

Report of the Health and Wellbeing Officer

Subject: Review of our Health and Wellbeing Service

Purpose of Report

To provide members with a review of the work of the Health and Wellbeing team and how present and planned activity in this area is being developed to meet the needs of people by reducing inequality, improving wellbeing and supporting the all-Wales Framework for Social Prescribing.

Introduction/Background

The Health and Wellbeing Officer, a new role for PCNPA, plays a vital role in making the National Park a more inclusive environment for all to visit, live, and work. The post focuses on delivering health and wellbeing initiatives that enhance access to nature, particularly for disadvantaged groups and those with protected characteristics. Central to the role is the development and implementation of policies and programmes that support physical and mental wellbeing through outdoor engagement. A key element of the position is effective stakeholder engagement, working collaboratively with internal teams, local communities, national organisations, and strategic partners to co-design and deliver impactful interventions. The role also involves identifying and securing funding opportunities, managing externally funded projects, and influencing policy by monitoring outcomes and responding to national and local initiatives. Through strong partnership working and community involvement, the officer ensures the National Park contributes meaningfully to wider public health and inclusion agendas taking a lead when it comes to green social prescribing.

At its heart, health and wellbeing work is about enabling equitable access to nature to support physical and mental health—particularly for underrepresented and disadvantaged communities.

Activity undertaken

In 2024/25, the focus has been on implementing recommendations from the PCNPA Access for All report—an independent review identifying barriers to access. This work led to the creation of two Get Outdoors Coordinator roles and renewed efforts to build relationships with harder-to-reach communities.



Community engagement

The Health and Wellbeing Officer has led on embedding these principles across the Authority through:

- Targeted projects – including providing Dementia Friendly audits and staff training at Castle Henllys, Oriel y Parc and Carew Castle
- Inclusive events
- Partnership working
- Building trust with local groups and individuals

Examples of Impact (2024):

Accessing Open to All funding we supported initiatives such as BSL interpretation of the Archaeology Day, available online and now one of PCNPA's most viewed YouTube series. Support was provided to teams across the Authority to deliver inclusive services such as development of the accessible design at Traeth Mawr/Newport Sands, support for Carew Castle to trial neurodiverse-friendly hours and inclusivity advice to the Oriel y Parc team.

Meaningful partnerships and relationships have been created with groups such as:

- Pembrokeshire People First
- Sign and Share Club
- Mencap
- Age Friendly Communities
- Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group
- Public Health Wales
- 50+ Forum
- PAVS and NHS-led health events
- YHA
- National Trust
- Bluestone

- Engaging Communities CIC
- Engagement activities with local businesses, PCC and members of the public

Over the last year the Health and Wellbeing Officer's focus has been to promote the Authority and the National Park's venues to communities and linked people and organisations to already existing services.

Looking Ahead: Priorities for 2025–2026

- Gypsy and Traveller family beach days and women's wellbeing groups
- Walk the Path for Wellbeing (September 12th, 2025)
- Apply for Bronze Carers Recognition Award
- Partner on Black Girls Hike event with YHA
- Explore accessible partnerships with the National Trust
- Collaborate on RNIB's 'See Cymru Differently' National Parks' project
- Support Public Health Wales's Hapus initiative: [Hapus](#)
- Join Bevan Foundation, Q Lab Cymru, PCC & NHS in systemic local health change
- Work with Social Firm Wales and Experience Community CIC
- Host BSL Archaeology Day 2025
- Deepen engagement with the Muslim community and refugees
- Celebrate PRIDE inclusively
- Support Farmers' mental health learning with Leeds University
- Apply for UK National Park Wellbeing Fund study (2026)
- Continue to improve access through easy read materials and more

The Get Outdoors Team

The two Get Outdoors Coordinator roles were appointed in 2024 replacing the previous Walkability Officer and Outdoor Mobility Equipment Coordinator posts, providing a more flexible and county-wide approach to walking and outdoor mobility support. The roles were also designed to allow for regional focus, with coverage in both the north and south of Pembrokeshire. Due to the difficulty in recruiting Welsh-speaking staff for this role, the focus for 2025 has been on sustainability, ensuring long-term impact with existing resources.

Reaching New Audiences

In its first year, the Get Outdoors service has significantly widened access, engaging with individuals who are often disconnected from other services and face multiple barriers to participation. New walking groups have been formed, while existing ones have been reinvigorated.

Regular walking groups are supported in Kilgetty, Broad Haven, Carew, St Davids, Haverfordwest, Fishguard, Amroth (with PAVS), and Narberth. These are now led by volunteers and average 50 participants weekly.



“After spending time leading this group over the last 8 months, I have seen such a bond grow between the group. As well as the friendships formed, they have reaped physical benefits helping them be more mobile in their daily life. There is clearly such a huge social benefit for this group as they all turn up week after week sharing stories of activities they have done away from the group together and the joy that they have when walking regardless of the weather.” – Get Outdoors Co-ordinator North

Staff-led Accessible Walks are held every Thursday at rotating locations and Parent & Baby Walks are held on Fridays supporting new parents and showcasing accessible spaces. These groups not only promote physical activity but help tackle isolation, especially for parents, carers, and disabled residents. The walks have created a community for new parents to help with getting outside and fighting isolation. One father said *"these walks really help you get out of the house, it can be so easy to be isolated and stuck inside all day. These walks are great"*. Another mother said *"these walks have really helped my mental health post baby"*.

A participant on the Accessible Walk was able to enjoy a walk with their grandson, supported by the Get Outdoors team, who introduced them to PACTO's Green Dragon Community Transport, restoring independence they thought was lost. They shared that *"I felt normal for the first time in 5 years."*

Inclusive Initiatives

Following the Black Girls Hike visit to St Davids with Llwy Criad 24, in September 2024, new Global Majority walks have been established. These are designed to be safe, welcoming, and community-led, and are set to expand as trust grows. Discussions are underway with Pembrokeshire Pride to develop a similar walking offer for the LGBTQ+ community.

Accessibility Equipment Use and Impact

We have widened our accessibility equipment provision to include ramps, and induction loops for this year. There were 548 mobility equipment bookings in 2024 up from 493 in 2023 and 420 in 2022. We are expecting a further increase in 2025 with figures currently reaching 231. Income is generated solely through donations, while access to the equipment is free to ensure access for the most vulnerable.

Partnership Development

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Operational Review Committee 11 June 2025

Our mobility equipment provision is supported by local hosts such as cafes, surf clubs and hostels.

New hosts for 2025 are Bluestone, hosting and supporting the maintenance of our previously underused mountain trikes and acting as a venue for future accessible walks. National Trust Stackpole has become the host for the mobile hoist, opening up more shared learning and collaborative projects. Requests have been received for additional beach wheelchair provision in Manorbier, Fishguard and Kiln Park Tenby which we are looking to address.

Booking System Improvements

Feedback from users revealed that the previous Simply Booking system was too complex. Thanks to Open to All funding, a new booking platform has been launched, developed in consultation with Pembrokeshire People First's Dream Team and a consultant, Kania Digital. The new system offers a simpler user experience, with early feedback being overwhelmingly positive. Work is ongoing to develop a video library to help users plan their trips with confidence.

Team Development

The team has received specialist training to strengthen their skills in outdoor engagement and inclusivity support, while actively seeking partnership opportunities to expand their reach and impact. This has built their competence and the relationships being built in the community. We have a very valued support from a volunteer team that we will need to continue and diversify across the next year.

Comparisons

The Authority's health and wellbeing service is innovative and sector-leading with few National Parks or local authorities offering a similar service.

Financial considerations

Our Get Outdoors work is funded until March 2026. We have been successful in attracting external funding for this work over many years but recognise that the funding landscape is becoming increasingly challenging. Our new booking system enables us to take donations, and we expect this will make an important contribution to the service going forward.

Risk considerations

The primary risk to this area of work is sustainability over the long-term to provide the support, training, walking opportunities and servicing the provision of equipment that are needed to ensure the continuity of a safe, well used service that people depend on.

Compliance

Our Health and Wellbeing work supports our duty to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities required by the Well-being of Future Generations

(Wales) Act, Environment Act and the Authority's Corporate Wellbeing Objectives relating to Connection and Communities.

Human Rights/Equality issues

Our health and wellbeing activity addresses key equality issues in terms of access to the natural heritage and delivers actions identified in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority's Strategic Equality Plan to achieve our Equality Objectives.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

Our health and wellbeing work has no discernible negative impact on biodiversity in the National Park. However, the content of activity programmes and increased participation from new audiences will increase awareness of biodiversity in Pembrokeshire and nature recovery in practice.

Welsh Language statement

Get Outdoors resources and information are provided bilingually, and the team have the support of the wider Engagement and Inclusion Service to provide Welsh language activities on demand.

Conclusion

This work strongly positions the Pembrokeshire Coast as an inclusive, accessible destination for locals and tourists alike.

Recommendation

Receive the report and note for future consideration.

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