green prescribing and examples in Sheffield
- NHS green and blue prescribing test and learn funding
- Parks and Countryside's role in managing the green assets/space which directly contributes to Sheffielders wellbeing

2. Main body of report, matters for consideration, etc

2.1 Community Wellbeing

2.1.1 It has been long understood that health and wellbeing is determined by the circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work and age as well as medical support. Therefore education, employment, housing, social networks are as important to the life chances and living with long term good health and wellbeing

2.1.2 In Sheffield we have a long history of community anchor and other voluntary sector organisations working alongside primary care to support the social determinants of health

2.2 People Keeping Well (PKW)

2.2.1 People Keeping Well is the city's community wellbeing approach which is jointly funded between Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Commissioning Group (approx. £1.5m).

2.2.2 PKW is a series of 17 partnerships led by ten community organisations. Funding is allocated based on the indices of multiple deprivation of the

City's 100 neighbourhoods to contribute to the following elements / outcomes

- Resilient Communities (support partnerships, capacity building of the community organisations and people enabling people to shape their own communities and stay connected)
- Community Wellbeing (targeted support for people who are at risk of declining health and wellbeing due to social reasons eg 1:1 and groups)

Follow the link for more information about [PKW](#)

2.3 NHS Social Prescribing Link Workers

2.3.1 Since 2019, Primary Care Networks (partnerships of GP surgeries) have been funded through NHS England to have social prescribing link workers.

[NHS England » Social prescribing](#)

2.3.2 Due to PKW, the implementation of social prescribing in Sheffield looks different to other cities / towns. In other areas, PCNs tend to come together to work with one voluntary sector organisation to deliver Social Prescribing. In Sheffield due to long standing community wellbeing approach, PCNs have either funded a link worker with their local community PKW organisation or have complimented via a city wide organisation (eg Sheffield Futures supporting young people)

2.4 What is green prescribing?

2.4.1 The term '*green prescribing*' (and blue prescribing – water) has been in use for over 5 years but its definition has been refined to mean '*connecting to nature*' rather than '*activities that are outside*'

2.5 Examples of green prescribing in Sheffield

2.5.1 Even though green prescribing is a relatively new term, there are many organisations and activities in Sheffield that *connect people to nature*'. Below are a few examples (many are not funded by the Council):

- Green activities as part of People Keeping Well include walking groups, pram push, community growing and allotments
- Sage Greenfingers which is a horticulture therapy programme
- Step Out Sheffield – largest health walk programme in the country of volunteer led health walks
- Wild at Heart (Wildlife Trust) – social groups exploring green spaces

2.6 NHS green and blue prescribing

2.6.1 In 2020 the government announced they would fund seven Integrated Care Systems (NHS) to test and learn green and blue prescribing. The South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw ICS were successful in securing in funding for this.

2.6.2 The programme in South Yorkshire aims to:

- Insight work to map and scope current green and blue activities and the gaps
- Workforce development, beginning with Link Worker training and webinars to understand green and blue prescribing
- A grants programme to develop further green and blue activities
- System and Place engagement work to connect stakeholders and promote collaboration and learning
- Support a national evaluation to strengthen learning around scaling up and sustaining green prescribing.

2.6.3 The insight work for Sheffield suggested the following for the grants programme:

- Projects working with people from areas of deprivation (top 20% IMD)
- Projects with a clear commitment to increasing diversity and inclusion, that can demonstrate close links to the communities they plan to engage
- Projects that support development of volunteers as GBSP advocates/champions that can act as connectors to target communities
- Projects that incorporate volunteer befriending and peer support schemes allied to delivery of GBSP activities
- Projects that support training and awareness of green/blue spaces to facilitate longer-term engagement

2.6.4 The following organisations have been awarded monies as part of the grants programme (several are existing PKW organisations)

- Peak District National Park Foundation
- Ethel Trust
- Heeley Development Trust
- Endeavour Training Limited
- Blend Cook, Eat, Share CIC
- Firvale Community Hub
- The Terminus Initiative
- Grow
- Darnall Well Being Ltd.
- Manor and Castle Development Trust Ltd
- Bloom Sheffield
- Support Arts Gardening Education
- Additional projects may be funded

2.7 Green and Outdoor space is an amazing asset for Sheffield

2.7.1 Please follow this [link](#) for Council's Great Outdoors Green and Open Space strategy

2.7.2 The green and open spaces in our city were established for the people of Sheffield. Although they have many other benefits (Biodiversity,

Nature & Climate, Economic value) they are there first and foremost to lift the spirit and enrich our lives. Popular and well-used spaces can bring residents and their communities closer together.

2.7.3 The Green and Open Spaces Strategy seeks to ensure that the full diversity of Sheffield's population is out there enjoying our local green and open spaces which are safe, clean and accessible in all areas - and enlivened with a range of activities, events and facilities and contributing to the health and wellbeing of our city.

2.7.4 The infographic below shows the breadth of the 800 places the Parks and Countryside Service manages on behalf of the city



2.8 The Outdoor City

2.8.1 The Outdoor City Strategy recognises 'Outdoor recreation' has a particular role to play in terms of reducing health inequalities: The health benefits of increased outdoor participation are both physical and mental and it will be vital to understand the role of the outdoors in engaging traditionally inactive groups to ensure they can enjoy these benefits.

2.8.2 Please follow the [link](#) to the Outdoor City Economic Strategy

2.9 Green Social Prescribing and Empowering Communities

2.9.1 Due to its breadth and variety green social prescribing has an important role in relation to the declared nature and climate emergencies and is a powerful tool for reaching our diverse communities. When people have

the opportunity to connect with the natural world through nature-based activities, they are also learning the value of protecting, enhancing and valuing those spaces and environments at the same time.

2.9.2 As the [Sheffield State of Nature 2018](#) report alluded we need to continue to engage people with their local greenspaces for the purposes of both active conservation and recreation.

2.10 **Parks, Woodlands & Countryside Service**

2.10.1 The Parks, Woodlands and Countryside Service are responsible for the management maintenance and development of over 800 green spaces across 4000 hectares.

2.10.2 The service maintains, activates, facilitates and supports this incredibly varied and diverse patchwork of greenspace enabling green and social prescribing activities. Whether in our parks, woodlands, allotments, river valleys or moorlands these spaces need to be safe, welcoming, accessible and well maintained, meeting the needs of all our communities. The service also plays a key role in enhancing biodiversity and habitats which allows communities to connect with nature.

2.10.3 The service also works with providers, partners and communities to build capacity - such as the People Keeping Well organisations. We help facilitate, capacity build, educate and inform suitable activity to cocreate long term initiatives which use and help conserve Sheffield's greenspace.

2.11 **Environmental Levelling up**

2.11.1 Sheffielders are fortunate to live in such a green city, where proximity to local green space is not as much of a barrier as in other large cities. However, we know that different parts of the city are served to different levels (in terms of number of sites, access and quality) and we continue to work hard to close this gap. This is captured in our 'Sheffield Standard' and public health investment that has gone into improvements as well as Better Parks programme.

2.11.2 The provision of toilets and accessible facilities that provide refreshments can be a key barrier to activation and engagement. There are more toilets and cafes in the west of the city and a lower level of provision in the east.

2.11.3 This backdrop increases the task of 'environmental levelling up' but a number of existing and planned 'Discovery Centres', parks buildings and activity hubs can provide a real focus for green social prescribing activity. Examples of these are the First Start Centre (Firth Park), Woodland Discovery Centre (Ecclesall Woods), Hillsborough Park Age UK café (opening soon), Shirebrook Valley Visitor Centre, Parkwood Springs Active Country Park project and Sheffield General Cemetery restoration to name a few. These sites provide facilities where green social prescribing activities can grow and flourish from as well as providing hubs for community activity or projects.

3. What does this mean for the people of Sheffield?

3.1 There is an emerging national body of evidence that connecting with nature improves people wellbeing and mental health.

3.2 As outlined in the report above there is a strong foundation of community wellbeing, green activities and green assets to develop green prescribing further

4. Recommendation

4.1 Scrutiny committee are asked to note the report