



West of England Practitioner Forum for Nature, Health and Wellbeing

10:00 – 12:30, 13 November 2019 at Old Barn, Kelston Roundhill, Bath

Practitioners met at the Old Barn, Kelston Roundhill for the fifth meeting of the Practitioner Forum for Nature, Health and Wellbeing.

Michéal Connors (Natural Academy) welcomed attendees to the meeting and invited everyone to introduce themselves and briefly explain why they were attending the meeting, before conducting a brief grounding exercise. It was explained that the focus of the day would be on finalising the draft Standards for Practitioners and Guidelines for Spaces, and on discussing the future purpose of and draft vision statements for the Practitioner Network.

William Heath, co-owner of Kelston Roundhill, explained the history and aspirations of [Kelston Roundhill](#), explaining that it was intended to be a healing place, available for appropriate community use.

Slides from the meeting are available at the following link: <http://www.wenp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Practitioner-Forum-Nov-19-slides.pdf>.

UPDATES

Stuart Gardner provided an update to members on the work of the West of England Nature Partnership (WENP). It was explained that WENP's Nature and Health Strategy Group was exploring developing an offer for the mainstreaming of nature-based health services in the West of England. Additionally, Stuart is in contact with other South West Local Nature Partnerships regarding the promotion of nature-based health services within social prescribing policy.

Stuart also gave an update on [Hyvr](#), the online social media platform that is being used to host the 'Nature, Health and Wellbeing Hive'. It was reiterated that the purpose of the Hive was to provide a space for practitioners working in Nature, Health and Wellbeing in the West of England to connect, collaborate, discuss, learn and share. The site is still in development and issues with notifications to members should be ironed out in the near future. Attendees were asked to provide any feedback they had on Hyvr and any ideas for how the Hive could be made more useful for practitioners.

Michéal explained that it was intended to continue the bi-monthly meetings of the Practitioner Forum, which can provide co-support to practitioners and give a common voice to funders, partners and organisations. The agenda regarding the mainstreaming of nature-based health services (to ensure consistent and secure funding) needs to be moved along, while incorporating bottom-up feedback.

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR SOCIAL PRESCRIBING

Michéal explained that funders and commissioners want assurance of the competency of practitioners and the quality of the services on offer. Therefore, practitioners must be able to express clearly and plainly who they are and what the services they offer are, and a professional development process (possibly including accreditation) should be developed to provide quality assurance. Links with strategic groups, including Social Prescribers, commissioners and WENP, are important in this regard. The afternoon event on building a Social Prescribing Network was intended to build some of these links. Additionally, there are other, similar networks forming in places such as Ireland, Exeter, North Yorkshire and Sussex, which the Forum should build connections with in order to form part of the larger conversation on nature and health.

The meeting discussed the recommended quality requirements for social prescribing, as contained in the report '[Quality Assurance for Social Prescribing](#)', which were developed to be used by navigators in social prescribing. Practitioners need to consider what is required from them to form part of social prescribing and respond to these requirements to ensure compliance; this will facilitate the funding of the services that practitioners provide. Michéal explained that there is currently funding in place for social prescribing *infrastructure*, but not the end services that are prescribed, although there are 'micro-commissioning' funds available to establish new groups/services.

The meeting agreed to finalising the Standards for Practitioners (which may need to be made more brief before publishing) and the Guidelines for Spaces that were discussed at the previous meeting of the Forum. It was suggested that a page be created on the WENP website to host these, and other, documents.

PURPOSE OF THE NETWORK AND VISION STATEMENTS

Michéal presented an updated 'mind-map' for the 'Nature & Health Network West of England (see Appendix I), which reflects the purposes of the group and the proposed organisation for the Nature, Health and Wellbeing Hive on Hyvr.

Attendees were invited to discuss draft statements on the purpose of a Nature and Health Practitioner Network and vision statements, which are presented in Appendix II. These statements are intended to inform the work of the Network, as well as communicating with an external audience (including funders and social prescribers) the purpose and vision of the Network.

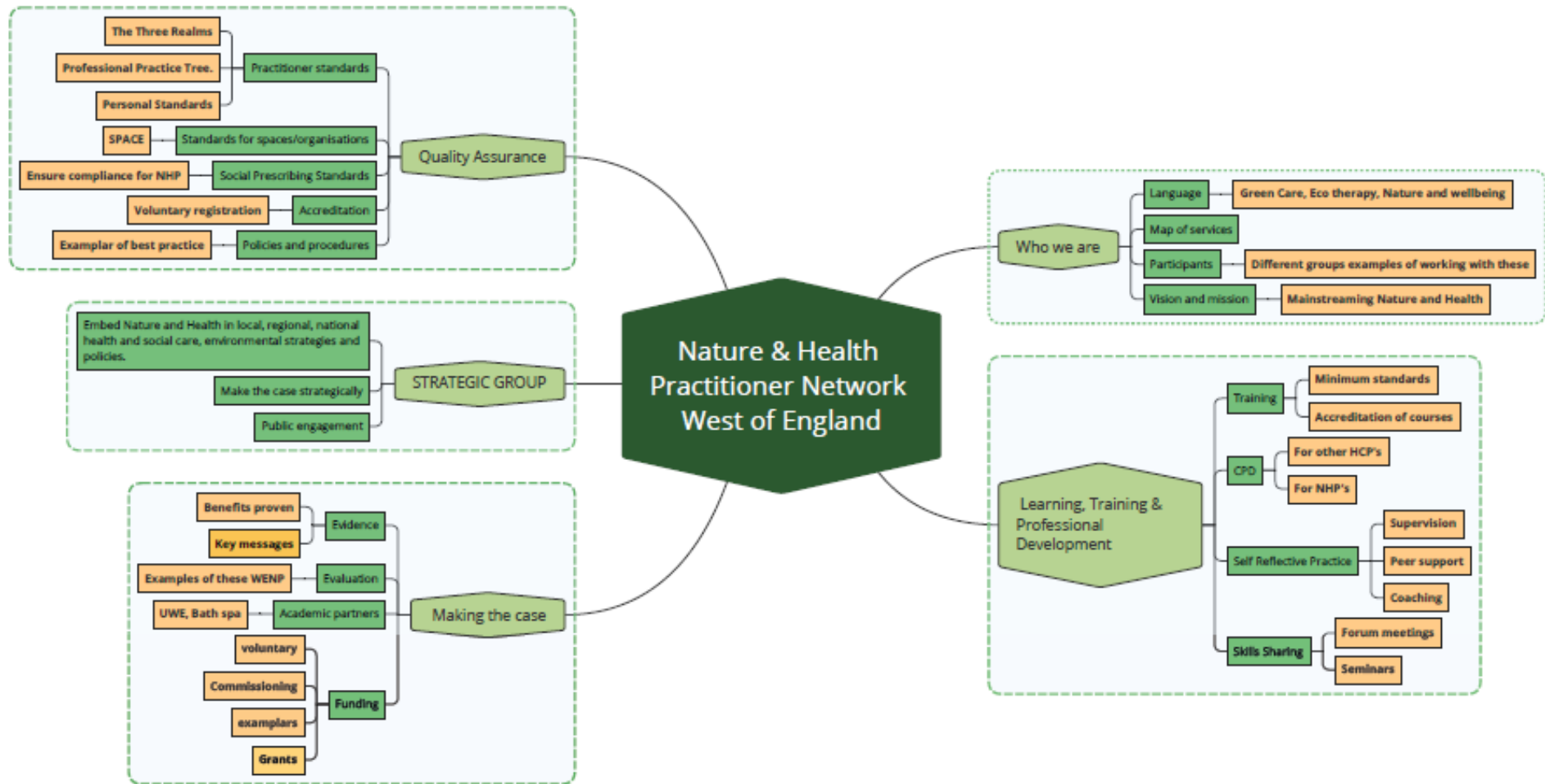
Participants were generally in agreement with the statements regarding the purpose of the Network. There was more feedback provided on the vision statements, which will inform a redrafting of these statements ahead of the next meeting of the Forum.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next Forum meeting will be held on **Thursday 16th January (2020)**, at the **Community Farm** (Chew Magna, Somerset). Dates for subsequent meetings will be agreed in the near future and disseminated to members.

APPENDIX I: NATURE AND HEALTH NETWORK WEST OF ENGLAND

HYVR Development: West of England Nature and Health Practitioners Network



APPENDIX II: DRAFT STATEMENTS ON NATURE AND HEALTH PRACTITIONER NETWORK

Draft statements on 'how the Nature and Health Practitioner Network can help':

- Finds ways to express plainly and clearly who we are, what we do and how this is of value
- Find ways to establish professional development and vocational pathways
- Establish quality assurance for partners, commissioners, funders and participants
- Build the case for nature-based approaches to health to be offered at scale
- Provide a link to strategic groups such as the West of England Nature and Health Strategy Group

Draft Vision Statements:

- Practitioners are supported to provide professional and effective nature-based solutions within a Nature and Health Service that is a vital part of health and social care provision across the West of England
- Practitioners have a positive impact on a thriving and well-connected natural environment that underpins a health, sustainable and resilient society and economy in the West of England
- Practitioners are recognised and valued as members of a professional practice that is making a difference for people and nature
- Practitioners have a vocational pathway for professional training and development
- Practitioners' services are commissioned by health and social care and are an integral part of social prescribing