

The Natural Health Service



Clare Olver
The Mersey Forest

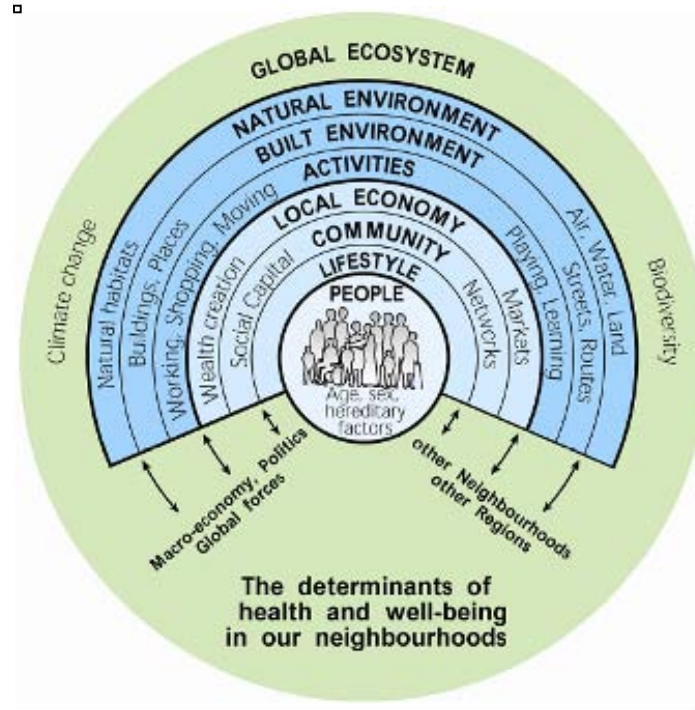
Our health is determined by:

Where we live

Who we are

Where we don't live

What we do



.....by our genetics, lifestyle, the health care we receive and our wider economic, physical and social environment. Although estimates vary, the **wider environment has the largest impact.**

The Mersey Forest

- 1300 sq km
- 1.7 million people
- High levels of
 - Poor health
 - Health inequality
- What role can a Community Forest play?



We have a 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..

Our three strands to health in The Mersey Forest

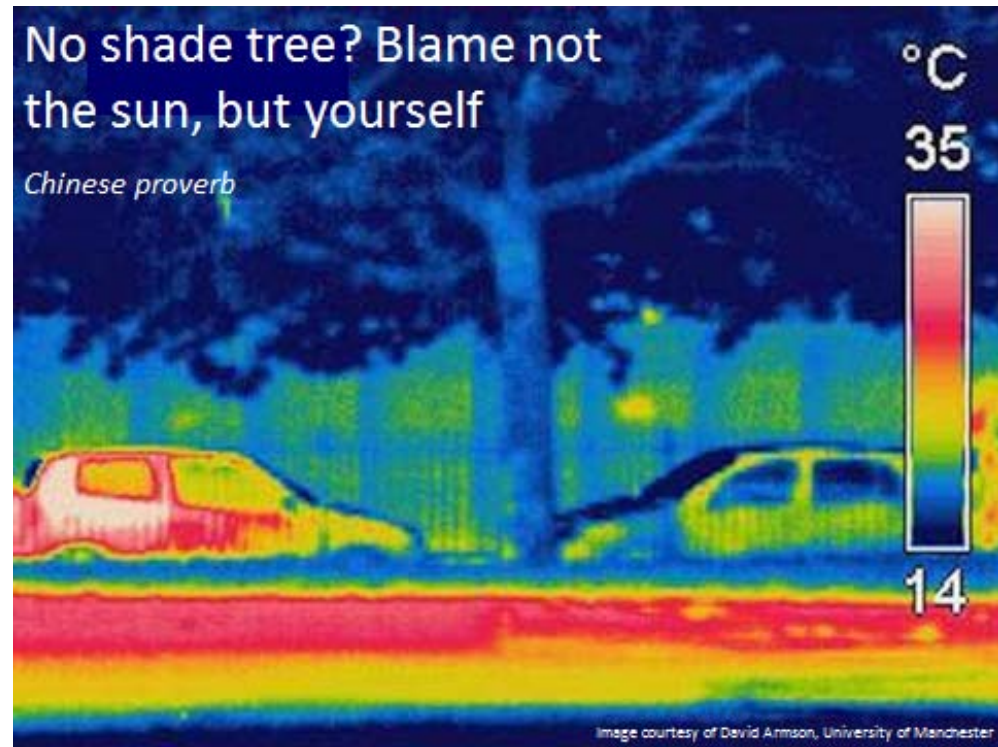


More people, more active,
more often



Promoting the passive benefits of trees and woodland

- Reduce air pollution
- Improve water quality
- Reduce noise levels
- Manage air temperature
- Contribute to Quality of Place



Developing a Natural Health Service

- A consortium of organisations
- Products targeted at specific conditions
- 10-16 weeks course (dose)
- Information and corporate governance in line with other commissioned services
- Framework for assessment of progress using approved & validated measures
- Independent evaluation



Natural Health
Service

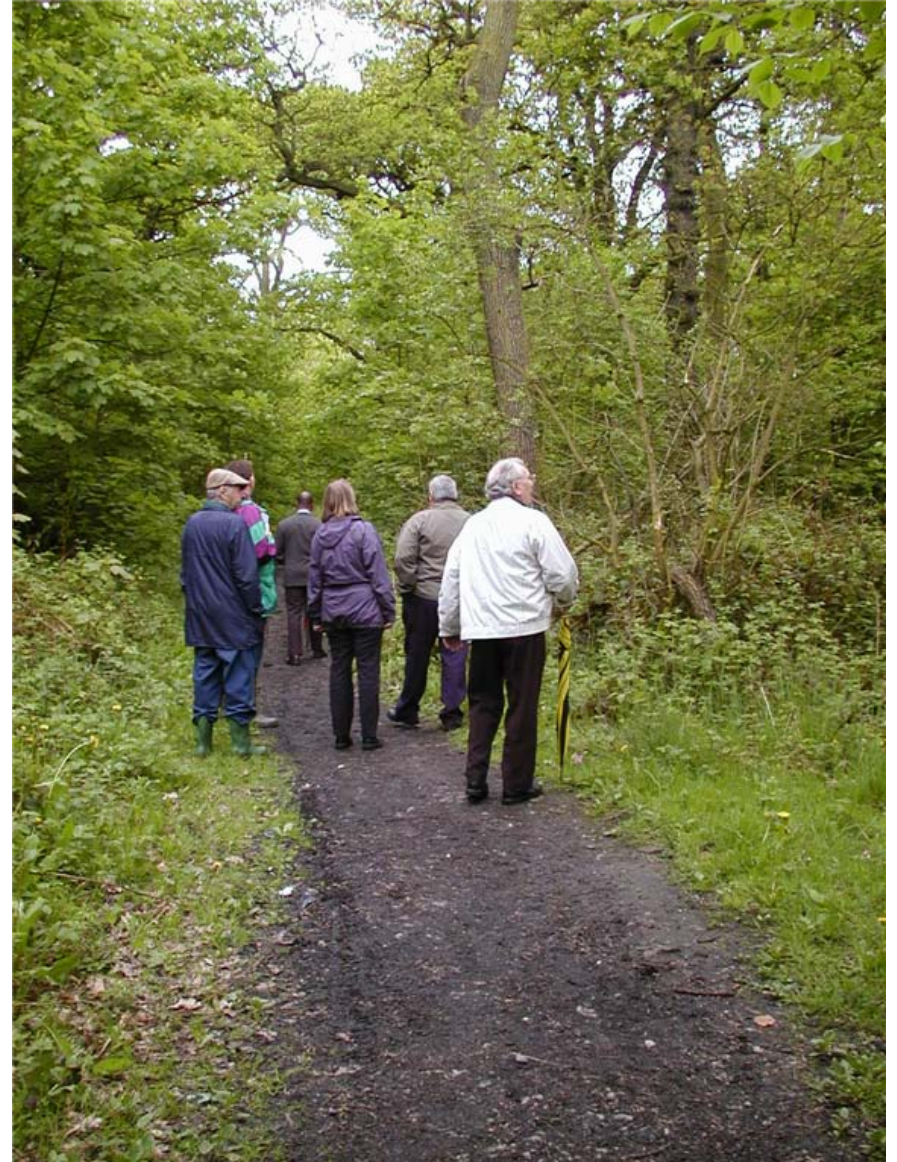
Targeted products

- Products that make use of the natural environment
- For specific conditions e.g.
 - Weight management
 - Adults
 - Children
 - Mild/moderate mental health issues
 - Post operative/
treatment recuperation



For example:

- Walking for Health
- Cycling for health
- Horticultural Therapy
- Mindfulness in Forests
- Forest School
- TCV's Green Gym



Activity to date

- Natural Choices
- Pilot in Halton
- Pilot in Northwich, Cheshire
- Knowsley MBC Rangers
- Smaller scale projects and thematic programmes





Decade of
Health &
Wellbeing



THE MERSEY
FOREST
more from trees

Natural Choices for **Health** and **Wellbeing**

Grants of up to £7,500 to support projects in Liverpool that can clearly show that they are both...

- helping to improve health and wellbeing and
- making use of the natural environment to help deliver the project















What worked well? ✓ 😊

What didn't work? X ☹️

What would you change? 💡

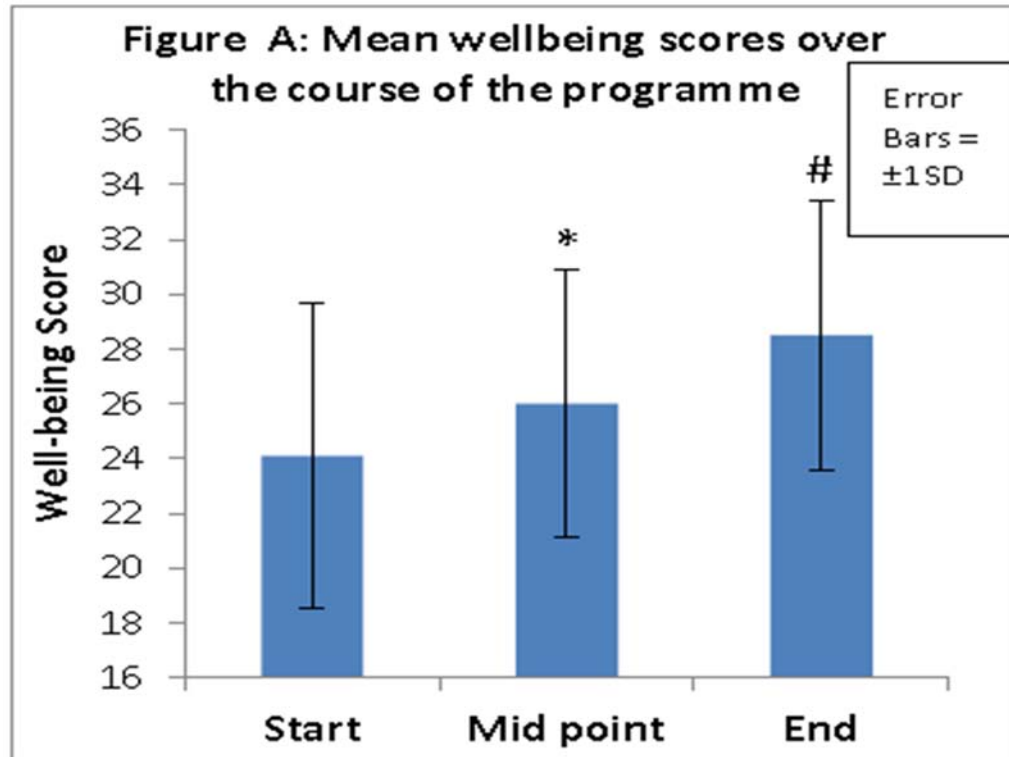
How do you feel people after taking...

More Connected the Same

Good ideas.....

How old are you

< 20yrs 21-40yrs 41-60yrs



(*indicates a significant difference between start and midpoint scores ($P < 0.01$), # indicates a significant difference between start and end, and start and midpoint scores ($P < 0.001$)).

Wellbeing scores improved by 18%

A greater proportion of participants had a 'high' well-being score by the end of the programme, whilst fewer had a 'low' well-being score.

Natural Health Service Research

- Working with the two universities in Liverpool
- NW Coast Academic Health Science Network
 - Improve the evidence base
 - Assess delivery
 - Improve delivery
- Research Centre of Excellence
 - 2PhDs
 - MSc placements
 - Research bids



NORTH WEST COAST
ACADEMIC HEALTH
SCIENCE NETWORK



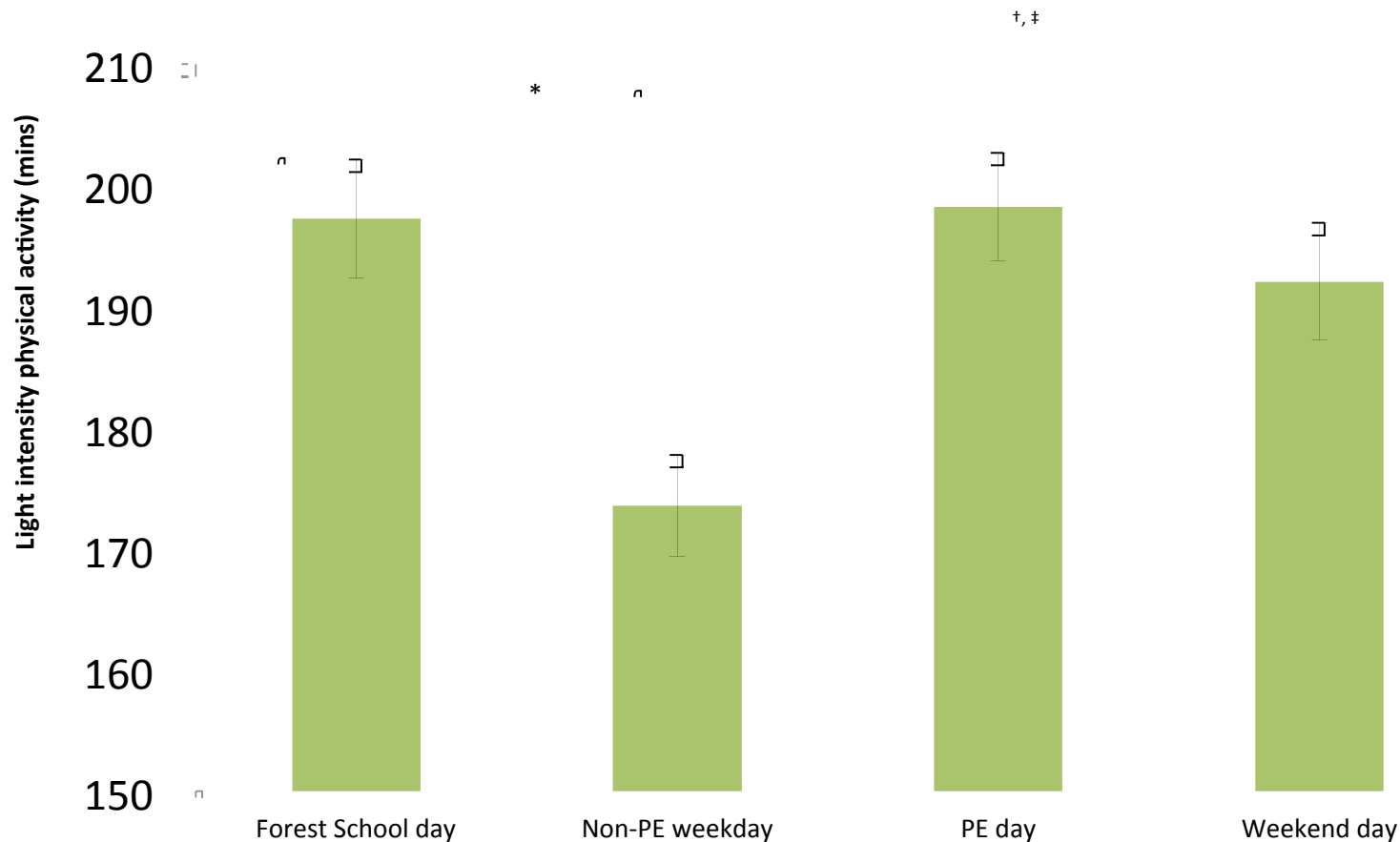
Some results already!



Halton Forest School

Preliminary Results- Accelerometer Data

Time spent in light intensity physical activity





Next Phase



Nature4Health

- £420,000
- Three years
- Test the Natural Health Service approach
- Monitor and evaluate
- Improve delivery
- Edge toward commissionability!





ARE WE THERE YET?



- We have made a start!
- Linked to robust research
- An emerging Centre of Research Excellence
- With the opportunity offered by Nature4Health to show how we reduce inequalities
- Show how the natural environment can keep us all healthier for longer

Thank You



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