The Natural Health Service

The Mersey Forest
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• Natural environment – as a health asset
• Consortium of practitioners and landowners
• Specific, targeted, evidence based interventions – “dose” of nature
• Long term research
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.
Who are we supporting?

Working with local delivery partners

1750+ participants have engaged in programmes since 2016

✓ Young people with learning difficulties
✓ Adults with disabilities
✓ Veterans
✓ Adults with enduring mental health difficulties
✓ Isolated Males 50+
✓ Open groups - all delivered in areas of health & economic disadvantage

✓ Children who are not reaching milestones in primary school (difficult family dynamics)
✓ Older people becoming more active/fall prevention & Dementia Support
✓ Adults in Recovery - substance misuse
✓ Younger Parents
✓ Social housing tenants experiencing anxiety
✓ People affected by cancer
Cheshire’s Natural Health Service

Over the next three years and building on our Lottery funded Nature4Health we are:

• engaging >3,000 people in evidence-based activities, including horticultural therapy
• increasing physical activity by 40%
• increasing wellbeing by 20%
• working with other agencies to signpost on to other services
• Providing support and new skills for local people to volunteer to continue to deliver sessions
Participants across The Mersey Forest
Results so far

- 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

**MENTAL WELLBEING RESULTS**

**WEMWBS AVERAGE:**
- Baseline: 48.54
- Follow-up: 56.55

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY RESULTS**

- **Walking Activity**:
  - Before: 42.9 mins per day
  - After: 57.6 mins per day
  - Increase: 34%

- **Moderate Activity**:
  - Before: 19.8 mins per day
  - After: 52.2 mins per day
  - Increase: 163%

- **Vigorous Activity**:
  - Before: 26.8 mins per day
  - After: 28.8 mins per day
  - Increase: 12%
For every £1 invested the programme will deliver a social return of £6.75
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

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

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

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