



Cardiff and Vale UHB Biodiversity report

December 2025

This document is available in Welsh / Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

Background and context

Biodiversity and the biodiversity duty

Declines in biodiversity, and the increasingly apparent impacts of climate change on our natural environment, are a risk to the health of people in Cardiff and Vale and globally.

The **Environment (Wales) Act** introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the '[section 6' duty](#)) which applies to public bodies including the Health Board. The duty requires the Health Board to publish a report of what action it is taking to maintain and enhance biodiversity, at least once every 3 years; and to set out and regularly review a biodiversity action plan.

Well-being of Future Generations Act and our internal governance

The **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act** requires the Health Board to act in line with the five ways of working (all of which are relevant to biodiversity: long-term, integration, collaboration, involvement and prevention) and contribute to the seven national well-being goals (including 'a resilient Wales' which includes maintaining and enhancing a biodiverse natural environment, and ecosystems with the capacity to adapt to climate change).

Under the Act the Health Board has set four well-being (strategic) objectives as part of our [long-term strategy](#), **Shaping our Future Well-being**, one of which is '**Acting for the future**' and includes action to improve environmental sustainability.

Internal governance arrangements for setting and reporting on actions to protect and improve biodiversity are via the Sustainability and Climate Response Board, which sits under the Shaping our Future Generations portfolio, responsible for delivering the 'Acting for the future' objective.

The UHB operates an Environmental Management System (EMS) and has achieved the International Standard ISO14001 Accreditation and is externally assessed through the British Standards Institution (BSI). The UHB also operates an overarching Environmental Management Policy which includes Energy, Water and Sustainability Management.

Our activities impacting on biodiversity

Cardiff and Vale UHB is categorised as a Group 3 organisation under the Environment (Wales) Act; these organisations 'own or manage land beyond their own grounds, whether their functions are connected with biodiversity and/or land management or not'.

The Health Board principally impacts on biodiversity through the following activities:

Category	Activities
Procurement	Purchase, manufacture, supply and transport of goods and materials to the UHB
Energy and emissions management	Direct and indirect combustion emissions affecting air quality and biodiversity
New buildings	Development of plans for new Health Board buildings
Water and effluent disposal	Use of water, water treatments and disposal of effluent to drain affecting water based biodiversity. This includes rainwater and sewage systems

Category	Activities
Waste management	Generation, management, recycling and disposal of waste will directly affect biodiversity
Sustainable travel and transport	Traffic management, UHB vehicle use and sustainable travel options will directly affect biodiversity
Land management	Maintenance of grounds, gardens, paths, roadways and roofs will directly affect biodiversity

This report

This report describes the main actions undertaken over the three year period between January 2023 and December 2025 by Cardiff and Vale UHB to enhance and protect biodiversity.

From 2026/27, we plan to streamline our biodiversity planning and reporting to align it with our usual corporate planning and reporting cycles, in line with best practice cited in national guidance. More information on future reporting is given in the final section of this report.

Highlights, key outcomes and issues

In 2023 we undertook a **detailed review of the evidence** connecting biodiversity and health, working with partners. The subsequent report highlights a **number of recommendations to maintain and enhance biodiversity**.

Following the report, we commissioned **ecological surveys of our main sites** to better understand additional targeted actions we can take. These highlighted low ecological value at Barry and St Davids Hospitals, with some areas of high ecological value at University Hospital of Wales and University Hospital Llandough.

We also engaged with partners including Local Nature Partnerships and RSPB Cymru.

We continue to face **challenges in identifying sufficient capacity internally** to embed this work fully, and this remains one of our priority actions.

Actions undertaken

‘Recall of the wild’ report

(contributing to [NRAP objective 1](#))

In 2023 we undertook a detailed review of the evidence connecting biodiversity and health, working with partners.

Nature can help improve health by supporting physical activity and social interaction, improving the human microbiome, supporting climate change adaptation, reducing air pollution, promoting relaxation, providing pharmaceuticals, and providing food. As a result, nature and biodiversity can help reduce all-cause mortality, improve birth outcomes, reduce the incidence of type 2 diabetes, reduce mental health problems, and reduce stress, among other outcomes.

The subsequent annual Director of Public Health report ([‘Recall of the wild: reconnecting with and restoring nature for biodiversity and health’](#)) highlights a number of recommendations for public bodies to strengthen action on biodiversity.

Recommendations actioned by Cardiff and Vale UHB include (for more detail on these please see sections below):

- Conduct ecological surveys of our sites
- Working with Local Nature Partnerships
- Reducing mowing
- Establish a nature prescribing scheme

Recommendations outstanding include:

- Implementing recommendations from the ecological surveys (see below)
- Promotion of local nature walking routes
- Encourage and facilitate employees spending time with nature during breaks in work
- Enhancing degraded areas and creating new biodiverse spaces
- Provide opportunities for employees to participate in voluntary environmental activities

Ecological appraisals

(contributing to [NRAP objectives 1, 2 and 5](#))

We commissioned ecological appraisals of the following key sites in our estate in 2024: Barry Hospital, St David’s Hospital, University Hospital Llandough, University Hospital of Wales

The findings of the surveys included:

Barry Hospital

- Barry Hospital site and ground presents **low ecological diversity** value.
- **Five areas of ecological enhancements** have been recommended to increase the site’s ecological value. Firstly, enhancing the grassland beneath deciduous trees with plug plants of native wildflowers. Secondly, planting new hedgerows to connect up hedge habitats and reducing gaps in existing hedge with native species. Thirdly, enhancing the amenity grassland habitat to cultivate wildflowers. Fourthly, enhancing the woodland area with bird boxes and

feeders, insect hotels and a small pond. Finally, planting in the bare border adjacent to the main entrance with sensory plants attractive for pollinators and people.

St David’s Hospital

- St. David’s Hospital site and ground presents **low ecological diversity** value.
- **Four areas of ecological enhancements** have been recommended to increase the site’s ecological value. Firstly, retaining and enhancing the existing scrub habitat on the left boundary of the site. Secondly, making the hedges around the site thicker, taller, and more diverse, and connecting hedge (boundary) habitats. Thirdly, enhancing the existing garden space at St David’s Hospital to include wildflower planting, sensory plants, bird feeding stations, and a small pond. Finally, enhancing the horticultural flower beds around the site to incorporate native species that are attractive for pollinators and people.

University Hospital Llandough

- University Hospital Llandough site and ground presents **several habitats with high ecological value** and the site is connected to higher ecological value sites geographically.
- **Seven areas of ecological enhancements** have been recommended to increase the site’s ecological value. Firstly, enhancing the grassland beneath deciduous trees with plug plants of native wildflowers. Secondly, planting new hedgerows and reducing gaps in existing hedge. Thirdly, planting scrub mosaic with a range of heights and structures. Fourthly, planting around the sustainable drainage ponds. Fifth, enhancing the existing wildflower areas for invertebrates. Sixth, growing amenity grassland habitat with the aim to cultivate wildflowers. Finally, new tree planting in specific areas of amenity grassland.



Figure. Distribution map of University Hospital of Llandough detailing the habitats observed (from ecological appraisal 2024)

University Hospital of Wales

- University Hospital of Wales (UHW) site and ground presents **some habitats with high ecological value** and the site is connected to higher ecological value sites geographically.
- **Five areas of ecological enhancements** have been recommended to increase the site's ecological value. Firstly, enhancing the grassland beneath deciduous trees with plug plants of native wildflowers. Secondly, planting new hedgerows to connect up hedge habitats and reducing gaps in existing hedge with native species. Thirdly, additional planting in mossy areas in the hospital garden. Fourthly, planting scrub mosaic with a range of heights and structures. Finally, enhancing the amenity grassland habitat to cultivate wildflowers.



Figure. Woodland habitat at University Hospital of Wales (from ecological appraisal 2024)

Work with partner organisations

(contributing to [NRAP](#) objectives 1, 2 and 6)

During the past three years we have worked with partner organisations to support promotion and protection of biodiversity, including:

- Local Nature Partnerships – to install signage on our sites highlighting changes in mowing practices to protect biodiversity
- RSPB Cymru - development of a [nature prescription for Wales](#)
- Future Generations Commissioner for Wales – visit to the Meadow at University Hospital Llandough

Integration of biodiversity loss into our climate change risk assessment

(contributing to [NRAP](#) objectives 1 and 4)

During 2025 we have been undertaking a climate change risk assessment for Cardiff and Vale UHB, to identify and guide action required for climate adaptation. We have also contributed to regional assessments carried out by Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Public Services Boards.

As part of our assessment we have identified biodiversity loss as an internal and external risk impacting on the Health Board.

We currently have a [decarbonisation plan](#) in place for the Health Board, which we regularly update, which indirectly supports the protection of biodiversity.

Supporting sustainable food systems

(contributing to [NRAP](#) objectives 1 and 6)

Cardiff and Vale UHB hosts [Food Sense Wales](#), an organisation acting across Wales to influence how food is produced and consumed, ensuring that sustainable food, farming and fisheries are at the heart of a just, connected and prosperous food system.

The Health Board also lead co-ordination of the two Sustainable Food Places networks in our local area, [Food Cardiff](#) and [Food Vale](#).

Through Food Sense Wales, Food Cardiff and Food Vale, we are supporting more sustainable agriculture and food consumption, reducing biodiversity loss associated with these activities.

'Business as usual' actions

(contributing to [NRAP](#) objectives 2, 3 and 4)

These include:

- Grass cutting, weeding, planting and management of borders/ courtyard gardens and 'seeded' roofs (Hafan-y-Coed), litter and leaf picking, participation in 'No Mow May'
- Annual Tree Surveys undertaken as required and specialist contractors engaged for tree maintenance and preservation.
- UHW Lakeside Pond managed and maintained through specialist contractor.
- Control of wildlife managed as necessary through specialist contractor and appropriate pest control measures adopted.
- Capital Schemes are developed and designed in line with relevant biodiversity standards and guidelines including: BREAM Assessments, Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SABS), Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDS) etc.
- Meadow at University Hospital Llandough

Future reporting and review of biodiversity action plan

From 2026/27, we plan to streamline our biodiversity planning and reporting to align it with our usual corporate planning and reporting cycles, in line with best practice cited in the guidance:

- We will **report** on biodiversity actions undertaken in the C&V UHB annual report, which is published a few months after the end of each financial year.
- We will incorporate the review of our **biodiversity action plan** and section 6 duty into our routine planning cycle. We will update the plan each year by identifying and prioritising outstanding actions as part of our annual plan/integrated medium term planning process. We will therefore update and publish a refreshed biodiversity plan as part of our 2026/27 annual plan, before **April 2026**.