

AN INNOVATION CASE STUDY



CYNON VALLEY

PROJECT DURATION: 12 months

PARTNERS: Cynon Valley Organic Adventures Ltd, Interlink Rhondda Cynon Taf, Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board, South Cynon Primary Care Cluster / Swansea University School of Medicine and Cardiff University

PROJECT AIM: To build, evaluate and promote engagement with a resource for green social prescribing

OVERVIEW

Our health is affected by many influences. Social and economic factors are known to influence health status more than clinical interventions. Awareness that long-term health conditions adversely impact social engagement, employment and mental health, is driving the exploration of new socially-oriented models for improving health outcomes.

Social prescribing involves non-clinical, community-based interventions for a variety of health conditions, as well as improving health behaviours and well-being, such as physical activity programmes, healthy eating advice, gardening, arts and volunteering.

Green social prescribing offers opportunities to improve health and well-being through access to green spaces and nature-based activities. Despite moves to embed social/green prescribing within the NHS, there is a paucity of robust evidence of its effectiveness, which would underpin its role in reducing poor health and inequalities.

Set in Rhondda Cynon Taff, one of the most socioeconomically deprived communities in the UK, this project builds on existing links between local GPs, wellbeing coordinators and Cynon Valley Organic Adventures, creating new opportunities to engage with a nature. In addition to building a new nature trail, the project explores its potential for improving well-being and explore engagement with those in positions to influence social prescribing practices.

Accelerate is supporting the delivery of this collaborative project through the input of academic experts across 3 Cardiff University Schools, with engagement and project management expertise from by the Clinical Innovation Accelerator. The collaboration will enable:

- A review of published literature on Green Social Prescribing and assessment of the perceptions of community healthcare professionals about the value of such approaches.
- A community developed nature trail in Abercynon which will provide opportunities for GP referrals and community members to engage in nature-based activities
- An assessment of the impact of green prescribing on personal and societal wellbeing using an on-line self-assessment tool developed as part of this project.



"Cynon Valley Organic Adventures are delighted to be working alongside Cardiff University on this upcoming project. The project will not only give local people opportunities to improve well-being but will also help us to develop an amazing community space that will act as a source of learning and accessible green space for years to come."

Janis Werrett, Director CVOA



A diverse 2 acre environment, ideal for green prescribing referrals (images courtesy of Cynon Valley Organic Adventures Ltd.)



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- An interactive, co-produced and co-created nature trail in the Cynon Valley, serving the local community to promote improved wellbeing and long-term health outcomes
- An app-based wellbeing tool to measure subjective wellbeing of individuals engaging with the trail
- A model green prescribing approach which could be replicated at other sites across Wales
- Opportunities for further collaboration
- Case studies
- Peer reviewed publications



FUTURE IMPACT

- Increased awareness of the potential benefits of green prescribing for the local population amongst primary care healthcare professionals in South Cynon
- Evidencing engagement with nature through the medium of a nature trial has a positive impact on community wellbeing
- A model to inspire and support the implementation of green social prescribing across Wales

"Our partnership with CVOA and the people of Cynon Valley is about creating a trail which provides visitors access to nature and the benefits of being in green spaces. Green prescribing is very topical, but there is a need for more robust scientific evidence to help society gain a better understanding of the benefits it can bring to people's lives. Cardiff University will determine how connecting with nature promotes health and well-being. We will support the community by providing expertise from groups such as the Pharmabees project to help create vital pollinator friendly spaces, which we will link with educational resources."

Prof Les Baillie, Cardiff University