



# Network for Social Change

## What is the Green Walking for Mental Health Recovery Initiative:

### OUTLINE

- **Funded by:** grant from Network for Social Change (NWSC)
- **Created by:** the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare with the support of the Royal College of Psychiatry and Royal College of Occupational Therapy
- **What:** advocate for access to green spaces in secondary mental health by supporting green space walks.
- **For who:** General Adult Psychiatric Inpatients

### OUTCOME

- **Initial Phase:** 04.19 – 07.19
- **Trusts:** 8 Mental Health Trusts participated across England – Cornwall, Kent, SLaM, Derbyshire, Bradford, Tees Esk & Wear, Norfolk, Birmingham.
- **Walks:** Resulted in over 80 new walks with 2-3 patients per walk
- **Incidents:** No clinical incidents
- **Funding:** Awarded follow on grant from NSC
- **Green Walking Guide:** resource summarising initial phase to promote walking groups more widely.

What is the initiative's aim ?

The Green walking initiative is simple but elegant. By joining the programme and taking seriously the task of starting a new walking group in a green space mental health Trusts and their wards can begin examining a wide range of complicated difficulties for mental health care.

- **Urgency to shift NHS to a sustainable model of care:** Green Walking embodies principles of sustainable healthcare.
- **Evidence base practice:** Green walking incorporates a combination of evidence that highlights the benefits of green spaces and exercise for well-being.
- **Concerns around the use of the Mental Health Act:** people are increasingly detained under the MHA for extended periods of time. Green walks help in promoting transition from care that is detained to that which voluntary.
- **Quality of wards:** service users cite the need for wards to be more therapeutically minded spaces. Green walks help to introduce an alternative, rich space which requires minimal resources and has therapeutic benefit.
- **Staff wellbeing:** participation in walks helps promote staff well-being.

Ultimately the initiative aims to promote a **shift** in how we care for psychiatric inpatients by promoting access to green-spaces through walking

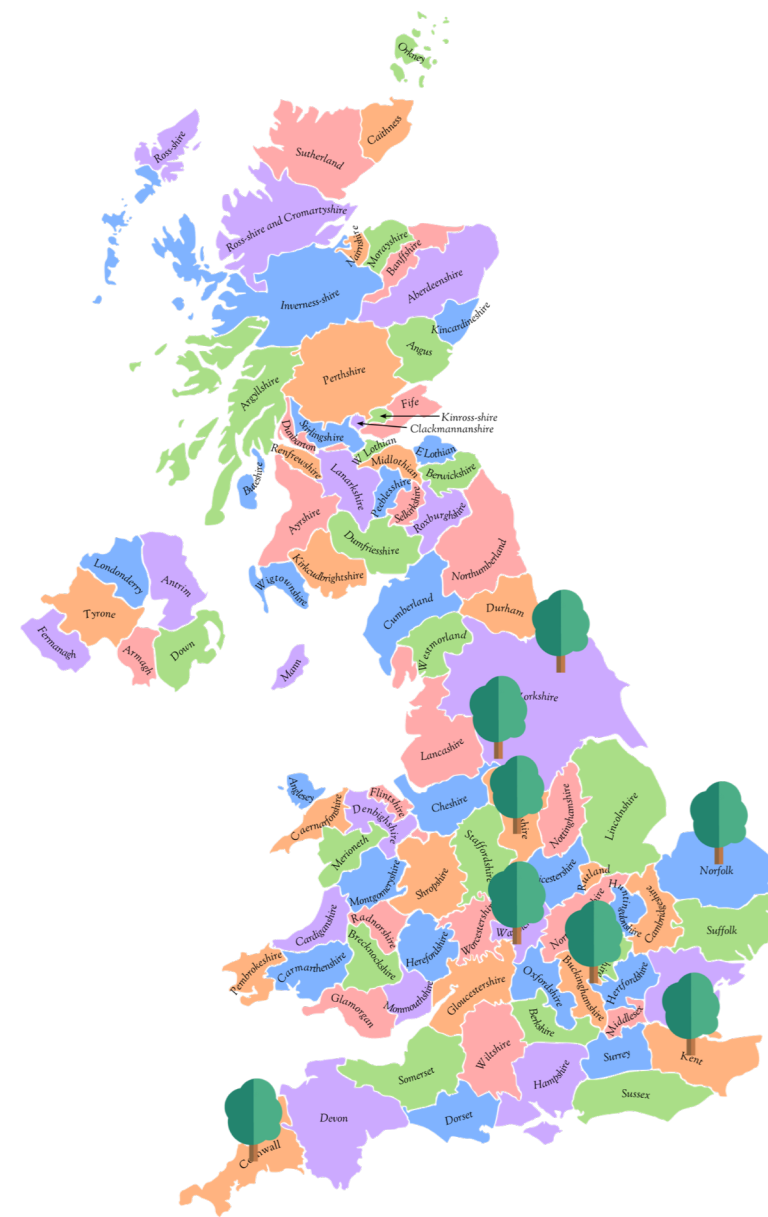
How does it hope to achieve this  
aim?

1. The initiative's seeks to support the adoption of green walking as a standard for every single adult inpatient wards in the NHS.
2. At the same time it hopes to continue promoting awareness about the importance of equitable and readily available access to green spaces for all as a right.

**Where are the 8 Green Beacon Sites in the UK?**

They are a selection of 8 Mental Health Trusts across the UK  
which took part in the Green Walking for Mental Health  
Recovery Initiative.





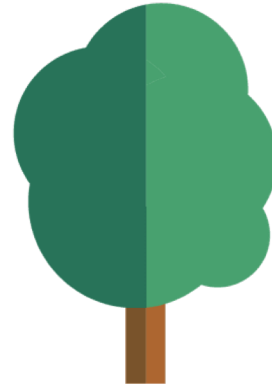


**NHS**  
**South London  
and Maudsley**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Birmingham  
and Solihull **NHS**  
Mental Health  
NHS Foundation Trust

**NHS**  
**Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Norfolk and Suffolk **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust



Cornwall Partnership **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Derbyshire Healthcare **NHS**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Kent and Medway **NHS**  
NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

**NHS**  
**Bradford Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Assessment period:  
mid April 2019 to Late July 2019

8 Trusts started new walking  
programs

No incidents

Over 80 new walks took place

Average of 2-3 walkers / walk

# INITIATIVE HAS LED TO IMPROVEMENTS IN A NUMBER OF SYSTEMIC AREAS:

*Working Across Professions:* Collaboration between Occupational Therapists, Doctors, Nurses

*Improved patient involvement:* supporting therapeutic work supported by service users

*Working Across Trusts:* Collaboration and co-working from 8 Mental Health Trusts across the UK

*Supporting care:* promoting awareness and integration of green resources for it's therapeutic effect.

**What are some of the barriers and enablers learnt  
thus far from the project ?**

## **BARRIERS TO WALKING GROUPS OCCURRING AS PLANNED:**

**Lack of staff** – most groups experienced missed walks because staff were unable to leave ward due to not enough staff members or not being able to justify providing staff to cover WG when only a small number of patients attend the WG, not having staff with adequate level of training to act as escorting member of staff

**Leave** – limited or out of date to leave the ward, amount of preparation needed to get leave organised

**Transport issues** – require access to minibus for larger groups, lack of funding to hire

## **ENABLERS to WALKING GROUPS:**

**Staff support** – identified as key enabler by all sites both in terms of having enough staff to carry out WGs as well as maintaining enthusiasm for walking groups. Whole team as well as clinical line leads and management

Select quotations from the Initiative thus far ...

“It’s good to be away from the ward” – SU reported.

“Should happen more” –SU reported

“The ward is really noisy, getting outside is nice” – Nursing staff.

“It’s good to be away from the ward”. - Nursing staff

‘Impressed with the amount of green space in York’

‘Good active walk and physically excreting.’

‘Good to see lots of people having fun.’

‘I didn’t realize places like this existed in York.’

“Service users seemed relieved to be off of the ward as soon as we left. I gave a brief that we

would stay on the hospital grounds, and use the cameras to try and focus on and capture nature.

The service users started taking photos of our surroundings, OT garden, trees, grass, pine cones etc. I allowed an hour for the walk so that we were

not in a rush and this worked well, meandering around the grounds at a leisurely pace. Service

users seemed to appreciate that we were not under any time pressure.”



*'They have enjoyed getting to new spaces and being outside and for some patients this was their first engagement since coming into hospital.'* (Tees)

*'The walks were memorable for the conversations and good company. It was a good time to talk with people with little of the healthcare professional-patient divide.'* (Kent)

*'It was the most rewarding group. It was an intervention that got consistently positive feedback'* (Kent)

*'I would want them to know the positive feedback that attendees have given us through their participation and how wonderful it has been a method of helping me to build rapport and good relationships with my service-users.'* (SLaM)