

Green Exercise Programme Evaluation

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Hazel Hynds



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Project details

This report results from research commissioned by Natural England to evaluate the Green Exercise Programme. The work was undertaken by Hazel Hynds with support from colleagues in Evidence and Healthy Walking Team.

A summary of the findings covered by this report, as well as Natural England's views on this research, can be found within Natural England Research Information Note RIN039 – Green Exercise Programme Evaluation.

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Summary

This report describes the findings of the Green Exercise Programme Evaluation, undertaken between November 2008 and January 2010.

The evaluation was designed and implemented by Hazel Hynds, People, Engagement and Access, Evidence Team with support from colleagues in both People, Engagement and Access and Healthy Walking Teams.

It will be of interest to those who were involved in setting up and running the green exercise projects; regional and national staff in Natural England Healthy Walking Team; the project officers and the host partners. It will also be of use to people who are planning to run similar community engagement interventions with hard to reach groups.

The aim of the evaluation was to understand the extent to which the green exercise programme enabled hard to reach groups to access green space. Specific objectives were to understand:

- Participants' experiences of green exercise;
- What has worked / what has not worked so well;
- Barriers to accessing green space;
- Enablers to participation; and
- The extent to which the programme achieved a long term behaviour change in participants.

The report summarises the findings around access to local green space, both through and outside of the project interventions, looking particularly at:

- Knowledge and awareness;
- Common barriers;
- Engaging hard to reach groups; and
- Environmental experience.

It also identifies and describes a range of social benefits participants have experienced from their involvement in the green exercise programme.

The evaluation shows that, overall, the green exercise programme was successful in engaging a variety of hard to reach groups to access local green spaces through the various project interventions. Whilst there is some evidence to suggest that some participants have accessed green space outside of the projects and post intervention, it is not clear what long-term impact the programme has had on behaviour.

The findings also show that accessing local green space and having a positive environmental experience can have a range of knock-on effects including:

- Social benefits for both participants and the wider community, such as: opportunities for learning and development; increased physical activity and improved health and wellbeing; community cohesion and community participation.
- Environmental benefits for local green space, such as improved knowledge and awareness of local environment issues and taking positive action to conserve and improve local green spaces.

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1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The aim of the Green Exercise Programme was to target sedentary people and increase their levels of physical activity and their connection to local green spaces.
- 1.2 Natural England funded eight, three year pilot projects through local partnerships in the regions between 2008-11 to test the process of engaging hard to reach groups in green exercise activity. The eight projects adopted very different approaches to delivering green exercise. Some had multiple target audiences and offered various interventions, whereas others maintained a much narrower focus. Table 1 gives a brief summary of the projects and further detail can be found at Appendix 1.

Table 1 Green Exercise project summary

Region	Project	Host partner	Target groups
South East	Get Active in Milton Keynes	Parks Trust	sedentary population, mental health service users, BME groups, women and girls and those with learning disabilities.
South West	3G Woodland games	Swindon Borough Council	children and young people, in particular those at risk of disaffection and exclusion from school or with learning difficulties; the families of the above; older people.
East of England	Youth Outdoor Experience	Suffolk Wildlife Trust	girls aged 13-16; Girls and boys aged 11-18. (particularly those who are inactive and lack confidence and /or social skills).
East Midlands	East Lindsay Active/East Lindsay goes green	East Lindsay District Council	older people 55s+; children under 16; women 16 – 24; families ie, grandparents and grandchildren; obese clients with a BMI >30; diabetic groups; mental health clients.
West Midlands	Walk to Water	Staffordshire Moorlands District Council	Individuals and families living on a local estate; people with mental ill health; teenagers including the local youth club and college; older people; a local community group and volunteers.
Yorks & Humber	Walk 4 Fun /first steps to an active life	North Lincolnshire District Council	year 6 primary school children; overweight /obese adults.
North West	Wheels for All	Cycling Projects	GP Referral clients; Cardiac Rehabilitation; Adult Mental Health; those with disabilities and differing needs; ethnic community members.
North East	Greenways to health	Groundwork	young people (aged 11 -16), identified as physically inactive who live in the top 25% most deprived wards.

- 1.3 As of August 2010 the green exercise programme had enabled approximately 18,000 people, within the target groups, to access and experience their local greenspaces. Of this figure approximately 8,000 were children and young people, and 10,000 were adults.

1.4 Figures 1 and 2 show the number of children, young people and adults who have participated in the green exercise programme. The numbers are broken down by project and show numbers of participants against project targets.

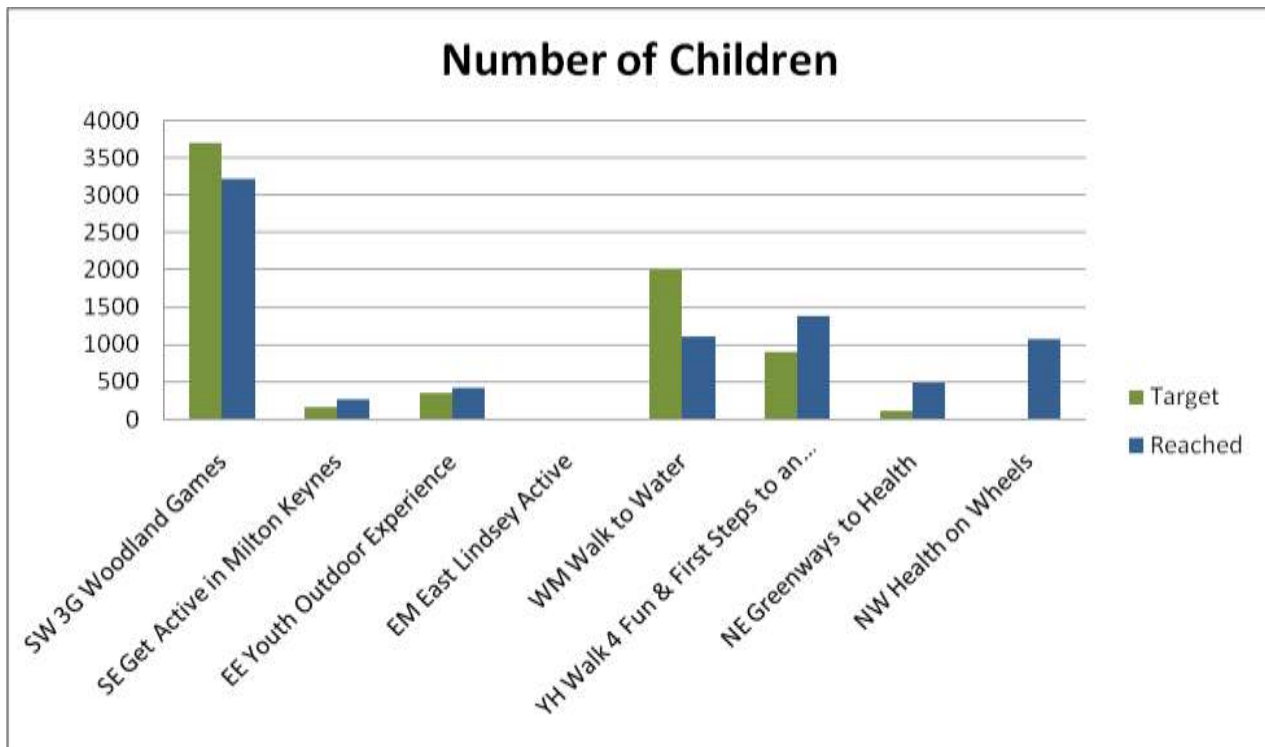


Figure 1 Number of children participating by project

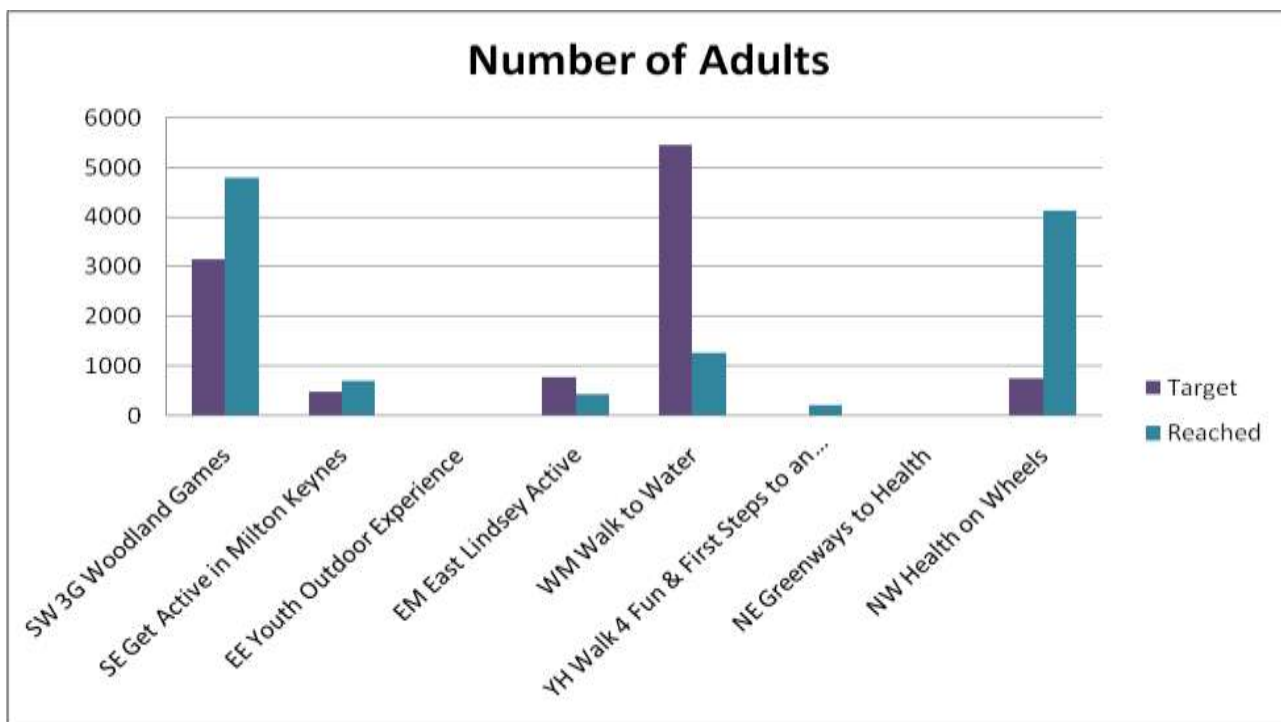


Figure 2 Number of adults participating by project

Research/evaluation need

1.5 Evaluation at both programme and project level was deemed necessary in order to fully explore how the pilot projects were operating and what difference Green Exercise had made to the participants. A framework for evaluation was developed which identified three distinct areas for evaluation:

- **Process Evaluation** – To understand the process of setting up and running green exercise projects. This was delivered internally, through collection of quarterly and six monthly monitoring and management information from individual projects.
- **Project Evaluation** – To look at the extent to which the individual projects have met their targets and objectives. In particular, looking at how effective the intervention has been at enabling participants to make connections with the natural environment and local green spaces. This was delivered by external research partners (see Appendix 2 for further details about the partners).
- **Programme Evaluation** – To examine the interventions as part of the wider programme, particularly in relation to participation, looking for consistent information about outcomes and indications of behaviour change. This was delivered internally through a qualitative study.

1.6 This report is concerned with the findings from the programme evaluation. The findings of the project evaluations and the process evaluation are available in separate reports which can be found at: URL: www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk/green/evaluation.



Plate 1 Walk 4 Fun School Walks – *Russell Cave*

2 Design and methods

Aim and objectives of the Programme Evaluation

- 2.1 The aim of the evaluation was to find out the extent to which the programme of green exercise interventions enabled hard to reach groups to access greenspace, both through and outside of the projects.
- 2.2 Specific objectives were to gain an understanding of:
 - a) participants' experiences of green exercise;
 - b) what has worked / what has not worked so well;
 - c) barriers to accessing green space;
 - d) enablers to participation; and
 - e) the extent to which the programme achieved a long term behaviour change in participants.

Research design

- 2.3 Given the need to get an in-depth understanding of the impact of the programme on individuals, and the small numbers of participants involved, a qualitative study approach was adopted, focussing on specific interventions and target groups. The aim was to examine participation in each of the projects; however time constraints meant that this study was only able to focus on participants from six of the eight projects.

Sampling

- 2.4 Due to sensitivities around the types of people involved with the projects, recruitment to the study was done on a voluntary basis through the project officers, who requested willing volunteers. There were 34 participants, 21 adults and 13 young people. The adult sample comprised 8 female and 13 male participants and the sample of young people comprised 8 male and 5 female participants. Table 2 provides further detail about the participant sample.
- 2.5 In addition to speaking with project participants, interviews were also conducted with the eight project officers and significant others involved with the project participants, (ie, teachers, youth leaders and key workers) in order to get a more rounded view of the various project interventions and the benefits to participants.

Consent and ethics

- 2.6 Although this study focussed particularly on vulnerable groups, it was not deemed necessary to obtain ethics clearance. This decision was taken because the methods of research were neither experimental nor invasive and would not touch upon sensitive issues that may cause distress to participants.
- 2.7 Prior to fieldwork commencing, all those involved in fieldwork involving young people (under 16) and vulnerable adults were CRB checked. Before each evaluation session the study was explained to all those taking part. Participants were also reassured that whilst we would be using the information they provided in the final report, their anonymity would be protected. Informed consent was gained from each participant and where necessary, letters about the study were sent to parents/guardians in order to obtain consent prior to evaluation fieldwork. Examples of consent forms can be seen at Appendix 3.

Table 2 Participant sample

Project	Intervention	Participants	Male	Female	Total
Youth Outdoor Experience	12 week outdoor activity programme	14 yr olds with low self esteem/confidence	2	4	6
East Lindsay Goes Green	12 week conservation programme	Adults with physical and/or mental ill health	2	2	4
First Steps to an Active Life	6 week walking programme with buddy	Adults with physical and/or mental ill health	2	1	3
Wheels for All	Cycling (ongoing)	Adults with physical ill health	-	3	3
3 G woodland Games	-	-	-	-	-
Greenways to Health	6 week outdoor activity programme based on JMA	14 yr olds suffering from substance misuse/behavioural problems/excluded from school	6	1	7
Get Active in Milton Keynes	Weekly conservation tasks (ongoing)	Adults with learning disabilities	9	2	11
Walk to Water	-	-	-	-	-
Total participants			21	13	34

Data collection

- 2.8 Data collection was carried out over two phases. Phase 1 at around week 2-3 of a participant's involvement with an intervention and phase 2 at 3-6 months after an intervention had ended or in the case of ongoing activities 3-6 months after phase 1 contact.
- 2.9 Pre-visits were carried out with learning disabled groups and young people in order to get to know them and to aid planning of focus group sessions. Fieldwork was planned to coincide either directly after, or before a green exercise activity, simply to make the experience as accessible and convenient for project participants as possible.
- 2.10 Due to the wide range of participants involved, a mixed method approach was adopted; including semi-structured interviews, informal chats, focus groups, projective techniques and questionnaires. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews were recorded and transcribed, and field notes were taken during informal chats.
- 2.11 Participants involved with the evaluation were thanked for taking part in the fieldwork and received a gift voucher, lunch or an outdoor themed gift.
- 2.12 Participant research focussed on:
- **Pre-intervention activity** – What people had done by way of green exercise/outdoor activity prior to their involvement in the project;
 - **Experience of project intervention** – What they liked/disliked, if/how they felt they'd benefitted from their experience;
 - **Future plans** – What they intended to do once the project was over by way of outdoor activity/plans for the future; and
 - **Post-intervention activity** – What they had actually done by way of outdoor activity since their involvement with the project.

2.13 Project officers/key worker research focussed on:

- **Benefits to participants** – How, in their opinion, participants had benefitted from their participation in the project;
- **Behaviour change** – Any particular differences they had noticed in participants attitudes/behaviours; and
- **Lesson learnt** – What they felt had gone well and what they would improve.

2.14 Different techniques were used, depending on the target group involved. For example, research with young people and vulnerable adults was conducted using focus groups and informal discussions that incorporated projective techniques, in order to make the experience more interesting and enjoyable. Topic guides for semi-structured interviews and focus groups can be found at Appendix 4. Further information about the methods and approaches used can be found in fieldwork reports at Appendix 5. Phase 2 follow up questionnaires at Appendix 6.

Analysis

2.15 The material generated from focus groups and interviews was transcribed using external transcription services. Transcripts, field notes and questionnaire responses were then reviewed in order to draw out themes and sub themes to develop a thematic framework. Using the framework the data was coded and moved into relevant themed tables to organise it for further analysis and interpretation. See Appendix 7 for thematic framework and Appendix 8 for themed data tables.

Limitations and challenges of research

Challenges with evaluation design

2.16 The diverse nature of the projects and the fact that this was a pilot programme, meant that it was difficult to decide how to evaluate the projects as part of a wider national programme, and what the research question should focus on.

2.17 The projects were locally designed and driven, which meant there was often great variation between them in relation to intervention type, ie from one-off events and short activity programmes to ongoing weekly activities. Where possible discreet interventions with a clear start and end point were the focus. Given the 'participant profile' and the qualitative approach it was not feasible to conduct fieldwork at one-off events. Ongoing activities would be difficult to evaluate because there was no obvious start or end.

2.18 Due to the individuality of each of the projects, a flexible and adaptable approach to evaluation was required, responsive to the needs of the projects and their target groups. Not surprisingly, conducting research with some of the target groups was difficult. In particular, those with learning disabilities and young people proved to be the most challenging to engage. For example, limited attention spans, behavioural problems and varying levels of intellectual capability meant that each research session had to be individually tailored to meet the needs of particular groups. Projective techniques such as imagery, graffiti boards and art were adopted and were effective in engaging the participants, however it was difficult to analyse the data from some of these sessions. These design and methodological issues are not uncommon when working with these kinds of groups and have been the subject of much debate, (Stalker, 1998; and Tisdall *et al*, 2008).

Challenges of practicalities

2.19 Scheduling fieldwork to ensure mutually convenient dates was very difficult. Project officers and, where appropriate, key workers, with limited capacity, were relied upon to support the fieldwork. This included recruiting willing participants and making all the necessary practical arrangements,

ie room hire etc. Visits had to be co-ordinated with the individual evaluations to ensure they didn't coincide and that there was no duplication of effort. Other issues that had to be factored in were practicalities such as the time of year and the weather, ensuring the projects had regular activities up and running and school holidays.

- 2.20 Working around these issues meant that there were inconsistencies in the approach at times. For example, the timing of initial interviews/focus groups was not always at the start of an individual's involvement with the project.

Challenges with phase 2 data collection

- 2.21 Another challenge was following-up with participants three months after their involvement with the intervention. Postal, self completion questionnaire was the preferred option for the majority of participants, apart from the learning disability groups, with whom additional focus groups and informal discussions were conducted.
- 2.22 Self-completion questionnaires are often problematic in research. They are generally administered after the event so people's memories are less reliable, questions can be misinterpreted and people may give superficial responses in order to get it done quickly. All this can result in low quality data.
- 2.23 Although the questionnaire was relatively short, difficulties arose at the design stage, such as, ensuring the questions were as clear as possible for a mixed audience and ensuring the question routing worked. The result was two slightly different questionnaires (for adults and for young people) tailored specifically to the interventions those participants were involved in. Due to the time it took to resolve these problems, there was some inconsistency in administering the questionnaires. This meant that around half the participants were not sent their questionnaires until six months after their involvement with the intervention.
- 2.24 The response rate to the questionnaire from adults was good with 7 adults out of 9 completing and returning it. However, perhaps not surprisingly, the response rate from young people was poor with only 2 out of 13 completing and returning it. Unfortunately the quality of responses to questions was generally quite poor which is most likely due to some of the issues discussed earlier.

Limitations of study

- 2.25 This was not a longitudinal study; therefore we were unable to track the progress of participants. It was really a cross-sectional study, a snapshot of how a particular set of people, at one point in their lives, felt about participating in green exercise projects. Whilst there was one follow-up with participants, as already mentioned, it was problematic, and there was no sustained, long term engagement with individuals through the projects, making it very difficult to detect changes in the behaviour of individuals.

3 Findings

3.1 This section of the report describes the findings of the evaluation, looking particularly at participants' experiences of the project interventions and what worked well/what didn't work so well. It focuses on access to greenspace and the perceived social benefits of accessing greenspace.

Access to greenspace

3.2 There is good evidence to demonstrate that; overall, the green exercise programme has enabled a variety of hard to reach groups to access local green spaces through the project interventions.

3.3 However, it is harder to understand the extent to which individuals have accessed greenspaces of their own volition, outside of the projects and post-intervention. Whilst there is some evidence to suggest that some participants have accessed local green spaces of their own accord it is not clear if this is indicative of a sustained change in behaviour.

3.4 The results of the questionnaire showed that there were no significant differences between what participants did by way of 'outdoor activity' pre-intervention compared to what they did post-intervention. This could be the result of a number of factors which are discussed in section 4.

3.5 Some of the key themes that emerged around access to local greenspace and participation in interventions were:

- knowledge and awareness of local greenspaces;
- common barriers to accessing greenspaces;
- engaging hard to reach groups and enablers to participation; and
- positive environmental experience.

Knowledge and awareness

3.6 One of the programme's key roles was to improve people's knowledge and awareness of where their local green spaces were, how to get there and what sorts of things they could do once there, in order to give them more confidence to visit independently. The projects have consistently found that people do not know where the majority of greenspaces are in their locality and how to access them.

3.7 Through their involvement in green exercise, participants discovered new places they didn't know existed and some have re-visited those places in their own time. For example, participants have reported finding footpaths and parks they didn't realise were there.

... "there's 96 sites round here. 96...we didn't realise there's so many – I mean within this immediate facility there's about ten places you can go to, of which the nature reserves are some of them..."

3.8 Prior to taking part in green exercise, participants reported feeling uncertain about where they were allowed to go in relation to green spaces. Nature reserves were mentioned in particular and it was suggested that lack of publicity makes them seem unwelcoming, unless you know where to go and that it's permissible to enter.

... "we were actually in the field in a part that you would never have been able to go if you weren't part of this project...it doesn't have a big sign saying "no entry" but because the gate's there and it's closed you wouldn't have gone into that area at all...it doesn't say that there's a public car

park and you've got access. So I mean are these just our best kept secrets for the local people...?"

- 3.9 It seems that there is a lack of information and publicity about local greenspaces and what you can do there, to encourage people from all walks of life to get involved, and that the current methods of communication are not reaching a wide enough audience.

... "I would never have thought of doing something on the nature reserves because I didn't realise what the set-up is... I think there could be more information because I'm sure that there are that many people who'd love to be able to do something..."

- 3.10 Participation in projects made a difference to people's confidence in accessing local greenspace independently. For example, a learning disabled user reported that he had been under-confident about which greenspaces he could cycle in so had been mainly cycling on the roads. After observing others cycling in local greenspaces and bringing their bikes along to project activities, he said he felt much more confident to now go to those places on his bike.

"...it's led to some of them seeking out the same places in their spare time just to go for a walk or they've gone there with their family, so it's definitely improved their access..."

Common barriers to accessing greenspaces

- 3.11 Within the environment sector it is widely accepted that there are many real and perceived barriers to accessing greenspace, particularly for under-represented groups. A literature review conducted by Forest Research, (Weldon *et al* 2007) revealed that there was a range of barriers affecting access to woodlands and green space, including lack of knowledge, negative perceptions, fears and safety concerns and feeling unwelcome.

- 3.12 In addition to those already touched upon, some common barriers that prevented people from accessing local green space were reported by participants:

- Anti-social behaviour and feeling unsafe, for example, groups of young people hanging about were found to be intimidating;
- Poorly maintained greenspaces, for example dog fouling, vandalism and litter put people off;
- Not having enough time;
- Lack of transport, particularly for young people or those less able to walk/cycle to their local greenspaces;
- Not knowing where the local greenspaces were and how to get there;
- Feeling uncertain about where you were allowed to go and what was private property;
- Poor health;
- Lacking confidence to visit a greenspace on their own;
- Not knowing what activities were on offer/what to do at a greenspace;
- Bad weather; and
- Not cool to be seen doing outdoorsy stuff – particularly felt by young people.

Engaging hard to reach groups and enablers to participation

- 3.13 The programme's aim was to target sedentary people from 'hard to reach' groups who didn't normally visit greenspaces. Within these parameters the projects set themselves some challenging goals in relation to the specific groups they wanted to engage with, including: teenagers with behavioural problems and/or suffering substance misuse, learning disabled groups, vulnerable adults, mental health service users, BME groups, people suffering physical ill health, children and teenagers suffering from low self esteem/confidence.

- 3.14 In respect of engaging the 'hard to reach' population, it seems that the most effective way is through existing groups, approaching, and developing relationships with, the relevant

partners/community members in order to do this. People from these 'hard to reach groups' rarely seem to just turn up of their own accord, they need to get involved via ways they know and trust. For example, projects targeted at 'disaffected' youth and people with learning disabilities would not have been successful in engaging those particular groups if they had not first developed strong links with the relevant organisations, and got the support of 'key workers' to help make it happen. Those projects with black and minority ethnic (BME) target groups found it extremely difficult to engage with local BME communities and unfortunately did not meet their targets in this area. This is perhaps not surprising, as BME groups are notoriously hard to engage, and particularly so in physical activity interventions. Time must be invested in building relationships and trust amongst the community and particularly with community elders, as there are many barriers that can prevent their involvement in such activities. (Usman, 2010).

- 3.15 On the whole, it seems that having a variety of activities on offer, to suit a wide range of people, works best. Regular activities and set programmes were effective in sustaining engagement/keeping people's interest as opposed to one-off events/taster activities which were good for sparking initial interest and attracting large numbers of people, but needed to be followed up with the offer of regular activities/programmes.
- 3.16 Most participants responded particularly well to activities that involved achieving something tangible and/or that contributed to the local community. For example, conservation work and litter picks. Children and young people enjoyed trying different things and responded well to new experiences. However, they needed a wide range of activities on offer at any one time to keep their interest. Particular favourites were practical activities that involved getting their hands dirty, such as den building, fire making and outdoor cooking.
- 3.17 A range of common enablers to participation in the projects were identified:
- Opportunity for social contact and companionship. Being around like-minded others, meeting new people and enjoying a shared experience.
 - Knowing how to get to the green space, and/or having transport, where project activities are happening and feeling welcomed and accepted.
 - Anonymity of health status, particularly for those with sensitive health conditions ie, those suffering mental ill health really appreciate the fact that nobody asks about it, they just accept you.
 - Informality of the group was important to people. They appreciated the fact that activities were relaxed and that there were no expectations. Participants aren't forced to do a fixed amount of activity.
 - Known routes to participation are key in giving people confidence and encouraging them to participate in the intervention. For example, through GP or exercise referral, via an existing group/organisation or through word of mouth.
 - Getting the publicity right/tailored to the target audience – rather than just blanket flyers/posters or adverts in the paper. People seemed to respond well to the personal touch ie, having the project officer come and tell them about the project/activities. Hearing directly from people who had already experienced the project also seemed to be a very effective way of encouraging people to get involved.
 - One-off taster sessions worked well enabling people to try the activity and see if they liked it before committing to a programme, but again it is important to get the publicity and communications right in order to attract specific audiences.
 - For the set programmes small groups of 8-10 seemed about right in terms of ensuring everyone was getting involved and developing friendships in the groups, too large a group would have been daunting and off-putting for some participants and wouldn't have functioned so well in terms of developing cohesion/support networks.
 - Branded free gifts are appealing and make participants feel appreciated and as though they belong to the project.

- The role of the project officer is important. Not only is having the same project officer each week reassuring for participants, they also value structure to activities and someone to take the lead, showing them where to go, explaining what they'll be doing and providing guidance on how to do it. However, it is important to get the balance right as once people are confident at an activity they appreciate being left to get on and do it.

Positive environmental experience

- 3.18 Another key aim of the green exercise programme was to help participants make a connection with the natural environment at their local green spaces. Although it is difficult to measure such a connection the positive responses from participants about their environmental experiences seem to indicate that they did connect on some level through their involvement with the projects.

“...They opened the gate and we walked into a field where they'd let it all go back to nature with all the farmers, and so we spread out...and we were counting the orchids...it wasn't like being on mowed grass, you know, where you would go from concrete onto a lawn if you went for a walk in the park it would still be quite level and flat but this was a ploughed field so it was up and down. So the difference in it, even in what was underneath you... I felt more connected to the earth...it just brought me alive, it was just lovely...I was walking along in the long grasses you know, how soft and lovely the fronds are and then feeling it running through my fingers, and then visually it was just beautiful because it was mostly yellow from the buttercups but of course buttercups that we see at home in the lawn are only 'this big' but these buttercups were 'this high', so it was really lovely...it was just amass with red clover, so you'd got the red clover and these yellow buttercups and then these purple orchids that we were counting and looking for...just being in that field – I could have stayed there all day, I really could and I didn't realise I could walk so far...”

- 3.19 A group of young people suffering substance misuse, who had been previously hard to engage in an alternative curriculum programme, regularly turned up each week to participate in the John Muir Award. Their youth worker saw some interesting changes in them which he believes is down to the freedom of the outdoors environment, the tangible activities and working in a group. They all now come prepared with a packed lunch, they listen to the task being explained; they are interested, they motivate each other and some individuals are beginning to show leadership. Whilst it has been slow progress, this group have also become more aware of their impact on the natural environment, for example they all now pick up their rubbish.

- 3.20 Some of the older participants reported that their involvement in the green exercise projects had enabled them to get back in touch with nature. One individual said that being in the natural environment had brought back memories from their childhood. Others mentioned their fascination with the things you could actually see if you were quiet and looked carefully, particularly near water, such as water voles and fish in the river.

- 3.21 Participants have generally become more appreciative of the natural environment and local greenspaces. For example, some people mentioned that their knowledge and awareness of the natural environment had improved. This was particularly in relation to the importance of conserving local greenspaces for both wildlife and the local community.

“...We're more aware of what's going on round us as far as conservation, we're more aware of what is out there...”

“...I took my camera...I've got some wonderful photographs...they're lovely photographs. Of all the plants...and grasses, I've even taken them of grasses...”

- 3.22 Many people talked about the beauty and tranquillity of the natural environments they were experiencing and that they felt these were places where they could really get away from it all and feel very peaceful. Some participants appear to have been so inspired by their experiences they are keeping regular blogs, writing poetry and taking photos to capture their experiences.

"First Flight

*Life Flows from water to earth
The Marsh Harrier at its birth
Takes its first breath and opens the eyes
Its mother above where the river flies*

*A building beside them
With the Marsh right behind them
The little Harrier cries
It knows its time for its first flight
But which way I go gives him a fright
With mother beside him begins to sing
Little Harrier flaps his wings
With the lenses in shape and there's nothing to wait
The switch clicks and it's a lovely portrait*

*We gather round a warm cosy fire
While others play on the new car tire
Big and bold in a shade of green
The tarpaulin creates a wonderful scene
With bow saws and Loppers
The branches come down
We all create some flower crowns*

*With art and crafts and food and drink
We take a seat and then we sink
Watching the Little Harrier Take its first flight
Its flaps its wings and flies into the light
We imagine what it would be like to fly
Well just imagine that the river flies!"*

Written by young green exercise project participant.

Social benefits of accessing local greenspace

- 3.23 As well as benefitting from the beauty and tranquillity of natural environments, there is good evidence to suggest that access to local greenspace and/or participation in community projects focussed on greenspaces can provide wider social benefits. An evaluation of BIG's Greenspaces and Sustainable Communities Programme (2008) demonstrated that environmental projects can be an effective way of engaging communities and facilitating change in disadvantaged areas.

Social benefits included opportunities for employment, training and volunteering to help develop the skills of local people.

- 3.24 Greenspace Scotland examined the impact of local greenspace on community quality of life and found that greenspace contributed to health and wellbeing; safer and stronger communities; community regeneration and capacity building; connecting communities with biodiversity and climate change issues.
- 3.25 Green exercise participants reported various areas where they felt they had benefitted from their involvement with the projects, which was corroborated by project officers and significant others. Five areas of 'social benefit' were identified; learning and development; physical activity and health; wellbeing; community cohesion and community participation, which are discussed in further detail below.

Learning and development

- 3.26 A wide range of benefits were reported by participants, project officers and significant others. The findings show that the projects have helped people to develop in confidence and improve their social skills, get work experience and become aware of wider opportunities.
- 3.27 For example, the learning disabled participants have gained invaluable work experience, which can be hard for them to find elsewhere, through their involvement with green exercise. Individuals involved in a weekly conservation intervention experienced having to get to a job on time, working set hours, working as part of a team and the positive feelings of making a big contribution to the local area. In some cases this has led to employment such as litter picking in local parks.
- 3.28 Many participants have had the opportunity to learn more about their local greenspaces and wildlife. Others have developed life skills such as team building and problem solving, as well as more practical skills such as making bird boxes, orienteering, woodland management, mountain bike maintenance and bush craft. These skills are transferrable to school, home and work. The experience has also broadened their horizons, making them aware of wider opportunities that the natural environment can offer, particularly in terms of further education, employment and general interests.
- 3.29 For example, one young participant enjoyed the experience so much he has decided he wants to become a farmer when he leaves school and has now enrolled on a special land based diploma. Another young person, suffering from substance misuse had particularly enjoyed learning woodland management skills and was beginning to consider his future, toying with the idea of 'tree surgery' as a career.

...” it has really helped to improve the self esteem and confidence of all those involved. The young people’s ability to work together as a group has improved significantly and this was apparent during the summer activity trip to Mull in Scotland, when they were required to use their team work skills...”

- 3.30 Another young person who was previously very shy and lacked social skills has now got a weekend job they cycle to. Prior to taking part in green exercise the furthest this individual had been was to the end of the road they lived in.
- 3.31 Those who participate in green exercise as part of an alternative curriculum programme benefit from additional support with their schooling. For example some individuals have the opportunity to practice and develop their literacy skills by completing diaries about their experiences of green exercise.

Case story: Youth Outdoor Experience

Xanithia grew in self-confidence and learned to get along with others better; Tom who didn't enjoy the classroom blossomed when working outdoors and became an expert fire maker; Michael is pursuing a future in farming while Carl enjoyed it so much he went home and built a garden shed!

The Youth Outdoor Experience (YOE) is an outdoor-based, 12 week project for 11-18 year olds based at Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Carlton Marshes nature reserve near Lowestoft. The project gives urban-based young people a taste of the natural environment by taking part in an alternative learning experience working outdoors as part of a team.

"Activities vary throughout the season and include outdoor cooking, shelter building, orienteering, conservation tasks, and environmental art in woods, on marshes, beaches and other green spaces."
Project Officer, Lorna Kerrison.



Plate 2 Youth Outdoor Experience – *Lorna Kerrison*

A recent group involved pupils and teachers from Kirkley Community High School in Lowestoft. Coordinating teacher Kathy Smith explains:

"The children we select for the Project usually don't thrive in the classroom environment – they may be fidgety or lack social skills and self confidence. They're not country children so taking part in YOE takes them out their comfort zone by involving them in things they wouldn't normally do. It offers them huge opportunities, giving them new skills and broadening their horizons enormously. We also find it's been a good introduction to our land-based diploma which we started this year. Without the environmental background with YOE I don't think as many students would have chosen to do the course. For us, taking part in YOE has been a great success."

School supervisor David Banks accompanies the group and works alongside them outside. He has witnessed shy, awkward students and those with more challenging behaviour develop in confidence and in their ability to get on with others.

"Once the young people see what they can accomplish both individually and together it gives them a sense of achievement they don't get in the classroom. Such a positive learning experience means some even come back to help me with the garden and animals. We're going to create a wildlife garden; the

students who have benefited from YOE will bring their skills back to school and show the younger children round.” David Banks.

Xanithia joined the YOE project this year and finds things easier socially at school, and has gone on to complete a high wire adventure course – something she would never have done before.

“I didn’t used to interact with others but on YOE we did loads of different things which we had to do together. I was proud of making a fire and baking bread on it – everyone called me ‘mum’! The experience gave me much more confidence.” Xanithia, project participant.

Carl was often in trouble at school: *“I liked being outside. Its fun doing stuff I don’t usually do. I saw bugs – yuk – and helped build a bridge; that was a new experience I really enjoyed. I later made a shed at home and my dad bought me a corn snake!”*

While Michael discovered his vocation: *“when you stop and look at the work you’ve done you can hardly believe you did it yourself. I really enjoyed making fires, carrying equipment and generally looking after things. It made me realise I want to be a farmer and so I’m doing a special diploma instead of GCSEs”.*

The Youth Outdoor Experience will continue this year and will target young people from a range of backgrounds.

Physical activity and health

3.32 The programme has enabled many participants to increase their levels of physical activity in ways that are both accessible and enjoyable to them in a relaxed environment. Several participants commented very specifically about not enjoying the gym environment because they felt too pressured in relation to meeting fitness goals and in not being able to conform to the ‘body beautiful image’ that is associated with people who go to gyms. We found that participants seemed to enjoy the informality of being able to exercise in an outdoor setting.

“..in the past I’ve gone to the gym. And hated it. Paid for membership and still never went, so...then I found out about this. I’ve just finished work actually which is another good reason for wanting to do something and it was outdoor and it was free and I hadn’t ridden a bike in forty years...since I’ve been doing it, I do feel quite a bit fitter...when I first started coming I was puffing and panting going riding on my bike whereas now I can do it a lot easier...”

3.33 Many participants said that the thing they liked best about green exercise was that there were able to ‘go at their own pace’. There were no expectations or goals set in relation to the amount of activity you were expected to do when attending a session. Others especially enjoyed the challenge of green exercise and especially the ‘sense of achievement’ on completion of an activity.

3.34 Participants have said they feel physically fitter and better in themselves. In particular, participants have reported weight loss, increased stamina and being more active since getting involved in green exercise.

“...one particular student has lost over a stone since his involvement with the project and was noticeably more active on the school trip...”

3.35 Another interesting finding was that many participants said that they were enjoying the experience so much, particularly the ‘outdoor setting’ and the ‘companionship’, that they weren’t aware of how much physical activity they were doing and didn’t realise what they were actually capable of.

Case Story: Health on Wheels

Health on Wheels is the Green exercise pilot project for Natural England’s North West region. It delivers a number of cycling initiatives to help people start including cycling into their daily routines. These rides aim to build people’s cycling skills and confidence, breaking down all the barriers that prevent people

cycling more often, such as learning to ride, where to cycle, cycle maintenance and road safety. In partnership with Warrington PCT's 'Reach for Health' team, Health on Wheels Warrington takes referrals for individuals with a wide range of health problems, and from cardiac rehabilitation and weight management groups. However a large proportion of the participants are people from the local community just looking to increase their levels of physical activity in the outdoors. Bill Hudson was a member of Warrington's 'Healthy Hearts' cardiac rehabilitation group after having a triple heart bypass operation. Bill and his wife joined the group after attending a taster session back in March 2009.



Plate 3 Health on Wheels – *Iain Lancaster*

"I joined as I wanted to continue keeping fit and being active but do it outside of gym environment. I hadn't cycled for years but I enjoy the freedom of the outdoors and fresh air, I feel healthier and happier exercising in the natural environment."

The rides generally follow traffic free routes from various starting points across Warrington, utilising the Trans Pennine Train from both Sankey Valley and Victoria Park in Warrington. Rides range from thirty minutes to an hour but are suited to groups.

"We started the rides at a slow and steady pace and the ride leaders have progressed us throughout the weeks. It's great to ride as a group and socialise whilst taking in some exercise. Since I started, I have noticed that my breathing has improved, I am able to walk much further than before and overall just feel much healthier." Bill Hudson.

Since taking part, Bill and his wife have now both purchased cycles of their own and regularly ride in their local area. They even now use their cycles to cycle to the shops for the morning paper, incorporating physical activity into their daily lives.

"If anybody was thinking of joining do not hesitate you are well looked after by all the staff and volunteers. They are great with us!"

Since starting the rides in January 2009, over 60 people have accessed the rides with over two hundred weekly attendances in the same time period.

“We aim to have a broader ride programme, in 2010, giving the people of Warrington the opportunity to connect with more of Warrington’s green space”. Iain Lancaster, Health on Wheels Project coordinator.

Wellbeing

3.36 The programme appears to have had a positive effect on participants’ general wellbeing to varying levels. The findings indicate that participants’ self esteem and confidence has improved. For example, some participants who were previously reluctant and nervous about travelling too far on their own, are now working out bus routes and making their own way to project activities.

“...one particular girl has really blossomed as a result...she used to be a real recluse before she started the project. Now she comes along to the garden club every Saturday...she has a boyfriend, her confidence is ‘sky high’ – this is noticeable at school and she gets out a lot more...”

3.37 Some participants have reported that what they have been able to achieve through green exercise, either for themselves or for the local community, has made them feel good about themselves and given them a sense of satisfaction.

3.38 Simply being active outdoors in the fresh air in attractive surroundings seems to have made people feel good about themselves and had an effect on their stress levels. For some individuals this effect has been quite profound, the natural environment experience appearing to have a real impact on their wellbeing.

“...when you’re cycling around, you do forget everything... your stress is all – say something was just niggling you, when you’re riding around, you just forget, your mind does go, it gives you a nice feeling because you’re out in the fresh air...”

3.39 One participant who has suffered with depression for a long time said her experiences of the natural environment through green exercise had ‘brought her alive’ and described the feeling as ‘Christmas and birthdays all coming at once’.

3.40 This individual admitted that prior to her involvement in green exercise she had contemplated suicide and during a visit to her GP had rated her mood (from 1-10) as less than 1. She had hit rock bottom. She described the depression as ‘being in a big black hole’ and that when she was participating in the green exercise project she was so happy she felt that she was ‘up at number 10’. She explained that when she got back to everyday life at home she felt herself gradually reverting back down to number 2/3.

3.41 As a result of her experiences of green exercise she has found an activity that can help her to combat her depression. She has decided that when she feels low she is going to go out for a walk in her local green space.

“...I’ve suffered from anxiety and depression for a long, long time...when it comes on it’s like being in a big black hole...I went to the gym, but...I’d reached the point where it’s just so claustrophobic in the gym that you’re just clinging onto the machine and nobody talks to you and you’re looking round and feel self conscious because of course you feel as if I’m big and fat and horrible. But when I was out and about I didn’t feel self-conscious I wasn’t even aware of me and all this, you know, calling myself names...I was just happy. I felt alive, and I’ve not had that feeling for such a long, long time that...it was like Christmas and birthdays...all coming at once...”

Case Story: Greenways to Health, Ashington Community Woodlands Forest Schools Programme
Greenways to Health, a project delivered by groundwork North East, engages 11-16 year olds from South East Northumberland, who are not normally active and who lack the opportunity or confidence to access natural outdoor spaces. The aim of the project is to provide young people with outdoor experiences that:

- Help them make valuable connections with the natural world;

- Encourage awareness and responsibility for their local greenspaces; and
- Provide them with fun and adventure based experiences which improve their health and wellbeing.

Greenways has funded two members of Groundwork staff to complete their professional level 3 Forest School qualification. The qualification allows the staff members to lead forest school activity such as den building and natural art to school and youth groups in forest environments. The Forest School ethos is to raise emotional awareness and confidence, encouraging independence through opportunities of outdoor play and learning.



Plate 4 Greenways to Health – *Stephen Matthews*

In order to demonstrate and promote Forest Schools, Greenways resourced and delivered a six week programme of Forest School activities to 11 young people aged 11 to 14 from Cleaswell Hill School.

Cleaswell Hill School caters for pupils, aged 4-16, who have special educational needs. The school's ethos is to recognise the individual needs and talents of each pupil and aims to develop their intellectual, spiritual, moral, physical, social and creative abilities.

The programme targeted pupils who lacked the opportunity or the confidence to access natural outdoor spaces in their day to day lives. The Forest Schools programme was specifically designed to develop the confidence of these individuals with the aim of inspiring them to access local green space outside of their school week.

The six week programme was delivered at Ashington Community Woodland in partnership with its new community woodland officer. This local woodland provided the perfect setting for a range of child centred and child led activities; including den building, environmental art, wood craft, fire lighting and outdoor cooking. These activities encouraged the group to take risks, develop new communication skills and increased confidence levels. Alongside these activities the pupils engaged in various sensory activities which awakened their senses to the woodland environment.

"It was very quiet and peaceful you could hear the birds, I also enjoyed running around in the rain and playing stuck in the mud it was mint!" Forest School Participant.

"I think the woodland makes a great learning space for youth led activity. The group showed a natural enthusiasm becoming more engaged and responsive throughout the programme." Stephen Matthews Green Exercise Coordinator.

Since the forest school programme the school has organised to revisit the woodland so that they can celebrate their forest school experience. To share this celebration the pupils have invited their parents to come along and find out more about what they got up to and also experience forest schools for themselves. The pupils and parents will be building dens and having a woodland cook up.

"This programme was an emotional and educational journey for pupils, teachers and leaders. The programme has shown Ashington Community woodland to be an ideal venue for Forest Schools". Peter Downes Ashington Community Woodland Officer.

Realising the benefits of outdoor learning the school have begun to develop a disused space within the school site. Pupils from the school have been involved in planting trees, re-establishing a pond and building a bird hide, transforming the space into a school nature reserve. This space will provide pupils with the opportunity to take part in outdoor activities as part of their school lives.

"The programme has given us inspiration and opportunity to try new activities, we hope to continue to develop and investigate new activities such as forest schools". Mrs Davies, Cleaswell Hill.

Community cohesion

3.42 The projects have played a key role in bringing local people together and helping participants to forge friendships. The social aspect of green exercise was important to people: Participants really enjoyed the companionship and the camaraderie of the group activities.

"...it's a social thing as well, it really is. I love it, meeting all different people, because there's different ones comes each week sometimes...and the same ones come as well and it's nice to meet them again..."

3.43 The shared experience of the project intervention seems to form a bond amongst the participants and the groups act as support networks. For example, one particular individual said that the green exercise group gave him the confidence to enrol on an IT course at a local college. He completed the course and passed his exam and brought his certificate and photo along to show people. Everyone was so pleased they gave him a round of applause.

3.44 A young person, normally a victim of bullying, was cheered on by all the other students during a school presentation when they went up to collect their certificates and gift for participating in green exercise.

3.45 It seems that the support the group provides can help to bring about changes in individuals. Some of the project officers reported that they had noticed changes in some of their participants, both young and old. For example, increased confidence and generally more positive attitudes. The projects seem to have made a real difference to some individuals, particularly those that perhaps lacked social skills or confidence. Being outdoors in an informal environment, having fun and having the opportunity to socialise with small groups of like-minded people seems to be an effective combination. Some of the groups have got on so well they are keen to continue their own group or meet up after the intervention has ended.

"...The best things are the reactions from the kids...the changes you see in them...the fact that being out with them over that period of time is helping...there's one lad, the first week he came out he was just really into himself and by the end of it he didn't want to leave and he'd changed. He'd had his hair cut, everything. There were all these changes in him...just having that support from the group, a friendly group and coming out and doing the sessions he was just dead keen to carry it on..."

Case story: Woodland Games at Upham Road

The 3G Woodland Games aims to increase participation in informal physical activity through accessing local greenspaces, parks and woodlands. The project focuses on more alternative sports as a means of keeping active – including Ultimate Frisbee, Disc Golf, Rock-it-ball and Kite flying.



Plate 5 3G Woodland Games – *Simon Pitman*

The Upham Road Centre in Swindon helps people with learning disabilities, providing day care and activities for 135 service users. Within the centre are two units for people with special needs, and these currently support; 13 people in QUEST (for people with challenging behaviour) and 13 people in Steps (for people with severe physical needs).

The South West Woodland Games project has enabled people from the Centre to become more physically active and to explore the natural environment in Swindon. The group meets at the centre every week to walk to a local green space or woodland. Lots of different games are offered, concentrating on fun and varied activities to be inclusive for all abilities.

The project works closely with the Disability Sports Officer from Swindon Borough Council's Leisure Services team, to constantly come up with new and fresh ideas to cater for all needs.

So far 28 people at the Centre have benefitted from the woodland games project. The group members have really enjoyed the experience of getting out and about in the local parks and being active every week.

"It's great to be outside, the games we play are fun, I like getting out of the centre". Stuart Roberts, user of Upham Road Centre.

Centre manager Angie Smith has also embraced the scheme.

"The most important outcome of this group is the intergration with the community. The parks are often busy, particularly in the summer, and it is great to see this groups interacting with the general public and getting a positive response back".

Daniel Morgan has a learning difficulty and a severe physical impairment that affects his ability to walk freely and was wheelchair bound when the scheme started. Over the 11 months he has attended the

scheme, he has made major progress physically and now runs to the park and is always moving for the whole hour – the transformation has been remarkable.

“The camaraderie of this group is fantastic, they are always willing to help each other out and there is a great spirit within the group. This is typified by the habitual ‘speeches’ at the end of each session whereby people take it in turn to tell a joke or say something – one of the group even plays the harmonica which everyone loves! It is clear that the fresh air and being out in the green space has a positive effect on this group”. Simon Pitman, Project Officer, Woodland Games.

The project plans to continue working with this group until it can become self-sustaining. Volunteers from the centre will be trained to lead the group to enable the project to continue beyond its initial lifespan. New users are taking part and it is estimated that another 10 new members will join in the remaining months.

Community participation

3.46 Another common theme that emerged, consistently, was community participation. For many participants it is very important to feel useful, to feel part of the community, and to get involved.

“...There’s a really good core of learning disabled users that go along and it’s something that service users talk about to each other and spread the word and it’s something that they know is an option to do on a Friday to get experience if they want to get a job or maybe to socialise or just get out, enjoy the outdoors and be more active. It’s something that is on the calendar now for learning disabled groups...two of the guys that come to the group were chatting about how much they enjoy it and one of them said that if it wasn’t for this activity he wouldn’t leave the house all week...”

3.47 An important motivation for participation, particularly, although not exclusively, amongst adult participants, was feeling that you had achieved something positive for the local community and being able to put something back.

3.48 One participant who had been helping widen and improve pathways on a nature reserve described her pleasure when she explained to a visitor in a wheelchair that they could now access the site much further in their wheelchair because of the work she and her group had been doing as part of the green exercise project.

“...It’s a good feeling really, when you talk about what you’ve done, things like that, you know and what you’ve seen and heard while you were out...you can sit back and relax and feel that you’ve contributed to something...”

3.49 Volunteering seems to be a key outcome of the green exercise programme. Many participants expressed a desire to either get involved with helping to deliver the projects, or managing local green space, and many of these went on to become volunteers in their own time after the intervention ended. For example some people have become Natural England NNR volunteers, others have been helping to create and maintain wildlife gardens in school grounds.

Case story: East Lindsay Goes Green

This project, based in the East Midlands aims to improve the health and well-being of local residents. The main focus is on the coastal strip in and around Mablethorpe as this was proven to have the highest levels of obesity and the lowest levels of physical activity in the region.

East Lindsay Goes Green is an exciting 12 week programme based at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe Dunes National Nature Reserve. Exercise referral patients have the opportunity to try outdoor activities which are aimed at improving their physical fitness and mental wellbeing, whilst also making improvements to the nature reserve. Patients may even progress to becoming volunteers for Natural England at the reserve.

A variety of activities are available, such as maintenance, constructing benches and widening the easy access trail. The conservation project is a great way to keep physically and mentally active in a beautiful setting.

“I am very impressed by the progress made by the Green Exercise Group. We try to encourage all our patients to lead healthy lifestyles and take regular exercise. However some people are not keen to attend a gym and prefer to be out in the fresh air. I hope that the group continues to develop in the future.” Dr Irene Carter, GP.

The project is managed in partnership by East Lindsey district council, Natural England and local GP practices. Michael McIlwain was diagnosed with high blood pressure and was recommended by his GP to undertake more physical activity to improve his health. After a consultation with an exercise referral specialist, he joined East Lindsay Goes Green.



Plate 6 East Lindsay Goes Green – Roger Briggs

When Michael became part of the project, he met new people and visited local places that he had never been to before.

“It’s made me aware of beautiful things I haven’t seen before and it’s made me see the importance of the nature reserve. Everyone should make use of the natural environment. I’ve looked into the history of the Nature Reserve and seen its importance to the local area and the community. This had been a learning curve for me.” Michael McIlwain.

The conservation project has been a very big help to Michael and he feels it has benefitted him physically and mentally.

As a result of participating in the project six people are now interested in becoming volunteers on the nature reserve.

“I have enjoyed the experience, it has been nice to be outside and see all the wildlife. The overall experience has been very helpful and I am very keen to carry on as a volunteer to the nature reserve.” Mrs Pauline Martin.

Bernice Wilson, the Project Coordinator, worked closely with GPs and the exercise referral specialists to provide details of the projects and ways in which the activities can make a positive impact on the patient's lifestyle.

"East Lindsay Goes Green is very enjoyable to be part of, it has been great to see participants enjoy themselves as well as learning along the way. The group worked well together and created a good social environment. Over each week people grew in confidence and they made many comments about feeling healthier for being outside and enjoying themselves." Bernice Wilson, Project Coordinator, East Lindsey Goes Green.

Roger Briggs, Reserve manger was responsible for setting the work programme and providing supervision to the participants during the activities.

"It was pleasing the way everyone took on the tasks and worked well together as a team, over the 12 weeks of the programme. Most of the participants are registering as volunteers on the nature reserve. I feel they must have achieved a positive outcome from the green exercise programme by wanting to continue giving their time in a voluntary role. Bernice and I worked well together and felt our enthusiasm rubbed off on the participants. I look forward to our second programme in October". Roger Briggs, Reserve Manager (Education).

4 Discussion

4.1 The findings show that prior to the green exercise programme interventions, the target groups had poor knowledge of local greenspace, in particular; where they could and couldn't go and what sorts of activities were available to them. Knowledge and awareness improved significantly during participants' involvement in the interventions, as did access to local greenspace. This demonstrates the overall success of the programme in enabling hard to reach groups to access greenspaces.

4.2 It is harder to understand the extent to which the programme encouraged access to greenspace post-intervention. The results of phase 2 data collection showed there were no significant differences between what participants did by way of 'outdoor activity' pre-intervention compared to what they did post-intervention. Possible reasons for this could be:

- short-term interventions are unlikely to have significant influence on people's behaviour unless it occurs at a transition point in people's lives when they are more likely to move to different patterns of behaviour: those not embedded in their social and material circumstances and their cultural context (NICE 2007; De Meester et al, 2009).
- problems encountered with the design of the questionnaire and the inconsistencies around administering it may have affected the results.

However, the results seem to directly conflict with what is actually known about some participants' activity from other sources, for example, those who have gone on to do regular conservation volunteering post intervention. Possible reasons for this could be:

- these individuals were offered opportunities for continued access to greenspace post intervention as opposed to those left to their own devices.
- this was a group who had past experience of the natural environment that was reawakened through the green exercise project, therefore inspiring them to access greenspace post intervention.
- confounding factors meant that some groups were more able to access greenspace post intervention than others and therefore may have biased the results.

A longitudinal study would need to be conducted in order to fully understand if there has been a long term change in the behaviour of participants. This study would need to fully explore the diverse nature of the target groups with a particular focus on the confounding factors that may affect individuals access to greenspace post intervention.

4.3 One project, particularly successful in enabling participants to access greenspace post intervention, was the 12 week conservation programme at Saltfleetby-Theddlethorpe NNR. This project provided participants with the opportunity to continue to access greenspace, post intervention, as volunteers of the nature reserve. This approach allows participants to continue to access a familiar green space, in a structured way, with people they feel comfortable around. This appears to be a very successful model, for this particular target group – generally older, retired people, suffering physical/mental ill health. However, it may not suit, or appeal to all, hence the specific needs of target groups and the social context should be taken into account when designing interventions. NICE Public Health Guidance 6 (2007) suggests universal interventions don't always have uniform effects, and may be more effective among some population groups, or in some settings, than others.

4.4 As already mentioned, a range of social benefits can be derived from participation in green exercise interventions, not only to those who participate but also for the wider community. Many of these outcomes can contribute to the government's drive towards the 'big society'. These locally-driven interventions have been effective in bringing local people together, fostering

community cohesion and social capital. Individuals have had the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge and have felt empowered to contribute their newfound knowledge and skills back to their local community through volunteering to create and improve local greenspaces. NICE public health guidance 6 (2007) suggests that enabling individuals and communities to develop more control (or enhancing their perception of control) over their lives can act as a buffer against the effects of disadvantage, facilitating positive behaviour change.

- 4.5 We know that those who access the natural environment tend to be older, affluent, car owning, white and in better health than the general population of England, (Natural England *et al*, 2006). The green exercise programme has demonstrated that these kinds of interventions, if planned and targeted carefully, can help to reduce inequalities associated with accessing greenspace. For example, we know that better health is related to access to greenspace, regardless of socio-economic status (Greenspace Scotland, 2007). The interventions engaged a good variety of 'hard to reach' groups and gave them the knowledge, confidence and opportunity to become more physically active at their local greenspaces, which in turn seems to have had a positive effect on their general health and wellbeing.
- 4.6 The projects were not successful in engaging people from BME communities. As already mentioned, this is perhaps not surprising as these communities are generally a difficult group to engage with. As well as facing the barriers referred to earlier in this report, there are other more complex and ingrained barriers for them to overcome, such as language, culture and faith. One of the difficulties facing the green exercise programme was unrealistic project targets, specifically in relation to the number of different community groups projects were expected to engage with, meaning the time they had available to build relationships was extremely limited. It always takes much longer than anticipated, to build relationships and trust with any hard to reach community and in particular with BME communities. In order to more effectively engage hard to reach groups, the environmental sector needs to work more closely with other relevant organisations, such as, Black Environment Network (BEN) and YMCA, to provide guidance and standards on the best methods of engaging a whole range of community groups in environmental programmes. Best practice in community engagement could then be demonstrated, for example, by working with local partner organisations on Local and National Nature Reserves.
- 4.7 Perhaps one of the most important outcomes of the programme for the environmental sector, is that, as well as providing benefits to local communities and individuals, these kinds of interventions can also benefit the local environment. Through participation in green exercise, particularly those interventions focussed on conservation activity, people have become more aware and interested in their local greenspace. They've started to understand some of the environmental issues and in some cases have gone on (post intervention) to take positive action to help conserve and protect their local greenspaces. However, this has not been the case with all interventions. In some cases people were not particularly interested in getting involved post intervention; others were interested, but didn't have the time and for some it was because there was no route to continued participation. These kinds of programmes need to ensure that they leave a lasting legacy, or at the very least can signpost interested people to other environmental organisations that offer similar opportunities.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 A qualitative evaluation examined participation in the programme of green exercise interventions in order to understand the extent to which the interventions enabled hard to reach groups to access greenspace.
- 5.2 The findings show that overall the projects were successful in enabling a variety of hard to reach groups to access greenspace through the various project interventions. However, whilst there is some evidence to suggest that some participants accessed greenspace outside of the projects and post intervention, it is not clear what long-term impact the programme has had on their behaviour.
- 5.3 The findings also show that accessing local green space and having a positive environmental experience can have a range of knock-on effects including:
- Social benefits for both participants and the wider community, such as; opportunities for learning and development; increased physical activity and improved health and wellbeing; community cohesion and community participation.
 - Environmental benefits for local greenspace, such as improved knowledge and awareness of local environment issues and taking positive action to conserve and improve local greenspaces.

Key messages

- 5.4 Participation in green exercise can:
- Increase people's access to local greenspace, by showing them where they can go and giving them confidence to visit these places independently.
 - Offer people positive experiences of nature that can increase awareness of local environmental issues and encourage people to take positive action for the natural environment through conservation volunteering.
 - Provide opportunities for meeting new people and socialising in an informal and relaxed setting.
 - Enable people to learn and develop new skills and knowledge which can broaden their horizons and are transferrable to home, work and school.
 - Enable people to become more active outdoors and encourage them to try different kinds of physical activities.
 - Help to improve people's physical health and wellbeing.

6 Considerations and Learning points for future interventions

- 6.1 The project officer needs plenty of time at the beginning of the project and prior to delivery, to research the local area and local community. In particular, this time should be spent finding out about the target group that the intervention is focussed on, making links with any organisations already working with them, consulting the target groups about their interests, building relationships and developing and promoting the intervention.
- 6.2 In designing interventions, particular attention should be paid to the needs of the specific community groups the project wishes to engage with. It is also important to take account of the social context, at a local level, of the target group and not make assumptions.
- 6.3 Identify key people in relevant organisations that could help advocate, support and deliver the intervention early on.
- 6.4 Projects should be realistic when setting aims, objectives and targets. Retaining a narrower focus, concentrating on specific target groups and delivering a particular intervention, is more likely to result in success.
- 6.5 In engaging BME groups, first approach local BME organisations. A project officer who speaks the language and understands the culture can be helpful. Do plenty of research and build relationships with community elders.
- 6.6 Ensure that sustainability is a key aim of the interventions. For example, train participants to continue to run activities on a voluntary basis, or offer routes for continued access to green space or signpost people to other relevant opportunities.

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Appendix 1 The Eight Green Exercise Projects

Project: Get Active in Milton Keynes

Region: South east

Host partner: The Parks Trust

Target groups: sedentary population, mental health service users, BME groups, women and girls and those with learning disabilities.

The aim of get active in Milton Keynes was to encourage the sedentary population in the city to become more active in their local green spaces. The project provides a range of activities based within the cities' many parks and green spaces. Activities on offer include, conservation management, food growing and walking. The aim is that participants will develop new skills and self confidence.

Project: 3G Woodland Games

Region: South West

Host Partner: Swindon Borough Council

Target groups: children and young people, in particular those at risk of disaffection and exclusion from school or with learning difficulties; the families of the above; older people.

The 3G Woodland Games project targets three generations of residents living within the great western community Forest boundaries. It aims to increase participation in informal physical activity through accessing local green spaces, parks and woodlands. The project focuses on more alternative sports as a means of keeping active – including ultimate Frisbee, disc golf, rock-it-ball and kite flying.

Project: Youth Outdoor Experience

Region: East of England

Host Partner: Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Target groups: girls aged 13-16; Girls and boys aged 11-18. (particularly those who are inactive and lack confidence and /or social skills)

The Youth Outdoor Experience (YOE) is an outdoor-based, 12 week project for 11-18 year olds based at Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Carlton Marshes nature reserve near Lowestoft. The project gives urban young people a taste of the natural environment by taking part in an alternative learning experience working outdoors as part of a team. Activities include practical tasks, requiring co-operation, trust, concentration and the use of tools as well as adventurous activities such as building shelters and orienteering. The project also runs a graduate scheme which offers those young people who participated in YOE, the chance to come back as volunteers.

Project: East Lindsay Active/East Lindsay Goes Green

Region: East Midlands

Host partner: East Lindsay District Council

Target groups: older people 55s+; children under 16; women 16-24; families ie, grandparents and grandchildren; obese clients with a BMI >30; diabetic groups; mental health clients.

A GP referral programme of healthy walking in and around Mablethorpe and a 12 week conservation programme which existing walkers are invited to join. The programme is based on Saltfleetby - Theddlethorpe NNR. Activities include, for example; beach cleans; path maintenance; orchid counts and construction of nest boxes. The programme enables participants to get physically fit in a beautiful setting whilst directly contributing to the management of the reserve. At the end of the programme participants have the opportunity to become reserve volunteers if they wish.

Project: Walk to Water

Region: West Midlands

Host partner: Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Target groups: individuals and families living on a local estate; people with mental ill-health; teenagers including the local youth club and college; older people; a local community group and volunteers.

The walk to water project is based in an area of deprivation in the Staffordshire Moorlands. It provides one-off events and activity programmes including health walks; conservation and countryside management; outdoor adventure activities for example, den building, night hikes and early morning walks with a focus on the natural habitat. A grant scheme is also available offering up to £200 to encourage people to deliver exercise activities within their own community.

Project: Walk 4 Fun & First Steps to an Active Life

Region: Yorkshire & Humber

Host partner: North Lincolnshire Council

Target groups: year 6 primary school children overweight/obese adults.

Walk 4 Fun is a programme of walks for school children. Working with 30 primary schools in North Lincolnshire the project provides an opportunity for each child to take part in a visit to the natural environment. First Steps to an Active Life is a six week programme offering 1:1 support for overweight/obese adults who lack confidence and who need a little extra help to get them out and walking. The aim is for them to progress to existing Walking groups.

Project: Health on Wheels

Region: North West

Host partner: Cycling projects

Target groups: GP Referral clients; Cardiac Rehabilitation; Adult Mental Health; those with disabilities and differing needs; ethnic community members.

Health on Wheels delivers a number of cycling initiatives to help people start including cycling into their daily routines. These rides aim to build people's confidence, breaking down all the barriers that prevent people cycling more often, such as learning to ride, where to ride, where to cycle, cycle maintenance and road safety. Weekly cycling activities include community cycle rides; beginners cycling / cycle tuition;

disability cycle sessions; controlled cycle programs for specific target groups; mechanics and skills sessions.

Project: Greenways to Health

Region: North East

Host partner: Groundwork NE

Target groups: young people (aged 11-16), identified as physically inactive who live in the top 25% most deprived wards.

Greenways to Health work with youth agencies, schools and social clubs to engage 11-16 year olds from south east Northumberland, who are not normally active, in non-competitive activities and outdoor pursuits. The aim of the project is to provide young people with positive outdoor experiences that: assist them to make valuable connections with the natural environment; encourage awareness and responsibility for their local green spaces; and provide them with fun and adventure based experiences which improve their health and well being.

Tailored programmes of activities include; walking, cycling, sailing, Frisbee, kite making/flying, bird & bat box making and practical conservation techniques.

Appendix 2 Research Partners

Table A Research partners

Project	Research Partner
3G Woodland Games	UWE Richard Akplotsyi and Professor Lamine Mahdjoubi
Get Active in Milton Keynes	A Word in Edgeways
Walk to Water	Sheffield Hallam University Richard Moores
Youth Outdoor Experience	Essex University Dr Jo Barton
East Lindsay Active/goes green	Lincoln University Dr Helen Farrell
First Steps/Walk 4 fun	Sheffield Hallam University Richard Moores
Wheels for All	Sheffield Hallam University Richard Moores
Greenways to Health	Edinburgh University Dr Beth Christie and Professor Pete Higgins

Appendix 3 Consent forms

Adult consent form



Green Exercise Programme Evaluation

Background Information

Natural England recently funded a selection of green exercise projects and is interested in finding out how participants are benefiting from them.

I would like to talk to you about your experiences of the 'Wheels for All' green exercise project.

The information you provide will be used to help us make decisions about future projects and programmes and it will be published in a report about Natural England's Green Exercise programme.

Material gathered during this research will be treated as confidential and securely stored. Please answer each statement concerning the collection and use of the research data.

Consent

I have read and understood the information above Yes No

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time without having to give an explanation Yes No

I agree to the interview being audio-recorded and to its contents being used for research purposes Yes No

I agree to being contacted three months after the end of my involvement with the project and have provided contact details below. Yes No

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

Tel:.....

Signature:.....Date:.....

Learning disabled consent form



Green Exercise Study Consent Form

We work for Natural England and our names are Hazel Hynds and Chris Gordon.

We would like to talk to you about the countryside and the work you have been doing with Julie Webb.

We will take notes about what you say and use a tape recorder so we don't miss anything important.

The information you provide will be used to help us make decisions about future projects and it will be published in a report about Natural England's Green Exercise Programme. We will not name you in any publications we produce.

I would like to take part in the group discussion Yes No

The notes above have been explained to me Yes No

I know what the study is about and how I will be involved Yes No

I agree that my photo can be used in publications about this study Yes No

I know I can decide not to continue at any time Yes No

I agree to take part in another group discussion in 3 months time Yes No

Name:

Signature:

Date:



Thank you!

Example of parental consent form



Greenways to Health Project & Evaluation

Consent form for Parents / Carers of Child Participants

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1) I have read the Information Sheet. | Yes / No |
| 2) I understand that my child does not have to take part in this project or evaluation study. | Yes / No |
| 3) I understand that my child is free to withdraw from the project or evaluation study at any time without having to give a reason. | Yes / No |
| 4) I agree to allow my child to take part in a group discussion about their views and experiences of outdoor activity before the project, during the project, after the project and about the natural environment which will be audio recorded. | Yes / No |
| 5) I agree to my child being contacted by a member of the project and/or evaluation team during or as a follow up to the project and I have provided our contact details in the space below. | Yes / No |
| 6) I consent to still / video photography of my child being taken and used in a promotional context for the project and the evaluation study. | Yes / No |
| 7) I agree to my child taking part in this project. | Yes / No |

Signature

Name (Block capitals)

Name of Child

Address:

.....

Postcode:

Tel:

Example of information sheet for parents



Greenways to Health: Information Sheet for Parents / Carers

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Groundwork Northumberland “Greenways to Health” project is part of a national programme of Green Exercise projects funded by Natural England. The project is working in partnership with the Primary Care Trust, local District Councils and the Local Education Authority to increase Green Exercise opportunities and provision for young people. Your child’s school is supporting the programme by encouraging its pupils to become regularly more active and by promoting the positive health message associated with increased levels of Green Exercise.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF MY CHILD TAKES PART?

Your child may be invited to participate in a range of Green Exercise activities that the project delivers. It will provide an opportunity to enjoy exercise, meet new friends and have fun. As parents / carers, you will be asked to consent to your child’s involvement in the project activities. Key aspects relating to health and safety, child protection and insurance can be discussed with the project co-ordinator before consent to participate in any project programme is given. Further references and extended documentation relating to all health and safety, child protection and insurance cover policies are available on request.

EVALUATION

The Greenways to Health project also has an evaluative component to it. As part of a group discussion, (which will be audio recorded,) your child will be asked about their experiences of outdoor activity before the project, during the project and what they think they might do in the future when they are no longer involved with the project. We are also interested in hearing about their views and experiences of the natural environment. As part of this study we would also like to contact your child 3 months after the end of their involvement with the project to find out whether their attitudes and behaviour in relation to the natural environment and outdoor activity have changed.

The information we collect will be treated as confidential and securely stored. It will be used to help us make decisions about future projects and programmes and it will be published in a report about Natural England’s Green Exercise programme. We will not name or identify individuals in any publications we produce.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you want to know more about this project and/or evaluation, you can contact: Stephen Matthews Greenways to Health Project Co-ordinator Tel. 01670 514876, or Hazel Hynds Green Exercise Programme Evaluation Lead Tel. 0300 060 0843

Appendix 4 Topic guides

Focus group topic guide – learning disabled participants



Table B Focus group topic guide – learning disabled participants

Moderator Intro 13:00 5 mins HH	<u>Welcome</u> Who we are Thank you Interested in the work with Julie Webb/views about countryside Tape recorded Consent forms Name badges
Introductions 13:05 10/15 mins CG	<u>Ice breaker game</u> Think of an animal – arrange yourselves by height!
Experiences of the activities they have been doing with Julie 13:20 20/30 mins CG	<u>Sad face/smiley face – opposite sides of the room</u> Ask group to indicate whether they like/dislike the activities they've been doing with Julie by going to the relevant face. Explore why they like/dislike the activities Ask how they felt the first time that they worked with Julie/how they feel now Ask how they feel after they've done an activity Ask if they have done these types of activities before
13:50	BREAK (20 mins)
Views about nature/countryside and barriers 14:10 30 mins HH	<u>Nature photos – post-it voting on best and worst</u> Ask the group to look at the photos of outdoor places – rate using coloured post-its which they like best and which they don't like Ask group why they like/don't like – get them to write how they make them feel on post-its or shout out key words – explore why Ask group what their favourite outdoor places are and why – work in pairs Ask group how often they get to these places and what stops them going to good places near where they live – work in pairs
The future 14:40 20 mins HH	<u>Closing question</u> Ask group what they might do when Julie is not working with them anymore?

Semi-structured interview topic guide – adult participants

Green Exercise



Introduction

- explain evaluation and NE's role
- how long interview will take
- recording equipment
- address issues around confidentiality
- consent form including permission to follow up

Experiences before project

- 1) Before you joined the project did you exercise/visit outdoors? (if necessary probe to find out what type of exercise what type of places).
- 2) What were the main barriers that prevented you from exercising/visiting outdoors (more often)?
- 3) How would you describe your general health and wellbeing before you got involved in this project?

Experience of project

- 4) How did you hear about the project/get involved?
- 5) What were your reasons for getting involved? What was it about the project that appealed to you?
- 6) How were you involved in the project? Probe around how often, types of activity undertaken, over what period.
- 7) What aspects of the project did you enjoy? And what did you not enjoy?
- 8) Is there anything that could have been improved or done differently?
- 9) What kind of effect do you feel the project has had on your general wellbeing? How have you felt after an activity?
- 10) If this project had not existed how likely is it you would have been involved in a similar programme or done something similar of your own accord?

Intentions after project

- 11) After the project has ended how likely to do you think it is that you will continue to do xx? If not likely why is this? Would you be likely to do something similar instead?
- 12) Is there anything else you would like to add about the project?

Focus group topic guide – teenagers

Table C Focus group topic guide – teenagers

Time	Subject	Tasks & time	How
1310	Introduction	Introduction to the day (Lorna).	
1315 HH	Activities, hobbies and interests prior to joining YOE programme	<p>Thinking back to before involvement before YOE.</p> <p>We want to find out about the sorts of things (activities, hobbies, interests) you did in your spare time (after school, weekends, holidays), where you went and what you liked to do there.</p> <p>Working quickly, try not to think too much. Use pens to draw, write, doodle. Can use rubber if want to change. If have done a picture or doodle, please put a word or two next to it to explain what it means.</p>	<p>Graffiti Wall (put title to explain what to put on it).</p> <p>4 large laminated sheets to be pinned up.</p> <p>Drawing and writing followed.</p>
1345 CA	Experience of YOE – likes and dislikes	<p>Bring back to sitting in a circle.</p> <p>We will show you a board of photos showing the types of activities you have been doing and the types of places you have been to as part of the YOE project.</p> <p>We want you to look at the photos and as a group, choose and agree up to 5 you especially like, and up to 5 you don't like so much.</p> <p>Please discuss, debate and try and agree. Try to make sure everyone gets to say what they want to. Then when you've agreed, pin the photos to the 'likes' and 'not like so much' boards.</p>	<p>Photo Board.</p> <p>Photo board display of photos depicting activities and places.</p> <p>Blank boards for pinning up selected photos and then writing likes and dislikes.</p> <p>Explaining (spokespeople) and recording.</p>
1410 HH		<p>Once completed: can you now give each photo a short title, and write a few words around the photos to indicate why you like/don't like them.</p> <p>Now can you agree a spokesperson for the likes, and one for the dislikes, and could you tell us about what you've chosen and why (Plan B if that doesn't work out: ask anyone to shout out any comments about why they like/don't like the photos).</p>	<p>Photograph the boards themselves.</p> <p>Record the discussion and the explanations.</p>

Table continued...

Time	Subject	Tasks & time	How
1420	Short break (if needed)	Activity ideas: bat/moth; stick in the mud; flock; arm floating.	
1425 HH	Aspirations after the end of YOE	<p>Back in a circle. Thanks for efforts so far, this is last activity.</p> <p>I want you to close your eyes and relax, lie down.</p> <p>Thinking again about spare time interests, hobbies and activities like we talked about in the first activity, but now looking ahead from now on. Think about the sorts of places you might like to go, and the sorts of things you might like to do there.</p> <p>Imagine what you can see in the place, what you can hear, smell. What is the temperature? What is the weather? Imagine yourself there in that place.</p> <p>Now imagine the activities you are doing in that place.</p> <p>Now open your eyes and sit up again. Holding on to all those thoughts you've been having, we want you to create your ideal space and what you'd be doing there.</p>	<p>"Gestalt room".</p> <p>Quiet thinking time.</p> <p>Individuals offered selection of art materials to create their pictures/sculptures/other.</p> <p>Individuals explain –we audio record (go round while they are working).</p> <p>Questions: What's your place/what it's like? What will you be doing there?</p> <p>Photograph creations (ensure have name on the photo).</p>
1435 CA		<p>Lots of different materials here –spread out and find a space. You can use any of these things to draw, paint, glue, cut, model, sculpture or another way, writing or poetry – <u>however you like</u>. There is plain paper if you wish to rough out/plan.</p> <p>At the end we'd like to see and photograph what you've created. But don't worry if you're not completely finished by the end of our time today.</p>	
1520 CA	Wrap up	Thank you and presents	

Have music playing throughout, except during quiet thinking time

Semi-Structure Interview Topic guide – project coordinators

Green Exercise



- 1) What has the experience of being a GE project coordinator been like?
 - Biggest challenges
 - Best things
 - Worst things
- 2) Home in on specific evaluation interest
 - How do you think the x project has gone?
 - How have participants benefitted (examples)
 - Access to green space through project
 - Access to green space outside led activities (examples)
- 3) Set-up of the project
 - Natural England input national and regional
 - Managed by partner organisation
 - Network meetings
 - Steering group
- 4) Evaluation
 - How has the evaluation been – individual/overall
 - Enough guidance/advice provided?
- 5) Anything you would change/do differently

Focus group topic guide – teenagers suffering substance misuse

Green Exercise

NATURAL
ENGLAND

Table D Focus group topic guide – teenagers suffering substance misuse

Time	Subject
10:00 – 10:30 RH	Slide show to music that displayed photos of the boys undertaking the whole variety of John Muir Award (JMA) activities to help stimulate their memory.
Short Break	
10:40 – 11:30 RH, CG, CA & HH	Evaluation of the JMA activities through JMA diary work, photos, sketches and comments (opportunity for one to one discussion with individuals)
Short Break	
11:40 – 12:30 RH & CG	Q&A session. Ask group specific questions about their experience of JMA and record on flip chart: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What have you really enjoyed about the John Muir Award and why?• What haven't you enjoyed so much and why??• What would you like to have done more of??• What would you like to have done less of??• What was your favourite place you visited with the Award??• Have you visited any of the places on your own??

Focus Group/informal discussions topic guide – learning disabled participants

Green Exercise



Table E Focus Group/informal discussions topic guide – learning disabled participants

Time	Task
Morning session 09:30 – 12:00 CG/HH	<p>Litter picking – Willen Lake</p> <p>Opportunity to have informal discussions with individuals to find out what they have been doing by way of outdoor activity since we last spoke to them</p> <p>Possible conversation openers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you do at the weekend • Weather – isn't it nice/awful • Any plans for this weekend • What did you do at Easter/did you get out/where • What do you think of this place
Break for Lunch	
Afternoon session 13:00 – 14:00 CG/HH	<p>Slide show 1:</p> <p>Show group photos of themselves doing various green exercise activities, as warm up/to get their attention and prompt discussion</p> <p>Slide show 2:</p> <p>Show group photos of people doing various activities and ask them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tell us what they think the people in the images are doing (if no response we will clearly describe ie, walking in the park, playing games outside, watching tv etc) • tell us if they do these sorts of things in their spare time/at the weekend, no or yes – raise hand/shout out • tell us if they would like to do these types of things in their spare time/at the weekend, no or yes – raise hand/shout out (this last one will be dependent on how we think the session is going ie are the group tiring of the session.

Table continued...

Time	Task
Morning session 09:30 – 12:00 CG/HH	<p>Litter picking – Linford Wood</p> <p>Opportunity to have informal discussions with individuals to find out what they have been doing by way of outdoor activity since we last spoke to them</p> <p>possible conversation openers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you like it here? • What are your favourite outdoor places? • What do you think of litter picking? • Do you do anything like this in your spare time? • Any plans for the weekend? • What did you do last weekend? • The weather's lovely isn't it, have you been out enjoying the weather...? • Isn't the weather awful, do you find it stops you going out...? • What did you do over summer, did you have a chance to get out? Where did you go? Holidays? • Autumn is here now...what do you think about it?
Break for Lunch	
Afternoon session 14:00 – 15:00 CG/HH	<p>Show the group photos of themselves doing all the various activities they've been involved with through green exercise.</p> <p>Ask the following questions for each slide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you remember what you're doing here? Activity/place • (If no response explain activity and place) • What do you think of this activity? • What did you like? • What did you dislike? • Do you do anything like this in your own time?

Appendix 5 Planning/fieldwork notes

Get Active in Milton Keynes: Weekly conservation programme with learning disabled users

Background Information

ECCO Team

ECCO stands for Exploring Choice Creating Opportunity and is run by Milton Keynes council. ECCO works with people with disabilities: They take referrals and review people to see what skills they need; support people to build on their skills and move forward using a range of opportunities and learning experiences and enable people to explore what they would like to do and which areas they need to develop to achieve their long term goals.

ECCO group profile

The group currently comprises 7 core service users (6 male/1 female); however the number who attend varies week to week. The group is led by Debbie Kelly, community access worker for ECCO team and support workers as appropriate. The service users are of mixed ability, some require 1-1 support and others are so able that they travel and live independently.

Get Active in Milton Keynes Green Exercise Project

Julie Webb is the project coordinator for Get Active in Milton Keynes, based at the Parks Trust, and has been involved with the ECCO group for the last 5-6 months. The ECCO group were already working with the Parks Trust every Friday litter picking. Since Julie has been working with the group they have been getting involved with other activities such as:

- Gardening in the walled garden at Bradwell Abbey (weeding etc);
- Gardening around the site at Bradwell Abbey – fixing fences, pruning buddleia, digging over flower beds, removing the Elder from flower beds;
- Apple picking at Woughton on the Green Orchard;
- Walking to Walton Lake; and
- Acorn collecting at Howe Park Wood and Linford Wood.

The group were really pleased that Natural England were taking an interest in what they were doing and they were keen to talk to us.

Focus Group 1

7 November 2008, Bradwell Abbey

What we did

Green Exercise Activity

During the morning we joined the group to plant a spiral of narcissus and daffodils and move manure at Bradwell Abbey. This was to get to know the group in an informal relaxed environment and to observe them to get a better understanding of their capability. The group accepted us really quickly and were incredibly welcoming. Chris also took lots of photos of the group which they really seemed to enjoy. We had arranged a special 'Pizza' lunch as a thank you for taking part in the focus group which everyone seemed thrilled about and really enjoyed.

Focus Group

The aim of the focus group was to find out:

- the groups experiences of the activities they'd been doing with Julie;
- what they like/disliked;
- how they felt after an activity;
- if they'd done anything similar before;
- what they thought of the countryside/green spaces;
- how often they visited local green space; and
- barriers to accessing green space in/around Milton Keynes.

The session was planned to run for 2 hours and the format was as follows:

Introduction

We began with a few minutes of Tai Chi to energise everyone, followed by a short introduction to explain why we were there, what we wanted to find out, the consent forms and that we would be audio recording the session. Chris, myself and the support workers explained the consent forms again individually to those that needed some extra help and they were all signed.

Ice breaker games

We asked everyone to think of an animal, make the noise and to arrange themselves by height. This seemed quite challenging for people and didn't go exactly to plan! We decided to scrap the second game we had planned (think of a fictional character that's most like you and tell rest of the group why you're like them) as we thought it might be too difficult.

Sad/smiley face scale

The aim was to capture information about the group's experiences of the activities they had been doing with Julie. A sad face was placed at one end of the room and a smiley face at the other. The group were asked to use this as a scale and to stand somewhere along it to indicate how much they liked or disliked the activities they had been doing with Julie. We then explored further to find out what activities the group particularly liked, why, how they made them feel and whether they'd done similar things before.

Nature photos best and worst

The aim of the second session was to find out what the group thought about the countryside. We showed the group a selection of images of formal green space, boring urban green space and very wild/natural green space. We then asked them (in small groups – a support worker in each) to use a

pink post-it if they liked the image, green if they disliked the image and write down words/phrases which described how each of the images made them feel/or what they particularly liked/disliked about the images. We then explored these comments further with different group members.

Favourite places

We then asked the group (working in smaller groups again) to think about the green places they liked going to in, around, near Milton Keynes; how often they went to them and anything that stopped them from going there.

The Future

We had intended to ask the group what they thought they might do by way of outdoor activities when Julie was no longer with them, but we decided against for 2 reasons: 1) we felt that the group might find it challenging to think that far ahead and 2) because we thought that the group were flagging a bit and had probably had enough.

We ended the session by thanking the group with some chocolates and asking them to rate on the smileogram whether they had enjoyed the day – and they all indicated that they had.

Reflections and Conclusions

What went well:

- taking part in the morning activity/getting to know group;
- tai chi as ice breaker/energiser;
- a lot of useful data was gathered;
- the group seemed to really enjoy it; and
- pizza lunch and chocolates as thank you.

What didn't go so well:

- exploring further the answers that the group gave – they seemed to find it hard to explain the reasons behind some of their answers particularly in relation to talking about feelings;
- Chris and I both ended up asking a lot of leading questions when we felt the group were struggling in understanding what we were asking of them; and
- They seemed to find it hard to answer questions about the past ie, what they had done before.

Lessons learnt:

- try to have a pre-visit with the group in question – big help in planning focus group;
- don't try to do so much;
- keep it simple; and
- make the session shorter – no more than 1 hour.

Initial thoughts on key themes:

- social aspects – making friends, having fun seemed to come out very strongly;
- memories – the images we showed seemed to remind many of the group members of happy time ie, holidays; and
- people generally liked being outdoors, in particular for the scenery/nice views.

Pre-visit with ECCO group (for focus group 2)

Bradwell Abbey, 3 April 2009

Observations

Turnover of group – there were several new faces and a few old faces absent; 3 new, 3 missing. Dynamic still good, friendly joking – good social interaction.

All members of the group we had previously met remembered us and that we were from Natural England and we were greeted warmly.

Debbie mentioned that some of them are active outdoors outside of the led volunteering activities with Parks Trust and that at least one Tony has employment litter picking at a pub which has resulted from his volunteering with Parks Trust.

Reasonable amount of practical work being achieved by the group and results of what we did last time (daffodil spiral) – good reactions from the group to it.

Difference in one group member's behaviour – much less concerned about getting muddy more interested and focussed on the task which happened to be gardening that day.

Two different support workers this time.

Plan for focus group 2

Chris and I chatted with Debbie about what we might do for the formal evaluation session on 24 April. We explained that this time we were trying to find out what individual group members had been doing by way of outdoor activity, outside Parks Trust led activities, since we last saw them. We agreed that in the morning we would get involved with the group activity and that we would take half of the group each and chat to them individually whilst they were distracted by the task (litter picking at Parks Trust site) in order to find out the answer to our question. We agreed that we would have to be careful as to how we framed the questions and consider asking them from different angles. Debbie made us aware that one of the new members of the group, that we hadn't met before had challenging behaviour and did not respond well to too many questions so we would have to be careful in how we approached this individual.

We came up with the following ideas for conversation openers/questions:

- Any plans for the weekend?
- What did you do last weekend?
- Weather related questions – isn't it nice, have you been enjoying the weather? Or isn't it awful?
- Easter – what did you do at Easter, where did you go, did you have a chance to get out?
- What do you think of this place?

We know that some individuals have particular interests which might work as an opener:

- bike rides;
- flowers, scenery; and
- litter picking.

We agreed that we would break for a pizza lunch and then show the group a slide show of photos we'd taken of them – and see if any interesting comments or discussion came out.

In order to supplement the information we gather from the group in the morning Chris and I decided that it would be a good idea to have a short evaluation session after the slide show, however we decided to make this session much shorter, about 30 mins. This session would involve showing the group a set of

around 10 -15 images of people involved in both outdoor and indoor activity and for each image ask the group to:

- tell us what they think the people in the images are doing (if no response we will clearly describe ie, walking in the park, playing games outside, watching tv etc).
- tell us if they do these sorts of things in their spare time/at the weekend, no or yes – raise hand/shout out.
- tell us if they would like to do these types of things in their spare time/at the weekend, no or yes – raise hand/shout out (this last one will be dependent on how we think the session is going ie, are the group tiring of the session).

Photos session

We came up with the following suggestions for types of photos we might include:

- a small group of people walking (say 2 or three) in a nice green space;
- people shopping in a town/mall/urban setting;
- small group doing some kind of practical outdoor activity ie, cutting trees, scrub clearance;
- small group doing some kind of gardening/allotment jobs/digging etc;
- fishing – solitary/feeding ducks? Lake;
- outdoor games – Frisbee, football, kite flying, playing football, cricket, rounders etc;
- cycling – green space;
- Indoor watching tv;
- indoors – playing computer games;
- meeting socially – pub or café;
- visiting farm; and
- people looking at wildlife etc.

Discussion with Debbie and/or support workers

We agreed that at some point it would be useful to have an informal discussion with Debbie and/or some of the other support workers to get her take on how/whether the group has benefitted from their involvement with green exercise.

Possible questions:

- What has happened to the members of the group that don't go anymore? Do they go to other similar projects now – what is the reason – is it to do with the project...?
- More background about ECCO.
- Any noticeable changes in behaviour with group.
- What they do in their spare time in relation to outdoor activities.
- More about employment in green activities.
- How do they benefit from the work with Parks Trust.

Focus group 2

24 April 2009, Willen Lake and Parks Trust Offices

Who came: nine service users came plus 6 key support workers.

NB: We were unable to use information gained from 2 of the service users as one did not complete a consent form and the other just wanted to sit and listen but didn't want to be involved in the evaluation.

Informal chats – morning session.

Service user 1

Likes to cycle along the Red Way, he likes to go somewhere – it's 20 mins to Costa.

He likes to see trees with blossom.

Goes out most weekends on his bike for about 20 mins.

Loves to see pictures of the outdoors – particularly liked a snowy picture of the Lake (Willen Lake?) that is in the Park Trust Offices foyer.

He would like to do more cycling but finds that he doesn't have the time – going to college gets in the way so really has only evenings and weekends.

He likes to cycle with his dad to Caldecotte lake where they cycle and have a picnic, he only really likes to cycle in the good weather.

Service user 2

Doesn't like the litter picking.

Too much walking – he already does a lot of walking and has walked around Willen Lake/Parks Trust Grounds before.

Service user 3

Goes to the lake lots, will go this weekend if it's not raining with friends.

Likes Willen Lakes also goes to Caldecotte lakes with his friends and walks all around it.

When we were walking around Willen Lake he told me he loved to see the blue sky and swans flying –he thinks it's nice.

Enjoys going to Bradwell Abbey and prefers this to the litter picking.

Service user 4

Went round Furze Lake on Wednesday and would go again.

Service user 5

Spends most of his spare time in the house watching TV.

His interests are history and museums.

He thinks that litter picking and Willen Lake are ok.

He became really animated when describing his sisters (?) house in New Zealand in particular the scenery from her back garden which overlooked mountains.

Service user 6

Spoke about watching a squirrel chasing a blackbird off to get bread – and mentioned watching them feeding in winter – very enthusiastic about this.

Slide show – afternoon session

This went really well group were particularly excited about seeing the photos of themselves and they were also very positive and very engaged in the second slide show we used to ask them about the sorts of activities they enjoyed in their spare time.

We agreed that this method worked really well and prompted lots of discussion, however, if we were to do this again we would:

- Go through the slide show a bit slower – to give the group time to process the image they are seeing, agree on what is happening in the image and answer the questions;
- Make sure that we highlight the difference between the questions – the “do you do this in your spare time” and “would you like to do this in your spare” by Chris asking the first one and me asking the second one;
- We thought we would reword the image we had been describing at “socialising with friends” to “meeting with friends”; and,
- We also wondered whether we could feed in the question around what people think/like about the environment.

Focus Group pre-visit (for focus group 3)

Woughton on the Green Orchard 2 October 2009

Observations

We met the group at a community orchard in Milton Keynes to take part in apple-picking. This task seemed to be a real favourite with the group, who really enjoyed using the apple-picking poles and baskets. The groups were allowed to take home what they picked and they spoke very enthusiastically about making apple pies and crumbles!

Again the group reacted really positively to our presence, seemed genuinely glad to see us and wanted to know what we'd be doing/talking about in the next focus group. Still great dynamic amongst the users and perhaps most interesting was the number of users that were now attending the conservation group. There were around 20 service users there, so more than double the size it had been on our very first visit.

Plan for focus group 3

This was to be the final session with the learning disability group. We decided to keep it simple and agreed that as normal we would take part in the morning activity, which was litter picking at Linford Wood, have lunch and then run the focus group in the afternoon. We decided that the informal chats worked well last time, so again we would come up with a list of guide questions to ask services users during the morning session. We wanted to show the group photos again as this technique had worked well previously. This time, however, we decided to stick to photos of them doing conservation group activities and ask them some specific questions about each photo.

Informal chats – guide questions/conversation openers:

- Do you like it here?
- What are your favourite outdoor places?
- What do you think of litter picking?
- Do you do anything like this in your spare time?
- Any plans for the weekend?
- What did you do last weekend?
- The weather's lovely isn't it, have you been out enjoying the weather...?
- Isn't the weather awful, do you find it stops you going out...?
- What did you do over summer, did you have a chance to get out? Where did you go? Holidays?
- Autumn is here now...what do you think about it?

Photo session

- Apple picking in the community orchard.
- Weeding the walled garden at Bradwell Abbey.
- Shifting manure at Bradwell Abbey.
- Linford wood – acorn picking.
- Bulb planting at Bradwell Abbey.
- Litter picking at Willen Lake.

Go through each photo slowly and for each one ask the following questions:

- Do you remember what you're doing here? Activity/place. (If no response explain activity and place)

- What do you think of this activity?
- What did you like?
- What did you dislike?
- Do you do anything like this in your own time?

Questions for Debbie/key workers:

- Have you or your colleagues noticed any differences in behaviour of ECCO group members since they have been working with Debbie and doing different/more varied tasks?
- Do you know what the group members do in their spare time?
- Do they go back and visit any of the places with family/friends/support workers at any other time of the week?
- Have they shown any interest in nature/environment since working with Debbie?

Focus Group 3

23 October 2009, Linford Wood

Who came: 10 service users, 8 male, 2 female

Informal chats

Morning session went really well, the group were really into the litter picking activity and were very responsive to questions.

We found that several service users had been going back to the parks with their friends and family to show them round and explain what they did on a Friday.

A service user who was previously nervous about cycling around Linford Wood because the paths were narrow observed a cyclist whilst we were litter picking and told me that now he'd seen someone else doing it he was going to come here on his bike.

One particular service user explained that he was really interested in wildlife, loved coming out on a Friday and was desperate to join other similar groups and do more volunteering or even better, get a job working in this area.

Discussions with key workers

Discussions with Debbie and other key workers revealed that the Friday conservation group was rapidly growing, with more and more service users wanting to come out. They had more than enough interest to actually run the session on more than one day, but sadly not the staff time. Debbie also explained how much service users enjoyed this project. It is the only proper outdoor exercise they really do and that for many it's the only time they get out of the house and fresh air all week. Debbie felt that litter picking was one of the groups' favourite tasks because it's tangible and makes them feel like they are contributing to the community.

Slide show session

This went well, the group really enjoyed seeing photos of themselves so it prompted lots laughs as well as lots of discussion about all the different activities that they'd done and the places they'd been to.

NB: All 3 focus group sessions were recorded and transcribed

Greenways to Health: 6 weeks John Muir Award programme as part of Alternative Curriculum for young people suffering substance misuse

Background

Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project (CVYP)

The aim of CVYP is to offer a range of opportunities that can further the social and personal development of young people up to the age of 19 who live in Cramlington, Northumberland. CVYP is run by the Project Coordinator, Rob Hall, supported by 17 staff and 20 volunteers.

CVYP objectives are to:

- Actively listen to young peoples' needs and offer guidance, support and advice in all aspects of life;
- Encourage young people to adopt a positive mental attitude in order to pursue and enjoy new experiences and be successful in gaining new skills for their future;
- Enable young people to have an active input into the direction CVYP takes, to offer them an invaluable insight into the meaning of responsibility; and
- Empower, encourage and support young people to pursue accreditation through specific projects or learning schemes and emphasis the benefits of citizenship within our community.

Young people are identified and assessed by Cramlington High School for referral to CVYP's alternative curriculum programme. Prior to the placement, coordinators from both agencies liaise and discuss the service level agreement.

Profile of group

This particular group of young people consists of 6 boys aged 14 who are on an alternative curriculum programme run by CVYP.

- The boys tend to have issues with 'instruction' and a limited attention span, are unable to focus at school and often display violent behaviour.
- All boys in the group use drugs (class B mainly), drink alcohol and smoke.
- The boys are generally from single parent families or live with other relatives, and there is often a history of substance misuse within the family.
- Some in the group have been involved in criminal activity.
- The boys' school has been unable to deal with them, therefore they have been excluded and CVYP is the last resort for them.

Teenagers are generally classed as a 'hard to reach' group and are a particular target for Natural England in relation to increasing people's access to, and enjoyment of, the natural environment. However, this particular group of teenagers are even more 'hard to reach' because of their particular set of circumstances, including their substance misuse and behavioural problems. It is a significant challenge just to secure their participation in the programme, as this involves overcoming a number of obstacles, not least making the effort required to turn up at the centre prepared for the day. Engaging in conversation with any of the boys is very difficult for anyone who hasn't spent a considerable time alongside them. Getting to know them and earning their trust requires well-developed skills in working with young people with these sorts of problems. Therefore, getting the group to work together and engaging them in regular outdoor activity, with a view to developing their appreciation of the natural environment is a huge challenge.

Alternative Curriculum Programme

CVYP have designed an alternative curriculum programme which consists of three strands:

- 1) Open College Network (OCN) – based around developing life skills, improving literacy and numeracy and opportunities for work experience.
- 2) Duke of Edinburgh Award (DoE) – focus is on practical skills, fitness and expedition in relation to mountain biking.
- 3) John Muir Award (JMA) – focus is on discovery, exploration and conservation of local green space in Northumberland.

Greenways to Health Project involvement

Stephen Matthews, Greenways to Health Project Officer, heard about CVYP's Alternative Curriculum Programme during a meeting with the Outdoor Education Officer at Northumberland County Council. Stephen made contact with Rob Hall at CVYP to see how Greenways to Health and CVYP could link up. Rob explained that he had been delivering the JMA but that it had been limited to conservation activity within the grounds of CVYP through creating a garden, and he was keen to develop it further in order to align it more closely with the existing DoE award.

Stephen worked with CVYP to design and deliver a John Muir Award to complement the rest of their alternative curriculum programme, in particular the DoE element of the programme. Before Stephen got involved with this group, their interest in the outdoors was limited to mountain biking through DoE. Stephen developed a 6 week programme, which, in addition to cycling, also included conservation challenges, bush craft and orienteering in and around various greenspaces in Northumberland. All the boys involved achieved the JMA at the end of the programme. His involvement has helped CVYP to make links with relevant conservation partners ie, Northumberland Wildlife Trust so they can continue to run the JMA with other young people. Stephen intends to deliver JMA to other groups, such as Cramlington High School, in the future.

Evaluation – what we did

Pre- visit

We arranged to have an informal pre-visit with the group on 24 February in order to get to know them and get a feel for what would be possible in relation to running some kind of focus group session.

We took part in a John Muir award conservation activity with the group at Druridge Bay, which involved dismantling a bird hide on a Wildlife Trust site to enable a new one to be erected. The task went really well and the boys were focussed on completing it, however we found it very difficult to interact with them. After 2 hours working alongside them we still had not made any real progress. We were concerned about how we would get them to engage in a focus group session and decided it would be most productive to let Rob Hall lead the session.

Planning the Focus Group session

Prior to the focus group session, we met with Rob Hall to discuss and agree how to run it, how we could get involved and to ensure we could get the answers to the questions we were particularly interested in. Rob didn't want us to audio record the session as he felt it was too soon to put this sort of pressure on the boys and that it could prevent them from talking freely, so we would need to take notes.

Rob suggested the following plan for the session:

Focus group plan

10:00 – 10:30 Slide show to music that displayed photos of the boys undertaking the whole variety of JMA activities to help stimulate their memory.

10:40 – 11:30 Evaluation of the JMA activities through JMA diary work, photos, sketches and comments.

11:40 – 12:30 Q&A session – group were asked specific questions about their experience of the JMA by Rob and his colleague, Claire Gascoigne and this was recorded on a flip chart.

Effect of JMA on boys from Project Coordinator's Perspective

We asked Rob to tell us what impact he thought the JMA had had on the boys. He felt that the JMA had definitely made a difference to the boys' behaviour, his measures were:

- They turn up.
- They come prepared ie, packed lunch.
- They "listen" ie, when a task is being explained to them.
- They are interested.
- They motivate each other.
- Some of them are beginning to show leadership.
- 2 of the boys are considering going back to mainstream education part-time.

He believes that the key things that make it work are:

- The type of activity – it's interesting and outdoors.
- It's meaningful/tangible – there is an end product they can see.
- Working in a group.

He thinks that the group are definitely more aware of the environment and their impact on it, for example, they pick up their rubbish now, although it has been slow progress. It's important to remember that the boys were completely disengaged when they started the alternative curriculum programme, so it's been a long journey and a very gradual process for them to get to the point they are at now.

Reflections and conclusions

What went well about the evaluation approach:

- Helping the group write in their diaries/sketch pictures etc about their experiences of the JMA – enabled us to engage and chat with them more.
- The pre-visit – whilst it was disappointing to not be able to engage with the boys, had we not taken this approach we wouldn't have appreciated the issues and realised we needed Rob's help to successfully run the evaluation session.

What didn't go so well:

- Not being able to record the session, it was hard to capture everything through taking notes.

Lessons learnt about evaluation approach:

- To engage with this kind of group, it is necessary to develop a relationship with them over a long period of time, it isn't possible to expect to have an instant rapport and that questions will simply be answered.
- The need to develop a focussed/structured plan for note taking during evaluation session, if audio recording is not possible.

Initial thoughts on key themes emerging from evaluation session in particular the JMA diary work and the Q&A session.

Boys seemed to most enjoy:

- The 'challenge';
"...when we went to Seghil it was just a bit of fun but it was also a bit chalinging..."
- Sense of achievement;
"...we made the shelter out of logs, string and leaves it was really good over nye camp..."
- Learning and developing outdoor skills;
"...Alex told and showed us how to cut a tree down properly and witch ones to cut down...this is a skill and i will never forget!..."
- Visiting/seeing new places;
"...Mountan bikeing helps me keep fit and its better than walking and we can see more or the forest..."

Key learning points about the project:

- A combination of factors is the key to success with the alternative curriculum programme, such as: having the right youth worker to drive it forward and motivate the group; good facilities; good contacts; funding; the different aspects of DoE, OCN and JMA complement each other well.
- The key to working with this sort of group is to make links with existing organisations who are already engaged with them, which is exactly what Stephen did. It would not have been possible to engage with these boys, deliver the JMA and get results within 6 weeks otherwise.
- Stephen's input to the programme has provided Rob with new contacts in local conservation organisations, along with a vision of what can be delivered, so that he can enhance the programme of JMA activities as part of the Alternative Curriculum Programme at CVYP.

Youth Outdoor Experience: 12 week outdoor adventure programme for teenagers

Background

The Youth Outdoor Experience (YOE) project is based at Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Carlton Marshes reserve in Lowestoft. The project targets young people, particularly those who are physically inactive, within Lowestoft and Waveney, Suffolk. The aim of the project is to inspire young people to get interested in the environment to benefit their wellbeing and to build self-esteem, confidence and learn practical and social skills.

One of the schools that the project has been working with is Kirkley Community High School, Lowestoft which is a mixed comprehensive with around 1,315 pupils aged 13 to 18.

The area in which the school is located has been designated an urban priority for development owing to social and economic deprivation, and many pupils are affected by a high level of disadvantage. The vast majority of pupils are white and only a couple come from homes where English is not the first language. Pupils' attainment on entry to year 7 is below the national average. The school has a unit for pupils with special educational needs, most of whom have moderate learning difficulties.

David Banks is a Cover Supervisor at Kirkleys. He also looks after the school garden and runs the garden club on a Saturday morning. David has been working hard to broaden the curriculum at Kirkley to include an environmental component, and as a result of his efforts the school now has a new diploma "Construction and Land base". Details about the YOE project were passed on to him from his head of House, Kath Smith, because of his work with the school garden and keen interest in the natural environment.

Youth Outdoor Experience

The project is hosted by Suffolk Wildlife Trust and based at the Carlton Marsh reserve. A variety of local green spaces are used in the project including parks, woodlands, the beach and other Wildlife Trust reserves in the hope that the youngsters who participate will be motivated to maintain their interest in nature and have easy access to green space once they've completed the 12 week programme.

The project is designed to develop key social skills such as team work and decision making. The young people are encouraged to become involved in taking responsibility for decisions about the direction of the project and the planning of future activities such as scrub-bashing, coppicing, environmental art and outdoor cooking.

At the end of the programme each participant receives a certificate summarising the skills they have learned, as part of a celebratory event. They then have the opportunity to join the WildlifeTrust's web group and volunteer with the Wildlife Trust.

Selection of YOE project participants

The YOE project targets young people aged 11-18 with existing or potential health issues, who are not physically active and may also be underachieving at school.

Kirkley High select students from year 9 as they have a free period to pursue a non-curriculum activity or interest. Priority is given to students that lack confidence and social skills, those who do not go to green spaces and are generally inactive and those who are genuinely interested in nature.

Profile of YOE participants

Planning

We met with Lorna Kerrison, YOE Project Officer, to identify a suitable group and discuss our plans for the evaluation session. We had originally hoped to work with a group of boys with Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD). However, this was not possible due to the ill-health of their key worker. Lorna suggested the Kirkley High School group as an alternative option.

Lorna was keen that we do the evaluation session outdoors so that it didn't feel too structured or boring. We were in agreement that the session needed to be as interesting and enjoyable as possible to keep the group interested and engaged.

The three areas we were particularly keen to probe were:

- what sort of activities the young people did in their spare time before they got involved with the YOE project;
- their experiences of the project; and
- what activities they hoped to do in their spare time when the project was over.

We agreed that a variety of 'projective' techniques, including: a graffiti wall, photo board and creative session, would be the most effective way to draw out the information we required.

Pre-visit

We were keen to meet the group prior to the evaluation session to get a sense of what they were like, how they interacted with one another and whether there were any issues which might affect our evaluation plans. We joined Lorna and the group at Carlton Marsh to help out with a Barn Owl Survey. This was a good opportunity to get to know the group prior to the session so they knew our faces and hopefully would feel more comfortable with us. The visit was reassuring, and we had no serious concerns about communicating with the group during the evaluation session. The students were friendly and generally quite chatty which meant we could easily engage with them in conversation and begin to build a connection.

Evaluation

The evaluation session took place outdoors in the woods at Carlton Marsh Nature Reserve. Six young people from the group participated in the evaluation – two boys and four girls. We set up our evaluation activities so that the young people could dip in and out of them whilst also getting involved in the YOE project activities such as building fires and dens and outdoor cooking. We wanted to create a relaxed atmosphere during the session so we brought a cd player along and encouraged the group to take charge and choose the music in between the quieter work.

Graffiti Wall

The purpose of the 'graffiti wall' was to capture information about what the young people did in their spare time before they got involved in the YOE project.

We invited them to come up and draw or write a few words about the sorts of things they did in their spare time before they got involved in YOE. The wall was a whiteboard with colored marker pens which could be rubbed off easily if desired. This activity seemed to really appeal to the young people. They were very enthusiastic and the Graffiti Wall was quickly filled with drawings and writing. Where it was unclear what individuals had written or drawn, we asked them to explain further and then took photographs of the wall as a record. Each contribution was also labelled with the name of the individual to aid analysis later.

Photo Board

The purpose of the photo board was to prompt discussion amongst the young people about their experiences of YOE.

We showed them a board which displayed images of them taking part in all the different YOE activities. We asked them to look at all the photos, particularly thinking about the place and the activity, and then as a group, agree on five they liked and five they didn't like so much and the reasons why. They really enjoyed looking at the photos and the girls were more enthusiastic, and dominant, in terms of the discussion. As a group, however, they did seem to find this activity quite difficult, especially in terms of focussing on the place and the activity. They did select five photos they liked but couldn't come up with any they didn't like so much.

Creative Session

The purpose of the creative session was to encourage the individuals to consider what they might like to do in their spare time after the YOE project was finished.

We asked the group to gather near the fire and find a comfy space on the tarpaulin, and explained that we wanted to know what sorts of things they would like to do in their spare time in the future. We asked them to lay down, close their eyes and then talked them through a relaxation exercise to help clear their minds and focus on the final task. All the individuals participated in this fully and seemed to have no trouble lying quietly and still.

Whilst they were in this relaxed state we asked them to imagine their ideal place and what it was like ie, what they could see around them, what they could touch and what they could hear and smell. We then asked them to picture themselves in that place and think about what they were doing. After a few minutes we asked them to open their eyes and sit up slowly. We then explained that we wanted them to create the place and what they'd been doing in it. We gave them a range of art materials to choose from including modelling clay, paper, pencils, paint, fabric, patterned card, glue, scissors and felt tips. We gave the group around half an hour for this activity and the majority of them seemed to really enjoy it.

After they had been working for a while, we then visited each person and asked them to tell us about their places and what they were doing there, recording their explanations for analysis later.

Thank you gifts

At the end of the evaluation session we presented each of the young people a thank you gift for taking part in the evaluation. This consisted of a rucksack, a torch, water bottle, a compass and a nature book (they could choose from Nick Baker's 'First Time Naturalist' or Collins 'Complete British Wildlife'). They all seemed thrilled with the presents and asked if they could have some extra gifts for those students who hadn't been able to take part in the evaluation session.

Teachers perspective of YOE

We thought it would be useful to talk in more detail to the group's supervisor, David Banks, about his view of YOE and how he felt that the young people had benefitted in order to get a balanced perspective.

Benefits of YOE

David believes that the YOE project has enabled the young people to see another side of life and bring it back to school. In particular he feels it has really helped to improve the self esteem and confidence of all those involved. The young people's ability to work together as a group has improved significantly and this was apparent during the summer activity trip to Mull in Scotland, when the young people were required to use their team work skills. One particular boy has lost over a stone since his involvement with YOE and was noticeably more active on the trip to Mull. David spoke about one of the young people he's seen the biggest change in since their involvement with the project

“...one particular girl has really blossomed as a result of her involvement with YOE. She used to be a real recluse before she started the project. Now she comes along to the garden club every Saturday and her parents even come too. She has a boyfriend, her confidence is 'sky high' and this is noticeable at school. She gets out a lot more and her mum and dad have even bought a tent and have started taking her camping...”

David says he has also learnt a lot from YOE and he now does outdoor cooking at the garden club on a Saturday morning and he also uses some of the previous Project Officer's team games in the courtyard.

Experience of YOE

David thinks that the young people have enjoyed shelter building, building fires, and outdoor cooking the best because they seem to like the more practical/hands-on/getting mucky type of activities. They also loved making kites from scratch and flying them on the beach (David couldn't get them to leave!). Again this is probably because it was practical, they were creating something from scratch, finishing it and getting a chance to try it out. They also enjoyed beach combing and litter picking, in particular exploring and finding things and also the arts and crafts activities. Most of them liked the pond dipping (though not all) about 80% of the group.

They didn't seem to like the orienteering so much and David felt that this was because it was quite structured, following the pathways on Carlton Marsh, and wasn't challenging enough for them. David felt it needed to be more difficult with a more 'off the beaten track', exploration feel.

How YOE could be improved

David felt that the project could be improved by including a few more hands on practical tasks, such as, constructing things that would be useful on the site so they can see the finished product. For example, this could involve building and erecting nest boxes or putting up fences.

The future

Four individuals from the group will undertake the new Construction and Land base Diploma, David believes this is a direct result of their involvement with the YOE project. The school are hoping to place another 10 students with YOE this term, however, it's quite hard to find a convenient time as the free period cannot be when one of the core lessons are being taught ie, English or maths. The group are putting together a presentation about their experiences of the project to show to the new recruits.

Emerging themes and observations:

- Freedom and doing something different, away from school seems to be an important factor.
- Small group seems to provide a safe space for them to express themselves, become more confident.
- Girls seemed to more interested in coming back to volunteer with the project. In fact, four of the girls expressed an interest in doing this and none of the boys did.

Reflections and lessons learnt

The group were around half an hour late for the session which meant there was not enough time to get all the information we required. We need to try and build in contingency for this, although when working with school groups and within their timetables it is not always possible.

We need to use the projective techniques to better effect. They should just be a starting point for discussion and further probing would have been useful to understand where the youngsters are coming from. Again this was partly because we had limited time on the day.

The session took place a week after the end of their involvement with the project, Lorna arranged a specific evaluation session with the school for us. Ideally we would talk to groups near to the beginning

of their involvement with projects. Unfortunately due to other commitments we were unable to schedule the session any sooner.

It is possible that by conducting the evaluation session outdoors as part of YOE activities, we may have influenced the responses and biased their opinions about the YOE project.

The presence of the Project Officer during the session may have made the young people feel awkward about mentioning activities they didn't enjoy so much.

David said that the thank you gifts we gave to the children for taking part in the session were perfect for them. These young people don't tend to win any certificates or awards. One of the young people (who is often singled out and bullied) was cheered on by all the other pupils when he went to receive his thank you gift.

Appendix 6 Questionnaires

Green Exercise Programme: evaluation questionnaire

Here are some questions for you to answer, there are no right or wrong answers, we are simply interested in what you have to say.

Please answer the questions honestly. It should take you no more than 15 minutes to answer the questions. You can miss out any questions you don't want to answer. Look at the instructions below and read what to do.

How to answer the questions.

Please read each question carefully. If you need help to read the questions or write your answers then you can get an adult to help you.

- Some of the questions can be answered by putting a tick in the box next to the answer that applies to you.
- In some cases you can tick more than one box, and there are instructions that tell you where you can do this.
- Some of the questions don't have tick boxes, instead they have a space for you to write an answer. Here we'd like you to explain your answer giving as much detail as possible.
- If you make a mistake, cross it through, then tick or write in the new answer.
- When we talk about "outdoors" we mean places such as parks, gardens, playing fields, woods or rivers etc.

1) On average how often do you spend your spare time outdoors? (ie, weekends, after school, in the holidays)

(tick one box only)

- more than once a week
- less than once a week
- once a week

2) What (if anything) stops you spending time outdoors?

(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....
.....

3) Thinking about the time you've spent outdoors recently, would you say it was:

(tick one box only)

- more than usual (please go to question 4)
- less than usual (please go to question 4)
- about the same (please go to question 5)

4) If it is more or less than usual, why has this changed?

(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....

- 5) Since the John Muir Award, with Cramlington Voluntary Youth project, finished in March, what sorts of things have you been doing in your spare time?

(Think about the kinds of activities you've been doing and whether they've been outdoors or indoors. Tick the boxes, that apply to you in the relevant columns. You can tick more than one box).

Indoor activities	Outdoor activities
<input type="checkbox"/> playing sport	<input type="checkbox"/> playing sport
<input type="checkbox"/> playing computer/console games	<input type="checkbox"/> exploring
<input type="checkbox"/> surfing the internet	<input type="checkbox"/> den making
<input type="checkbox"/> drawing/craft	<input type="checkbox"/> camping
<input type="checkbox"/> bowling	<input type="checkbox"/> going on picnics
<input type="checkbox"/> attending organised club/group	<input type="checkbox"/> attending organised club/group
<input type="checkbox"/> reading	<input type="checkbox"/> fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> swimming	<input type="checkbox"/> swimming
<input type="checkbox"/> meeting friends	<input type="checkbox"/> meeting friends
<input type="checkbox"/> shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> cycling
<input type="checkbox"/> watching television/DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> pond dipping
<input type="checkbox"/> listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/> walking
<input type="checkbox"/> e-mailing or texting friends	<input type="checkbox"/> something else

If you ticked "something else" please explain what and whether it is an indoor or outdoor activity in the space below

.....

(If the activities you ticked or described are only indoor, then please go straight to question 11).

- 6) In what types of outdoor places have you been doing these things?
(please explain in the space below)

.....

7) Why do you choose to go to these outdoor places?
(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

8) How often do you go to these outdoor places?
(Please tick one box only)

- more than once a week
- less than once a week
- once a week

9) What are the things you enjoy about these outdoor places?
(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....

10) What are the things you don't enjoy about these outdoor places?
(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....
.....

11) What would encourage you to spend more time outdoors in your spare time?
(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for answering our questions.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided.

If you have lost the envelope then you can put it in another one and post it back to this address:

Hazel Hynds

Natural England

Social & Economic Evidence Team

Northminster House

Peterborough

PE1 1UA

When we receive your completed questionnaires we will send you a mystery prize!

Green Exercise Programme: evaluation questionnaire

Please answer the following questions honestly, there are no right or wrong answers, we are simply interested in what you have to say. It should take you no more than 15 minutes to answer the questions. You can miss out any questions you don't want to answer.

How to answer the questions.

Please read each question carefully.

- Some of the questions can be answered by putting a tick in the box next to the answer that applies to you.
- In some cases you can tick more than one box, and there are instructions that tell you where you can do this.
- Some of the questions don't have tick boxes, instead they have a space for you to write an answer. Here we'd like you to explain your answer giving as much detail as possible.
- If you make a mistake, cross it through, then tick or write in the new answer.
- When we talk about "outdoors" we mean places such as parks, gardens, playing fields, woods or rivers etc.

1) On average how often do you spend your spare time outdoors?
(ie, weekends, after work, holidays)
(tick one box only)

- more than once a week
- less than once a week
- once a week

2) What (if anything) stops you spending time outdoors?
(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....
.....

3) Thinking about the time you've spent outdoors recently, would you say it was:
(tick one box only)

- more than usual (please go to question 4)
- less than usual (please go to question 4)
- about the same (please go to question 5)

4) If it is more or less than usual, why has this changed?
(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....

5) Since the First Steps Walk Buddy scheme finished in March, what sorts of things have you been doing in your spare time?
(Think about the kinds of activities you've been doing and whether they've been outdoors or indoors. Tick the boxes that apply to you in the relevant columns. You can tick more than one box)

Indoor activities	Outdoor activities
<input type="checkbox"/> playing sport	<input type="checkbox"/> playing sport
<input type="checkbox"/> surfing the internet	<input type="checkbox"/> gardening
<input type="checkbox"/> drawing/crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> camping
<input type="checkbox"/> attending organised club/group	<input type="checkbox"/> going on picnics
<input type="checkbox"/> reading	<input type="checkbox"/> attending organised club/group
<input type="checkbox"/> watching television/DVDs	<input type="checkbox"/> fishing
<input type="checkbox"/> swimming	<input type="checkbox"/> swimming
<input type="checkbox"/> meeting friends	<input type="checkbox"/> meeting friends
<input type="checkbox"/> shopping	<input type="checkbox"/> cycling
<input type="checkbox"/> listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/> walking

something else *(please describe what and whether it is an indoor or outdoor activity).*

.....

(If the activities you ticked or described are 'indoor' only, then please go straight to question 11).

6) In what types of outdoor places have you been doing these activities?
(please explain in the space below)

.....

7) Why do you choose to go to these outdoor places?
(please explain in the space below)

.....

8) How often do you go to these outdoor places?

(Please tick one box only)

- more than once a week
- less than once a week
- once a week

9) What are the things you enjoy about these outdoor places?

(please explain in the space below)

.....
.....
.....
.....

10) What are the things you don't enjoy about these outdoor places?

(please explain in the space below)

.....
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11) What would encourage you to spend more time outdoors in your spare time?

(please explain in the space below)

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Thank you for answering our questions.

Please return your completed questionnaire in the envelope provided.

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Hazel Hynds

Natural England

Social & Economic Evidence Team

Northminster House

Peterborough

PE1 1UA

Appendix 7 Thematic framework

Table F Thematic framework

1. Access to greenspace	2. Learning and development	3. physical activity and health
1.1 knowledge and awareness of local green spaces	2.1 Team building	3.1 increased physical activity
1.2 barriers to accessing local green spaces	2.2 practical skills	3.2 weight loss
1.3 positive environmental experiences	2.3 life skills	3.3 fitness levels
	2.4 work experience	3.4 general health/feeling better
	2.5 ideas/opportunities for education and employment	
4. wellbeing	5. Community cohesion	6. Community participation
4.1 confidence	5.1 meeting new people	6.1 volunteering
4.2 self esteem	5.2 making friends	6.2 positive achievement for the community/putting something back
4.3 mental health	5.3 shared experience	6.3 getting out and getting involved
4.4 happiness	5.4 support networks	
4.5 feeling good	5.5 companionship	
4.6 sense of achievement/satisfaction		
7. Project intervention		
7.1 engaging hard to reach groups		
7.2 enablers to participation		
7.3 challenges/barriers		
7.4 learning points		

Appendix 8 Verbatim segments

THEME: Access to Greenspace

Sub themes:

1.1 knowledge and awareness of local greenspaces

1.2 barriers to accessing local greenspaces

1.3 positive environmental experiences

Table G Access to Greenspace

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East of England Youth Outdoor Experience	<p>...it's a sort of forest type sort of place. And it's really quiet and just go out there to chill out. And just look at the environment...there's nice lakes and rivers and a lot of nice fields, plenty of flowers. And nice sunset, the sky (1.3)</p> <p>It's a nice place and I'm up the tree...big trees, like three foot off the floor and Rose got stuck and fell down (talking about Dunton Woods?) (1.3)</p> <p>Yeah, there was a little beetle and I was looking at that (1.3)</p> <p>Yeah, but they're ugly little things ...No, they're not that ugly....They look like they have been thrown up, look...Aw...But one of them did actually throw up...Oh yeah... Right, down my tank top. Think it is that one actually. (girls talking about checking barn owl boxes and holding the chicks) (1.3)</p> <p>I was up in my tree, I was up in the tree, wasn't I. Is there that picture of me up on that hill in the tree and stuff? (1.3)</p>	<p>I tended to take them to natural areas where they're not in the middle of town and stuff and part of that is to do with the fact that I got the message very clearly that they didn't want to be anywhere too public (LK/28Jan10/pg7) (1.2)</p> <p>They wanted to be out of the way doing stuff, that they perhaps feel slightly uncomfortable if they had people watching them or their peer group knowing what they were up to. It's a bit uncool I think being interested in being out and playing and doing conservation work... (LK/28Jan10/pg7) (1.2)</p> <p>They do love it though generally I think...they have requested that they don't go here or there at times so I've tended to stick to the green space like nature reserves, the beach, public areas but places they can get away from it as well. We have been in a few parks but I tended to stick to the same places. Maybe I could have extended it a bit more and gone to more areas but I've kept to places they can get to and access as well. They have discovered places they can get to themselves so yes they have been to green places (LK/28Jan10/pg7) (1.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
		<p>In general they do just so love being outside... a lot of the tutors have just said they're a very different kettle of fish when they're out. They change their behaviour a lot (LK/28Jan10/pg1) (1.3)</p> <p>We've got a young lad who's autistic and it's his second time out with the group. It's outdoors this group that he's with and that's only the second time ever they've take him out and he's responded so well to it they're so excited about it. He's coping really well with it . That's a really important change (LK/28Jan10/pg2) (1.3)</p>	
<p>East Midlands East Lindsay Goes Green</p>	<p>we were actually in the field in a part that you would never have been able to go if you weren't part of this project... It doesn't have a big sign saying "No Entry" but because the gate's there and it's closed you wouldn't have gone into that area at all (SS/19jun09/pg6) (1.2)</p> <p>I'd passed another boundary, I was in somewhere that I wouldn't have been able to go on my own. (SS/19jun09/pg7) (1.2)</p> <p>Yes, the gate was closed and so I suppose living in this area, you have the farmland with the crops so you would automatically see it was a field with a closed gate...and that's the barrier and you're not allowed – you're allowed on the footpath but you wouldn't be allowed beyond that point. (SS/19jun09/pg7) (1.2)</p> <p>And again when you come down to Theddlethorpe itself, where you turn and the sign says, "To the sea" and there's two roads down but it doesn't say that there's a public car park and you've got access. So I mean are these just our best kept secrets for the local people? Do you know what I mean? (SS/19jun09/pg9) (1.2)</p>	<p>They have got to be more appreciative of the reserve, especially the outdoors as well. I know a lot of them have (BW/20Jan10/pg5) (1.3) (1.1)</p> <p>There are some places where we've been on the health walks and East Lindsay goes green where they haven't known it's there BW/pg5 (1.1)</p> <p>with some of the walkers...they have gone out in their own time and have accessed that green space in their own time and done a walk with some others in that group...now that they are aware of it they sometimes say "we take the dog for a walk there" I know on the nature reserve project that one of the participants in the new cycle has said that she has now gone for walks with her husband on the reserve as well, because she wasn't, even though she lived close to the reserve she didn't realise it was there (BW/20Jan10/pg5) (1.1)</p> <p>in their own time now they access the green space a lot more which is good to hear when they say "yes we went for a walk at such and such an area" and it's really good to hear (BW/20Jan10/pg5) (1.1)</p> <p>I think they have had more, they have got to know more about the outdoors as well...(BW/20Jan10/pg) (1.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>I think just basically not knowing where to go and where you would be allowed to go. (1.2) (SS/19jun09/pg8)</p> <p>But that's not something that I did even in my childhood. I wouldn't have..you would have been told, "No, that's the farmer's field, you don't go past the gate."... so perhaps I was brought up with that sense of no, you are not allowed to go and walk in a field. (SS/19jun09/pg10) (1.2)</p> <p>...perhaps I might be brave enough to see whether or not I can go and do that walk on my own, even if I take the wheels, you know, with me for the first time. (SS/19jun09/pg17) (1.2)</p> <p>it's only round Mablethorpe, this one we're doing at the moment, but we've started learning more about the area we live in, you know, and we've found parks that we didn't know existed and things like that. (DM/19jun09/pg3) (1.1)</p> <p>we've found footpaths, a couple of parks we didn't know were there, and there's quite a few routes we can use now to keep off the roads more, even on the bikes... (DM/19jun09/pg6) (1.1)</p> <p>I would never, you know, thought of doing something on the nature reserves because I didn't realise what the set-up is...I think there could be more information because I'm sure that there are that many people who'd love to be able to do something. (PH/19jun09/pg15) (1.2)</p> <p>It whetted our appetites when we had that talk at U3A with that girl from...Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust...There's 96 sites round here. 96. I can't remember what it was, but we didn't realise there's so many – I mean within this immediate facility there's about ten places you can go to, of which the nature reserves are some of them. (PH/19jun09/pg15-16) (1.1)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>I think you need to raise the awareness that this is there...you know, bit of publicity in the local paper about the nature reserves. (PH/19jun09/pg19) (1.1/1.2)</p> <p>the sunshine was shining, and the birds, and there wasn't hardly any breeze and the birds were singing and just to be, you know, back, just to be outside again, it was just lovely. (SS/19/Jun 09/pg5) (1.3)</p> <p>It was this deep and all lovely buttercups and, you know, we were spotting all the orchids and everything, it was really nice. (SS/19/ Jun 09/pg7) (1.3)</p> <p>it was the open spaces, but it wasn't like being on mowed grass, you know, where you would go from concrete onto a lawn if you went for a walk in the park it would still be quite level and flat, but this was a ploughed field so it was up and down. So the difference in it, even in what was underneath you ... I felt more connected to the earth (SS/19/Jun09/pg9) (1.3)</p> <p>it just brought me alive, it was just so lovely, and then...if I was walking, like I say, it was this high, so I got all of this lovely, you know, and then I was actually physically trailing my fingers (SS/19/Jun09/pg9) (1.3)</p> <p>I was walking along in the long grasses, you know, how soft and lovely the fronds are and then feeling it running through my fingers, and then visually it was just beautiful because it was mostly yellow from the buttercups, but of course buttercups that we see at home in the lawn are only this big but these buttercups were this high, so it was really lovely. And then he pointed out the different flowers and the different things and the red clover, it was just a mass with red clover, so you'd got the red clover and these yellow buttercups and then these beautiful purple orchids that we were counting and looking for. (SS/19/Jun09/pg10) (1.3)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>one lady found duck eggs...and somebody else said, "Oh! there's a frog here,". We were like little children saying, "Oh! wow, isn't this lovely," But that's not something that I did even in my childhood. I wouldn't have, because you would have been told, "No, that's the farmer's field, you don't go past the gate."(SS/19/Jun09/pg10) (1.2/1.3)</p> <p>Just being in that field – I could have stayed there all day, I really could. And I didn't realise I could walk so far. (SS/19/Jun09/pg12) (1.3)</p> <p>it was like being a little girl all over again...to think oh! wow! You know, it's nice just to be able to sit and just to be back in touch with nature, you know, because you just start to look round you and you think, and you remember, you know, even the shape of the leaves of the different kind of plants. (SS/19jun09/pg14) (1.3)</p> <p>we used to go to Theddlethorpe Park quite regularly with the dog...we have been up there and seen the orchids...but to actually get involved with counting them... getting involved in that way, we'd never ever thought we'd do anything like that... (1.1) (1.3) (DM/19/jun09/pg10)</p> <p>there's some wonderful countryside around here, I didn't realise. (PH/19jun09/pg2) (1.3)</p> <p>if you sit there quietly, especially if you're near water, you can see all sorts of things, water rats, voles. (PH/19jun09/pg2) (1.3)</p> <p>We're more aware of what's going on round us as far as conservation, we're more aware of what is out there. (PH/19jun09/pg5) (1.1)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
South West 3G Woodland Games	I took my camera... I've got some wonderful photographs which I'm going to put on a disc and give to Bernice to use...they're lovely photographs. Of all the plants...and grasses, I've even taken them of grasses. (PH/19jun09/pg8) (1.3)	<p>With the children, with the school groups...you wouldn't necessarily describe the children that come to our clubs or sessions as naturally sporty kids. I think they see something like a Frisby...and it encourages the children who wouldn't necessarily take part in traditional normal sports to come along and have a go. It's been pretty much an equal mix of boys and girls which has been really good. I think it's just trying something different and new that they probably haven't done before and introducing them to a new sport or game that they haven't done before that they really enjoy. I think obviously getting outside as well. Some of the places, I mean a lot of the teachers didn't even know about some of the parks and places that we've taken them to, so it's opened their eyes up to it and obviously the children wouldn't know about it either so I think they've really enjoyed that, getting out into the parks, as well. (SP/25Jan10/pg4) (1.1)</p> <p>One of the schools we work with...since we went there in the summer, last summer we went and did some games in the summer there, that teacher didn't know about that park. So then as a result of that we had our session there and then she also took the kids across to the park for other lessons. I think it was science or something, you know. They used the park in their own time as well as with our sessions. So I think it's pretty evident that they are increasing their access to green spaces and using them more readily. (SP/25Jan10/pg4) (1.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
		<p>I've had a few stories from a few kids. For example, some of the clubs we do, I've given away some free frisbys...obviously kids love the freebies and one or two of them have come back to me and said, "I've been playing with my frisby all weekend with my mum or dad in the park" which is great. That's exactly what it's about (SP/25Jan10/pg 4) (1.1)</p> <p>The most successful part of the project so far was the event in the summer which I was really pleased with because I had a target of 500 people and we were getting feedback saying there was near enough 1500 people... I was quite surprise in way that so many people came along to it. It was a new event and it was a new site but I think people showed a real appetite to get out and do something as a family...we were lucky with the weather...it was well planned, well organised...and i think it was really well promoted and publicised (SP/25Jan10/pg3) (1.1)</p> <p>With the Upham Road group, if you came to one of the sessions it is clear that they really benefit from getting outdoors. A lot of the stuff that they do is in the confines of that centre so, you know, I think you can see with a lot of them. I mean some of them literally don't, on the occasion we've had to do the session indoors because the weather's been bad and we couldn't get outside, some of them don't come. They only come if it's out in the parks. It's quite clear that they really want to just get out there...obviously it's hard with that type of group to get proper feedback...but you can tell by how they're enjoying it, their reaction to things (SP/25Jan10/pg3) (1.1/1.2)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
South East Get Active in Milton Keynes	<p>I enjoyed it...I used to work on a farm...it reminded me of what I used to do before...(Ecco/pg8/Nov 08) (1.3)</p> <p>I have never done acorn picking before, no and I haven't planted bulbs before, no, this is all new work for us...it feels fantastic... (ECCO/Nov08/pg20) 1.3)</p> <p>I like it because one group will go off and do digging and like digging up soil and whatever and stuff and then another group will go over and pull and pull all – pull all the weeds out... so that's quite good (ECCO/Nov08/pg24) (1.3)</p> <p>..at the back here there is a river that runs from- there is a river that runs all the way along the back of here as from as far as Loughton Lake, it runs all the way along throughout the top all the through Stoney and that way.... (ECCO/Nov08/pg26) (1.3)</p> <p>...you see a lot of stuff in the river that other people won't recognise, but only if you look carefully you will see different stuff and how the river is when it's been stormy and that, when it's fair it's fair when it's stormy it's not and you will find fish as well...little fish in the river... (ECCO/Nov08/pg27) (1.3)</p>	<p>It's definitely widened their experience of what's in the city. A lot of the service users were reluctant to travel too far and would walk to most places but because they go to lots of different site around Milton Keynes then it's forced them to work out bus routes to different places and find out what there is out there. From what I hear it's led to some of them seeking out the same places in their spare time just to go for a walk or maybe to tell their family about and they've gone there with their family , so it definitely improved their access....(JW/12Jan10/pg3) (1.2) (1.1)</p>	
West Midlands Walk to Water		<p>The project is in an area which is deprived and doing things like walking is seen as a very middle class activity...(BH/18Jan10/pg1) (1.2)</p> <p>People have said that they have gone on the walk and they've enjoyed it Like when I do activities with the school children in the holidays they've come back a couple of days later or in the next holidays and said, "that game you played with us, we've done that and we've really enjoyed it", so they've taken on some games that I've done with them and they they have adapted them and done them in their own time. The same with the young mums. So even just by doing games with some people and showing them how they can use the green space, that's starting to get them to use it a bit more. (BH/18Jan10/pg2) (1.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
North West Wheel for All	<p>Well, since I started on the bikes, I think well, it's outdoors, I'm getting – you know, I mean I am a member of this gym where I go to yoga but I prefer it, it's outdoors, I prefer the trike rather than just sitting on the bike... (PL/10Jul09/pg2) (1.3)</p> <p>It's safe, going round the track. I have got a bike myself now but I have to find places to go to. I have been on it on the pavement round where I live and it's not safe, you know, it's wobbly. It's certainly not safe, so I still come here. I don't go out as much on my own bike, I come here, I find it much more, you know, safe and I can just go round the track and I enjoy it. (PL/10Jul09/pg2) (1.2)</p> <p>we used to go walking years ago...but I mean I can't walk...you know, it's not fair to go walking now because I walk that slow. (PL/10Jul09/pg2) (1.2)</p> <p>I go on the pavement, yes, and then we've been to the park, Birchall Park, but that was quite hilly...which wasn't very suitable, so we went to the Pennine Way at Lymm and found out which way to go, but we didn't do a lot there because it was a dull day... it's lovely round there...there's a canal along there and woods and there's trees... we saw the path where you get in to see if the bike would fit through because there's gates...(PL/10Jul09/pg6-7) (1.2/1.3)</p> <p>we've been to different places before and it was too much for me to walk... (PL/10Jul09/pg6) (1.2)</p> <p>Because it's not very pleasant out there when it's piddling down...You know, all the equipment's getting wet and everything. (PH/10Jul09/pg9) (1.2)</p>	<p>All my background has been fitness and health related work so it's a big change going from my gym environment and leisure centre based environment to suddenly obviously be thrown into the outdoors but really positive because it's sort of changed my opinions on using green space as a form of, another venue for physical activity. I certainly probably wouldn't be going back to gyms myself in the near future. So yes it's broadened my views certainly of your work. IL/12Jan10/pg1) (1.1)</p> <p>A few people have bought cycles themselves and I've sold three three or four trikes to individuals so they're obviously accessing their green spaces around them. I terms of the two wheeled led rides I think a lot of them do go off into parks themselves, or if not at least on a bike they go off and walk there now or they are a bit more aware, "oh I didn't know I could go through that section." They are a bit more aware of the routes to get to places. (IL/12Jan10/pg4) (1.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
North East Greenways to Health	<p>I enjoy the fresh air as well... (EW/10jul09/pg5) (1.3)</p> <p>it's quiet and it's peaceful, and you get the birds singing and everyone seems friendly in the parks and gardens, "Good morning," and everything, "Good afternoon." Yes, it's just a nice atmosphere. (EW/10jul09/pg7) (1.3)</p>	<p>I think that in the case of Choppington Woods, Ashington Community Woodland, Gallagher Park, a lot of the young people that we took to those spaces, although they lived very locally, had not experienced them and reflected that consistently through most of the interventions that we did. So I would say that the project absolutely did introduce new green spaces to young people within their local areas (SM/1Feb10/pg4)(1.1)</p> <p>In talking to the young people at Cleasewell Hill School I know that they do a lot more and go out a lot more to some of the places that we went. Cramlington Youth Project I couldn't say because I've not done any follow up work with the groupsSM/1Feb10/pg4) (1.1)</p>	
Yorkshire to Humber First Steps to an Active Life	<p>I've never felt inclined to go out of the gate or go left or right but, now Russell has shown that I can get up the lane either way and not fall over, I think this summer I'll probably walk just up the lane. (MM/31mar09/pg1) (1.2)</p> <p>wind is the worst thing. If it's windy or cold and raining I'm marooned in here...I've started watching a programme called Country File because it does a five day weather forecast and I'm looking at that to see what Wednesday is going to be and if it says it's going to be mild it's a sigh of relief and I know I'll be able to go (MM/31mar09/pg2) (1.2)</p>	<p>The only problems we really had I think with some of the schools it was access, access to green space was a big one, and with our steering group we sort of managed to work around it so I managed to fee up a little bit of funding to be able to pay for transport for the schools that didn't have any access to any green space at all...(RC/pg 2) (1.2)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>Another thing Russell has, well, he's not invited me as such but he's made me aware of other walks as well. If I do eventually get my driving licence back I'll be able to go to some walks that they're doing in the local country park at Scunthorpe. (MM/31mar09/pg2) (1.2/1.1)</p>	<p>he lives in a village and he didn't really get out much of his house. But I know there's a few of the farmers tracks that go into the countryside just next to his house and I know he said he'd been down there a few times with his wife...I think all he does is just walks a distance and then he turns around and goes back home. But when he gets there it's a lot better than what he was doing before – he used to be stuck in the house all the time and never went anywhere (RC/pg5) (1.1)</p>	
	<p>Before I had my stroke I used to go on circular walks all round this sort of area. Every Sunday morning we used to pick my mum and father's dog up and we used to go into the Lincolnshire Wolds and do a walk, about six miles or so in the morning. The dog used to love it and my wife and I used to love it as well. It was good. (MM/31mar09/pg2) (1.2)</p>		
	<p>if the surfaces that I was walking on were slightly better than I'd probably go further...this little road here...it's getting rougher and rougher and with it being a bit uneven it can jolt my confidence and I think I'm going to trip up. (MM/31mar09/pg4) (1.2)</p>		
	<p>I've got a dislike of walking on grass or anything like that because it's not firm enough for me. I really need to be on a hard surface. (MM/31mar09/pg4) (1.2)</p>		
	<p>It's not safe walking round here. That's upper Beirut and that's lower Beirut and you take your life in your hands if you go out here. It's not good. (MW/31mar09/pg2) (1.2)</p>		
	<p>I used to be able to walk to town from here but the hill is a barrier. I can't walk up that hill. (MW/31mar09/pg7) (1.2)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>If it's raining and I phone up, "Is the walk on," and they say, "Yes," I shall go. The only thing I wouldn't go in fog. I would go in anything else. I don't care about the snow or anything.. (MW/31mar09/pg12) (1.2)</p> <p>seeing different parts of the country and how things are going and looking at the seasons as they go through. It's quite nice.. (MM/31mar09/pg2) (1.3)</p> <p>It's the fresh air I like out at Normanby. (MW/31mar09/pg9) (1.3)</p> <p>Not so much the animals, just in the flora more, you know, the sort of different flowers and trees and things. That's nice. And if I can pick up any little bits of information, when I take my grandchildren over I can pretend I'm a right know-it-all. (1.3) (MW/31mar09/pg10)</p>		

THEME: Learning and Development

Sub themes:

2.1 team building

2.2 practical skills and knowledge

2.3 life skills

2.4 work experience

2.5 ideas/opportunities for education and employment

Table H Learning and Development

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East of England Youth Outdoor Experience	When you stop and look at the work you've done you can hardly believe you did it yourself. I really enjoyed making fires, carrying equipment and generally looking after things. It made me realise I want to be a farmer and so I'm doing a special diploma instead of GCSEs (Michael – taken from case story) (2.2/2.4/2.5)	Apparently a lot of them went on to do the land based diploma as well. I'm not saying every group go on to do all these amazing things, but Kathy has said that sign up to the land based diploma may be to do with their contact with the project so I think that is a brilliant follow on...LK/28Jan10/pg6 (2.4) (2.5)	Four individuals from the group will undertake the new Construction and Land base Diploma, David believes this is a direct result of their involvement with the YOE project. (David Banks by phone) (2.4) (2.5) The children we select for the project don't usually thrive in the classroom environment – they may be fidgety or lack social skills and self confidence. They're not country children so taking part in YOE takes them out their comfort zone by involving them in things they wouldn't normally do. It offers them huge opportunities, giving them new skills and broadening their horizons enormously. We also find it's been a good introduction to our land-based diploma which we started this year. Without the environmental background with YOE I don't think as many students would have chosen to do the course. For us, taking part in YOE has been a great success... (Kathy Smith – coordinating teacher – taken from case story) (2.2/2.3/2.4/2.5)

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East Midlands East Lindsay Goes Green	<p>then it's out on the nature reserve, and that I thoroughly enjoy. Of course Roger's a fount of knowledge with flowers. I used to be and I used to be able to know what flowers you can use for what medicinal purposes, which I've forgotten, I've got my books out again now and it's amazing what there are on these reserves. (PH/19jun09/pg1) (2.2)</p> <p>my knowledge has increased of flowers...I mean he had us looking for scarlet pimpernels...(PH/19jun09/pg8) (2.2)</p>		<p>Once the young people see what they can accomplish both individually and together it gives them a sense of achievement they don't get in the classroom. Such a positive learning experience means some even come to school on a Saturday morning to help me with the garden and animals. We're going to create a wildlife garden; the students who have benefitted from YOE will bring their skills back to school and show the younger children round... (David Banks – taken from case story) (2.2/2.3/2.4/2.5)</p> <p>David believes that the YOE project has enabled the young people to see another side of life and bring it back to school. In particular he feels it has really helped to improve the self esteem and confidence of all those involved. The young people's ability to work together as a group has improved significantly and this was apparent during the summer activity trip to Mull in Scotland, when the young people were required to use their team work skills. (David Banks by phone) (2.1/2.3)</p>

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>I'm learning an awful lot about plants ...I am interested in plants that you can use for medicines as well. I've got a book. (PH/19jun09/pg11) (2.2)</p> <p>We immediately said, because we're members of a digital photography group, well, it's an excellent opportunity.(2.5)</p>		
<p>South West 3G Woodland Games</p>	<p>..there was a group that helped me only a few weeks ago when I was here, and we had to go and repair a fence...I was in charge of the fence job, I had Tony and a few others helping me dislodge a bit of fence so we could remake it safe so it wouldn't collapse...I tried to show them how to go about it if they don't know how to do it... I get them to do it...I only do the cutting, but they do all the nailing so they get to do it not me, because I know what I'm doing because I've done it before but they don't know what to do, so I just show them how to do it and then they do it (ECCO/Nov08/pg16) (2.2)</p> <p>If you work with somebody that knows how to do stuff, then another group doesn't know how to do it, then they watch what you are doing and then they learn from you then (ECCO/Nov08/pg25) (2.2)</p>	<p>Also I think they are able to show employees that they've worked with the Parks Trust and done litter picking and that sort of thing and I think that's led to a couple of them getting jobs, be it litter picking around pubs or petrol stations and things, or one member got a job in the warehouse at B&Q and things like that. So it's a really good way for learning disabled service users to get job experience they might find really difficult to get elsewhere. (JW/12Jan10/pg) (2.5)</p>	<p>....that an interesting thing you've just said because Mark Holmans did used to come and join us, he is actually now because of the litter picking that has taken place, he is actually working at the top of the lake litter picking... (ECCO/Nov08/pg19 – Debbie group leader) (2.5)</p>

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
West Midlands Walk to Water			
North West Wheel for All			
North East Greenways to Health	“Alex told and showed us how to cut a tree down properly and witch ones to cut down...this is a skill and i will never forget we made the shelter out of logs, string and leaves it was really good over nye camp...”	I believe a couple of the individuals have gone back to school part time. I’m not going to claim sole responsibility for achieving that, I’m sure that’s the Youth Projects Work (SM/1Feb10/pg3) (2.5)	
		I think the group definitely did learn how to work together and achieve their goals. There were two groups that ran in parallel and I know the group that we worked with reached all of their targets for the year that they worked with the Youth Project and their alternative curriculum, and beyond. So those students did very well as opposed to the young group that didn’t quite achieve the same outcomes. It would be nice if the Green Exercise Programme contributed to that success...(SM/1Feb10/pg3) (2.1)	
Yorkshire to Humber First Steps to an Active Life			

THEME: Physical Activity and Health

Sub themes:

3.1 increased physical activity

3.2 weight loss

3.3 fitness levels

3.4 general health/feeling better

Table I Physical Activity and Health

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East of England Youth Outdoor Experience			One particular boy has lost over a stone since his involvement with YOE and was noticeably more active on the trip to Mull (David Banks by phone) (3.2)
East Midlands East Lindsay Goes Green	<p>up till three weeks ago I was doing nothing at all (SS/19Jun 09/pg1) (3.1)</p> <p>I used to use this walking frame simply because I was struggling a lot at that time, and then – when I went on that first walk I put it in the boot and I thought, right, I’ll go but I don’t know how far I can walk at the moment, can I actually do a mile, where will I be going, and then you think, oh! gosh, if there’s lots of people, and then panic attacks will come in then...you see, so I thought, I know I’ll take my walking frame. So I took it and I was just literally clinging onto the handles because of the panic... and then when she mentioned about going on this other project on the Friday afternoon I thought, well, I’ve been for this walk and I’ve managed that...and so if I can find something else to do that will add on to the progress(3.1) (SS/19jun09/pg3)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>as I walked along – so no walking frame this time, remember the week before I'd gone on the walk and I was clinging desperately onto the walking frame...and no walking frame. I thought, well, I can't take – if we're going in that field I can't really, you know, take it out and be clinging onto that. (SS/19jun09/pg10) (3.1)</p> <p>Just being in that field – I could have stayed there all day, I really could. And I didn't realise I could walk so far. (SS/19jun09/pg12) (3.1)</p> <p>we did quite a distance and I didn't realise that. I don't know, because I was so engrossed in what I was doing, I wasn't even aware of how far I'd walked and what I'd done. I ached. (SS/19jun09/pg12) (3.1/3.3)</p> <p>I've got a heart problem so I've got a pace-maker. I do tend to get short of breath a bit these days, I've to slow down. It doesn't basically stop me but I've to pace myself better. (DM/19jun09pg2) (3.1/3.3)</p> <p>my well-being was quite good, sort of thing, but I was getting more and more unfit, I think really and well, we both were and that's when we decided we – well, we started walking again more regular.....(DM/19jun09pg2) (3.3)</p> <p>I feel better for it, yes. You do feel like you're getting fitter (DM/19jun09pg5) (3.3) (3.4)</p> <p>I've been on the Healers exercise programme since before Christmas... I've got emphysema, I couldn't do anything, I seemed to spend half my time going in and out of hospital, so since then I've not been in at all. (PH/19jun09/pg1) (3.3/3.4)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
South West 3G Woodland Games	I just like being out...and it's better than just going out and walking, you're out and you're working, which I think does your health a lot of good. (PH/19jun09/pg1) (3.4)		
South East Get Active in Milton Keynes			
West Midlands Walk to Water			
North West Wheel for All	<p>...I think it does my legs good, you know, the exercise as well...(EW/10Jul09/pg5) (3.4)</p> <p>I think it is good and healthy. I always feel good when I've been...I feel well, and that's what it's about, trying to keep well... (EW/10Jul09/pg7) (3.4)</p> <p>...you do feel good after it. I feel good after exercising... (PL/10Jul09/pg9) (3.4)</p> <p>In the past I've gone to the gym. And hated it. Paid for membership for, you know, a couple of years and still never went, so....then I found out about this. I've just finished work, actually, which is another good reason for wanting to do something, and it was outdoor and it was free...and I hadn't ridden a bike for forty years. (PH10Jul09/pg1) (3.1)</p> <p>since I've been doing it, I do feel quite a bit fitter... When I first started coming I was puffing and panting going riding on my bike whereas now I can do it a lot easier. (PH10Jul09/pg3) (3.3/3.4)</p>	<p>She was obviously looking for some physical activity. She comes to Wheels for All and comes to both sessions. She come to Wheels for All and she comes to the Health on Wheels rides and like every single week she's been there turning up. She does her cycling and loves it because it's an opportunity for her to have activity and from speaking to her she does feel that her health has improved from coming (IL/12Jan10/pg3) (3.4)</p> <p>She suffers with MS and she has very much come from that point of view thinking that she couldn't do any physical activity and she's found an activity that's inclusive for her and she can do it. She gone on to buy a trike herself and do it independently outside of our sessions (IL/12Jan10/pg3) (3.1/3.4)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
North East Greenways to Health	Mountain bikeing helps me keep fit and its better than walking and we can see more of the forest (CVYP participant – taken from field notes) (3.3)		
Yorkshire to Humber First Steps to an Active Life	<p>But it means a lot to me. One thing, it gives me a bit of exercise outside because the only thing I really get is going down to my greenhouse which is at the bottom of the garden which I can do safely with my walking stick (MM/31mar09/pg1) (3.1)</p> <p>well, certainly my stamina now is a lot better. The first time that I went round a little walk I came back and I immediately went and had a sleep in the chair... Now it doesn't shatter me, or doesn't appear to shatter me like it did in the early stages. (MM/31mar09/pg6) (3.1/3.3/3.4)</p> <p>I'll still go on Friday...Normanby. I shall definitely do that. And there will still be the three grades to choose from and last week I was thinking, "After the six weeks I'll go on the middle walk," but having seen how pathetic I am I shall still be on the slow walk. So I'll carry on on the slow walk for a bit longer and then hopefully try a harder one. (MW/31mar09/pg13) (3.3)</p>	<p>On the one-to-one side, for the people we've had through I think it's worked...over 90% of the people have maintained or increased how much exercise they're doing after the project...about 40% of the participants have started attending some of the led walks...I think with the people we've had through it's been really beneficial to them all, everybody said it has and everyone has really enjoyed it. Everybody has said they wouldn't have started the exercise without the scheme. It was the ease of getting into the walking and having somebody that goes with them and build up with them they found to be really useful (RC/11Jan10/pg3) (3.1)</p>	
		<p>She said that it had helped her or she thought it had been helping her until she got ill. She was out walking and I think with her it was just being able to be out walking because she was told at one point she would never walk again. You know she was wheelchair bound and then being able to, once she started walking she came on to this scheme and just being able to get out anywhere she really enjoyed it. But then her illness kicked in again and I think she really struggled. It's difficult to say how it affected her because she didn't actually finish it...(RC/11Jan10/pg4) (3.3/3.4)</p>	

THEME: Wellbeing**Sub themes:****4.1 confidence****4.2 self-esteem****4.3 mental health****4.4 happiness****4.5 feeling good/better****4.6 sense of achievement/satisfaction****Table J** Wellbeing

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East of England Youth Outdoor Experience		The best things are the reactions you get from the kids. Working with teenagers I've absolutely loved. The reactions you see or the changes you see in them, that's what's been the best for me really. The positive, the fact that being out with them over that period of time is helping. All the good stories you get afterwards (LK/28Jan10/pg3) (4.5)	One particular girl has really blossomed as a result of her involvement with YOE. She used to be a real recluse before she started the project. Now she comes along to the garden club every Saturday and her parents even come too. She has a boyfriend, her confidence is 'sky high' and this is noticeable at school. She gets out a lot more and her mum and dad have even bought a tent and have started taking her camping (David Banks by phone) (4.1)(4.2)
		I just got the impression that the young people loved it...I never got any bad feedback from them...maybe they were just being polite to me but generally we tried to do an evaluation after each session and they were very happy with stuff and they did brilliantly...(LK/28Jan10/pg6) (4.4)	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East Midlands East Lindsay Goes Green	I've suffered from depression and anxiety for a long, long time. It's not there all of the time, like at the moment I'm sort of level at the moment. (SS/19jun09/pg2) (4.3)	<p>There were definitely individuals in the group who seemed happier at the end. They smiled more. There was a couple of people in particular I remember, ***** I think and ****. **** was very separate from the group didn't want to do anything. He wouldn't eat anything wither and he ended up having food with them. He was quite independent but he just seemed happier at the end of it and ***** was quite morose a lot of the time to start with but I think she relaxed a lot. She ended up with a part time job and she ended up doing a bit of voluntary work with us a well, conservation work (LK/28Jan10/pg6) (4.1) (4.4)</p> <p>David Banks was saying today that ***** , who volunteerd with me in the summer holiday has started working at a florist shop in Lowestoft at the w/end. She read a map and cycled to the shop for the interview which is significant, because before YOE she only went to the end of her road and didn't dare go further. (LK by e-mail) (4.1)</p>	I think as well the patients becoming more comfortable in themselves, especially with the East Lindsay Goes Green they have become volunteers which was a bonus. I wasn't sure how many would become volunteers, if any, and they have all become volunteers of the nature reserve so that was a bonus for us really. And just getting to know the patients one-to-one I feel was really good because they've become more like friends and you see their health and food every week and their confidence improve so that's been really good as well (BW/20Jan10/pg3) (4.1)

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>when it comes on it's like being in a big black hole, whatever, and so prior to going to the doctor's and almost confessing and saying I've let things get to that, I didn't think things were this bad and I've got myself in a mess again, and so prior to that I hadn't been out of the house for four months. (SS/19 jun09/pg2) (4.3)</p> <p>I was just happy. I felt alive, and I've not had that feeling for such a long, long time that ...it was like Christmas and birthdays and everything, you know, all coming all at once... it... and all these things I would never ever have told anybody either, would I? ...Because they would have thought, well, she's gone crackers, she's only walked in a field, something you think that people do every day. But it's not until you look round and think no, people don't take time out, do they, to do this, because afterwards while we were having a cup of tea I said then, but look, what else would I be doing on a Friday afternoon, I'd be either sat at home and thinking oh! I'm really fed up and I'm bored and what can I do and where can I go, or there's nowhere to go and nothing to do. Or I'd just sit and watch the television...But now, as I've said, I can go there on a Friday afternoon, I'm really looking forward to it...it's an adventure (SS/19Jun09/pg13) (4.4) (4.4) (4.5)</p>	<p>She was really enjoying it and her confidence was, I think it was only her confidence. You could see it was more, she was becoming more confident and she was enjoying it a lot more and things...BW/20Jan10/pg5) (4.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>And then I went to the gym, but I must admit I'd reached the point where it's just so claustrophobic in the gym that you're just clinging onto the machine. And nobody talks to you and you're looking round, and you feel self-conscious because of course you feel as if I'm big and fat and horrible. But when I was out and about, both on the walk and when I went last Friday, I didn't feel self-conscious, I didn't, you know, I wasn't even aware of me and all this, you know, calling myself names and whatever. (SS/19jun09/pg16) (4.2)</p> <p>when I did the interview she said how are you feeling, you know, with your mood being from 1 up to a 10, I was at number 1...I felt terrible, yes. I was, really, really down...and I must admit prior to that, during this four weeks, this is really hard for me to say, but suicide, it was so hard just to keep myself alive during that time...So for even me to get to the gym and have the interview and talk to this woman was a hundred percent improvement. To be at number 1 I was a hundred percent better. (SS/19jun09/pg16) (4.3)</p> <p>if you'd have asked me last Friday I would definitely have been up there at number 10...So if you want to level it from during the activity it's taken me right from being a number 1 up to a number 10... then when I got back home everyday life comes back and by Sunday, I was just like a bear with a sore head and I'd gone right back down again to number 2, number 3...even now as I'm having this conversation I'm thinking, ah! so perhaps that's a solution ..if I get up in the morning and think, oh! I don't feel very well today I should get myself down there and go for a walk.. (SS/19jun09/pg17) (4.3)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>it's a good feeling really, when you talk about what you've done, things like that, you know, and what you've seen and heard while you were out... you can sit back and relax and feel that you've contributed to something (DM19jun09/pg5) (4.4) (4.5)</p> <p>it gets me out in the open air, keeps the body and the brain active. (PH/19jun09/pg2) (4.3)</p> <p>when we were clearing those paths I came walking back and I was the first back to the car, and there was a couple there, a lady in a wheelchair, she's got to have her hips done, and they'd come from the site further up, they'd managed to get down even though she was in the wheelchair...and she said "What are you doing now?" I says, "Well, we've been clearing paths." She says, "What for?" I said, "So that you can get wheelchairs down." She said, "Do you mean to tell me I can get my wheelchair down there?" I said, "Yes, you can, as far as Natterjack Lake, really.... It's been measured out and as long as your wheelchair's not wider than the norm, and it shouldn't be," and she said, "Oh! it's great when somebody does that." Now, she really appreciated it because she wanted to go and see the orchids. ...and if we hadn't have cleared the path, there's no doubt about it, she would not have been able to have gone. (PH/19jun09/pg7) (4.6)</p> <p>I mean when you look back at what we've done you think, oh! we did that, doesn't it look good? And it's something that's got to be done and somebody's got to do it. (PH/19jun09/pg11) (4.6)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
South West 3G Woodland Games	I find when I come out here on a Friday I feel like I don't get bored at all, I am like, I want to get stuck right in as soon as I get in...I like being busy, I don't like being bored (ECCO/Nov08/pg14) (4.4) (4.5)	<p>The ecco group in particular get so much out of the relatively simple tasks really, like the litter picking each week. So it's sort of hearing some of the feedback and knowing that the groups are really getting a lot out of their activities and it's sort of improving their quality of life really and also for the mental health service users just to give them something to focus on and to be part of and take ownership of has really helped a lot of people I think (JW/12Jan10/pg1) (4.4) (4.5) (4.6)</p> <p>There's a really good core of learning disabled users that go along and it's now really something that service users talk about to each other and spread the word and it's something that they know is an option to do on a Friday to get experience if they want to get a job maybe or to socialise or just to get out, enjoy the outdoors and be more active. It's something that is on the calendar now for learning disabled groups (JW/12Jan10/pg2) (4.4) (4.5)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
West Midlands Walk to Water		<p>I think the target group were really receptive. Debbie was rooting for them to have an activity that would get them outdoors and get them fitter. They've got quite a few indoor projects that they can get involved with and things like that but something that would improve their health and also it allows them to contribute to the city. So it's really good for some of the guys who haven't got a job to feel like they are doing something really good, which they are. They just really enjoyed it and I think a lot of them really look forward to it in their week. They might not do a huge amount else (JW/12Jan10/pg2-3) (4.2) (4.4) (4.5) (4.6)</p> <p>Because we couldn't run the session we met up with the group for lunch and had a bit of a chat about what they liked about the project and what we could improve and things like that and it was then that I realised the effect it has. Two of the guys that come to the group where chatting about how much they enjoy it and one of them said that if it wasn't for the Parks Trust activity he wouldn't leave the house all week. So it was a bit of an eye opener to realise that it's really important for a lot of them. (JW/12Jan10/pg2-3) (4.4) (4.5)</p>	
		<p>Like the 'rethink' mental health group, they have seen some benefits. They were people that wouldn't come out of their room originally and now they will go out walking on their own, not just in groups. Then we've got some young mums that have become a little bit more confident, not just in themselves but also taking the children out a bit more, knowing what to do with the children when they are outside...(BH/18Jan10/pg2) (4.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
North West Wheel for All	<p>when you're cycling around, just like I've been cycling this morning, you do forget everything. You know, people tell you it's like that when you do yoga, I don't know, but, you do, because you're riding along and you do – everything, you know, your stress is all – say something was just niggling you, when you're riding around, you just forget, your mind does go, it gives you a nice feeling because I think you're out in the fresh air...(EW/10Jul09/pg3) (4.3) (4.4) (4.5)</p> <p>Well, it's something I've learnt to do so it gives me satisfaction in that way because each time I come I'm getting better...we've got little cones out now and I'm now beginning to manoeuvre through, so when you get through that, you do get satisfaction (EW/10Jul09/pg5) (4.6)</p> <p>I wouldn't have never been able to ride a bicycle where I can now, and I'm quite pleased at myself, even though I'm not very good, at what I've achieved (EW/10Jul09/pg9) (4.6)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>I feel good when I've been, I really do, rather than when you've been in the gym. You know, I like my yoga but I really feel good, you know, after being outside, I've had the fresh air, otherwise you know all I do is perhaps go in the garden, you know, do little bits in the garden if I can get around, because I've got a little walker now. But, yes, I think it is, I think it's the fresh air, being out, being outside and meeting all the people with problems as well. When you're at the gym you feel the odd one out, you know, struggling to get on the bike, but here I think, you know, they're all so helpful and everybody's in the same boat (PL/10Jul09/pg3) (4.1) (4.5)</p> <p>it makes me feel good, I do feel good (PL/10Jul09/pg5) (4.5)</p> <p>I said I was never going on the roads because I think it's too dangerous, because I do drive a car. Well, I have actually been on the road and I can tell my confidence is getting a bit better all the time, and it is better in a group anyway, the cars seem to sort of see a group rather than just one cyclist. (PH/10Jul09/pg2) (4.1)</p> <p>quite elated that I've achieved something...a sense of achievement I can say (PH/10Jul09/pg5) (4.6)</p> <p>I just feel so much better, so I don't know whether it's that that's doing it or....I don't know, I think it's excellent(PH/10Jul09/pg8) (4.5)</p>		
North East Greenways to Health	When we went to Seghil, it was just a bit of fun but it was also challenging (taken from field notes) (4.6)		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
Yorkshire to Humber First Steps to an Active Life	<p>I saw this advert for it and I thought, "That sounds just right for me actually," because I have problems with confidence and with mobility. (MM/31mar09/pg1) (4.1)</p> <p>Yes. I go every Wednesday now. It's usually at the same time, which is another thing that I like because since my stroke and everything I need things sort of, well, not regimented but I need to know when things are going to happen. I get very anxious if things don't appear at the same time or things like that. (MM/31mar09/pg2) (4.3)</p> <p>Before I started my health wasn't too bad but what was poor was confidence. (MM/31mar09/pg3) (4.1)</p> <p>I'm a lot more confident...now when we get to the road, although I take Russell's lead of going across the road, I'm checking the road as well...So it's making me aware of things as well, which is maybe a strange one to sort of get your head round but when you haven't been put in situations for such a long time everything is sort of relatively new and has to be learnt again. (MM/31mar09/pg6) (4.1)</p> <p>I've got serious depression so basically I've been off work a month so far. (PW/31mar09pg2) (4.3)</p> <p>obviously I've hit the blues now. I don't even (inaudible) in depression. But I am trying to do things, you know what I mean? I'm trying to sort of get things up and running. (PW/31mar09pg3) (4.3)</p>	<p>when I first went round he said he was quite housebound, didn't really get out...we did about eight weeks with him and got him out walking and when I've been back to see him after the three months he actually said he'd been out with his wife a few times walking. When they've been going into town he's been getting out of the car and actually walking with her and he said it's just really helped increase his confidence to in being able to actually go out walking despite his disability from the stroke. He's started talking to his neighbours a lot more and it's little things like that he said has helped because he's out in his garden a lot more, in his back garden. (RC/11Jan10/pg3-4) (4.1)</p> <p>He was already quite active before he came on but he came for different reasons, more to improve his mental health and meet new people. I think he actually did that. He said he goes out walking around town quite a lot more now...he's met people on some of our local walks. He was off work with his mental health problems and he's now back at work, so that's good. I do think it helped. I think it had quite a big impact on him. (RC/11Jan10/pg) (4.3)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>I might go to Central Park myself like, you know what I mean, around town. I mean I often, because I am sort of depressed now I often walk around town now, just walk around town because I don't want to keep in the house and tie myself down so I'd rather go round town and just mooch around. At least I'm out getting fresh air and like not stuck in here. (PW/31mar09pg9) (4.3)</p> <p>I'm not a couch potato. I can specifically say I have never been a couch potato because a couple of year ago my dad got blocked arteries in his heart and that's fired a signal to me because I might have a 3% chance of getting it, so that's fired a signal to me so I've never been actually a couch potato. I'm always doing something in my life. It's just that at the moment with the depression it's so hard. (PW/31mar09pg5) (4.3)</p> <p>I used to cry...when I was at the doctors. Now I'm not too bad. It's like getting, sort of surfacing, but I'm also, well, I've got the internet but it's also like surfacing but I'm also like going four steps forward and five backwards because the internet's not working for me properly, so I'm finding that very hard because I'm not a PC person (PW/31mar09pg6) (4.3)</p> <p>(feeling after going out with Russell) a bit more pounce in yourself, you know what I mean, a bit more go in yourself (PW/31mar09pg8) (4.5)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>It is hard at the moment because you're not eating properly, your sleeping pattern is out and you are not getting the energy levels. Like sometimes I'm only eating half a meal, sometimes I don't eat a meal, sometimes often or at all, so you are like running on half a battery. It's like a car battery, you're running on half a battery all the time, so you never get topped up all the time. You know what I mean, that's why I wanted to go out, that's why I suggested to Russell today, if I can go out more with Russell it might get me a bit more out. (PW/31mar09pg8) (4.3)</p> <p>I used to do on average 122 miles a week on my bike. It had dropped down a bit because with it being winter you're not getting out so much and I think it's what's brought part of the rut on and all because it's like the low part of the season (PW/31mar09pg1) (4.3)</p> <p>I wanted to do things but with David dying and the family not being around I lost a lot of confidence. If you imagine, you see, he did everything for me and then he died and I was sort of, "Oh dear, I can't cope," and of course you can. You just have to get a grip (MW/31mar09/pg2) (4.1)</p> <p>Mentally okay, good, invigorated, because you've been out in the fresh air, you've met somebody new, talked to somebody with different interests, a different age group (MW/31mar09/pg9) (4.3)</p>		

THEME: Community Cohesion

Sub themes:

5.1 meeting new people

5.2 making friends

5.3 shared experience

5.4 support networks

5.5 companionship

Table K Community Cohesion

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East of England Youth Outdoor Experience		There's one lad, the first week he came out he was just really into himself and by the end of it he didn't want to leave and he'd changed. He'd had his hair cut, everything. There were all these changes in him...just having that support from the group, a friendly group, and coming out and doing the sessions he was just dead keen to carry it on...You get to see good results at the end of it (LK/28Jan10/pg3) (5.4)	David said that the thank you gifts we gave to the children for taking part in the session were perfect for them. These young people don't tend to win any certificates or awards. One of the young people (who is often singled out and bullied) was cheered on by all the other pupils when he went to receive his certificate for taking part in and completing YOE project and gift. (David Banks by phone) (5.2/5.3/5.4)

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East Midlands East Lindsay Goes Green	<p>hopefully in an ideal situation we'll have made friends, formed a new group, and say oh! shall we meet up and get together and go for a walk, so that's increasing on the social side. I think if this group finished I'd have to look for another group somewhere, (SS/19jun09/pg18) (5.1) (5.2) (5.5)</p> <p>being outside and meeting people who've got this similar kind of interest, you know, who like to be out and walking on the beach (SS/19Jun09/pg5) (5.1/5.3)</p> <p>nobody asks you why you're there or what's your problem or why have you been referred on it. They just were so friendly and we did something really nice...they opened the gate and we walked into a field where they'd let it all go back to nature with all the farmers, and so we spread out...and we were counting the orchids... (SS/19Jun09/pg6) (5.2/5.4)</p> <p>And the interaction, because of course whoever you were next to that side, if you sort of glanced along as you were walking and you think, oh! shall I count that one, but it's that little bit to my left, but has he seen it over that side? And so you'd got interaction because you were sort of asking, oh! this one here, do you want me to get it or do you want to put it onto yours? (SS/19jun09/pg12) (5.3)</p> <p>it's because I'm going to be in a group of people who are getting the same experience as I am and it's a shared experience... (SS/19jun09/pg14) (5.3)</p>	<p>When we first get together, the participants, I think a couple may know each other but it's mainly nobody really knows each other and everyone is quite quiet at the start and then they really work as a team and like in this cycle they've called themselves the A Team and they develop, they get together more socially as well and they will have a coffee at each other's house or whatever. In the first cycle we had most of them wanting to be volunteers, at the reserve which was definitely a bonus for us (BW/20Jan10/pg4) (5.1) (5.2)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>we're quite enjoying the company, meeting people and that sort of thing now...(DM/19jun09/pg2) (5.1) (5.5)</p> <p>There's a hardcore of people there regularly and you find it becomes a bit of a social thing as well and we enjoy that more than walking on our own, you know, so we quite enjoy it (DM/19jun09/pg3) (5.1) (5.2)</p> <p>when you're at home all the time together you do tend to – you can get on one another's nerves a bit ...so we find it's a big improvement now to get out and mix more, because we have never, we've always been we can entertain ourselves sort of people, we've never gone around in groups or anything, but now we find we enjoy the company... (DM/19jun09/pg4-5) (5.1) (5.2) (5.5)</p> <p>we all seem to muck in together..all take it in good fun, and enjoy yourself as well as doing your work... (DM/19jun09/pg9) (5.3)</p> <p>Well, you do meet other people and it's surprising now that the weather's got a bit better you meet all sorts of people who are walking through the reserves and they do ask questions and it's nice to be able to answer some of them, perhaps wrongly, but... I think it's great (PH/19jun09/pg10) (5.1)</p> <p>and that's another thing, you make friends (PH/19jun09/pg10) (5.2)</p> <p>Being with other people (PH/19jun09/pg11) (5.5)</p>		

South West
3G Woodland
Games

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
South East Get Active in Milton Keynes	<p>I like the staff that come and help us as well, so I get as much fun as what everyone else does (ECCO/Nov08/pg13) (5.3)</p> <p>we can also have a laugh, at dinnertime we can have a good laugh as well...and while we're working in the garden we just – we get on with it (ECCO/Nov08/pg13) (5.3)</p> <p>Me and tony have worked on our own and we were getting rid of a tree..we had to get this great big fern tree to go...and we were snapping it all right and he got hold of a log and it was just like, I was cutting and he was breaking it and we got this great big stump out and he's got hold of it in one go... (ECCO/Nov08/pg15) (5.3)</p> <p>It's good that we got new, other people – new people coming along and working with us ECCO/Nov08/pg18) (5.1)</p>		

West
Midlands
Walk to Water

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
North West Wheel for All	<p>I think it's nice to be in a group because you help each other as well, you know, if anybody's got any problems, or....I always think. The friendship's nice as well, "Good morning" "Hello, how are you?".... I mean I think I only went out a couple of times with the Wednesday people but they were ever so nice, and they were even waiting for me, and I mean I could have been at the other end of the park but they were waiting for me. I thought I can't keep this up. That's when I went back to Wednesdays. But that's what I'm saying, the spirit of the team was, you know, it was so good, you know, and I'd come back all hot and bothered all the time and they were all saying, "Don't worry, don't worry, we were all like that, you know, when we started," so I think that spurs you on...(EW/10/Jul09/pg8) (5.4)</p> <p>...it's a social thing as well, it really is. I love it, meeting all different people, because there's different ones comes each week sometimes...and the same ones come as well and it's nice to meet them again...(PL/10Jul09/pg8) (5.1) (5.2)</p> <p>And there's a sort of a social aspect when we go on the bike rides. (PH/10Jul09/pg2) (5.1) (5.2)</p>	<p>*****, I think, comes for two reasons. She enjoys the cycling. I don't think she does it as much for the health benefits, obviously it does keep her ticking over, but I think she come because the social aspect. She seems to me to be a quiet individual, sometimes quite nervous around people. I think it's been good to bring her out and socialise as a group and we've sort of brought her out of her shell slightly. (IL/12Jan10/pg3) (5.1) (5.2)</p>	
North East Greenways to Health			

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
Yorkshire to Humber First Steps to an Active Life	<p>It's the companionship. I get out and I invariably see some of my neighbours which I don't normally do because the walks that we're on are all pretty local and anybody who sees me and Russell, you know, they know me anyway in the immediate area. (MM/31mar09/pg5) (5.5)</p> <p>If I meet people and get out more I think it might bring me out a lot more, better... (PW/31mar09pg4) (5.1)</p> <p>get outside the house and meet more people and get conversation, try and talk me up more. (PW/31mar09pg4) (5.1)</p> <p>I need to meet people and get talking because that's what's part of the problem. I've never been able to, how can I say, contact people properly. So when I do they take me the wrong way, they take advantage of me, so I tend to back off ... I tend to be a bit, well, shy. (PW/31mar09pg6) (5.1)</p> <p>...I'm meeting Russell a lot more and I'm actually meeting people, you know what I mean, well, meeting a person, but I would like to meet more people to get me out of my shell a bit more... (PW/31mar09pg7) (5.1)</p> <p>it's nice to meet new people and talk to them. Russell's the same age as – I don't know how old he is but he strikes me as being the same age as my sons and it's lovely to hear him talk about the things he does and I hear my lads talking about the same sort of things, you know. It's lovely. (MW/31mar09/pg9) (5.1)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>The company I think. I think it's not doing it on your own. Mixing with different people every week. Yes, it's the company I think that makes it so attractive. And also there's no pressure and there are no expectations, or if there are they keep quiet about them. (MW/31mar09/pg11) (5.1) (5.5)</p> <p>Some people take their dogs with them. And there's a nice mix of men and women as well which makes a change because when you get to this age there's only old women left and you go to mother's unions and things, you get all these old dears. (MW/31mar09/pg16) (5.1)</p>		

THEME: Community participation

Sub themes:

6.1 volunteering

6.2 positive contribution/achievement for the community/putting something back

6.3 getting out and getting involved

Table K Community participation

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East of England Youth Outdoor Experience		<p>They were quite an amazing group and they were all pretty compliant with anything and they were happy to get stuck in generally. There was a bit of competition I think between one or two of them and also we did get a few of them that were keen to do a little bit of volunteering and helping out after the project finished (LK/pg6) (6.1)</p> <p>***** came to volunteer with a YOE activity day and a practical conservation task (green haying) during the holiday.(LK by e-mail) (6.1)</p>	<p>Such a positive learning experience means some even come to school on a Saturday morning to help me with the garden and animals. We're going to create a wildlife garden; the students who have benefitted from YOE will bring their skills back to school and show the younger children round (David Banks – taken from case story) (6.1) (6.2)</p>
East Midlands	<p>we've always gardened all our life and to be able to contribute to a nature reserve...because when you walk round at times you always think, "Oh! they ought to cut this back" and "They ought to do that," you know? So we thought it would be a good chance to do something, sort of thing, help, and we're quite enjoying it (DM/19jun09/pg4) (6.2)</p>	<p>We've developed the conservation project so that's been like a bonus as well having the participants go on to be volunteers (BW/pg1) (6.1)</p> <p>*** is now actually a volunteer of the reserve and uses skills that she has, because she has some computer skills and she wanted to use that as well and she also wanted to work with children as well, so I feel it has opened different pathways (BW/20Jan10/pg5) (6.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>they have volunteers up there...I think we might make enquiries as to what sort of things we could do up there (DM/19jun09/pg11) (6.1)</p> <p>But we're also very environmentally aware anyway ...but the thing about it is we've had so much benefit generally since we've come into this area... felt that it was an opportunity to give something back. (PH/19jun09/pg5) (6.2)</p> <p>putting something back, we take plenty out...(PH/19jun09/pg11) (6.2)</p> <p>I know they do a lot with children. I'd like to get involved with that... (PH/19jun09/pg12) (6.3)</p> <p>the reason we like going on this is because we've had a lot out of the system when you think of the exercise programme, the Slimming World programme, and we know, we both know, we're going to get down to target before we've got pay, so of course we've got to do it, so we thought as we could put something back.... (PH/19jun09/pg2) (6.2)</p>		

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>when we were clearing those paths I came walking back and I was the first back to the car, and there was a couple there, a lady in a wheelchair, she's got to have her hips done, and they'd come from the site further up, they'd managed to get down even though she was in the wheelchair...and she said "What are you doing now?" I says, "Well, we've been clearing paths." She says, "What for?" I said, "So that you can get wheelchairs down." She said, "Do you mean to tell me I can get my wheelchair down there?" I said, "Yes, you can, as far as Natterjack Lake, really.... It's been measured out and as long as your wheelchair's not wider than the norm, and it shouldn't be," and she said, "Oh! it's great when somebody does that." Now, she really appreciated it because she wanted to go and see the orchids. ...and if we hadn't have cleared the path, there's no doubt about it, she would not have been able to have gone. (PH/19jun09/pg7) (6.2)</p>		
South West		<p>The school groups are probably the best, although the group we have on a Monday, the Upham Road group, the group of vulnerable adults, they're really good. That is a real sort of rewarding session, you know, when you work with those guys (SP/25Jan10/pg2) (6.2)</p>	
South East	<p>..I feel physically shattered the whole day, but I really, I like the outdoors a lot...I feel like I've done a good day's work... (ECCO/Nov08/pg14) (6.2)</p>		
West Midlands			

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
North West	if I had more time I would like to be a volunteer...it's sort of along the lines of the work that I used to do... (PH/10Jul09/pg8) (6.1)	<p>When I came into post they had initially done some work in Warrington but it was very much geared just to one target group which was the elderly and it was very much and older person's activity. Wheels for All is obviously our inclusive cycle initiative and I didn't see it should be just one target group so I thought we'll open it up to everyone. From original numbers you would maybe get like 20 people on a Friday afternoon and now we're hitting almost 90 to 100 on a Friday afternoon and that's from a 5year old kid coming to a 95,96,97 year olds coming. (IL/12Jan10/pg3) (6.3)</p> <p>All walks of life can come into it...I'm trying to use it as a hub for all cycling to try and get everybody down, whether they are able bodied, disable bodied, and just use it as a centre for cycling and then you can sort of refer people on to whatever session you want from that Friday session. So it's just all community really. (IL/12Jan10/pg3) (6.3)</p>	
North East		<p>The school have begun to develop a disused space within the school site. Pupils from the school have been involved in planting trees, reestablishing a pond and building a bird hide, transforming the space into a school nature reserve (takenfrom case story) (6.1) (6.3)</p>	
Yorkshire to Humber			

THEME: Experience of Project Intervention

Sub themes:

7.1 engaging hard to reach groups

7.2 enablers to participation

7.3 challenges/barriers

7.4 learning points

Table L Experience of Project Intervention

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
East of England Youth Outdoor Experience		<p>The biggest challenge with this project has been managing the kids' behaviours at times...I have pushed myself quite a bit and pushed the type of kids we have because I've felt that as we're talking about kids that have physical and mental issues potentially or actual health issues, I've gone a little bit more to the extreme with some of them and they've pushed my boundaries a little bit on how I deal with them, but it's been really interesting to do that. But it's been challenging at the same time (LK/28Jan10/pg1) (7.3)</p> <p>I've felt pushed knowing how to deal with the kids at times (LK/28Jan10/pg1) (7.3)</p>	<p>the young people have enjoyed shelter building, building fires, and outdoor cooking the best because they seem to like the more practical/hands-on/getting mucky type of activities. They also loved making kites from scratch and flying them on the beach. Again this is probably because it was practical, they were creating something from scratch, finishing it and getting a chance to try it out. They also enjoyed beach combing and litter picking, in particular exploring and finding things and also the arts and crafts activities.</p>

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
		<p>There's so much to do, so much you know, it's like the project keeps moving direction. It's like an organic ball in a way that just keeps growing and moving in different areas and I just hope it can continue actually after November because there's so much more to be done (LK/28Jan10/p2) (7.3)</p>	<p>Most of them liked the pond dipping (though not all) about 80% of the group. They didn't seem to like the orienteering so much and David felt that this was because it was quite structured, following the pathways on Carlton Marsh, and wasn't challenging enough for them. David felt it needed to be more difficult with a more 'off the beaten track', exploration feel. (David Banks by phone) (7.2) (7.4)</p> <p>the project could be improved by including a few more hands on practical tasks, such as, constructing things that would be useful on the site so they can see the finished product. For example, this could involve building and erecting nest boxes or putting up fences. (David Banks by phone) (7.4)</p>
<p>East Midlands East Lindsay Goes Green</p>	<p>I've been going there for two weeks and then the first time I turned up for the walk and there was only one other lady there and Bernice, I think that's why we were able to talk so much. I found Bernice to be lovely, she really is (SS/19jun09/pg3) (7.1)</p> <p>I quite enjoy the sort of maintenance side of it...looking after the paths and cutting any vegetation, things like that...I suppose it's something I've always done. I grew up in the country and I feel that's more my environment (DM/19jun09/pg8) (7.2)</p>	<p>We had trouble getting the referral patients on board at first. I think it was basically just getting a system in place because we would get the odd one or two coming on to the walks but sometimes we wouldn't get anybody at all, so I think it was just creating a structure (BW/20Jan10/pg1) (7.3) (7.4)</p> <p>I attended some presentations, just some groups that were taking place, local community groups that would meet up locally in Louth and it gave me a chance to have more one-to-one time with them to actually explain and go through what is (BW/20Jan10/pg2) (7.1)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>I don't really want them to say at the end of twelve weeks, to say all right, that's it, you've finished, I'd like something to go on, because I've enjoyed it. (PH/19jun09/pg13) (7.4)</p>	<p>It was a case of word of mouth really that they sort of told people that they knew that was on the Healer scheme. And then for the second cycle we got some advertising out that went to the referral patients but what I also did as well, I had the chance to have some one-to-one time with some of the patients at say like the medi centres and I could explain more to them (BW/20Jan10/pg2) (7.1)</p> <p>You get a few freebies with the clothing and additional things just to help the programme along the way and I think they liked the sound of that as well. I think it helped more with just explaining to them one-to one about what it was and yes they on board with it more that way (BW/20Jan10/pg2) (7.1) (7.2)</p> <p>Getting the case stories out for the walks and the conservation projects have proven to be a really good way of advertising in the GPs and in leisure centres and things (7.1) (7.2) (7.4)</p>	
<p>South West 3G Woodland Games</p>		<p>It's been quite a challenge because I think getting people introduced to the idea of green exercise is quite a hard thing and it's automatically something that people know about and so getting that message across about what it's about is quite a challenge (SP/25Jan10/pg1) (7.3)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
		<p>Another big challenge has been setting up, in terms of the weekly coaching sessions setting up new ones is always a challenge. I tended to sort of tap into existing ones sometimes, existing groups and develop them and modify them slightly. For example working with leisure services and some of the disability groups there and just sort of adapting them and taking them outdoors and getting them active outdoors rather than inside the centre which they don't really enjoy (SP/25Jan10/pg1) (7.1) (7.2) (7.4)</p> <p>My project is such a wide ranging thing you know. It's not specifically targeting, well there are a few groups to target but it is pretty much for everyone. I just think where do you start, you know in terms of who you are going to aim a new group at really and fitting it into their day, you know, is it going to be a weekend evening thing with obviously people working and all the rest of it. I think in a way it's been easier to adapt existing groups sometimes (SP/25Jan10/pg1) (7.1) (7.2) (7.4)</p>	
South East Get Active in Milton Keynes	<p>...I like gardening quite a bit...I can dig bulbs and put things in...(ECCO/Nov08/pg10) (7.1) (7.2)</p> <p>I like the apples...apple picking in the orchards... (ECCO/Nov08/pg10) (7.1) (7.2)</p> <p>...the best bit about it for me is doing litter picking...and making new friends...it makes me feel happy.... (ECCO/Nov08/pg10) (7.1) (7.2)</p>	<p>It took a while to establish interests and let people get the name of the green exercise project out there really and get people involved. But I think it definitely did take quite a long time to get off the ground but having spoken to other people that have tried to do similar things it seems that it's often the way with these sorts of projects. They gain momentum over time (JW/12Jan10/pg1) (7.3)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>...I like it all...yeah I get stuck in digging... I like the physical side of it... (ECCO/Nov08/pg12) (7.2)</p> <p>I like... getting a saw and sawing off bits off the branch, branches off...I like it because then one day if you had a load of old branches or whatever you could have you could have a bonfire... (ECCO/Nov08/pg15) (7.1) (7.2)</p>	<p>Debbie, who leads the ecco group, I think it really helps if you can get somebody on board like that that obviously is enthusiastic about the project and sort of drives you forward from their end really. It's worked really well and it's been an ideal activity because it run independently (7.1) (7.4)</p>	
<p>West Midlands Walk to Water</p>	<p>North West Wheel for All</p> <p>...And then this came through the door and I thought, "Gosh, that's what I've wanted to do." Anyway I rang... and I explained that I couldn't ride a bike or anything like that and he said, "Oh! you don't have to worry about that, you know, just come along." I was really, well, I was really hopeless at first, I was nearly giving up many times but they encourage you to come and they're very, very nice people here, very nice... (EW/10Jul09/pg2) (7.1) (7.2)</p> <p>I think many people want to do things, like, when they retire, but they don't know what to do... you don't really know what's out there. If I hadn't have got that booklet, you know... I wouldn't have joined (EW/10Jul09/pg6) (7.1) (7.4) (7.2)</p> <p>I think it's been good, really... other than extending it and maybe, you know, having another day or something... (PH/10Jul09/pg7) (7.4)</p>	<p>I've had three areas across the north west and I have found it quite difficult at times to spread myself across three areas. So I suppose that's been quite a challenge and quite a headache. Some nights I've come home and thought, "My God, how am I going to do this, how am I going to do that at the same time?" I think if we were to plan a project again, either three areas that are a lot closer together or just concentrate on one area and really blast that and do a lot more because at times in Warrington because they've been so forthcoming and want so much on and I want really to embrace everything, I had to say, "I have to stop there because I've got stuff that needs doing in the Wirral", That's probably been the biggest headache. (IL/12Jan10/pg2) (7.3) (7.4)</p> <p>I think it's having that key person within the PCT or the council to really try and help you pull it altogether because they've got the contacts. They know everybody first hand. They can put a lot of weight to the argument. (IL/12Jan10/pg2) (7.1) (7.2) (7.4)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
North East Greenways to Health	<p>I think we did have leaflets through the door... about the cycling projects, which I had saved, but it was probably because I'd come and met the people and actually committed myself to doing it... it's like with everything, a leaflet comes, "Oh! yes, that might be quite nice but I can't be bothered," you know, but because I'd said I'd do it, I did...It's the same as I feel if I give it up, you know, you wouldn't come back to it. You think, you know, that's gone, that's in the past, which is why, you know, I prefer to keep coming and it sort of be known if you like. (PH/10Jul09/pg7) (7.1) (7.2)</p>	<p>The major issues have been for me not knowing what to do and also not knowing that we should have put about 10% of our budget aside for the evaluation (IL/12Jan10/pg2) (7.3) (7.4)</p> <p>Being able to be creative and try new ideas out, trying to think broadly about how to deliver green exercise to the target group of 11-16 year olds and complement existing services rather than replicating what exists. So say in the case of Cramlington Youth Projects where they already did quite a large amount of what I would qualify as green exercise activity, trying to design something that added to it (SM/1Feb10/pg1) (7.3)</p> <p>There's obviously lots of young people who would benefit for health reasons and through personal development to get involved in the type of project we've delivered, but actually finding space in the curriculum at schools to actually access them and to deliver the interventions has been the most difficult, negotiating with the youth agencies or the schools to have a sustained project rather than to just have people come in and do just one-off sessions (SM/1Feb10/pg1) (7.1) (7.2)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
		<p>Not having to hunt numbers and get a large number of participants allowed me to be selective in the schools and the youth agencies we've worked with. In the first year I met a lot of people who were interested in being involved in Green Exercise and seemed very enthusiastic, there was obvious people who stood out, all people who showed a willingness to work in partnership rather than just reap the benefits of what Ground Work could have provided them...it was always dependent on finding individuals like that who would support the programme and work with us (SM/1Feb10/pg2) (7.3) (7.4)</p> <p>I always enjoy the actual delivery of the sessions, working with the young people. Coordinating the programme you take on a very broad range of responsibilities. There's only so much one person can do (SM/1Feb10/pg2) (7.3) (7.4)</p> <p>The beginning was very hard because the project had lost its focus of working with health groups through health referrals, so finding a new ground in which the project could run was a difficulty but for me was exciting because it gave me autonomy in shaping the project (SM/1Feb10/pg2) (7.3)</p> <p>I think two years was a short life for Green Exercise and there's lots of things that have developed and I think if we were running for three years like the majority of the projects we would have seen a lot more positive outcomes in that extra year (SM/1Feb10/pg5) (7.4)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
		<p>Say with Cramlington and other projects where we could have just put a little bit of publicity out there that I think would be serving us well now. We want everybody to know about Green Exercise and I think we could have been a little bit more tactical about how we promoted the project through publicity strategies. That's probably more reflective of my inexperience around publicity and what I now know at the end obviously with hindsight I would do things differently (SM/1Feb10/pg7) (7.4)</p> <p>I would have maybe narrowed the type of delivery down a little bit earlier so that we could have a had a longer period of focus on specific types of delivery which once again would hold us in better stead now in being able to just draw different types of delivery off the shelf and be able to offer them out (SM/1Feb10/pg7) (7.4)</p>	
Yorkshire to Humber First Steps to an Active Life	The thing I like about it is that it's the same buddy I get as well. It's Russell I get who comes every time, he's not sort of sent somebody else who doesn't know my capabilities. It's always the same one. So that's a thing that I like about it. (MM/31mar09/pg1) (7.2)	With the one-to-one I think one of the biggest challenges we had was recruiting volunteers to walk with us...On the one-to-one it's a six week session but it's really flexible so new volunteers need to be flexible. You couldn't just say, you know, Monday morning for six weeks because with each individual if you come to the Monday they would feel ill, for example and they might want to go on the Wednesday...So the volunteers needed to be really flexible and that was really really difficult finding people who had enough time to put aside... (RC/11Jan10/pg1) (7.1) (7.2)	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>The thing about this scheme that's so good is that it's an organised scheme. There's no pressure, and yet you kind of feel you've got to do it because someone's looking out for you and it makes you do it. I mean I woke up this morning feeling pretty rough. I thought, "Oh, I feel like I did when I was school and it was PE and I didn't want to go in," that sort of thing. Because I knew it was a nice day I had to go and it was good, otherwise I would have stayed in bed. So from that point of view it's very motivating. It's a very good scheme. (MW/31mar09/pg3) (7.2)</p> <p>I was just so impressed with the way they handled it. There was no presumption that you will do this and we will make you walk 100 yards the first week and 200 yards the second week. It was very laid back, very friendly. It was nice. I didn't feel threatened so as I didn't feel threatened I kind of followed it up. I think if I'd felt threatened I wouldn't have done but they were really nice. (MW/31mar09/pg4) (7.2)</p>	<p>Going through the GPs was not the best idea and we were looking to go through practice nurses. That seemed to work quite well so we had a few referrals from practice nurses in local health centres and GPs...The number of referrals we were getting maybe only sort of five to eight every quarter which numbers aren't massive... (RC/11Jan10/pg2) (7.3) (7.4)</p> <p>Other problems were just time, finding time with the teachers to be able to arrange it. I don't think there's anything you can get around at all. You've just got to work with timetables and what the school can fit in and fit in with those. If you can't then they're not going to take it on. So it's just being really flexible with the schools...RC/pg10 (7.4)</p>	

Table continued...

Respondent group → Project ↓	Participant views	Project officer views	Significant other views
	<p>Now I think about it I've probably seen it advertised in maybe the library or somewhere. It rang a bell and the little logo was familiar. I thought, "I've seen that somewhere." But I wouldn't have been prompted to do anything about it. It was really sort of meeting this guy that did it. We don't get a paper down here. We're considered to be too rough to be delivered to, and they don't deliver the free paper round here. That's how bad it is. Ridiculous. Anyway, so we don't get The Target and if you don't bother to buy the Evening Telegraph you don't find out what's going on locally. So really we're in a kind of little oasis down here. There's no way the people on Westcliffe would know about the scheme unless they had the paper, so it does need advertising more in some way in probably things like libraries, you know, maybe the book shop, places where people go for coffees, that sort of thing. (MW/31mar09/pg13) (7.1) (7.2)</p>	<p>One of the things that came up was about the antisocial behaviour, why some of the kids had been saying that they don't go. One of the reasons why they don't visit like green spaces quite a lot is because they don't want to go in case there are some older kids there and they might get bullied. But then the other one was litter and dog mess... RC/pg10 (7.3)</p> <p>The numbers weren't great compared to the other side of the project. I don't know how to get around that. We tried publicising it in quite a few places but it was just really difficult getting people on to the scheme ...(talking about one-to-one scheme) (RC/11Jan10/pg3) (7.3) (7.4)</p>	



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