

Biophilic partnerships for health and wellbeing

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The global health challenges of the 21st century require a new way of thinking and a change in healthcare services through an approach that considers human needs in their entirety, and not in a strictly therapeutic sense. Biophilia states that humans possess an innate tendency to seek connections with the natural world and that this is vital to their health and well-being. According to several studies, the humanisation of healthcare spaces and contact with nature can empower the patient and have a positive impact by reducing stress and pain and improving emotional well-being. This paper focuses on the role of the National Botanic Garden of Wales in health and well-being. Co-creating inspiring spaces with the National Health Service and patients, staff groups and community partners has never felt more important for the Garden. Its collaborations with University Health Boards focus on moving away from a 'one-size fits all' approach to amenity areas to embracing biophilic design, creating a diverse mosaic of green space and biodiversity to support healthcare delivery, wellness activities and community integration. Furthermore, the collaborations consider their potential for use within a wider package of green prescribing, therapeutic horticulture and wellness activities. Working with communities and the voluntary sector we are creating inspiring spaces for health and well-being that meet public needs and policy and show how Wales' biodiversity can contribute to wider well-being goals. The long-term sustainability of outputs is central to the design of our collaborative work to achieve permanent improvements in the biodiversity and environment of Wales and the health and well-being of people. This paper will highlight some of the key outcomes and learnings from this work to date.