

Natural Health Service

Executive Summary

2013



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Executive summary

This Executive Summary introduces the Natural Health Service. A Natural Health Service Business Plan has been prepared for and by the Natural Economy Health Consortium, part of the North West Investment Forum. If you would like a copy please contact info@naturalhealthservice.org.uk

The Natural Health Service consortium consists of 21 organisations who have come together to develop a sustainable business using natural environment based products to help improve the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

The consortium is working together to develop a coordinated offer of products to health commissioners. New partners are welcome to the consortium at any time.

The Business Plan is a framework for the new Natural Health Service. Information within the plan the name and intellectual property of the Natural Health Service are protected. Reproduction of the plan in any part or in full is not permitted, nor is the concept of this Natural Health Service.

What is the Natural Health Service?

The Natural Health Service is a social enterprise that offers health commissioners a single point of access to a range of well-developed and evidence based natural environment focussed products to help tackle a range of health and wellbeing issues.

Our mission:

As a consortium, develop a financially sustainable, excellent Natural Health Service to treat physical and mental illness and promote and enable good health through high quality, natural environment based products.

Our objectives are:

- In 2013 create a focal point for health commissioners to enable the contracting of natural environment based products that are evidence based and cost effective ways to improve health and wellbeing.
- To develop a sustainable business and well-resourced consortium that operates as a Social Enterprise.
- To become a centre of excellence for delivery of this type of health service by 2016
- Achieve annual delivery of 1000 units of treatment by 2018

Our consortium brings together land owners, managers and experienced community leaders to develop and deliver high quality health products through the Natural Health Service, an asset based mechanism for social prescribing.

Our business is helping those with poor mental and/or physical health and promoting good health using the natural environment as the basis for our work.

Our service is provided to health commissioning bodies as a social enterprise, taking a business-like approach to ensure the sustainable development of the business.

Who are the consortium members?

The consortium members are community experts and experts in the use of the natural environment to improve health and wellbeing. The Natural Health Service Consortium includes Forestry Commission, TCV, Groundwork, GreenSpace North West, and Community Forests.

21 consortium members have agreed to cooperate as a social enterprise that provides a single access point for health commissioning bodies for the products offered: www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk

Why has a Natural Health Service been developed?

The business opportunity arises due to:

- Increased evidence of the benefit of environment-based health products such as Green Gym and Horticultural Therapy to treat a range of illness and safeguard good health.
- Awareness amongst consortium members that a coordinated approach to the health sector with a business-like approach offers the best option for long term sustainability of the products that they offer.
- The need to address costs in the NHS by delivering upstream health improvements that reduce pressure on acute health services.
- Restructuring of the health sector

Achieving our ambition

Our strategy is based on the development of a suite of existing products developed by members, marketed to the new commissioning bodies to deliver a high quality Natural Health Service. Our business plan sets out the organisational and marketing development required to achieve our mission and objectives over a 5 year period.

The Consortium is managed through a **coordinating group** with a nominated organization that acts as a “**hub**”. This Consortium, the coordinating group and hub are established as the “Natural Health Service¹”, a social enterprise. The Community Forest Trust will manage and support the Consortium, using the registered brand “Natural Health Service”. It will provide accountability and also coordinate the website www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk

The Natural Health Service provides a single contact point to all providers of health improvement, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Wellbeing Boards, Public Health Authorities and Consortium members.

Health Priorities

The Consortium will target its products at the outcomes that need to be achieved by the health commissioning bodies. Key to this will be showing a clear link to the Public Health Outcomes Framework as well as other health strategies at a local level, which the Natural Health Service will respond to for each new geographic area.

Commissioners will be able to influence the available products, treatments and evaluation required to meet their local health outcome objectives and priorities.

Products

The products that we are delivering are fundamentally an asset based approach to address health priorities. The table below shows the products available from Consortium members.

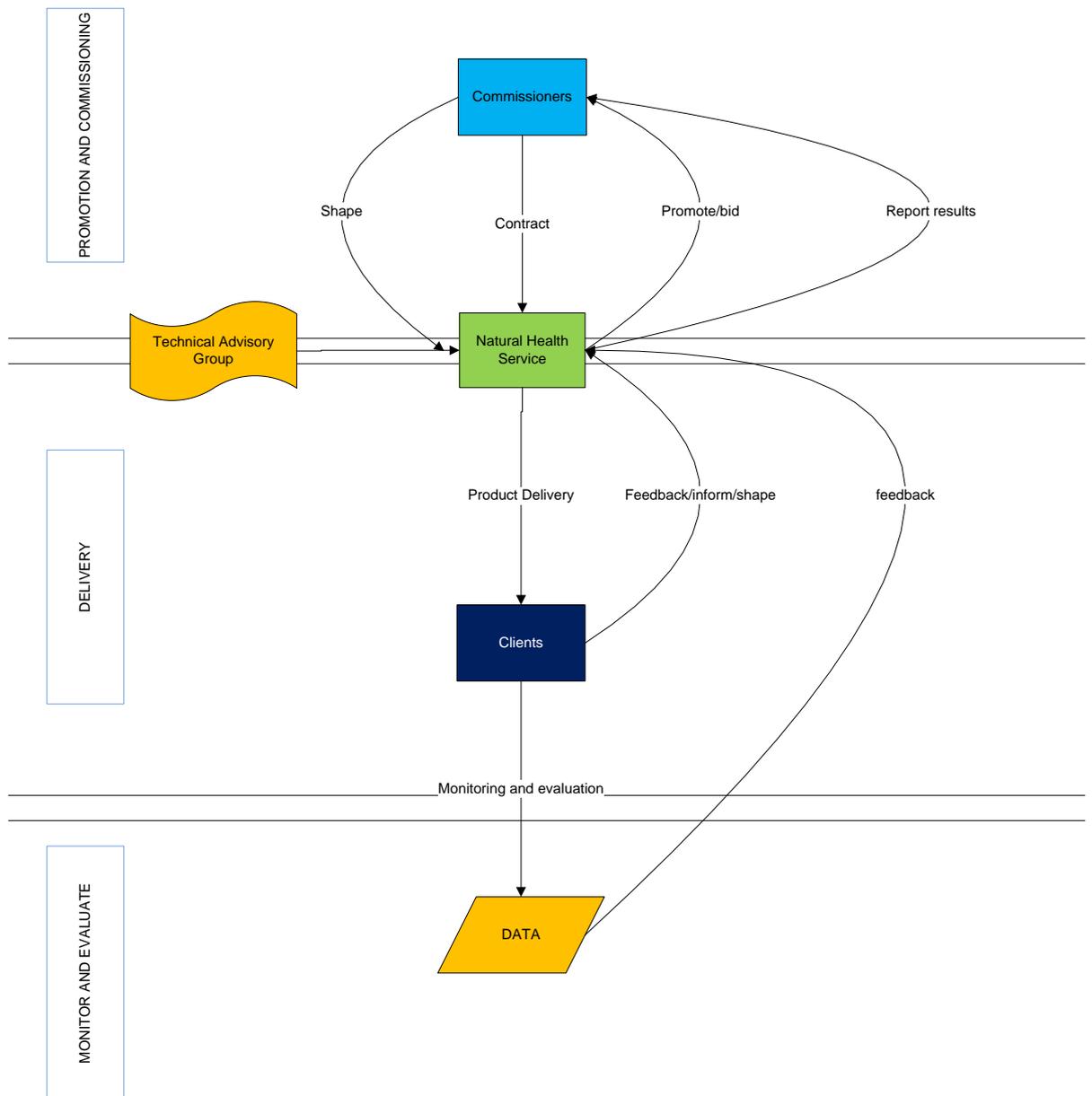
Our established, effective products can be exemplified by Green Gyms, Grozone, Forest Schools, health walks and cycles and “Feel Blue Touch Green”. These are all established products that have been locally or more widely been taken up by individual health bodies. “Product Sheets”² have been developed for each of these products. These sheets provide an overview of the products and its applicability to a range of health problems.

The Consortium delivery of Natural Health Service branded products provides a single contact point for sustainable high quality delivery of these in a business framework; rather than a ‘hit and miss’ approach of multiple projects with differing outcomes and measures. The business of the Natural Health Service is to ensure clinical governance, data protection, and consistent evaluation of improvement against health priorities for reliable outcomes. In addition, products, delivery locations and service providers will be monitored for continual excellence. Each product service provider and land owner as a Consortium member signs up to the Natural Health Service, its brand, reputation and quality assurance.

¹ www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk

² www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk

The Natural Health Service



Delivery model

In our delivery model, each unit of treatment for a particular product consists of 16 sessions of activity with each session able to accommodate ten people. These can be run once, or several times a week. The course of treatment may last anywhere from 4-16 weeks depending on the products and the needs of the clients.

Clients can be children or adults of any age or ability, either supported with a carer, or as individuals. Referrals remain within the strict confidence and protocol of the commissioner or General Practitioner who makes recommendation based on their assessment for suitability. The Natural Health Service ensures a reliable framework for this to happen and against each product.

Support

The Natural Health Service consortium provides a rich resource of information to the health sector to assist in the development of Public Health Plans. This can assist in **Health Protection** – managing air pollution, sustainable development management plans, comprehensive inter-agency plans for responding to public health incidents.

Signposting

The Natural Health Service consortium can help to ensure that people that use the service have the opportunity to continue their increased use of the natural environment as a place for enjoyment and to support their health and wellbeing. This is a key element of the **Wider Determinants of Health**.

Monitoring and evaluation

A key issue reported in many NICE Guidance publications is the need for evaluation of these types of products. In line with NICE Guidance, we will, therefore, monitor and evaluate the delivery of products commissioned through the Natural Health Service.

The Natural Health Service will work with a range of institutions, including Liverpool John Moores and Essex Universities to commission independent evaluation of the products and the Natural Health Service.

About The Natural Health Service

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