

# Natural Health Service

## Consortium Health Products 2013

### Product Sheets

The following product sheets provide an overview of the products that are being offered by the Natural Health Service. They provide an overview of the product; identify the client group and outcomes from delivery, the evidence base and links to case studies.

They are updatable and adaptable to local circumstances and developing evidence. Product Sheets are provided for:

1. *Horticultural Therapy*
2. *Walking for Health*
3. *Cycling for Health*
4. *Forest School*
5. *Green Gym*

# Product Sheet

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## Horticultural therapy

Horticultural Therapy is a client-centred treatment that utilises horticulture activities to meet the specific therapeutic or rehabilitative goals of its participants. The focus is to maximise social, cognitive, physical and/or psychological functioning and enhance general health and wellbeing.

Activities encourage people with to work alongside our staff and volunteers, encouraging new friendships and growing horticultural skills. Activities are based within local communities, and the plants grown from these activities are planted out on sites for local councils, housing associations, community groups and other organisations – helping to improve the environment by supplying locally sourced plants to the local community areas.

## Target Client Groups and outcomes

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Client Group	Outcomes
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Effective as supplemental therapy for children with behavioural disorders</i></li></ul>
Older People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Increased engagement from people with dementia</i></li></ul>
People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Physical and mental fitness, well-being and sensory stimulation</i></li></ul>
Local Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Enabling a move into employment</i></li></ul>
Socially isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Reducing social isolation</i></li></ul>
People with mild to moderate mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Improved mental capital, mental wellbeing, emotional wellbeing,</i></li></ul>
People with mobility issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Improved fitness &amp; mobility</i></li></ul>

## Evidence

There are a number of published studies mostly linking horticultural therapy projects to mental health outcomes:

### **Eco therapy: The green agenda for mental health**

This survey report from MIND includes a review of the evidence

[http://www.mind.org.uk/assets/0000/2138/ecotherapy\\_report.pdf](http://www.mind.org.uk/assets/0000/2138/ecotherapy_report.pdf)

### **Gardening as a therapeutic intervention in mental health**

Page, M. (2008) Gardening as a therapeutic intervention in mental health. *Nursing Times*; 104: 45, 28–30.

<http://www.nursingtimes.net/gardening-as-a-therapeutic-intervention-in-mental-health/1921374.article>

### **An evaluation of the gardening leave project for ex-military personnel With PTSD and other combat related mental health problems**

<http://www.gardeningleave.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/06/completeglsummary.pdf>

## Case Study links

For video testimonials see

[Groundwork Grozone](#)

For case study details see

[Ecominds TCV Growing On](#)

[Ecominds Feelgood Factory](#)

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### **About The Natural Health Service**

**Contact:**

### **Natural Health Service**

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# Product Sheet

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## Cycle for Health

Cycle for Health activities enable people to develop their cycling skills in a safe and supported environment. This can be a combination of one to one activities and group activities. Activities will be designed to suit a range of abilities and will inform people of safe and appropriate cycle routes within their local area, making maximum use of local parks and green space.

Cycling can be used by people seeking to improve their fitness and cardiovascular health. Cycling is especially helpful for those with arthritis of the lower limbs who are unable to pursue sports that cause impact to the knees and other joints. Since cycling can ultimately be used for the practical purpose of transportation, there can be less need for self-discipline to exercise.

## Target Client Groups and outcomes

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Client Group	Outcomes
Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Improved lifestyles, healthy choices</i></li></ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Reducing Preventable Conditions</i></li></ul>
Older People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Supporting People with Long Term Conditions</i></li></ul>
People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Prevention of obesity</i></li></ul>
Local Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Economic well-being – skill improvements</i></li></ul>
Socially isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Reducing social isolation</i></li></ul>
People with mild to moderate mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Improved mental capital, mental wellbeing, emotional wellbeing</i></li></ul>
People with mobility issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Improved fitness &amp; mobility</i></li></ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Suitable for Social Prescribing</i></li></ul>

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## Evidence

Factors of the Physical Environment Associated with Walking and Bicycling.

An academic Paper from 2009. Good academic evidence on health benefits of the physical environment. <http://arno.unimaas.nl/show.cgi?fid=2304>

A systematic review of the literature of 16 cycling-specific studies.

Oja, P., Titze, S., Bauman, A., de Geus, B., Krenn, P., Reger-Nash, B. and Kohlberger, T. (2011), Health benefits of cycling: a systematic review. *Scandinavian Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports*, 21: 496–509. doi: 10.1111/j.1600-0838.2011.01299.x

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1600-0838.2011.01299.x/pdf>

Cycling features prominently in this review of the health benefits of parks:

Maller, C., Townsend, M., Brown, P., & St Leger, L. (2002). Healthy parks healthy people: The health benefits of contact with nature in a park context. Burwood (Australia): Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences, Deakin University. <http://www.georgewright.org/262maller.pdf>

## Case Study links

[Sefton Health on Wheels](#)

[Cycle Speke](#)

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# Product Sheet

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## Health Walks

A programme of expert led walking activities tailored to individual needs and designed to help meet target exercise and physical activity levels.

Walking is one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. Walking is ideal for people of all ages and fitness levels who want to be more active. Organised walking activities in a group can help people start walking, make new friends, reduce social isolation and stay motivated.

Activities are arranged to make use of local greenspace and encourage individuals to make use of the community assets available to them.

## Target Client Groups and outcomes

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Client Group	Outcomes
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Improved lifestyles, healthy choices</i></li></ul>
Older People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Reducing Preventable Conditions</i></li></ul>
People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Improved fitness &amp; mobility</i></li></ul>
Local Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Prevention of obesity</i></li></ul>
Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Volunteering Opportunities</i></li></ul>
Socially isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Reducing social isolation</i></li></ul>
People with mild to moderate mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Improved mental capital, mental wellbeing, emotional wellbeing</i></li></ul>
People with mobility issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>Suitable for Social Prescribing</i></li><li>● <i>Economic well-being – skill improvements</i></li><li>● <i>Supporting People with Long Term Conditions</i></li></ul>

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# Evidence

## **A useful review of the available public health benefits of walking**

The importance of walking to public health. A literature review from 2008.

Lee IM, Buchner DM

[Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise](#) [2008, 40(7 Suppl):S512-8]

## **Academic evidence on health benefits of the physical environment.**

Factors of the Physical Environment Associated with Walking and Bicycling. An academic Paper from 2009. Good

<http://arno.unimaas.nl/show.cgi?fid=2304>

## **An evidence based information pack from Natural England**

HEALTH AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS - The report contains six evidence based information sheets that outline the natural environment's contribution for improved health and wellbeing and includes the statement "An illustrative cost benefit analysis of Natural England's Walking for Health Scheme found that it would deliver 2817 Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) at a cost of £4008.98 per QALY. The scheme is estimated to save the NHS £81 million and have a cost benefit ratio of 1:7."

[www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/health-information-pack\\_tcm6-31487.pdf](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/health-information-pack_tcm6-31487.pdf)

# Case Study links

[Age concern Liverpool](#)

[Walking for health - walk finder north west - Halton Council](#)

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# Product Sheet

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## Green Gym

Physical activity in the local natural environment led by TCV, The activities are varied and carried out in groups. Clients are managed, taught and supported by trained Green Gym Coordinators. Each session lasts for 3 hours, is carried out in 16 week blocks with one to three sessions per week and can be repeated. As well as learning and increasing social connections, clients are active, achieve a sense of achievement through the constructive nature of the work and are encouraged to be aware their natural environment as a source of wellbeing beyond the green gym sessions.

## Target Client Groups and outcomes

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Client Group	Outcomes
Recovering from surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b><i>Studies show increased rate of recovery;</i></b></li><li>• <b><i>Older people show increased 5 year survival rates</i></b></li></ul>
People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Social integration improved mental health</i></li></ul>
Overweight/obese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Evidence of links to reduction in BMI from regular exercise</i></li></ul>
Socially isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Social integration improved mental health</i></li></ul>
People with mild to moderate mental health issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Time spent in natural environments linked to enhanced emotional well-being, reduced stress, and, in certain situations, improved health</i></li></ul>



# Evidence

**Scottish Natural Heritage** publishes case studies about the health benefits of green exercise at:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/about-snh/what-we-do/health-and-wellbeing/healthier-scotland/green-exercise-projects/>

which provide details of benefits derived from similar projects, and there is an evaluation report available at:

<http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/12747-REO25GreenPrescriptionSchemes.pdf>

The **Health Benefits Of Volunteering** is a solid US-based academic evidence review of the general health benefits of volunteering is available from the Office of Research and Policy Development, Corporation for National and Community Service:

<http://www.vds.org.uk/Portals/0/Documents/Health%20Benefits%20of%20Volunteering%20-%20Review%20of%20Recent%20Research.pdf>

## Case Study links

[TVC Green Gym](#)

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# Product Sheet

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## Forest School

Forest School is an innovative approach to outdoor play and learning, inspiring individuals of any age through positive outdoor experiences.

By participating in engaging, motivating and achievable tasks and activities, in a woodland environment, each participant has an opportunity to develop intrinsic motivation, sound emotional and social skills.

Forest Schools have demonstrated success with children of all ages who visit the same local woodlands on a regular basis and through play have the opportunity to learn about the natural environment, how to handle risks and most importantly to use their own initiative to solve problems and co-operate with others. Forest schools help develop children's confidence, social skills, an interest in nature and the natural world, and their knowledge and understanding of the environment.

## Target Client Groups and outcomes

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Client Group	Outcomes
Young People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Evidence for restorative health benefits in young people</i></li></ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Time spent in natural environments linked to enhanced emotional well-being, reduced stress, and, in certain situations, improved health</i></li></ul>
Local Community Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Evidence of links to reduction in BMI from regular exercise</i></li></ul>
Socially isolated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Social integration improved mental health</i></li></ul>

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# Evidence

## **ESRC/Forestry Commission review**

Forest school: evidence for restorative health benefits in young people based on research by Jenny Roe, Peter Aspinall and Catharine Ward Thompson (Edinburgh College of Art), available from:

[http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/pdf/appendixf/OPENspacewebsite\\_APPENDIX\\_F\\_resource\\_36.pdf](http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/pdf/appendixf/OPENspacewebsite_APPENDIX_F_resource_36.pdf)

## **Towards Forest Schools in Birmingham**

A report on a pilot study in Birmingham entitled Towards Forest Schools in Birmingham:

[http://www.brumforestschoools.org.uk/files/towards\\_forest\\_schools\\_download\\_version.pdf](http://www.brumforestschoools.org.uk/files/towards_forest_schools_download_version.pdf)

# Case Study links

Details of The Forest School Experience, Nature workshops and the Norwood Forest School Southport's experience with Forest schools at

[Forest Schools in Merseyside](#)

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