



VALUING NATURE

Developing indicators of success for nature-based public health interventions

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Background

- PhD in geography, Newcastle University (2006)
 - Research conducted in Cheviot Hills, Northumberland into how environmental knowledges of hill farmers, conservationists and professional ecologists were shaping the 'greening' of upland farming policy in England.
- Other relevant research in this area:
 - Contributory author to Climate Change Risk Assessment's chapter 5, People and the Built Environment (Adaptation Sub-Committee, 2016)
 - Evidence needs for the development and protection of green infrastructure in London (HPRU, 2017)

Research Interests

- **Environment, Interdisciplinarity and Public Participation**
 - *Understanding Environmental Knowledge Controversies: The case for Flood Risk Management (RELU)*
 - *Building Adaptive Strategies for Environmental Change with Land Managers (RELU)*
- **Urban Areas and Public Health**
 - CCRA chapter on 'People and the Built Environment' (2016)
 - Climate inequalities across Europe (2016)
 - Green Infrastructure and public health in London (2017)

- Relevant work on green space and public health
- HPRU carries out research on:
 - the relationship of different land-cover types (e.g. broadleaf trees, arable, improved pasture) to mental health
 - how using ‘blue spaces’ (i.e. living near coasts) increases ability to meet the physical activity guidelines recommended by Public Health England
 - collaborations with Cornwall Council and Cornwall LNP around use of green/blue space for public health
- HPRU research has also contributed to the World Health Organization (WHO) Indicator Development Document on “Urban Green Spaces and Health” (for public release Summer 2016).
 - “to inform public health specialists and policy makers on the benefits of providing access to green spaces to urban residents, and to promote systematic approaches to quantifying and monitoring access to green spaces”.

Nature-based public health interventions

- Widely recognised that access to the natural environment has multiple benefits to human health
- Growing interest in the role the environment can play in both defined clinical needs such as depression and obesity, and non-clinical needs linked to the promotion of public health such as improved physical activity and reduced social isolation
- **Nature-based interventions;**
 - Focused on wider notion of public health
 - Opportunities for people to engage with nature in their community
 - Examples: Community gardening and food growing and conservation volunteering
- **Green prescriptions;**
 - Structured therapy for individuals with a defined clinical need (e.g. depression)
 - Examples: Care farms or specific conservation therapy projects



Aspirations for placement

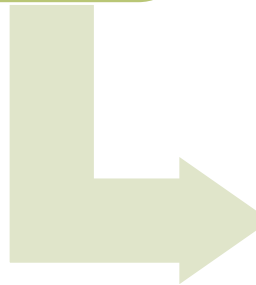
- To address the significant gap that remains regarding the evidence and cost-effectiveness of nature-based solutions that support the allocation of scarce health resources for these interventions.
- Placement, hosted by Natural England, in partnership with ActiveNewham and Newham Council local authority aims to;
 - Explore extent to which public health bodies are using nature-based interventions in Newham
 - Explore potential barriers to uptake of nature-based interventions
 - Identify ways to improve the coordination and production of evidence for the effectiveness of nature-based public health interventions

Contribution to Valuing Nature Debate

Better understand
role of biodiversity
and ecosystem
services in human
health and
wellbeing



Building
interdisciplinary
research teams that
link academia, policy
and practice



Multiple
opportunities for new
learning in novel
policy and practice
contexts

Planned outputs and outcomes

Outputs

- Short formal summary of main learning points for wider VN community
- Video and written blog on placement
- A report on findings will be produced for NE and also wider policymakers and practitioners
- An academic journal paper on public health evidence needs for green nature-based interventions
- Webinar for Natural England staff sharing learning from the placement

Outcomes

- An ongoing relationship between NE and the Health Protection Research Unit at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine on how public health issues can be addressed through the natural environment
- Continued involvement for Dr Whitman in NE's ongoing work in Newham on re-connecting disadvantaged sections of the community with nature for health and learning benefits