BHFNC 14th annual conference

Creative Partnerships: Promoting physical activity by stealth

Sharing practice booklet
About us
The BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health (BHFNC) was established in 1999 and is funded by the British Heart Foundation. We are also part of the prestigious School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences at Loughborough University.

The BHFNC is well recognised across the UK for its leadership in the promotion of physical activity and health. We are committed to developing and translating research evidence to improve and extend the practice of promoting physical activity in the UK.

We do this by supporting professionals across a range of sectors including health care, education, transport, sport and leisure with practical tools to promote physical activity. To find out more about the work we do visit our website www.bhfactive.org.uk.

Sharing practice
The BHFNC believes there is great benefit in sharing information about different physical activity projects and programmes as it enables professionals working in a variety of sectors to learn from others’ successes and challenges in developing and delivering physical activity interventions.

Sharing practice has the potential to promote and replicate good practice, reduce duplication of mistakes and enable professionals and organisations involved in planning and commissioning of physical activity programmes to make informed decisions about which initiatives to adopt or develop.
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About this booklet

Each year the BHFNC captures examples of physical activity projects and programmes that reflect the theme of the annual conference.

This booklet includes examples of innovative physical activity projects and programmes, some of which were displayed at the 14th BHFNC annual conference, *Creating partnerships: Promoting physical activity by stealth*.

The case studies summarised in this booklet are examples of ‘stealth interventions’ where:

- the primary objective or end-goal of the intervention, movement or cause may be unrelated to increasing physical activity levels, but a supplementary outcome of the project is a change in physical activity behaviour
- there is a focus of people’s intrinsic motivations/passions to attract them to physical activity.
Beat the Street - Reading
Intelligent Health

Aims and objectives
Beat the Street is designed to reduce traffic congestion through a fun, community-wide walking competition. It aims to build community cohesion, raise awareness of the issues around physical inactivity and over-dependence on cars for short journeys. The project also aims to assess how far a community can travel on foot over the course of 4-6 weeks.

Overview
Beat the Street Reading was designed to engage the least active members of the community in line with one of the key priorities for NHS Reading Clinical Commissioning Groups. A whole community approach was taken to avoid stigmatising or discriminating against the least active people.

The Beat the Street project takes place in the local environment, on the streets and in the local parks. The project is designed around a ‘real world walking game’. Personalised smart cards are touched onto electronic sensors called ‘Walk Tracking Units’ to see how far a community can travel on foot over the course of 4-6 weeks. As part of the challenge, schools and businesses can be invited to compete against each other to see who can accumulate the most points. The teams compete to walk the furthest, incentivised by team prizes, individual prizes and raising money for charity.

Beat the Street Reading launched at the end of May 2014 and ran for five weeks. The idea of the initiative is that it acts as a catalyst for longer term behaviour change, nudging people towards a different way of travelling to work or to school and encouraging them to explore walks and parks in their local area.

Evaluation/research methodology
The purpose of the evaluation was to establish changes in physical activity levels amongst participants, and in particular patients with long term conditions. Baseline data was collected at registration via the registration website, or on postcards for people without access to the internet. Data collected included demographic information: age, gender, postcode, answers to the Single Item Physical Activity Question and travel diaries. A follow-up survey was conducted which repeated the Single Item question and travel diaries. Additional questions were asked about attitudes and people’s perceptions and experiences of Beat the Street. The evaluation was carried out by independent evaluators The Evidence Centre. Process evaluation was conducted by Intelligent Health.
Results

- Fifty teams competed in the competition, 30 of which were primary schools.
- The community walked a total distance of 244,537 miles.
- The majority of journeys were on the way to school or work.
- A 10% increase was seen in the number of people meeting the Chief Medical Officers’ physical activity guidelines.
- The main reason for participation was having fun but the majority cited that they had gained health benefits from participating.

Tips for professionals

1. Whole population approaches help to create maximum exposure in the media.
2. You should persist with time and efforts to involve GPs in the project and get them on board.
3. You should involve as many stakeholders, communities and schools as possible when siting the sensors to ensure they are positioned in the most appropriate locations.

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Can a Geocaching Intervention Increase Physical Activity in the Community?
University of Brighton

Aims and objectives
The study aimed to increase physical activity in members of a village community, in particular families, by carrying out geocaching activity. The study also aimed to determine maintenance of geocaching, motivators and barriers to uptake and the feasibility and acceptability of geocaching as a physical activity intervention. The potential reach of geocaching within a community and characteristics associated with people interested in geocaching were also determined.

Overview
Geocaching is a GPS treasure hunt type game, where co-ordinates of ‘caches’ are published online, downloaded onto devices with a GPS capacity such as smartphones and found by the ‘geocachers’. Caches are hidden by other geocachers and contain a paper logbook and sometimes swappable items such as small toys. The finds can be logged online to build a profile. This provides a fun, interactive and sociable activity to engage children while walking.

Evaluation/research methodology
The study involved a five week intervention and a five week follow-up period. Local magazines, flyers, posters, presentations and information sessions were used to market geocaching to the local community. During the intervention 28 caches were located within a 1 mile radius of the village centre, with participants given sufficient information to set up a geocaching account and to begin geocaching.

Although targeted at families, children were not included in the data collection or analysis due to ethical and methodological issues. The study measured baseline and follow-up physical activity (IPAQ short form) and variables of Theory of Planned Behaviour (5-point Likert scale questionnaire). Geocaching activity was monitored using the geocaching website. Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted post intervention to determine the participants’ views and experiences of geocaching. Data collection and evaluation was carried out by the main researcher.

Results
A total of 90 individuals (40 adults and 50 children) took part in the geocaching intervention. There were no significant changes in physical activity measured at follow-up by the IPAQ. This could be due to the participants already being physically active (at baseline 93% of participants were sufficiently active to meet UK guidelines, with 40% meeting the ‘high’ category defined by IPAQ), therefore geocaching may have replaced other physical activities.
rather than being an addition to normal activities. Also, the pilot nature of the study was such that it was not adequately powered to detect significant changes in physical activity. The favourable attitudes and intentions to geocaching at baseline may have become more realistic (as these were reduced) after encountering barriers to geocaching. However attitudes to walking in the countryside were improved. 83% of participants took part in at least one geocaching trip during the intervention, with 27% of participants geocaching during the five week follow up. 75% of caches found were located in countryside areas.

The majority of participants independent of family and age factors reported enjoying their geocaching experience. During the telephone interviews parents made positive statements about the time spent socially as a family and contact with nature, recognising that geocaching provided a purpose for their walk and helped to motivate their children. The children enjoyed the treasure hunt side of geocaching whilst adults enjoyed discovering new places. The barriers identified were lack of time, problems with mobile technology and non-successful geocaching trips. Smartphones may have unreliable data and GPS signal in countryside areas. Future studies may benefit from loaning out GPS devices to overcome this barrier. To ensure a successful first geocaching experience, greater education of the basics of geocaching should be included in interventions. As well as presentation or information sessions, participants could be directed to the ‘Learn’ section of the geocaching website or take part in a led geocaching introductory walk. The motivators and barriers for geocaching identified in this and previous studies support the constructs of the self-determination theory (SDT). Future geocaching research should/could be based on the SDT and actively support the needs for competence, autonomy and relatedness in the design of interventions.

83% of participants had primary school aged children. The most successful means of attracting interest in the study was via the school assemblies and subsequent flyer distribution (54% of enquiries). Also, those participants with younger children had more positive attitudes to geocaching and were more likely to consider it a suitable activity for their families.

**Tips for professionals**

1. Geocaching is an easily marketable activity due to its low cost, worldwide accessibility (currently over 2.5 million caches) and minimal set-up required.
2. Objective measures of physical activity may be more appropriate for geocaching, eg, using GPS to measure distance walked. Future studies of geocaching should also include measures of wellbeing.
3. A school-based intervention teaching children how to geocache with a home/parent support element may be most effective.

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Come Outside!
Natural Resources Wales

Aims and objectives
Come Outside! aims to inspire, motivate and support young people across Wales to enjoy, experience and care for the natural environment. The programme develops the skills of young people who aren’t in education, employment or training to increase their career or education opportunities in the future. The support offered enhances people’s confidence and skills to access the outdoors and subsequently promotes the development of a more physically active lifestyle.

Overview
Based on a model to develop sustainable participation in outdoor activities, Come Outside! works in 12 Community First areas in Wales. These areas have been identified by the Welsh Government as those facing the highest levels of deprivation. The Community Development Team, activity and outdoor providers work collaboratively to identify target groups and discuss the activities they do already, perspectives on the outdoors and barriers to participation in outdoor activities.

The feedback is used to develop taster sessions which aim to capture the initial interest of the target group for example community edible trails, geocaching, nature trails, forest schools, bushcraft and woodland management. Following these taster sessions, the target groups return to their communities to promote the specific activity.

A group who participated in foraging during their initial taster sessions returned to their community with an interest in what edible food was freely available in their community. In partnership with ‘Egg Seeds’, ‘Edible Landscaping’ these groups are developing community maps to share outlining where and when food can be foraged. They will complete a health walk leader course that will enable them to deliver edible trail walks to the local community.

Evaluation/research methodology
Attitudes were assessed through a quarterly survey and complemented by qualitative data from reflective diaries, video interviews and conversations. Outdoor activity session attendance is recorded and attitudes towards the sessions are assessed through paper/app versions of a survey. Data collection is primarily conducted by the programme team with assistance from the programme participants as a method to develop their skills to measure the impact of the work that they are doing. A process evaluation aims to understand what works and the impact of the process on outputs and partners.
Results
Participants in the programme have shown a renewed interest in the outdoors and physical activity and improvements in confidence and motivation. Families have reported spending more time participating in outdoor activities. The programme has now been included into ten work programmes. The delivery of PE lessons has changed by placing a greater emphasis on parent involvement in children’s outdoor learning programmes.

The key results of the projects are:
- 620 people engaged with the project
- 146 sessions were run
- 383 participants were classified as less physically active when they joined.
- 67% of participants stated that participation in Come Outside! sessions is the only reason that they are physically active

Tips for professionals
1. Identify the needs of participants to ensure that all activities are specifically designed to meet these and any potential barriers can be addressed.
2. Work in partnership; developing partnerships is essential to ensure you have the right expertise.
3. By understanding the common barriers to physical activity in some stereotypes, strategies can be developed to overcome these and motivate those whose physical activity participation is low.

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Ecominds
Mind

Aims and objectives
Ecominds had four broad outcomes:

• more people enjoying and benefiting from the natural environment resulting in improved mental and physical wellbeing
• improved community spaces and local environments through environment-based projects
• improved access to the natural environment via a range of projects and activities
• less stigma and discrimination towards marginalised groups within local communities resulting in less social exclusion and more social integration.

Overview
Mind has a long track record of championing the use of nature for its mental health benefits. In 2007 it launched a campaign to highlight the growing evidence for ecotherapy, an intervention that improves mental and physical health by supporting people to be active outdoors doing gardening, food growing or environmental work. Following on from this, in 2009 Mind launched its five year Ecominds scheme, a £7.5 million grant scheme that funded 130 environmental projects in England with support from the Big Lottery Fund.

Ecominds was more than going for a walk in the park or mowing the lawn in the garden. It provided regular activity that:

• was facilitated and structured
• focused on doing an activity rather than health (you leave your diagnosis at the gate)
• was outdoors in a green environment
• related to appreciating and exploring the natural world
• happened over time
• involved contact with other people.

One project, Idle Valley Ecominds near Bassetlaw, was located in an area with high levels of poverty and deprivation - where 12% of the population experience common mental health problems. Participants learnt how to manage woodland, wetland and meadow habitats, maintained wildlife gardens, as well as trying beekeeping, willow weaving and green woodwork. The project was run by staff who were supported to work sensitively with people with mental health problems and all volunteers received mental health awareness training by the project officer.
Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group recognised the impact of Idle Valley on its participants and has awarded new funding for the project to run in a partnership between Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust and Bassetlaw Mind.

Evaluation/research methodology

• An independent evaluation was carried out by the University of Essex School of Biological Sciences and Essex Sustainability Institute. Composite questionnaires were developed composing of a mixture of internationally recognised standardised questionnaires (WEMWBS, RSES, POMS, CNS). A total of 803 participants took part in the evaluation.

• Research on the economic benefits of Ecominds projects by NEF Consulting focused on case studies detailing five typical Ecominds participants.

• A survey of general practitioners (GPs), nurses and clinical commissioning group professionals about their awareness and opinions on ecotherapy.

Results

• 12,071 people participated in the programme, 2,695 of whom continued to employment or re-enrolment in education.

• 69% of people experienced significant increases in mental wellbeing.*

• 62% noted an increase in self-esteem and 59% noted an improvement in their perceived health.*

• Physical improvements to local spaces included 20,000 flowers and 1,000 trees planted, 26 disused pieces of land brought back into community use, 10 projects created new paths, 15 projects maintained pathways and 12 projects provided public seating.

• 44% of GPs wanted to find out more about social prescribing - a way of linking patients with non-medical interventions within the community - and 46% wanted to find out about early interventions for people at risk of developing mental health problems.

• Reduced state spending through lower welfare benefits and healthcare spending - equal to £1.46 million per year for the 254 people who found full-time work through the scheme.

Tips for professionals

1. All projects worked equally well regardless of the specific activity, which suggests that the benefits of all types of ecotherapy are similar.

2. Ecotherapy can achieve multiple outcomes including obesity and physical activity improvements, the uptake of education and training, pathways to employment and enhancement of the local environment.

3. Develop good working relationships with a broad range of partners within health and social care to build local knowledge of the project, its benefits and quality. This helps to offer alternative choices and support for people and referrals.

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Aims and objectives
The project aims to establish street play and children playing out in estates as a feature of community life in Hackney and encourage patterns of healthy behaviour in children. A further aim is to increase contact between neighbours to overcome isolation and the create a friendlier, safer community environment.

Overview
Following a successful Council Pilot of Play Streets in 2012-13, the Council commissioned Hackney Play Association to deliver a one-year street play programme ending in September 2014.

The first strand was to increase uptake of Play Street sessions both in residential streets and outside schools. Play Street sessions are weekly or monthly road closures for up to three hours, which allow children to play freely in the street. Street closures are organised and stewarded by residents/parents. The Play Street model is based on a model developed by Playing Out, the national not-for-profit street play organisation (www.playingout.net). The uptake nationally of this model of street play is also being supported by Play England and the Department of Health.

The second strand was to support parent-led play sessions in green spaces or paved areas within two estates, without the need for formal road closures. By establishing street play in the community children can incidentally achieve higher levels of physical activity.

Community engagement efforts were focused in the most deprived areas of Hackney, South and East parts of the Borough and parts of Dalston. The programme involved empowering local parents to be the organisers and enablers of Play Street and Estate Play sessions. This was achieved through information sessions for parents in community locations, for example in schools and children centres, giving information about the project through a video, the application process and written guidance to run regular Play Street sessions (also known as Playing Out Sessions). These sessions successfully recruited volunteer organisers (usually parents) who in turn recruited other volunteer organisers from their street/estate.

Organisers were given extensive support and practical assistance. This included face-to-face meetings, emails, phone support, attending residents meetings and initial Play Street sessions and inclusion in a peer-to-peer Facebook group which now has over 200 members. Estate play organisers were given additional support in the form of playworker assistance at their first four to five sessions.
Evaluation/research methodology
Quantitative data was gathered about the outputs and outcomes of the initiative, with the aim of collating evidence about the potential difference that street play initiatives could make to the lives of children and families. The data will examine the impact of the project on children’s opportunities to play out close to home, and whether play street sessions affect the sense of neighbourliness in an area.

During the first street play sessions (for both the Play Street and Estate Play model), face-to-face baseline surveys are carried out with adult participants. Follow-up surveys will be carried out after around six months of sessions. Street organisers collect data on the number of child and adult participants and the number of cars being diverted. Detailed interviews are also carried out with volunteer organisers and partner organisations.

Results
• A cultural shift has taken place away from the idea that streets are solely for cars, towards the idea streets can be a shared community space.
• 146 Play Street and Estate Play sessions took place totalling 8,087 child hours of street play
• 1,593 children took part in sessions.
• 30 Play Streets running Playing Out sessions in Hackney as of October 2014 - the second highest number in the UK after Bristol.
• 1,032 adults were involved in sessions including 180 adult volunteers.
• Delivered 20 community engagement activities including stay and play sessions, parents coffee mornings, ward forums, residents meetings, events like Living Streets Street Festival.
• An average of nine cars were redirected per playing session.
• Collaboration between departments, ie, Streetscene (Highways), Public Health, Children’s Services, Transport planners, Hackney Homes.
• Hackney Streetscene department is facilitating a Pan-London Play Streets Group involving eight London boroughs, to meet and share best practice.
• Four housing associations actively supporting Play Street and street play initiatives.

Tips for professionals
1. School-hosted Play Street sessions effectively model the idea to mass audiences of children and parents, engage parents in their children’s play and increase school management’s awareness of the benefits of play.
2. Identify the existing key partners working with families in the area to provide support for residents if/when social issues come to light.
3. Try creating stepping stone outcomes towards running Play Streets sessions for example, recruiting parents to become advocates in their communities - showing the promo video at their local church or trying out pavement play in their street.

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Hackney Wild Walks
London Borough of Hackney and Hackney Play Association

Aims and objectives
Hackney Wild Walks primarily aims to entice children outdoors by making walking fun and getting children and their parents exploring their community. The three walks were designed with children in mind with colourful easy-to-read maps, friendly characters and instructions full of rhymes and riddles. Families were encouraged to ‘explore more outdoors’ by making the most of Hackney’s green spaces and discovering nearby places to play out. The project aims to increase children’s ‘roaming range’ by giving parents a tool to make walking more fun and encouraging them to support their children’s independent exploration as they get older. By helping families to have fun exploring, the project aims to reduce sedentary behaviour and increase the number of people getting active outdoors in Hackney.

Overview
Hackney is Inner London’s greenest borough, with beautiful parks, woodlands and waterways. This project sought to capitalise on these existing assets to get more people active outside, connecting with nature and building a connection to their communities. Hackney Wild Walks tapped into the ‘fun theory’, the principle that families and children were more likely to do something if it’s fun. The walks:

- were targeted, the starting point for each walk is in an area with high levels of childhood obesity in reception year
- are manageable for children aged 4-5
- follow a route that lead walkers to discover existing facilities that can be used to increase their connection with nature, improve physical activity or improve general health
- are accessible all year round.

After collaborating with Outdoor People to research the routes, maps were produced and widely distributed as a pull out in Hackney Today, the council’s newspaper. Physical and online copies were also made available utilising existing council services. Outdoor People also run workshops to support professionals and volunteers working with families across the borough. The workshops provide advice on how to promote walking and exploring to families in the three target areas as well as offering a platform to share good practice.

Results
The positive response to Wild Walks (online and in print) suggests that they were well received by residents. It has helped to raise the profile of Hackney’s parks and outdoor spaces as assets...
to be used for exploring, playing, having fun and being active with residents, members of the
council and policy makers.

- 113,000 copies of the Wild Walks pull-out were distributed through newspapers,
libraries, schools, children’s centres, park offices and Hackney’s markets. Copies are
still available via Outdoor People’s market stall and online through the Family
Information Service, Outdoor People website and the Council’s website.
- The wild-walks webpage has had over 2,200 unique visitors and is still being visited on
a daily basis more than four months after the guide was launched.
- Six Wild Walks Workshops for professionals and volunteers, plus children have taken
place. These were promoted through the Children’s Centres, the local paper, social
media and direct emails.
- One additional workshop with autistic young people, their care staff and youth workers,
has taken place.

Evaluation/research methodology
As this is a small (£12k) project, Outdoor People is drafting a report rather than full evaluation,
to inform policy makers and councillors and shape promotion of physical activity across the
borough. It will look at short to medium term impact, including feedback from social media
and reported conversations, survey of workshop participants and observation of participants,
children and carers involved in walks. Evaluation of the first workshops showed 100%
satisfaction. Staff in children’s centres, schools, youth clubs and play providers said they had
developed their confidence and skills in leading walks. Each of the 60 participants completed a
feedback survey and made commitments to continue Wild Walks and take at least ten children
on one of the walks.

There have also been opportunities for them to connect with a wider network of support,
increase their understanding of the barriers to playing outdoors and how to overcome these. In
future this could inform the design of the public realm and links between services that support
the spaces where children grow up.

Tips for professionals
1. Focus on user experience. If the product is something that people find attractive and
fun they will want to use it. A light-hearted tone that aims to entertain as well as
inform can be a welcome change and cut through the mass of health messages that
parents receive.
2. Work your assets. Look at what you’ve got and think about how you can use those
things to your advantage - including physical assets like parks and adventure
playgrounds but also partners, health champions and communications networks.
3. Make it local. Ensure that your target audience know that this is a product designed for
local people, by local people. Aim to bring out the personality of the borough and its
residents.

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Hopwood Park Regeneration Project  
Friends of Hopwood Park

**Aims and objectives**  
Hopwood Park Regeneration Project primarily aimed to improve the facilities and safety of the recreation ground which has been underused because of its poor condition caused by neglect. Additionally, it aimed to improve social cohesion, reduce anti-social behaviour and inspire residents to participate in community activities.

**Overview**  
Hopwood Park Regeneration Project began in 2011 securing several funding bids to support the regeneration work. The funding helped to improve play facilities for children aged 8-13, public access, pathway resurfacing, the general maintenance of the park and the creation of a wildflower meadow which has proved to be the park’s most successful activity. All of this work has established the park as a focal point in the community.

The Friends of Hopwood Park organises a range of activities, events and projects to engage different community sectors. These are publicised through leaflets, local newspaper flyers, activity posters and social media. Such activities include craft activities, meadow maintenance events, family activities, games and attractions. These are often community-led fundraising events to improve the social cohesion and community feeling, with the proceeds reinvested to further develop the park.

The project places emphasis on community involvement. They seek to understand what local people want from the area by consulting with community groups, residents and businesses early in the process. Community members are also encouraged to attend the regular planning meetings. Friends of Hopwood Park has utilised its strong community links to reach volunteers and support from local schools, Rochdale Borough Council, Heywood Fire Station, local businesses, charity groups and residential homes.

**Evaluation/research methodology**  
Evaluation of the park takes place on two levels, general park usage and individual projects. Total park usage is monitored twice per year during spring and autumn for one week. Questionnaires are distributed to ask about current usage, reasons for using the park and frequency of use. The website and consultation/planning meetings provide regular feedback and all constructive comments are recorded.

Specific feedback is also given on individual projects such as the Wildflower Meadow and Summer Holiday Arts & Crafts. For each project, community needs are identified and the
impact of the project will be assessed. Data is collected before the project and then at yearly intervals through a variety of methods including questionnaires, feedback forms, website and social media pages and attendance records. The evaluation is conducted by the trustees and key partners.

Results
There has been improved access to a range of community facilities, activities and events by local residents leading to clear improvements in wellbeing. Their involvement in activities and local projects helped to increase the sense of community. Input from the Hopwood Park Regeneration Project has seen a significant increase in users of all ages making extremely good use of the facilities for exercise and recreation. The Wildflower Meadow has attracted the most volunteers and is responsible for the notable increase in wildlife population. The park, as a focal point of the community has experienced overall improvement.

In 2014 the project hopes to deliver 10 community engagement events, which is a 50% increase since 2011. Active member numbers has also seen a 50% increase per year since 2011.

Tips for practitioners
1. Get to know the community to tackle the problems that matter to them. This will help you gain their trust and support.
2. Try to establish the group and its credibility early as this will make funding applications easier.

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Loughborough Parkour Project
Charnwood Borough Council

Aims and objectives
The Parkour project sought to identify young people who were either engaged in or on the cusp of committing anti-social behaviour (ASB). Parkour also known as freerunning or Art du Deplacement aims to modify behaviour to reduce incidences of reported ASB within the target area.

Overview
Parkour is a non-competitive physical discipline which trains participants to move freely over and through any terrain principally through running, jumping and climbing. The sport aims to build confidence, determination, self-discipline, self-reliance and responsibility for one’s actions.

Parkour was initiated to address the lack of youth diversionary activities in the Thorpe Acre area of Loughborough as part of Charnwood Borough Council’s corporate plan. Young people are referred by organisations such as Youth Service and Youth Offending Service on an ongoing basis. The project aims to reduce social exclusion and deprivation in high priority neighbourhoods.

In 2013 two Parkour sessions per week were delivered jointly by Charnwood Borough Council Sport & Active Recreation Team and Leicester Parkour Association, in partnership with the Police, Youth Services, Youth Offending Team and Supporting Leicestershire Families who provided support to improve the attendance at the sessions which was sporadic among some participants. Sessions were initially funded by Public Health, Leicestershire County Council, Charnwood Borough Council, Basic Command Unit, Police Crime Commissioning and Proceeds of Crime funding.

Evaluation/research methodology
Data collected was used to identify the number of young people engaged in the Parkour activity and the number of ASB issues in the area compared to the previous 12 months. A search of ASB records for the target area via Sentinel was conducted and compared for the two time periods.

Results
In total, 58 young people attended the Parkour activities, 45 male and 13 female. There had been a significant reduction in reported ASB issues from 62 incidents in the first monitoring period to 36 incidents in the second, a 58% reduction within the core Thorpe Acre area.
Parkour has continued to generate interest among young people throughout Charnwood. As a result, £40,000 of additional funding from section 106 was secured for the development of a purpose built Parkour facility in Loughborough. The application was supported by young people who played a major role during the consultation on design briefs. The new Parkour facility was officially opened on the 18th of October 2014 and young people from across the Borough of Charnwood are now accessing the facility.

Four young people from the ‘referred into’ group have progressed to a Universal Parkour session where they continue to participate. One success story is of a young person who when initially referred had no career or educational aspirations even turning up with non-matching shoes and ripped trousers. This person has trained so hard he now aspires to be a Parkour instructor and is thinking of life after school.

Youth Services, SLF team and local police has been instrumental in the project moving forward. Positive working relationships with existing and new partners have continued to develop.

Tips for professionals
1. Engaging with partners is useful as having several agencies on board enables the project to get off the ground and be successful.
2. Use ‘support workers’ to support attendance as this tends to be sporadic in the young people on the project due to their chaotic lifestyles and peer pressure applied by others.

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Aims and objectives
The National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) aims to embrace community cohesion by bringing people from all walks of life together for the benefit of their physical, mental and social well being. They want to change the traditional image that a leisure centre is a place for ‘lycra clad sporty types’ to a place suitable for all community dwellers to experience, enjoy and be proud of. NERS aims to offer additional physical activity opportunities for referred clients, particularly men who traditionally were dropping out of programme.

Overview
The existing NERS scheme in Wales mainly offers gym, circuits and water-based activities but it was recognised that these were not suitable for all referrals especially males. In 2012 permission was given by the Council for NERS to develop the ground outside Porthmadog Leisure Centre into a community garden. A regular group of 12 people attended the gardening sessions with up to 22 people engaged at different time points. Following an initial period where the groundwork was laid, the beds were filled with compost provided by the local council and crops including beans, peas, kale, tomatoes and blackcurrants were grown. Customers of the leisure centre helped themselves to the produce and gave a donation towards the project. Additional physical activity opportunities have been introduced as rewards to increase the take up and retention to the programme. Examples of these opportunities are trips out, fundraising walks, fishing, golf etc.

The scheme has been used to offer alternatives for referred clients and encourage other community members to share the resource. The scheme successfully engaged schools, day centres, adult services and the general public. Future plans to develop space around another leisure centre and additional spaces are in place.

Evaluation/research methodology
This project has not been subject to a formal evaluation. Nevertheless the local authority are going to continue to offer the NERS programme land to develop into further community gardens to promote changing places changing lives. Some case studies were collected for the referrals on the NERS programme.
Results
The usage of previously open unused ground has significantly increased which has had a positive impact on the local environment. Schools have made a number of educational visits to the garden, even using the produce collected in the garden to do cookery demonstrations. Many garden users have gone on to develop their own gardens into a ‘grow your own’ patch which has had a positive impact on improving their diet. Additionally, the number of visits to the leisure centre increased as a result of this development.

This initiative has reached its potential of embracing community cohesion by bringing people from all walks of life together for the benefit of their physical, mental and social wellbeing. The leisure centre is now perceived as a venue in the community for all to experience, enjoy and be proud of.

Tips for professionals
1. Get buy-in from local authority or landowners.
2. Engage with the local community early to ensure all their needs are listened to.
3. There are numerous small grants available so make sure you ask for help.

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The Green Gym
The Conservation Volunteers

Aims and objectives
The Watford Green Gym® was established:

1. to develop a local and regular group volunteering opportunity to benefit the health and wellbeing of local residents
2. to improve the green environment and biodiversity in Colne River Park in Watford.

The project was developed due to the need to improve Colne River Park for recreation and biodiversity. Additionally the project aimed to address the priorities set out by Hertfordshire District Council in their Health and Wellbeing Strategy, specifically to promote a healthy weight, increase physical activity and improve mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Overview
Green Gyms® transform people’s health and wellbeing through participation in outdoor conservation activity. They are group-based, physically challenging and result in improved green spaces for the wider public benefit. Regular attendees increase their activity over time which results in improved fitness. They also develop a social, or ‘peer support’ network, and have higher levels of contact with nature. This powerful combination helps them to develop resilience against mental and physical health problems, and through learning how to manage green space, new skills, knowledge and confidence.

In Watford a Green Gym Project Officer ran two sessions of practical activity per week, involving volunteers from the local area to improve the environment at Colne River Park. Elements were included in the sessions that promoted social activity within the group such as tea breaks and a relaxed atmosphere that encouraged chatting. Volunteers in the project helped to create a wealth of wildlife habitats including new woodland and hedgerows, wildflower meadows, otter holts and improved access to nature.

With an average of 15 volunteers per week there was a variety of support needs within the group including learning disabilities, stroke victims, physical issues, and mental health problems. Tasks undertaken by volunteers, such as digging, sawing, raking etc, meant that they significantly increased their levels of physical activity and fitness.

The local community volunteers were recruited through the TCV website, social media, newsletters, posters, leaflets, media releases and face-to-face meetings as well as the websites of local partners such as Watford Borough Council, Watford Mind and Watford & Three Rivers Trust. Volunteers were also referred by a number of referral partners such as Turning Point, Vinvolved, Do It and Haven Day Centre to name a few.
Evaluation/research methodology
The evaluation sought to identify improvements in participants’ short term health as a result of being involved in the project. Participation in activities was recorded on TCV’s secure online activity database. Participants completed the General Practice Physical Activity Questionnaire and the Edinburgh Warwick Mental Wellbeing Survey when they joined and again at four and twelve weeks. Survey returns were complemented by interviews to produce case studies of individual participants. The Evaluation was conducted by the TCV Project Manager as advised by Oxford Brookes University and Mind.

Results
• In 4 years over 276 participants contributed over 12,000 volunteer hours to create a wealth of wildlife habitats.
• 66% of participants self-reported an increase in overall physical activity.
• 56% self-reported improved wellbeing.
• 99% reported that they had gained confidence and 94% said they had learnt new skills.

A volunteer said: “Green Gym is a great physical work-out. There is good companionship and it’s nice to be working outdoors surrounded by greenery. It keeps you in a level mental state and avoids depression setting in. Since volunteering I feel better mentally and physically and I have made new friendships”.

The group became self-sustaining on the 1st April 2014 and the Watford Green Gym now has an active volunteer base of 30, with an average attendance of 12 participants joining on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The group has continued to successfully run two Green Gym sessions weekly. Watford Green Gym is one of 120 community Green Gyms in the UK.

As a result of the environmental improvements to the park, its usage has increased by the local community. There has also been an increase in the use of adjacent greenspaces, community gardens and habitats. Anti-social behaviour in the area has also reduced alongside a general increase in the sense of pride and community since the project began.

Tips for professionals
1. Offering multiple benefits to participants, eg, learning new skills, social inclusion, helps ensure a high retention rate among participants.
2. The inclusion of people with no identified health problems and people with learning disabilities, long term physical conditions and mental health problems helps to build community cohesion.
3. In order to get participants to run the Green Gym themselves try and involve a number of people to spread the workload and arrange peer support from other volunteers already running Green Gyms elsewhere.

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Us Girls Alive
StreetGames

Aims and objectives
The purpose of the project is to create lasting friendship among girls and young women aged 16-25 living in deprived areas. Us Girls Alive aims to improve wellbeing, resilience and physical activity levels as well as the provision of opportunities to volunteer and participate in training.

Overview
Us Girls Alive are lifestyle clubs aimed at women from low income families and areas of deprivation. Currently running in 16 areas, the project sets up fortnightly lifestyle groups for up to 15 young women giving them access to a wide variety of local services and wellbeing sessions. Examples from the Us Girls Alive project in Chorley are:

• confidence building, self-esteem and raising aspirations - creating dream books and balloon releases to let go of negative emotions and experiences
• nutrition, healthy eating - smoothie and juice making, healthy breakfast, cooking one pot meals and healthy pancake day
• physical activity - Zumba, street dance, Wii fit, circuit training and pop up tennis
• outer confidence - manicures, hand treatments, hair braiding and styling

In each area, StreetGames appoints a local organisation who receive an induction and a starter kit to get things going. New participants are attracted to the programme by outreach work, working in partnership with other local groups and through word of mouth. Within each club four girls are identified and trained as Us Girls Motivators to support other women and girls to engage with Us Girls Alive clubs and to take a greater role in organising the sessions. As the group grows in confidence they progressively take the responsibility for organising events away from the local organisation.

Evaluation/research methodology
BHFNC is undertaking the overall evaluation. The study includes baseline and 12-month surveys and qualitative data collection through interviews, project visits and focus groups with Motivators, participants and partners. The output of the evaluation includes an interim report, final report and case studies.

The overall service delivery was measured by the number of sessions, session attendance, reviews of the activity programmes and the nature of training and qualifications on offer to participants. Individual case studies were used to assess the opportunities, quality of service
and the relationships that had been built. Changes in physical activity were measured using questionnaires, diaries and pedometers and a questionnaire was used to assess health literacy, self-esteem and confidence in relation to physical activity participation.

**Results**
Us Girls Alive has:

- built positive and empowering relationships between young women in a social setting
- increased physical activity levels and the number of women achieving and/or getting closer to the physical activity guidelines
- increased health literacy, self-esteem and confidence of young women in relation to physical activity participation
- contributed to increasing life expectancy and reduction in premature mortality in areas with particularly high health inequalities
- integrated with emerging public health commissioning structures and systems
- set up 30 clubs, running 600 sessions
- attracted 600 participants totalling 6,000 attendances
- had a positive impact on individuals - one such case is a participant who joined the project with low confidence and self-esteem due to bullying; she has now started a mobile hairdressing business and planning to write a book about bullying
- encouraged girls in Chorley to make healthier life choices, participants have joined the local gym, taken up pilates classes, quit smoking or started healthy eating regimes with the aim of losing weight.

**Tips for professionals**
1. The style, timing, location and cost of the sessions are critical and therefore the planning stages should be informed by insight.
2. Young women who are not inclined to be physically active can still find it fun and rewarding when the environment is supportive.
3. Investing in volunteers is an effective way of sustaining outcomes.

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50 things to do before you are 11¾
National Trust

Aims and Objectives
The main project aim is to get children active and enjoying the natural environment. It also aims to:

- increase awareness of the outdoors and nature
- engage families
- explore new areas
- encourage team work
- build confidence.

Overview
‘50 things’ is a free initiative, created to address the results of the National Childhood Report in 2009 which identified a decline in physical activity of children. 50 things to do before you are 11¾ is a list of outdoor activities put together by children all over the country. The list aims to get children outdoors and engaged with nature by asking them to tick off each activity when it’s complete. Activities are grouped into Adventurers, Discoverer, Ranger, Tracker and Explorer and include tree climbing, rolling down a hill, paddling a canoe, run around in the rain, flying a kite, explore a cave, building a den, going on a walk barefoot and many more.

The website and mobile app offer the children a chance to meet their very own ‘virtual Outdoors Explorer’ who will show them around and encourage them to get outdoors by recommending the best place to do each activity. As they tick off activities they can personalise their virtual Outdoor Explorer, receive rewards, play games, fill in activity logs and undertake secret challenges.

Evaluation/research methodology
The project has been monitored at source with participant questionnaires, through the internet and using National Trust Visitor Experience Questionnaires. This shows participation numbers and geographic spread of location.

Results
295 National Trust properties participated in this project with staff and volunteers leading activities. 50 things to do before you are 11¾ has increased family visitors and repeat visits to National Trust properties with a 16% boost from Explorer Families. As well as increased visits the length of each visit has increased. Visitors to the National Trust properties participate in an average of 5.2 activities per visit and 84% of visitors stated that their ‘50 things’ experience was very enjoyable.

- 280,000 scrapbooks were taken home.
- 61,826 explorers registered online.

Creative partnerships: Promoting physical activity by stealth
In 2013, ‘50 things’ explorers have become 11% more connected with nature as a result of working through the list of ‘50 things’.

**Tips for professionals**

1. Children’s relationship with the outdoors can be impacted by creating fun and imaginative ways for them to connect with nature.
2. Continuity is important and properties should increase their confidence and ideas to further develop the offer.

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Our mission

Creating an active nation

Developing evidence
We conduct research and evaluation to improve the evidence base on how to influence physical activity and sedentary behaviours.

Translating and communicating evidence
We synthesise, interpret and communicate research and practice-based evidence relating to physical activity promotion from across the world.

Providing leadership and advocacy for policy and practice
We work with partners across the UK to make physical activity a priority.

Inspiring and supporting practitioners
We provide high quality, evidence-based training and resources to increase the knowledge and skills of practitioners to support them in creating a more active nation.

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