

The Natural Health Service

The Mersey Forest

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Natural Health
Service



The Mersey Forest...

...is a Place and a Partnership:



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With a plan!



More from trees

The Mersey Forest Plan



Our vision is to get “more from trees” to help make Merseyside and North Cheshire one of the best places in the country to live.



We will work with partners, communities and landowners across rural and urban areas, to plant trees and woodlands, improve their management, and complement other habitats. This will increase woodland cover to 20% of the area. We will revitalise a woodland culture, and bring economic and social benefits through our transformed environment.

Policy 17. Health and Wellbeing

We will promote the health and wellbeing benefits of trees and woodlands, for individual health as well as the wider wellbeing of our communities. We will make use of the maturing woodland resource to help support the five ways to wellbeing. We will work with health professionals to maximise the use of woodlands, from increased day to day use through to GP referrals..



Four steps to wellbeing

1. Greener Places – healthier communities



2. More people, more active, more often



3. Promoting the passive benefits of trees and woodland



4. Natural Health Service



Our Products

OUR FIVE NATURE4HEALTH ACTIVITY PRODUCTS



HEALTH WALKS

Walking is the easiest form of outdoor exercise supporting the widest age and ability range.



HORTICULTURAL THERAPY

Improving mental and physical wellbeing through gardening and growing food.



MINDFUL CONTACT WITH NATURE

Applying the principles of mindfulness to the outdoors brings a walk in the woods to a new level of intensity. It's all about submerging yourself in the sights, sounds and smells of the woods.



FOREST SCHOOL

Forest School allows children to play, explore and learn about the natural environment and do activities like shelter-building, outdoor cooking, growing plants, using tools and bug-hunting. It's a hands-on approach to promote play in natural environments.



PRACTICAL CONSERVATION

Our Conservation Workout sessions involve getting stuck in to do practical tasks to improve the environment, boosting health at the same time.

Nature4Health – Lottery funded

- Addressing health inequalities of our harder to reach communities
- **Aims** to use our natural assets to improve physical health and mental wellbeing, and reducing social isolation
- **Up to 12 week programmes**
- **Evidence-based products and interventions**
- **Product evaluation:** Continually monitor and evaluate outcomes - build a compelling picture for commissioning

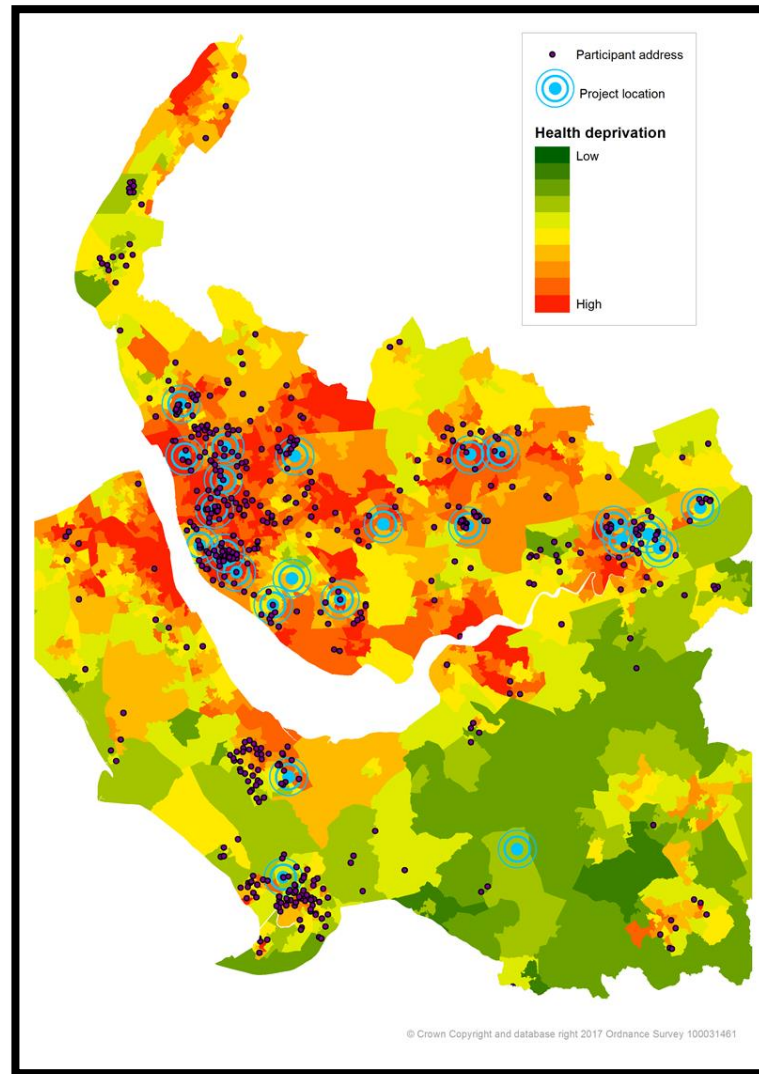


Cheshire's Natural Health Service

- **Funded** by Cheshire West & Chester Council
- **Engaging** >3,000 people
- **Increase**
 - physical activity by 40%
 - wellbeing by 20% (on average)
- **Deliver** a 6:1 Social Return on Investment
- **Work with** other agencies to signpost on to other services
- **Develop:** Health Rangers
- **Provide** support and new skills for local people to volunteer



Targeted Interventions

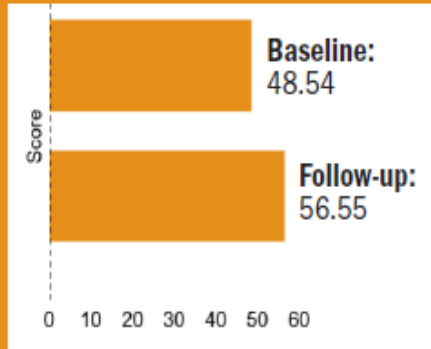


As at September 2018

Results so far

MENTAL WELLBEING RESULTS

WEMWBS AVERAGE:



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESULTS



WALKING ACTIVITY

↑ 34%

Before:
42.9 mins per day

After:
57.6 mins per day



MODERATE ACTIVITY

↑ 163%

Before:
19.8 mins per day

After:
52.2 mins per day



VIGOROUS ACTIVITY

↑ 12%

Before:
26.8 mins per day

After:
28.8 mins per day

- Improvement in Wellbeing of 12 points (3-8 significant)
- From 48.5 to 56.5 where UK average is 51
- Increase in all levels of physical activity



Feedback

It was a beautiful day in the sunshine.... I thought I'd be out of my depth ...but gladly I was wrong.

This exercise is keeping me out of the hospital

I want to continue - 12 weeks is too short! I would go mad if we stopped as I enjoy my regular session

The group is good and I can now take on the world - bring it on!

“If it wasn't for the course I would probably still be stuck sat in my house”

Think about all the **vigorous** activities that you did in the **last 7 days**. **Vigorous** physical activities refer to activities that take hard physical effort and make you breathe much harder than normal. Think only about those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time.

1. During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do vigorous physical activities like heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast cycling?

___ days per week No vigorous physical activities Skip to question 3 →

2. How much time did you usually spend doing vigorous physical activities on one of those days?

___ hours per day Don't know/Not sure

Think about all the **moderate** activities that you did in the last 7 days. **Moderate** activities refer to activities that take moderate physical effort and make you breathe somewhat harder than normal. Think only about those physical activities that you did for at least 10 minutes at a time.

3. During the last 7 days, on how many days did you do moderate physical activities like carrying light loads or cycling at a regular pace? Do not include walking.

___ days per week No moderate physical activities Skip to question 5 →

4. How much time did you usually spend doing moderate physical activities on one of those days?

___ hours per day Don't know/Not sure

Think about the time you spent walking in the last 7 days. This includes at work and at home, walking to travel from place to place, and any other walking that you might do solely for recreation, sport, exercise or leisure.

5. During the last 7 days, on how many days did you walk for at least 10 minutes at a time?

___ days per week No walking Skip to question 7 →

6. How much time did you usually spend walking on one of those days?

___ hours per day Don't know/Not sure



Our learning

- We can prove the Natural Health Service works
- We need to show value:
 - Of the investment
 - Of green space
- We have to market the products in the right way
- Hard to reach groups need time to engage
- Research evidence needs to be gathered sensitively & consistently
- Some of the least receptive senior managers can become your best advocates



Linking more services



And how we've put this in practice

- Listening and adapting as we go along
- Never underestimating the importance of good local evidence
- Well presented reports - acceptable to participants and policy makers alike
- Keep influencing policy
- Communicate the benefits

