

NATURAL HEALTH SERVICE CONCORDAT

“We believe that everyone should have the right of access to local, high quality, natural green space to benefit their physical and mental health and wellbeing”.

Research demonstrates that green space provides mental and physical health benefits for those who live and work nearby . These benefits can be broadly divided into:

- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Promoting physical activity
- Strengthening social cohesion
- Reducing health inequalities
- Direct effects, eg. moderating temperatures in the urban heat island, cleansing the air and sheltering people and buildings from noise, UV light, and flooding.

As organisations whose principles are based on equity in health and fair access to healthcare, we support the concept underlying the “Natural Health Service” as stated above, so that everyone can improve their health and wellbeing through nearby green space.

We therefore endorse, and will work with others to further, the following actions.

- **Support** planners and policy makers to ensure that there is high quality public green space near to where people live and work.
- **Encourage** people to make the best use of this local public green space by promoting schemes that provide new opportunities to connect people to their local natural environment.
- **Promote** and **disseminate** research into the health benefits of the natural environment and ensure that local, national and international research agendas are aligned to help us understand the mechanisms behind the health benefits of green space and how these benefits can be fully realised.
- **Partner** the NHS and local authorities with organisations that promote local green space to benefit both staff and patients – promoting this engagement through local strategic partnerships, local area agreements and the third sector.