

# **Stepping Stones - Ullapool & Lochbroom**

## **Community Supported Green Health Pathways**

### **Workshop Outputs - May 2024**

#### **Introduction**

In 2018, the Highland Green Health Partnership was formed and is chaired by the Head of Health Improvement within the NHS Highland Public Health Team. Think Health Think Nature is the work programme of the Highland Green Health Partnership with a vision that states:

*‘By 2030, the natural environment will be valued as essential for the health & wellbeing of the people of Highland. We will work together to support individuals and communities to connect with and enjoy nature, while safeguarding our natural spaces and promoting inclusion’*

The benefits of connecting with nature for our health and wellbeing are well documented and evidenced. Nature-based activities can help to keep people healthier for longer, and are also a valuable self-management resources for those undergoing medical treatment or recovering from illness or injury.

#### **Stepping Stones**

The concept of Stepping Stones originated from work undertaken through the Think Health Think Nature, seeking to develop green prescription pathways from health & social care services into community nature-based activities.

It was recognised that, in some rural areas, there is limited capacity within health and social care services to support individuals into nature-based therapies and that such nature-based services can be hard to sustain due to short term funding cycles and low volunteer turnover.

It was also recognised that there are opportunities to enter nature-based therapies without the need for input from healthcare professionals; that people are benefiting from such activities without the knowledge of their

healthcare service; and opportunities exist to enhance and promote such activity at community level.

The stepping stones model is a community-led approach to positive physical and mental wellbeing, determined by suitable local activities (stepping stones) that sit within a shared pool of knowledge. People are encouraged to participate in local activities or self-led activities in nature close to home, through community ‘enablers’.



### **Ullapool Medical Practice**

Initial discussions with GP's at Ullapool Medical Practice indicated that the stepping stones model could help to support green prescriptions pathways by reaching a wider audience and engaging participation before crisis or ill health has occurred.

At the same time, the project could help to equip healthcare staff with the knowledge, information and resources to encourage individual participation and to make referrals via a community link worker, thus reaching those that would benefit the most.

## **Whole Family Wellbeing Programme**

At an inception meeting held online in December 2023, the concept of Stepping Stones was discussed. The group agreed to explore working with the Whole Families Wellbeing Programme to explore the delivery of community supported nature-based pathways.

APPENDIX B outlines the ways in which the Stepping Stone Model aligns with the priorities of the Whole Families Wellbeing programme.

In collaboration with the Whole Families Wellbeing team, a workshop was held at the Macphail Centre in Ullapool in April 2024.

The following outlines the workshop findings. For the purpose of the discussions, families were interpreted as being multi-generational and targeting individuals from cradle to grave.

### **Ullapool - What is in our Stepping Stone pond?**

The pond can be thought of as a pool of knowledge within a defined geographical area. The area of focus was the Ullapool High School Catchment.

### **Barriers and Opportunities**

Workshop attendees explored some of the barriers and opportunities around accessing nature-based wellbeing initiatives in the community and these are summarised in the following pages under four categories:

- Behavioural
- Physical
- Financial
- Administrative

## Barriers

<b>Behavioural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Awareness of what is out there</li> <li>• Stigma</li> <li>• Low confidence/self-esteem - there is a need for support</li> <li>• Perception of the activity - no first experience</li> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Risk Aversion</li> </ul>
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to clothing and Equipment</li> <li>• Transport</li> <li>• Geography - Ullapool-centric. Little Loch Broom overlooked</li> <li>• Limited Active Travel opportunities</li> <li>• Lack of available spaces &amp; buildings</li> </ul>
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of funding to sustain activities</li> <li>• A reliance on the provision of free services</li> <li>• Cost of running activities - Short term nature of funding</li> <li>• Loss of trained staff/training costs</li> <li>• A need to set long term or permanent initiatives</li> <li>• Hidden Poverty - how do we reach those most in need?</li> <li>• Reliance on volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough skilled staff to run initiatives - need for training - keeping up with qualifications</li> <li>• Lone working</li> <li>• Reliance on Individuals</li> <li>• Responsibility and Expectations - people nervous to take a lead role</li> <li>• Booking systems online</li> <li>• Too much red-tape and paper work for referral pathways</li> <li>• Burn Out</li> <li>• Insurance/Indemnity</li> </ul>

## Opportunities

<b>Behavioural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have good schools to reach younger people and extend to wider family and community</li> <li>• We can connect with local and community led services that are pro-active - avoid crisis rather than follow crisis</li> <li>• Local people may be more trusted than intermediaries</li> <li>• Use existing information channels and networks</li> </ul>
<b>Physical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ullapool &amp; Lochbroom has plentiful greenspace and beautiful natural and cultural heritage</li> <li>• Has a variety of green and blue health activities on offer</li> <li>• Opportunities for connecting with nature from home/close to home</li> </ul>
<b>Financial</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for better collaboration between groups to strengthen funding applications.</li> <li>• Bottom-up/Community-led applications can be designed to meet community need</li> <li>• Promotion of self-management tools to reduce reliance on external services</li> </ul>
<b>Administrative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sharing of skills and resources</li> <li>• Volunteer Recruitment</li> <li>• Joint training for staff and volunteers</li> <li>• Joint promotion and campaigns</li> </ul>

## Who are Our Community Enablers?

Our Community Enablers are people active in our community who can signpost to information and support; provide advice using their specialist or local knowledge or can give one to one support.

Taking the first step into a new activity is often hard and requires support. The Community Enablers are those available in a locality to offer a helping hand to individuals.

Signposting opportunities reach the greatest number of people but uptake and overall impact is low. It is also not known how many people will have taken up a new activity based on signposting.

Providing advice alongside signposting has a greater though a lower reach

Providing direct support is known to help those who need it most, though reach will be smaller. (See figure 1 below)

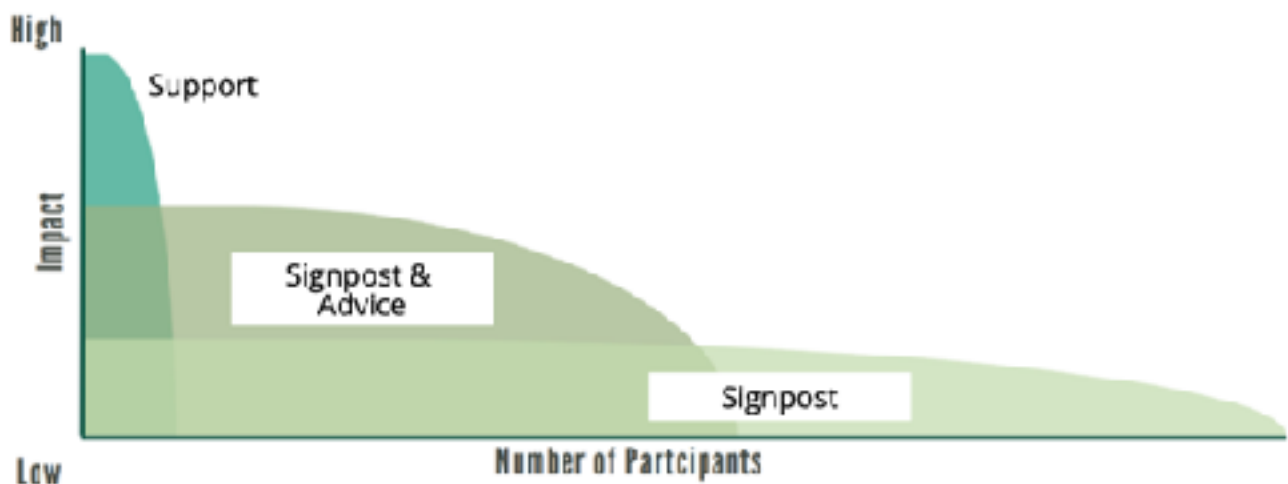


Figure 1: Different Community Pathways into Green Health Activity

Community Enablers Identified during the workshops are listed below by category:

Signpost	Advice	Support
Ullapool & Lochbroom Community Trust GP Link Worker Active Health Link Worker Community Nurses GP CAB Social Workers Lochbroom Community Council Active Schools Library Staff Adult Learning Staff Countryside Rangers Youth Workers	GP Pharmacy Ewens Room Councillors Macmillan Support Workers Community Support Worker Alzheimers Support Workers Occupational Therapist Physiotherapist District Nurse Teachers Youth Workers Countryside Rangers	Befrienders Peer Support Support Workers Link Workers Befrienders Early Years Workers Health Visitors Peoples own family and friends Social Workers

## Who Are Our Community Stepping Stones?

The stepping stones consist of all the community activities that would help an individual maintain good physical, mental and social wellbeing through connection with nature.

Each stepping stone should have an awareness of the other activities around them and how to signpost individuals. The idea being that once an individual takes their first step into the network, onwards steps should be easier as providers are each equipped with the knowledge and information to support that individual.

It was acknowledged during the workshops that some people prefer self-led activities rather than group activities, and there may also be opportunities to create bespoke resources or develop new self-led activities in the village and surrounding area.

## Our Activities

The following activities were identified during the workshop

	Activity	
1	High Life Highland Countryside Rangers	
2	Kinder Croft	
3	Create Theatre Group	
4	Allotments	
5	Football	
6	Sailing Club	
7	Forest Run	
8	West Edge	
9	Active Schools After School Clubs	
10	Lochbroom Field Club	
11	The Bothan (community Space	
12	Isle Martin	
13	School Polytunnel and Garden	
14	Achiltibui After School Club (Thursdays)	
15	Achiltibui Library (wed)	
16	Gaelic Toddler group	
17	Gaelic Book Bug	
18	Toddler Group	
19	Health Walk Group ??	
20	Coastal Rowing	
21	Cold water swimming (informal)	
22	Garden of Reflection	
23	Dolphins Dementia Group	
24	Mens Shed	
25	Schools Mountain Biking	
26	Bikability	
27	HLH Climbing Wall (Wednesdays)	
28	Seaful	



	Activity	
29	Coach Community Development Company	
30	Loch Broom Yoga	
31	Litter Picking groups	
32	Golf Club	
33	Ullapool Youth Space	
34	An Talla Solais Arts	
35	Ullapool Hill Walking group	
36	Ullapool Sea savers	

## Provision of information

It was acknowledged during the workshop that a lot was going on but more could be done to raise awareness of the benefits of nature-based activities and the opportunities for participation locally. Below is a list of suitable information points identified:

- Post Office Van
- New Broom Notice Board
- Social Media
- Village Hall Notice Board
- Library/Mobile Library
- Tesco Notice Boards
- Events
- THTN Directory
- GP Practice
- Ullapool News (weekly 80p)
- School Chrome Books
- Schools
- Leisure Centre Notice Boards
- Book Shop
- An Talla /Museum
- Wester Ross RAdio
- Local Directories
- Monthly Team meetings

## ACTION PLAN

During the workshop participants identified actions that could be taken to meet the elements of the stepping stone model and were invited to prioritise those actions. The Action plan is shown in Appendix A.

## Ullapool Stepping Stones Action Plan

## APPENDIX A

Below are the prioritised actions identified through the Ullapool Stepping Stones workshop by theme:

### THEME 1 - Healthcare Referral Pathway

Ref	Action	Description	Time-scale	Lead
1.1	Map the available green health services	Update and make accessible the online directory in use for person-centred patient care. Add to THTN website and cross reference with CLW directory and ALISS.	Short	Think Health Think Nature
1.2	Create information resources in healthcare settings	A community noticeboard in the GP practice. Printed resources available for handing out through HIRS	Short	Think Health Think Nature/Practice Manager - may require £'s to print more resources.
1.3	Work with Community Link Workers to connect people into suitable activities.	Ullapool practice is due a Community Link Worker commencing in the Autumn of 2024. Can also work through Active Highland.	Medium	Think Health Think Nature/Change Mental Health/Velocity
1.4	Monitoring	Capture referrals through Elemental System	Medium	NHS Highland/Change Mental Health

## THEME 2 - Provision of Community Information (Pool of Knowledge)

Ref	Action	Description	Time-scale	Lead
2.1	Collaborative Events	Host a series of Come n Try Sessions or work with activity providers to encourage them to run drop in sessions.	Medium	
2.2	Provision of at-home and self-led resources for families	Book Bug Packs, leaflet drops, home packs, borrow boxes	Medium	HLH Library Service/ HLH Ranger Service
2.3	Wellbeing Hub	Work alongside those leading on a wellbeing hub for the community ensure a presence of green health opportunities, guidance and advice available.	Longer	An Talla Solais
2.4	Map the available community greenspaces	Work with local information providers to create an map of available spaces in the area.	Short	Think Health Think Nature/LUCT
2.5	Raise awareness of the support services in the area and their role.	Jo Ford is mapping the H&WB support services. Aneurin Ellis (drug and alcohol mapping) SLCVO	Medium	NHS/HTSI
2.6	Targeted Campaigns	Through local newsletters, social media and events raise the awareness of green health opportunities for families	Short	

### THEME 3 - Building Capacity and increasing reach of what is on offer (Stepping Stones)

Ref	Action	Description	Time-scale	Lead
3.1	Volunteer recruitment and management support	Campaign for volunteer recruitment, training and retainment. collaboration across organisations and succession planning is needed to sustain activities.	Longer	
3.2	Training & Skills development	Training needs assessments of activity providers. Shared learning events. Collaborate with UHI, bring in rural skills and commission courses. Mini bus training. A wellbeing Hub could be a useful venue for use in this. Link to existing training.	Medium	Think Health Think Nature can carry out a needs assessment but further resources may need to be sought to coordinate and deliver training
3.3	Mixed age/whole family activities	Encourage activity providers to accept a wide range of ages to participate. Support training if that is needed to make it happen. Funding for PVG checks. Kids need accompanied.	Medium	
3.4	Progression pathways	Work with activity providers to build an understanding of what each other has to offer and to encourage families to try new things	Medium	
3.5	Commissioning services where needs have been identified	Wild things/ Nature 4 HEalth/ Able 2 Adventure and other Highland based 'experts' can deliver immersive experiences and training.	Medium	
3.6	Transport	Work with activity providers and community transport provision to break down barriers to participation	Longer	
3.7	Workforce/employee initiatives	Work with employers to both to maintain the wellbeing of our workforce supporting families but also to increase awareness of what is on offer and the wellbeing benefits. Invite decision makers to participate in activities	Longer	
3.8	Understand the audience and reach of current activity provision and close the gaps	Through self assessment and health inequalities training work with activity providers to build understanding of the needs to local families and engage	Short	Think Health Think Nature

#### THEME 4 - Supporting Families into green health activities (Enablers)

Ref	Action	Description	Time-scale	Lead
4.1	Identify Community Enablers	Raise awareness of green health benefits and opportunities among those that can signpost to support. Jo Ford work will help with this.	Short	Think Health Think Nature
4.2	Map the current enablers and seek to create support where there are gaps	Potential to work with Highland Hospice and or Befrienders on this	Medium	
4.3	Develop and foster peer support	Wellbeing hub opportunities. Need to understand what groups would benefit from this ie. mens only/ women's only groups, groups with particular health concerns	Medium	
4.4	Reduce or remove stigma	How? Language used. Trauma informed. Understand.	Medium	
4.5	Provision of equipment and clothing	Potential to replicate the kit for All initiative developed in Caithness	Longer	





## Setting Baselines, Monitoring and Evaluation

In addition to the prioritised actions identified through the community workshop, the following actions would be required to maximise the impact of the programme and to evaluate its effectiveness.

THEME 5 - Governance, Monitoring & Evaluation				
Ref	Action	Description	Time-scale	Lead
5.1	Gather baseline information on current participation and provision	Work is already underway through the Whole families team and HTSI. Survey of activity providers needed to understand more about current provision. Look at local health profiles to identify need.	Short	Think Health Think Nature/HTSI/Whole Families Wellbeing Programme
5.2	Set Targets	For services available, participation and referrals. For reach of public engagement	Medium	
5.3	Form a locality partnership group to oversee the project	Identify stakeholders and governance routes locally and regionally	Short	Ullapool Wellbeing Working Group
5.4	Employ a local development officer	Build relationships, coordinate action and collaboration and drive initiative forward. This officer would provide capacity to deliver on the aspects of the project that are moderate or hard to achieve or may take longer and require collaboration at a local level.	Medium	
5.5	Seek ongoing funding opportunities	To address the gaps in service delivery by targeting activities at those families in greatest need continually look to draw in funding from other sources	Medium	
5.6	Monitor & review progress	Use quantitative and qualitative methodologies to review progress on a regular basis	Medium	
5.7	Carry out an EQIA	To ensure project tackles inequalities an EQIA should be carried out on the agreed plan ahead of implementation	Short	Think Health Think Nature

## Stepping Stones & Whole Families Wellbeing Programme

The Ullapool Stepping Stones Model and action plan can help to meet the following priorities as identified in the Whole Families Wellbeing Programme:

	<p><b>Priority:</b> Ensuring funding recognises the whole family longer-term need and isn't stop start.</p>
	<p><b>Priority:</b> We have a process that ensures that all services know about each other.</p> <p>Inclusive community events and hubs that suit families and communities when &amp; where they need it</p>
	<p><b>Priority:</b> Enabling early intervention and prevention</p> <p>Addressing the disjoin between children and adult services</p>
	<p><b>Priority:</b> Acknowledge the impact of stigma and actively consider how we overcome it</p>