



Public Health
England

Protecting and improving the nation's health

Outdoor spaces for health: the evidence

APPG Parks and Green space 1st March 2021

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What keeps us healthy?



“A job, home and a friend are the things that matter most to our health”
- Duncan Selbie, PHE Former Chief Executive

Improving access to Greenspace – A new review



- Update of PHE's 2014 report
- For local government and partners
- Developed with expert input from academia, PHE teams (CRCE, Physical Activity, communities, inequalities), other government departments, local government, business

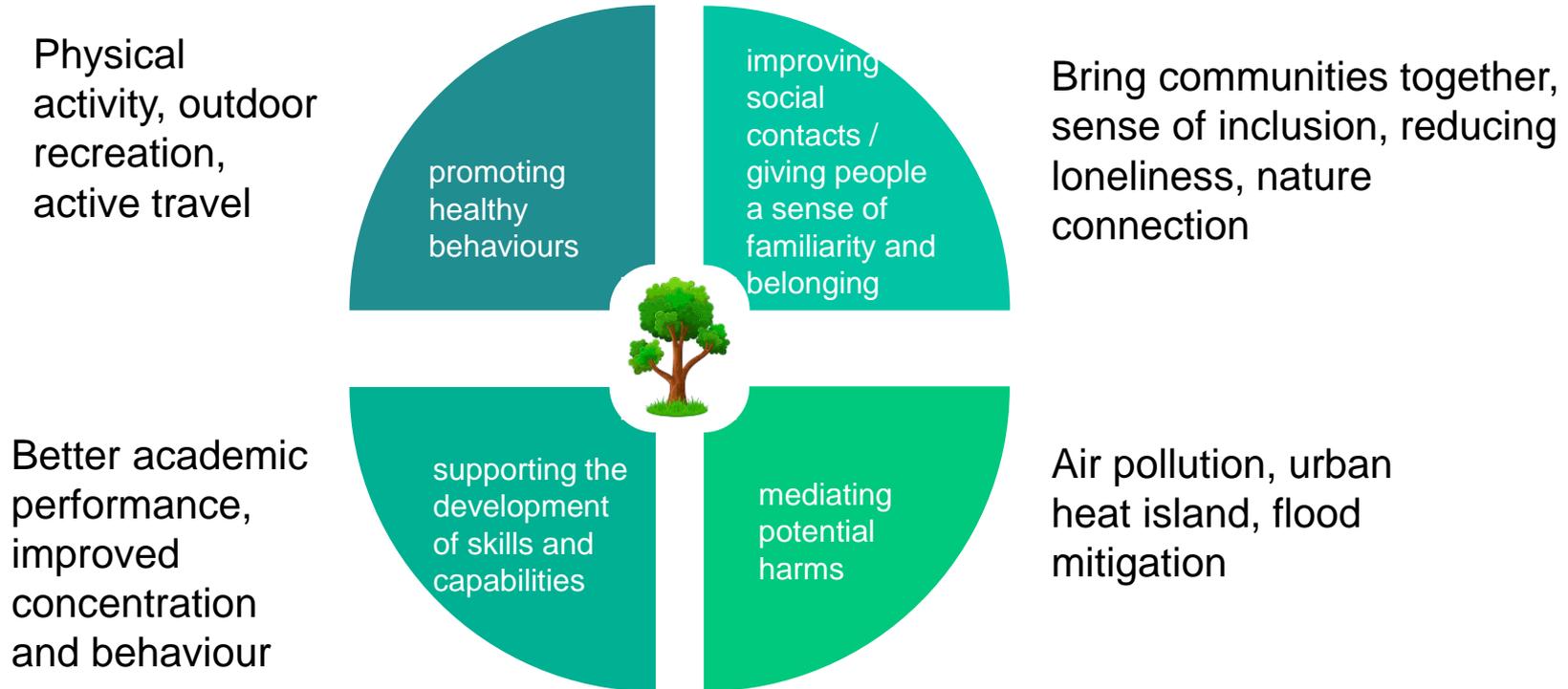
Link to the review:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf

Aims of the report

- Review latest evidence of health benefits of exposure to greenspace
- Explore current evidence on inequalities in access to greenspace
- Provide an overview of how the benefits of greenspace can be valued
- Explains opportunities for improving access through the spatial planning system
- Gives practical advice on levers that local authorities can use to support greenspace
- Presents case studies

Access to greenspace/green infrastructure



What can greenspace do for us: physical health

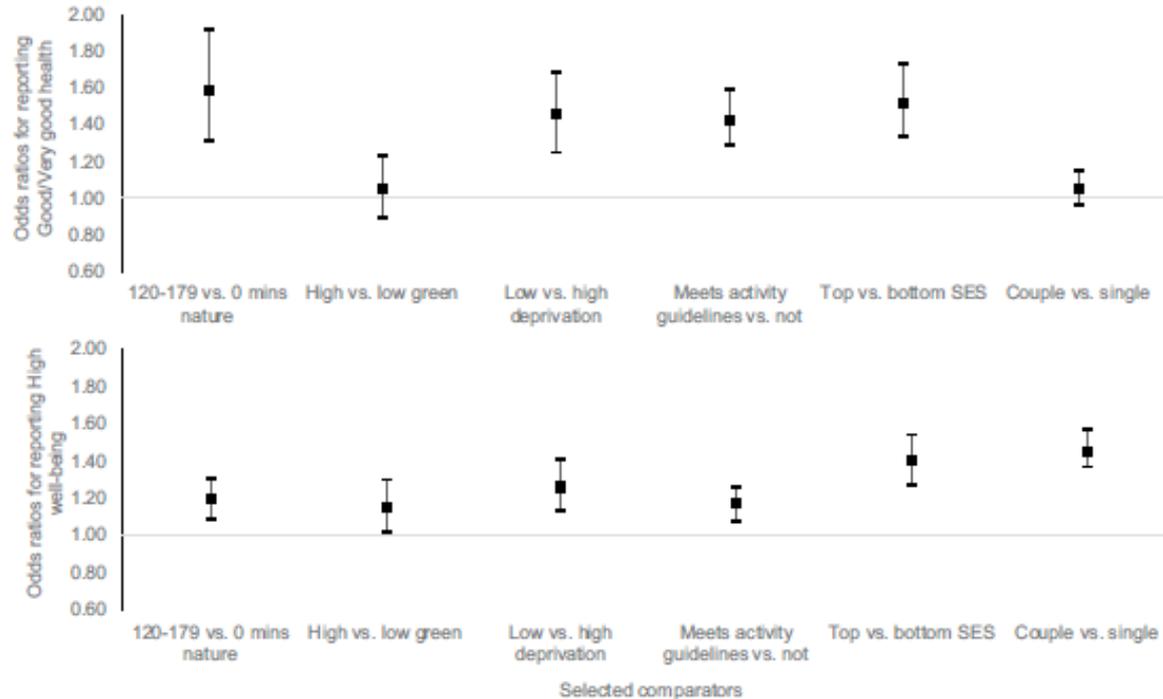
- improved HDL (good) cholesterol
- better birth weights
- reduced mortality
- reduced stress hormones
- more likely to meet physical activity guidelines
- better self-assessed general health
- more likely to maintain a healthier weight
- lower heart rate and heart rate variability
- lower diastolic blood pressure
- healthier immune system
- reduced incidence T2 diabetes



What greenspace can do for us: mental health

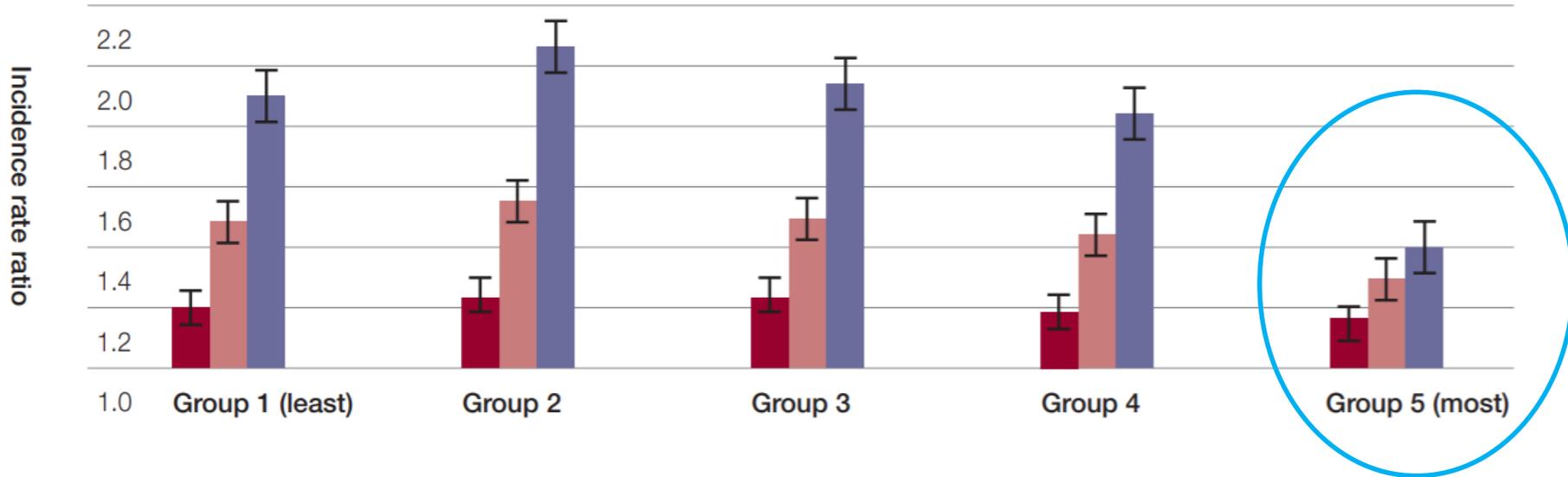


Recent research – how much nature?



The odds ratios (OR) and 95% confidence intervals of reporting good health and high well-being as a function of nature visits and selected covariates (controlling for all other covariates).

Socioeconomic-related inequalities in health tend to be lower in communities with most access to greenspace

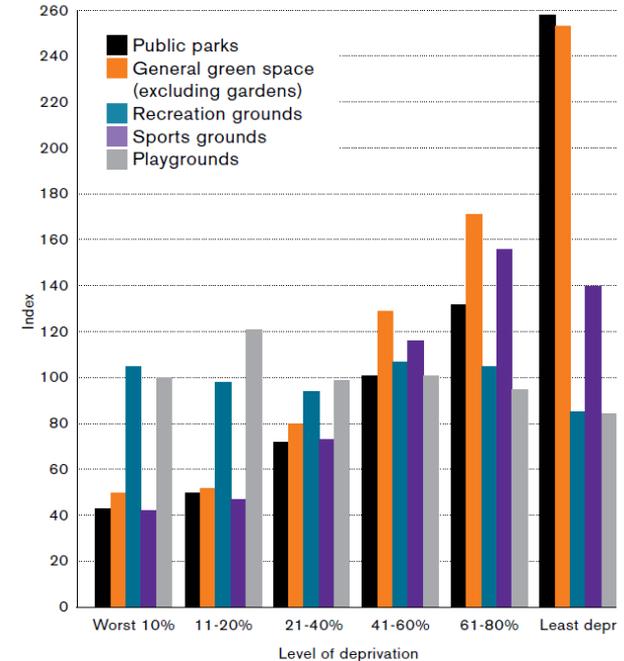
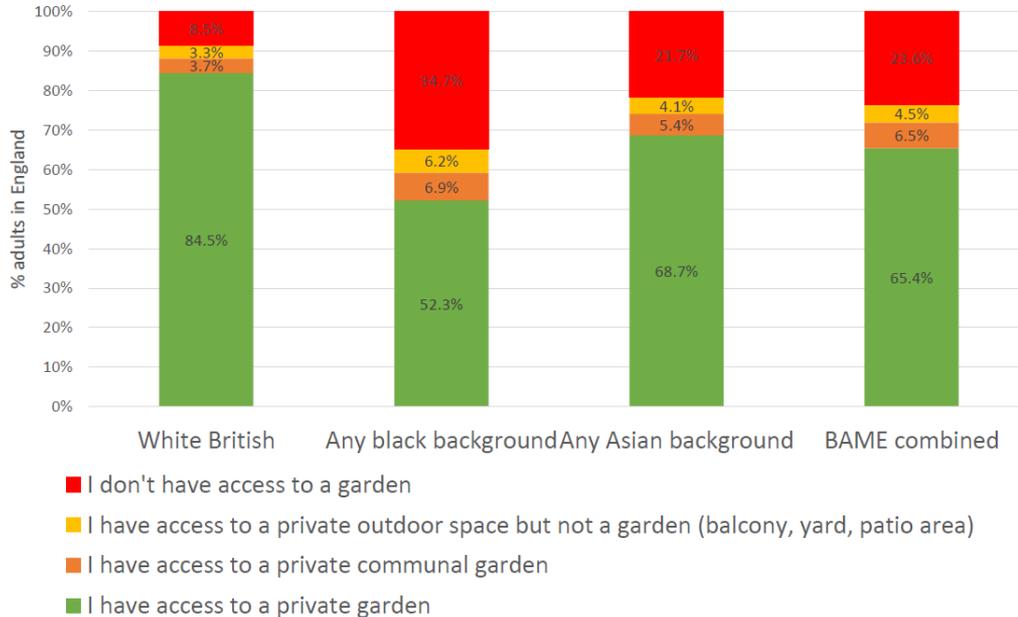


Incidence rate ratios with 95% confidence intervals, for deaths from circulatory disease in income deprivation quartiles 2 (red), 3 (pink) and 4 (blue) relative to income deprivation quartile 1 (least deprived), stratified by green space exposure group.

Greenspace inequality / health inequality

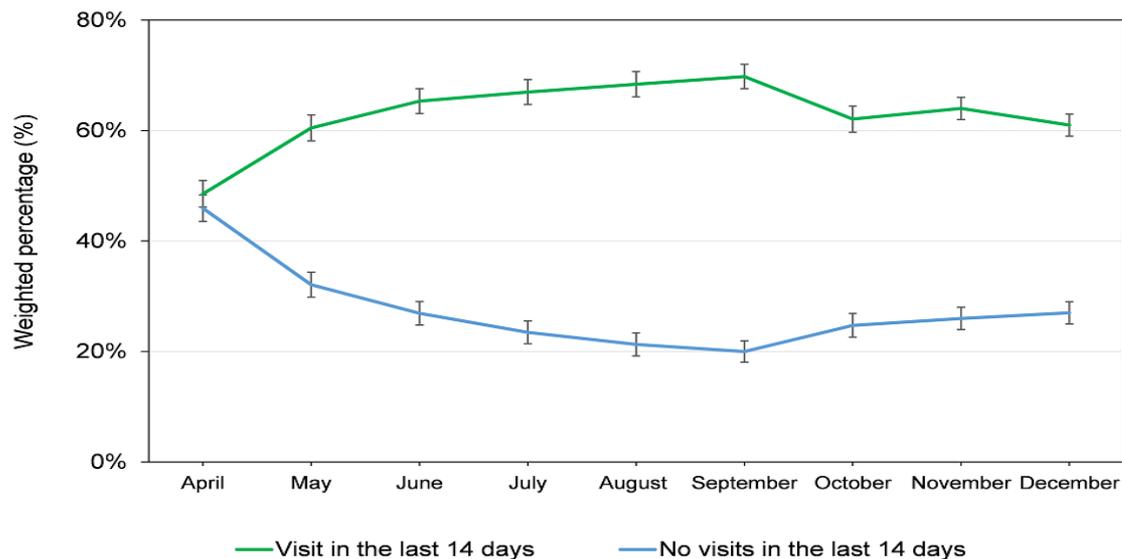
BUT... not everyone has access to good quality greenspace or a green public realm

Garden access - adults in England (MENE 2014-2019)



Index - All measures based on area (hectares) of green space per 1,000 population.

The proportion of adults in England who had taken a visit to a green and natural space during the previous fortnight. (April to December 2020)



What do we do?

How do we move from this...



Some key recommendations

- Design and manage local green (and blue) space as critical assets for maintaining and supporting health and wellbeing in local communities
- Prioritise improving access to greenspace and creating greener communities especially in areas of deprivation
- Support meaningful engagement across local government functions and the community to understand the actual and potential local benefits of greenspace and reveal the complex and diverse ways greenspace is thought about and used
- Identify and factor in resilient funding arrangements for the maintenance of greenspace as early as possible, so that it can continue to provide benefits in the long term

Thank you

For regular updates from PHE's Healthy Places team, please see:
<https://khub.net/group/healthypeoplehealthyplaces>