



Powys Teaching Health Board
Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section
6/7

Biodiversity Action Plan 2025-31



Contents

Foreword 3

Purpose 4

Scope..... 4

Introduction and Context 4

Duty and Responsibilities 6

Support and consultation..... 7

Review of Species and habitats: 7

Aims 8

Objectives..... 8

References:..... 10

Foreword

As we deliver our Health Board’s strategy for a Healthy Caring Powys, it’s as important as ever to measure, analyse and minimise the impacts of Powys NHS on the biodiversity within our operating areas.

We have seen the largest change to our daily lives in working memory from the Covid-19 pandemic, yet the Health Board have continued to deliver against its objective to protect the environment and act as an environmental custodian for future generations. The first nation-wide ‘lockdown’ in March 2020 was a shock to everyone, but it gave the people of Wales an opportunity to immerse themselves in local nature, and appreciate its importance to them, whilst giving nature a chance to relax and expand its range, able it temporarily.

Now, in 2025, we see that our constant drive for progress, and the impacts of climate change, are continuing to disproportionately impact nature. The 2023 State of Nature Report documented biodiversity decline in the UK and states ‘the UK is one of the world’s most nature depleted countries on Earth’ *state of nature 2023*.

Despite this, there is still hope for positive and meaningful change: In 2022 the UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) agreed a set of targets to significantly reduce harm to nature. In 2023, this translated into domestic policy with the UK government committed to protect 30% of land for nature recovery by 2030 (30 by 30).

In 2024, the Welsh Government developed a white paper to imbed the UN Biodiversity

plan (*Kepling Ma, 2023*) into legislation, establishing 5 ‘Environmental Principles’ to protect our natural assets, and to hold people, businesses organisations, and government agencies to account.

Powys Teaching Health Board continues to support sustainability as a central organising principle. The importance of the environment agenda is reflected as a golden thread across the Integrated Medium-Term Plan (IMTP) for 2023-26. The IMTP also supports the Health Board’s endeavours to embed the principals of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and the five ways of working.

As a way of ensuring environmental compliance and good governance, the health board continues to support its ISO14001 certified Environment Management System.

To date, the organisation has made good steps towards delivering its biodiversity action plan. It is now time to review our plans to ensure PTHB biodiversity action is in line with national and local policy, whilst ensuring we are doing everything we can to support the nature recovery agenda in Wales.



Wayne Tannahill- Associate
Director of Capital, Estates
and Facilities.

Purpose

To communicate the commitment as well as aims and objectives, to staff, stakeholders, and the public regarding habitats and species protection and enhancement.

Scope

All grounds owned and under the management of Powys Teaching Health Board

Introduction and Context

Under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, public authorities that exercise their functions in relation to Wales have a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. In compliance with the Act, Powys Teaching Health Board (PTHB) maintains a Biodiversity Action Plan which is part of PTHB's environment management system accredited to ISO14001 (2015). This standard ensures a robust and transparent environmental management at the core of its business.

The Health Board is responsible for improving the health and well-being of approximately 133,000 people living in Powys. Powys covers a quarter of the landmass of Wales, but with only 5% of the country's population making it the most sparsely populated county in England and Wales.

Powys Teaching Health Board provides health and care services through nine community hospitals and ten clinic sites. The estate covers a land area of 36 hectares and whilst some locations have little green space to enhance biodiversity, some, such as Bronllys Community Hospital, are predominantly green spaces with substantial room to support biodiversity protection and enhancement. Nonetheless, the organisation understands the importance effort to both small and large-scale biodiversity schemes as the aggregation of the marginal gains will contribute to the overall biodiversity enrichment across Wales.

Powys Teaching Health Board is committed to protecting and enhancing the natural environment. and recognises the immediate need to tackle climate change by reducing its CO₂e emissions, whilst at the same time ensuring measures are implemented to adapt to a changing environment. This imperative for change was reinforced by the Welsh Government's declaration of a 'climate emergency' in 2019.

In September 2021 a revised Environment Policy Statement was approved and published by the Board. The publication of the Environment Policy Statement forms a core part of articulating publicly the Board's commitment to act to promote the environment and sustainability. It seeks to enable an action-focused approach with openness and transparency on progress.

PTHB is a statutory member of the Public Services Board under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and reports annually on Well-being objectives. The Health Board is committed to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and have made the act a golden thread throughout the organisation. You can read more about the organisations actions and response to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 from our Annual Report, Annual Accounts and Annual Quality Statements at <https://pthb.nhs.wales/about-us/key-documents/annual-reports-annual-accounts-and-annual-quality-statements/>



Duty and Responsibilities

Under section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 public authorities (including all Health Boards and Trusts) must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems. A public authority must take account of the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the following aspects: (a) diversity between and within ecosystems; (b) the connections between and within ecosystems; (c) the scale of ecosystems; (d) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning); (e) the adaptability of ecosystems.

In conformity with the section 6 commitments PTHB strives to include biodiversity matters into all parts of its operations, especially as early as possible in its capital expenditure programme. This allows us to maximise the impact of change to enhance biodiversity habitat and its expansion. Additionally, the organisation seeks to limit the negative impact on ecosystems from its operations through:

- Buildings management
- Procurement
- Sustainability
- Awareness raising, education and training
- Grounds and land management to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and promote the resilience of ecosystems

This Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed to protect and enhance species and habitats within our control, for the enjoyment of the public and as an intrinsic value to nature.

At the heart of the biodiversity action plan is the recognition that an organisation can have both a positive and negative impact on biodiversity. It demonstrates an ambition to tip the balance in nature's favour. At a time when much of our attention is focused on climate change and the need to cut carbon emissions, it would be a grave error to overlook the role that biodiversity plays in climate management.

Governance

The Health Board's **Environment and Sustainability Group** (ESG) is accountable to the executive Innovative Environments Group and provides strategic direction to implement a structured approach to sustainability. The ESG presides over areas where the Health Board has a major impact on the environment and promotes consistency and transparency in management of environmental issues across the Health Board and day-to-day management. By ensuring continual improvement and certification of the Health Board's Environmental Management

System (EMS), and implementation of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act, Powys Teaching Health Board is delivering the three key principles of Sustainable Development:

- 1) Environment
- 2) Economic
- 3) Social

The Environment and Sustainability Group continues to support initiatives to reduce CO₂e emissions from scope 1, 2 and 3, including an increased diversion of waste from landfill, an improvement in the estate's biodiversity, and the development of procurement procedures.

The **Buildings and Biodiversity Group** is accountable to the Environment and Sustainability group, and is responsible for developing objectives and targets, ensuring legal and voluntary compliance, understanding, and communicating technical documentation, drafting other documentation such as audit responses, developing and undertaking projects.

Support and consultation

To support the development of this plan, and to ensure it is robust and effective, the following stakeholders have been consulted:

Welsh Government

Biodiversity partnership

Wildlife Trust

Vincient Wildlife Trust

Eco Dyfi

PTHB staff

Review of Species and habitats

In 2023 PTHB commissioned desktop and walkover surveys for hospital sites within its control to evaluate habitats, and their condition, species presence, or absence. The studies also looked at historic records within or adjacent to the sites, designated sites for nature conservation within 2km of the site, and connectivity to the wider landscape context within a 500m radius, noting ecological features such as watercourses and woodlands.

Whilst several section 7 habitats and species were noted, the surveys demonstrated the health board's importance to stepping stone habitats providing connectivity to the wider landscape. PTHB's green space is not high-grade conservation habitat, such as species-rich wildflower meadows, but acts to facilitate the movement of species around the countryside to higher grade conservation land.

Biodiversity objectives and targets have been informed and based on these surveys.

Aims

- Have regard for, and enhance, biodiversity in our operational and service delivery, directly and indirectly, locally and globally.
- Provide leadership and good governance across the organisation for biodiversity management.
- Promote the importance of biodiversity, and the role it plays in ecosystems services, and our health and wellbeing.

Objectives

- Maintain an environment policy and ensure reference to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.
- Undertake biodiversity surveys for all hospital sites.
- Biodiversity impacts and aspects are considered as part of the health board's environmental management system.
- Relevant legislation/obligations and updates are tracked as part of the environmental management system.
- Develop, maintain, and deliver site-specific grounds maintenance plans, ensuring the provision for biodiversity and ecosystems improvements.
- Understand the biodiversity impact of any capital works and consider alternatives wherever practical.
- Consider the impact of construction materials and specify materials from well-managed sources.
- Ensure control of contractor's documentation is adhered to and that all contractors are trained appropriately to minimise harm to the environment.
- Comply with any planning consent issues pertaining to water, habitats, and species management.
- For any major Welsh Government-funded capital scheme look to achieve BREEAM 'very good' for refits and 'excellent' for new build and comply with clause LE05 (long term impacts on biodiversity).
- Major Welsh Government-funded capital schemes should, when appropriate and when the size or impact of a scheme could be detrimental to the environment, consult with local wildlife organisations to strengthen the provision of biodiversity and ecosystem improvements.
- Ensure biodiversity protection and enhancement is a consideration during evaluation and assessment of capital improvement projects.
- Consider alternative less harmful to the environment substances as part of COSHH evaluations.
- Carry out and maintain tree surveys for hospital sites.

- Ensure an environment and sustainability representative sits on the Health Board's Capital Control Group.
- For every tree felled on PTHB land at least 2 native local trees are planted in appropriate places.
- Improve biodiversity potential across all owned sites.
- Maintain documented evidence of progress and publish in line with the section 6 biodiversity duty.

Summary

In recognition of the role biodiversity plays in our everyday lives, the significant contribution it plays in carbon sequestration and the fight against climate change as well as the intrinsic value to wildlife, PTHB will integrate its biodiversity plans throughout the organisation, continue to improve its 'green infrastructure', whilst integrating patient services to help everyone access these spaces. We will continually look to evaluate and improve our biodiversity plan based on the best available information on a frequency at least in line with legislation.

In the coming years, the Health Board will develop practical conservation projects, based off biodiversity surveys, to better serve local wildlife as stepping stone habitats, communicate with staff to increase education and awareness in the hope that individuals will carry on good conservation work in their personal lives, and work with partners organisations to stretch ourselves further.

We all benefit from a healthy environment; we all have a part to play in its restoration and maintenance.



References:

Keping Ma. Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework: An important global agenda for biodiversity conservation[J]. Biodiv Sci, 2023, 31(4): 23133.