Green care: An overview

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• So many different ‘nature-based’ initiatives
• Being run by and for many different people
• Increasing interest in using nature for health
• But there is sometimes confusion
• Green care sector: has started to unify and deliver a clear message to commissioners
• Best way forward? Social prescribing? Green public health?

How can we make green care a natural part of health and social care services?
Many current health issues

- Obesity
- Physical inactivity
- Smoking
- Diabetes
- Cancer
- Mental ill-health
- Dementia
- Comorbidity

Challenges for NHS in treatment and for Public health in prevention
Changes in health and social care

• Structural changes

• NHS needs to change
  • from “a ‘factory’ model of care and repair”
  • to one that focuses on much wider individual and community engagement (Five Years Forward View, NHS England, 2014)

• Social prescribing

• Drive to integrate health and social care

• Radical upgrade in prevention and public health

• National action to tackle major health risks
  • i.e. prevention (Five Years Forward View, NHS England, 2014)

• Nature to the rescue? ..............................
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Source: Adapted from Haubenhofer, Bragg et al., 2010; Sempik and Bragg, 2013; Bragg 2014; Bragg and Atkins, 2015
What is green care?

“Green care: nature-based therapy or treatment interventions - specifically designed, structured and facilitated for individuals with a defined need”

- not a casual encounter with nature

- A range of different green care interventions available
  - Collective name
  - But many different settings and contexts under the umbrella
Green Care

- Social and Therapeutic Horticulture
  - including Food growing (as a treatment intervention)
- Care Farming
- Environmental Conservation
  (as a treatment intervention); Ecotherapy
- Animal Assisted Therapy
- Others:
  - Wilderness therapy;
  - Nature therapy;
  - Nature arts and crafts;
  - Ecopsycho-therapy;
- Green Exercise
  (as a treatment intervention)

Range of different contexts, activities, health benefits, service users, motivations and needs.

Source: Adapted from Hine et al., 2008; Bragg et al., 2013 and Bragg 2014
Interaction of three key elements within green care

**Natural surroundings**
- Psychological restoration
- Reduced stress
- Attentional capacity
- Sense of calm and safety

**Social context**
- Part of a group
- Social contact
- Inclusion
- Sense of belonging

**Meaningful activities**
- New skills
- Sense of achievement
- Responsibility
- Confidence

**Green Care**
- STH, ECI, Care Farming

STH – Social and Therapeutic Horticulture; ECI – Environmental Conservation Interventions; Source: Bragg and Atkins, 2015
Multiple outcomes

- Multiple outcomes from green care
  - simultaneously produces other positive life outcomes
  - wider than clinical outcomes
  - Integrates health and social care
  - Is therefore cost-effective
  - Also enjoyable – people go back!
- Ticks many of the boxes in ‘Five Year Forward View’

- Need to raise awareness – commissioners practitioners and patients alike
Some recommendations

• There is a need for the green care sector umbrella organisations to:
  • work together in partnership - in order to promote the sector more widely to policymakers, commissioners and potential service users; and
  • to raise awareness *within the green care sector* of the need for developing common messages for clear communications with commissioners.

• Through partnership, a core group of national organisations should widely adopt the term ‘green care’ to demonstrate leadership
• It is crucial to make a distinction between
  • specifically designed and commissioned interventions for individuals with a defined need (green care), and
  • public health programmes for the general population.

• To ensure that nature-based service providers use the appropriate language (and evidence) to talk to the ‘right’ commissioners
  • i.e. green care providers will target health and social care commissioners (Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Authorities (social services)) and more general nature-based programmes will target commissioners of Public health (PHE and Local Authorities (public health)).
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• Please include short reference underneath the figures whenever you use them – many thanks
• Full references are as follows:


