

# An overview of gardening and mental health

Tony Li, Senior Project Officer, Mind



An intervention that improves mental and physical health and wellbeing by supporting people to be active outdoors; doing gardening, food growing or environmental work



Mind, Ecominds: Feel Better Inside, Feel Better Outside



# The natural environment and Mind

- Mind has a long track record of championing ecotherapy or 'green care' as a route to better mental health
- 63 of our local Minds in England and Wales provide some type of nature based intervention (annual return 2014)
- Our five year Ecominds scheme awarded £10m of lottery funding to 130 ecotherapy projects in England – this included support for 19 local Minds
- Evidence from Ecominds used to inform our Ecotherapy Works campaign

Ecominds





## Gardening is good for you

A spot of gardening not only gives you a good physical workout but reduces pain and anxiety, too



## Report says more doctors should prescribe gardening

Those with cancer, dementia and mental health problems can benefit from gardening, according to health thinktank.

June 9, 2016

The Guardian

Plants

Trends



## Gardening is the best medicine for the mind

Tom Smart

Since I had a nervous breakdown, nothing has lifted my spirits more, or has made me feel saner, than my garden



## NEWS

Home | UK | World | Business | Politics | Tech | Science | Health | Education | Enterta

### Health

## Gardening and volunteering: The new wonder drugs?



Nick Triggles  
Health correspondent

🕒 13 June 2016 | Health



# Health professionals are interested!

- Poll of GPs found that just over 50% considered ecotherapy suitable for treating anxiety and depression
- 46% interested in prevention and early intervention for people at risk of developing a mental health problem
- 36% would refer to ecotherapy if it was available in their area

Mind, 2013



# Ecominds findings



69%

of people experienced significant increases in mental wellbeing after attending an Ecominds project.



62%

of people thought their overall health was better by the time they left an Ecominds project.



£35k

Five people with mental health problems saved the state more than £35,000 in one year through lower welfare benefits and healthcare spending.



£1.46  
million

Ecominds helped 254 people find full-time employment with potential savings to the state of £1.46 million through reductions in welfare payments and income from tax and National Insurance.




81%

of people got more involved in community activities by the time they left an Ecominds project.




63%

of people with mental health problems felt more positive about their lives by the time they left the Ecominds project.



60%

said they felt they did not belong to their immediate community when they started at an Ecominds project; but by the end, 60% said they felt they did belong to their community.



56%

of people attending Ecominds were men – ecotherapy is a great way to get men involved in wellbeing services.

# Opportunity?

- Anti-depressant prescriptions have doubled in the last ten years – over 1M are issued per week
- 50 per cent of people wait over three months for talking therapy
- At least 30 per cent of people using community MH services would like support to take part in local activities



# Five Year Forward View for Mental Health



**Simon Stevens:** “Putting mental and physical health on an equal footing will require major improvements in 7 day mental health crisis care, a large increase in psychological treatments, and a more integrated approach to how services are delivered. That’s what today’s taskforce report calls for, and it’s what the NHS is now committed to pursuing.”

**Prime Minister:** “The Taskforce has set out how we can work towards putting mental and physical healthcare on an equal footing and I am committed to making sure that happens.”

## The report in a nutshell:

- 20,000+ people engaged
- Designed for and with the NHS Arms’ Length Bodies
- All ages (building on Future in Mind)
- Three key themes:
  - High quality 7-day services for people in crisis
  - Integration of physical and mental health care
  - Prevention
- Plus ‘hard wiring the system’ to support good mental health care across the NHS wherever people need it
- Focus on targeting inequalities
- 58 recommendations for the NHS and system partners
- £1bn additional NHS investment by 2020/21 to help an extra 1 million people of all ages
- Recommendations for NHS accepted in full and endorsed by government



# People's priorities for change



- 20,000 responses to online survey
- 250 participants in engagement events hosted by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness
- 60 people engaged who were detained in secure mental health services
- 26 expert organisations submitted written responses
- 20 written submissions from individual members of the public

The themes identified through the engagement process informed the four priorities that shape the full set of recommendations...



# Challenges

Natural England Commissioned Report NECR204

# A review of nature-based interventions for mental health care

First published 03 February 2016

[www.gov.uk/natural-england](http://www.gov.uk/natural-england)



<div>Wellbeing</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS)</li><li>Short version of the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS)</li><li>Personal Well-being Index (PWI)</li><li>Personal Wellbeing Index China version (PWI-C)</li></ul>	<div>Generic health or efficacy</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SF-36v2</li><li>Adapted SF12</li><li>Short Form 36 Health Survey (SF-36)</li><li>General Self Efficacy Scale(GSE)</li><li>IPAQ-S (physical health – activity)</li></ul>
<div>Depression</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Beck Depression Inventory (BDI)</li><li>Attentional Function Index (AFI)</li><li>The Brooding Scale- subscale of revised Ruminative Response Scale</li><li>Perceived Restorativeness Scale</li><li>Zung Depression Inventory (ZDI)</li><li>Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS21)</li></ul>	<div>Anxiety</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory–State Subscale (STAI-SS)</li><li>Beck anxiety inventory (BAI),</li><li>Hospital and Anxiety Scale HAD)</li><li>Speilberger state anxiety inventory (STAI-SS)</li></ul>
<div>Stress</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Salivary cortisol levels</li><li>Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)</li><li>mental stress scale (MSS),</li><li>physical stress scale (PSS)</li></ul>	<div>Self- esteem or mood</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Profile of Mood States (POMS) – state</li><li>Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) Dutch version</li><li>Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) – state and trait</li></ul>
<div>Dementia - various</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mini Mental State Examination (MMSE),</li><li>Bradford Well-Being Profile,</li><li>Large Allen Cognitive Level Screen (LACLS)</li><li>Pool Activity Level (PAL)</li><li>Agitation assessed with Chinese version of the Cohen-Mansfield Agitation Inventory (C-CMAI)</li><li>modified version- Apparent Affect Rating Scale (AARS)</li><li>Menorah Park Engagement Scale (MPES)</li><li>Barthel Index (BI)</li><li>Interview for Deterioration in Daily living in Dementia (IDDD)</li></ul>	<div>Other or specialist mental health</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Emotional State Scale (ESS) questionnaire adapted from the Osgood Semantic Differential Scale</li><li>Two items from Connor Davidson resilience scale</li><li>Mental Health Inventory</li><li>Impact of Events Scale (IES-R)</li></ul>
<div>Meaning or Quality of life</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Life Regard Index –revised (LRI-R)</li><li>The Quality of life - Life Experiences Checklist (LEC)</li><li>Quality of life – WHOQuoL</li><li>Satisfaction with life – (GGZ)</li></ul>	<div>Recovery</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Six standardised questions from the Elements of a Recovery Facilitating System (ERFS) measure</li><li>Recovery Star</li></ul>
<div>Other</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work Behavioural Assessment (WBA)</li><li>Work Environment Impact Scale (WEIS)</li><li>Work and Social Adjustment Scale (WSAS)</li><li>Volitional Questionnaire (VQ)</li><li>Personal Outcomes Record</li><li>Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale</li></ul>	<div>Social</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Questions on social inclusion</li><li>Social provisions scale</li><li>The Therapeutic Factors Inventory Cohesiveness Scale (TFI-CS)</li><li>adapted version of Buckner’s (1988) Community Cohesion Scale</li></ul>
<div>Qualitative Interviews</div> <div>focus groups</div> <div>Qualitative Benefit Analysis (QBA)</div>	<div>observations</div> <div>diaries, scrapbooks</div> <div>photos</div>



# Green Care

```
graph TD; GC([Green Care]) --- SH[Social and Therapeutic Horticulture<br/>- including Food growing<br/>(as a treatment Intervention)]; GC --- CF[Care Farming]; GC --- EC[Environmental Conservation<br/>(as a treatment intervention);<br/>Ecotherapy]; GC --- AAT[Animal Assisted Therapy]; GC --- GE[Green Exercise<br/>(as a treatment intervention)]; GC --- O[Others:<br/>• Wilderness therapy;<br/>• Nature therapy;<br/>• Nature arts and crafts;<br/>• Ecopsychotherapy]; GC --> Summary[Range of different contexts, activities, health benefits,<br/>service users, motivations and needs.];
```

## **Social and Therapeutic Horticulture**

- including Food growing  
(as a treatment Intervention)

## **Care Farming**

## **Environmental Conservation**

(as a treatment intervention);  
Ecotherapy

## **Animal Assisted Therapy**

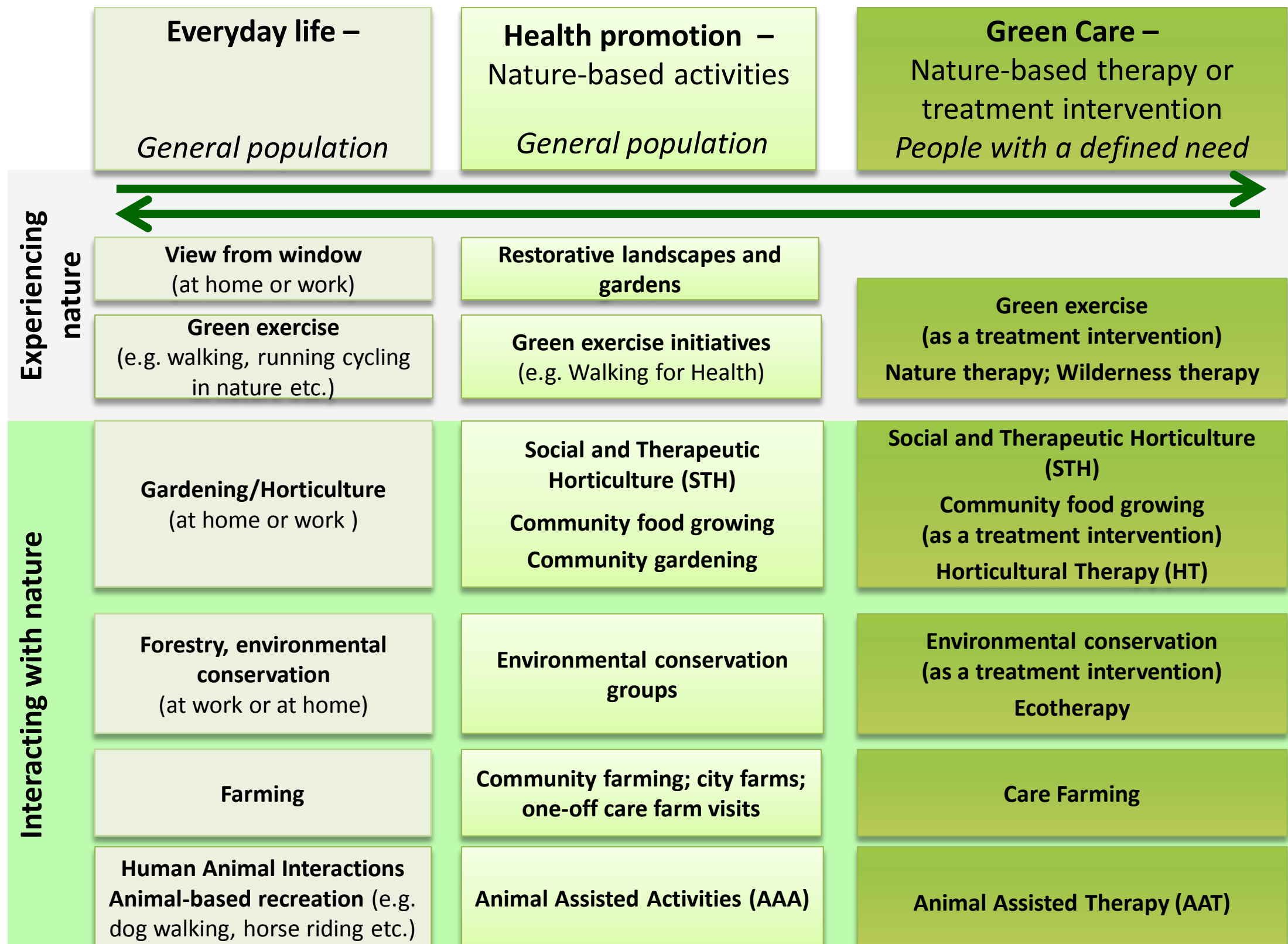
## **Green Exercise**

(as a treatment intervention)

## **Others:**

- Wilderness therapy;
- Nature therapy;
- Nature arts and crafts;
- Ecopsychotherapy;

Range of different contexts, activities, health benefits,  
service users, motivations and needs.



- There is no complete picture or definitive data for the scale of green care services in the UK overall
- Data collected is often organisation specific and not in a common format
- Using data from 2003, we can estimate at that point 1000 projects were supporting 8,400 people with mental health problems per week
- There are approximately 230 Care Farms in the UK provided services to 7,820 people per week.  
75% of care farms report providing services to people with mental health problems

So what can we do?



1. There is a need for green care umbrella organisations to collaborate and raise awareness of the need for common messages and evidence
2. The term 'Green Care' should be used, with the possible addition of the strapline 'nature-based interventions for individuals with a defined need'
3. A clear distinction must be made between interventions designed as treatment and public health programmes for the whole population
4. The green care partnership organisations should work with their members to facilitate access to, and development of, larger scale health and social care contracts

# Contact

[t.li@mind.org.uk](mailto:t.li@mind.org.uk)

<http://www.mind.org.uk/ecominds>