

**Attendees:**

Cathy Slater	Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Cassa Townsend	Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Saskia Peet	Firth Park allotments & NE Sheffield Growing Together Co-ordinator
David Price	Assistant Commissioning Officer, Sheffield City Council
Mike Fazakerly	Assistant Commissioning Officer, Sheffield City Council
Sara Moore	Natural England Regional Health & Environment Lead
Dave Bell	Natural England National Health & Environment Lead
Paula Yassine	SAGE, Sheffield
John Preston	TCV South Yorkshire
Helen Todd	Nature Practitioner - Forest Bathing
Helen Taylor	Wellbeing Coach - SOAR, Sheffield
Ruthe Heskin	Sheffield Museums Trust
Fran Humphries	Sheffield Flourish
Jenny King	Sheffield & Rotherham Wildlife Trust
Chloe Smith	Canals and Rivers Trust - Yorkshire and NE Region
Zoe Fuggle	Roots OT - nature and wellbeing practitioner
Emma Lovett-Jones	Well Doncaster (Doncaster Council)
David Fong	Clinical Psychologist, Nature Therapy Practitioner

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

**2. Natural England's Healthy Outdoors Guide to evaluating outdoor wellbeing interventions.**

Dave Bell, Natural England's National Health & Environment Lead, spoke about the 3 core outcomes for Natural England - improving health and wellbeing is one of them. The National Green Social Prescribing pilot 2021-2025 really helped to grow this area for Natural England and demonstrate why connection with nature is important.

The [Healthy Outdoors Guide](#) was launched in April 2026 and was developed with a cross government partnership, which supported the development of the guide, to support how we measure health outcomes when evaluating outdoor wellbeing interventions.

A range of practitioners were also involved, and helped to provide detail on what evidence existed, covering a range of different activities. The Guide focusses primarily on engaging people with nature & outdoor spaces, rather than improvements and changes to physical spaces eg green infrastructure or nature's recovery - this Guide is mostly about when we engage people with activities that we running.

The idea for the Guide came from a need to provide support with consistency and confidence when measuring and evaluating outdoor activities. People were keen on

understanding what would be a good core set of data to collect, to know what they're aiming for - and there can be a need to be consistent for funders.

The Guide is navigable with clickable links that provide more information on the types of outcomes to measure, and a range ways to measure and collect data. Dave and his team are keen to hear feedback from anyone who might begin to use the guide, or indeed from anyone who chooses not to and reasons why - feedback can be given through this [online form](#).

Q from Emma: working with community groups in Doncaster doing this work - a growing part of our sector - should people be collecting this sort of evidence, for funding and future procurement & commissioning? We wouldn't ask them to collect this for current funders. A: Yes, partly why we created something a bit more engaging rather than a long word document, so it could be shared and understood by a wide variety of people. Look at the list of measures and see which ones are relevant to the work you're doing, there are pointers and tips to measure health outcomes in a range of activities. Also depends on scale, sometimes gathering case studies & testimonials from a smaller sample of people can be really effective to tell their impact stories.

Cathy mentioned the Green Social Prescribing pilot 2021-2025 test & learn programme - used ONS4 wellbeing measures, the collected evidence became quite powerful.

Q from Saskia - is there an accessible version? Yes - there is a word document version, but not perhaps relevant for young people or people with learning difficulties, this is a known challenge when evaluating any wellbeing activities. Jenny from SRWT talked about the difficulties of using any kind of questionnaires with people who are experiencing mental health difficulties, or with learning difficulties, and how she has simplified them by often removing a lot of the text, and using visual cues such as emojis instead.

Further discussion covered the following:

Do the NHS say that ONS4 (Office for National Statistics) wellbeing measures are OK to use? (it would seem so, in South Yorkshire certainly)

Public Health Improvement teams helped develop the guide - Directors of Public Health did not flag use of ONS as an issue, although we know of the potential difficulties of using any evaluation questions with vulnerable people. It can be tricky to use these evaluation measures with asylum seekers & refugees, need to look at what works best with different groups, it's always a balance.

Encouragement to share any data and impact findings that you have even if funders aren't asking for this. Page 65 in the Guide (Annex 4) has pointers around this.

Many people who are engaging are self-referring, not engaging with the NHS, sometimes because of this type of monitoring - academic research already exists to show that nature improves health so we can use that?

Being able to demonstrate value for money or social value of this work would be really helpful. Some studies demonstrate either cost savings to the NHS, or the Value for Money derived using the ONS4 "Life Satisfaction" measure and how this relates to the WELLBY

wellbeing valuation (as defined by the HM Treasury's Green Book guidance on wellbeing valuation.) However there are multiple models and methodologies for assessing this, and wide differences in values reported. It would be good to know if there are any options for collecting the right evidence for these sorts of economic calculations in future. (WELLBY is included in the Healthy Outdoors guide briefly as a suggestion but more work needs to be done on how this can be applied to this area of work.)

It's important to hear from participants - they talk about what matters to them. How they value the sessions they attend, how it makes them feel (self worth etc) and what they achieve in the gardens, supporting each other etc - this isn't necessarily captured by completing a mental health questionnaire every quarter for 5 years.

### **3. Workforce wellbeing - case studies and paper**

Cassa presented the Case Studies that have contributed to a short paper on Workforce Wellbeing - this paper ("Workforce Wellbeing - the case for Nature") can found on the South Yorkshire Green Social Prescribing web pages [here](#).

Comments on this:

This area of work is really useful - NHS staff stresses are relentless.

Health care staff have attended Green Social Prescribing training and reported that it benefits their personal wellbeing, as well as helping them understand how to support clients more through nature connection.

Are there places to find out what organisations are experiencing high levels of sickness? Civil Service & NHS publish theirs, and there are government statistics by region, but not down to the level of individual organisations locally.

Suggestion of providing (possibly on the Green Social Prescribing website) a list of options that an organisation could reach out to across South Yorkshire - ie the offers that people have developed to support workforce and corporate wellbeing. This could include team days, one-off wellbeing and nature connection activities, training, or even the availability of sites and venues that staff teams could use for their own self-led activities eg Lower Dearne Valley Nature Reserve (Natural England)

Dave suggested that Kate Mainprice (Natural England's South West Senior health lead) could help - she put on an event for employers and GSP providers to meet (matchmaking!) and charged some of the businesses to come - this built local connections - and sold the idea of how nature connection and biodiversity will support a business's bottom line, reducing sick days, other costs etc. Could this be part of the solution to funding work in this space?

### **4. Updates from others**

Dave Price mentioned the current uncertainty around restructuring of teams at SCC - although they will try to still attend the Green Network meetings if possible.

Chloe suggested possibly good to collectively look at the national youth strategy and how outdoor learning and youth volunteering can help meet a lot of the key aims.

Paula Yassine - SAGE - 6.30pm 1st July All welcome at Grimsthorpe Allotments for the Mikron Theatre annual performance... more information coming soon..

Cathy outlined how the South Yorkshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy is now in consultation and feedback from individuals and groups is welcomed - it was agreed this could form the agenda for the next Green Network meeting (Wednesday 15th July 2026)

There are workshop packs available that people can have to run their own sessions to raise awareness and hold feedback sessions with their own groups/communities. Cathy can supply these - please email [greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com](mailto:greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com)

## **5. Topics for future meetings**

- 1. Local Nature Recovery Strategy South Yorkshire** - for the July meeting
- 2. Involving young people** - Young people for an autumn theme? Chloe offered to share the Canals and Rivers Trust's work in Sheffield & Doncaster with primary schools - but would also be interested to explore work with older young people/adolescents too. Sara Moore - can share some of Natural England's work with young people. Emma Lovett-Jones suggested Heather Coulthard - "Forged in Nature CIC" for their work with young people.
- 3. Projects around growing** for a winter meeting - looking ahead to Spring 2027!

## **ACTIONS:**

- Cassa will share the draft Workforce Wellbeing report (now available online)
- Cassa to ask for contributions of "offers" to support workforce wellbeing - if you would like your offer to companies/organisations included and listed on the Green Social Prescribing website, please email [greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com](mailto:greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com).
- Aspirational follow-on action - perhaps organise an event to matchmake businesses with green providers? (Cassa in contact with Kate Mainprice from Natural England around how they organised theirs)
- Cassa to follow up with those who offered to host their own feedback workshops around the Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Cassa to follow up on the offers of people to contribute to the autumn meeting around young people and nature connection.

## **Future meeting dates:**

**Wednesday 15th July 2026** 10am - 11.30am

**Thursday 17th September** 2pm - 3.30pm

**Tuesday 17th November** 2pm - 3.30pm

Meeting links will be sent out nearer the time.

Please contact [greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com](mailto:greenprescribing@wildsheffield.com) if you would like to:

- Contribute to any topic at future Green Network meeting

- Chair or host a Green Network meeting (we are open to other people doing this, and deciding on future topic meetings - please do make suggestions!)
- Send content for any upcoming Green Network e-newsletters.