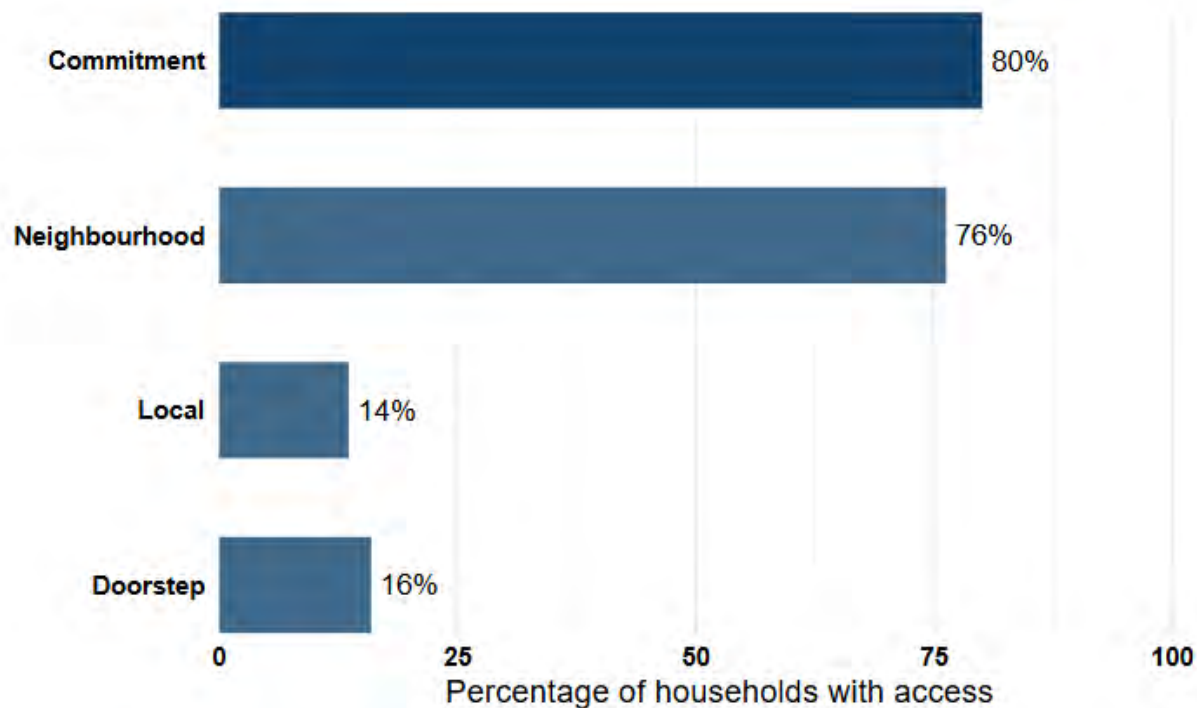


Access to green and blue space in England

Under the 15-minute commitment, 80% of households in England were found to have access to at least one green or blue space within a 15-minute walk (Figure 2).

Households are included in this overall figure if they meet any of the three access standards. This includes 76% of households who have neighbourhood access, 14% of households who have local access, and 16% of households who have doorstep access.

Figure 2: The percentage of around 25,980,000 households in England with access to green or blue space, under the 15-minute commitment and neighbourhood, local and doorstep standards



Department
for Environment,
Food & Rural Affairs

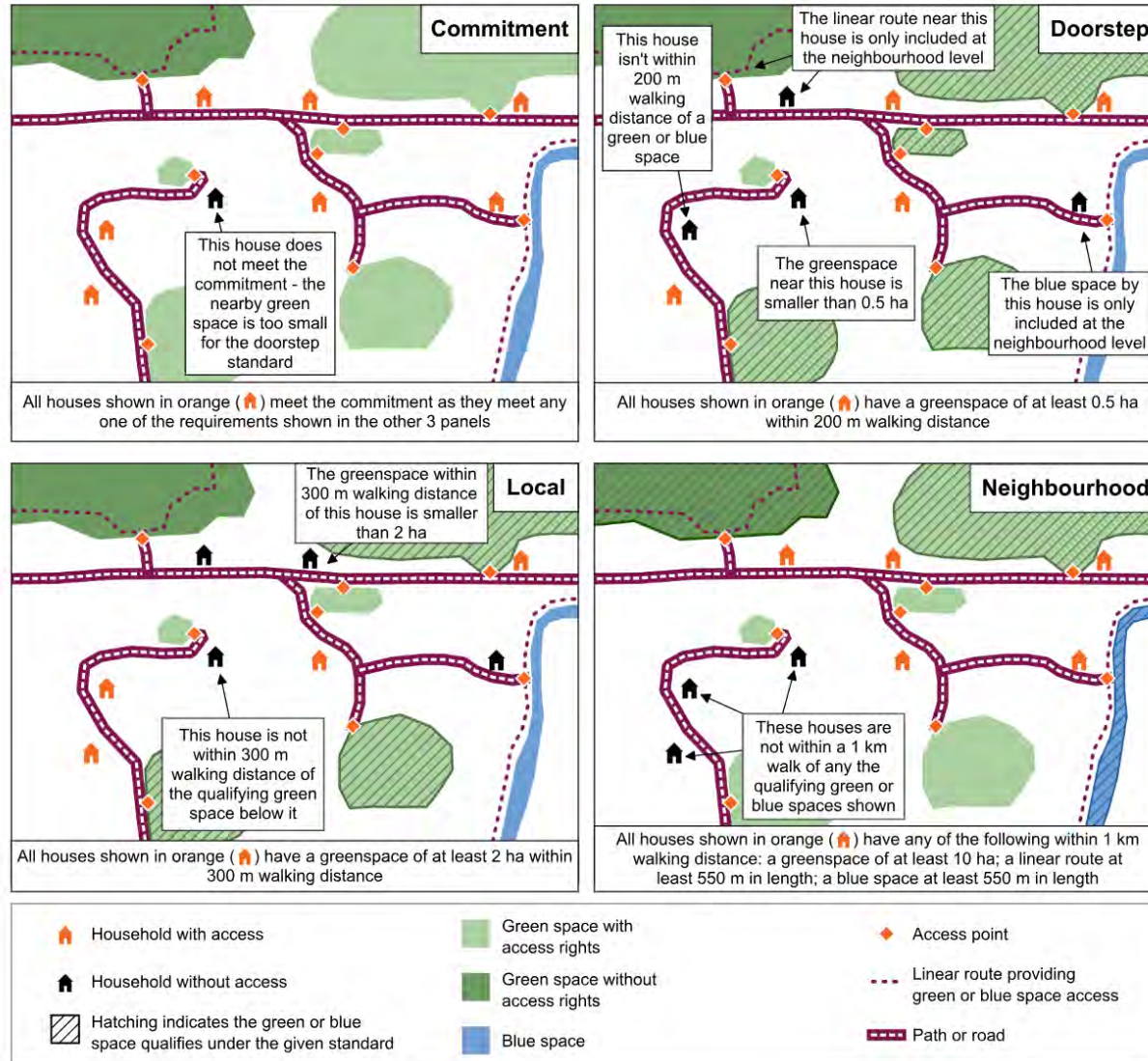
Official Statistics

Access to green and blue space in England

Published 4 March 2026



Figure 1: Illustration of household access to green and blue space under the 15-minute commitment, as well as doorstep, local and neighbourhood standards



Official Statistics

Access to green and blue space in England

Published 4 March 2026



Environment

This article is more than 7 months old

Human connection to nature has declined 60% in 200 years, study finds

Prof Miles Richardson says people risk 'extinction of experience' in the natural world without new policies

Patrick Barkham

Sat 9 Aug 2025 09.00 BST

Share

Prefer the Guardian on Google



The study found people in Sheffield on average spent just four minutes and 36 seconds in natural spaces each day. Photograph: Geoffrey Swaine/Shutterstock

People's **connection to nature** has declined by more than 60% since 1800, almost exactly mirroring the disappearance of nature words such as river, moss and blossom from books, according to a study.

We need a programme which looks at **whole-city activation**

Compact Geography:

Many UK towns are cities have walkable neighbourhoods, yet the car is the default

Education Ecosystem:

Behaviour into adulthood can often start in school.

Local Economy:

Evenly distributing the benefits of the Business Improvement District city wide to address the inequity.

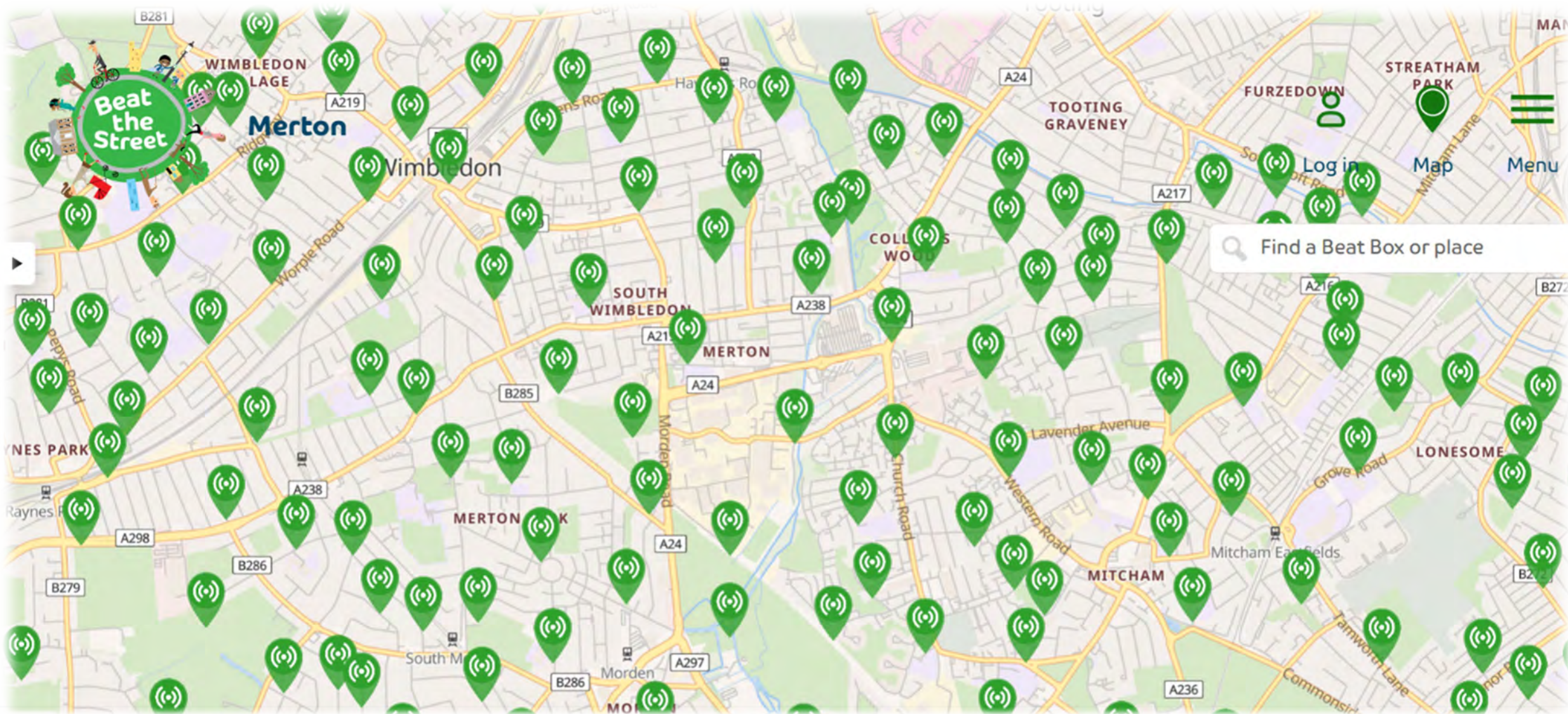
Blue & Green Infrastructure:

Parks, rivers, canals, community gardens, nature reserves.

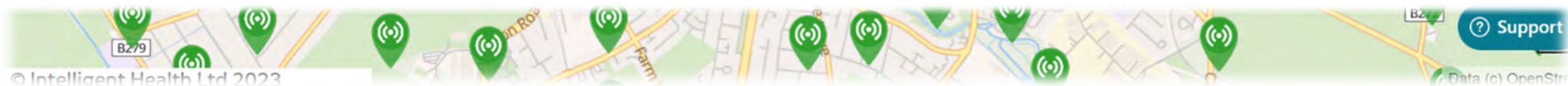
Civic Culture:

Towns can have a strong sense of identity and civic pride yet little to channel it into





Why not turn a town into a giant game?

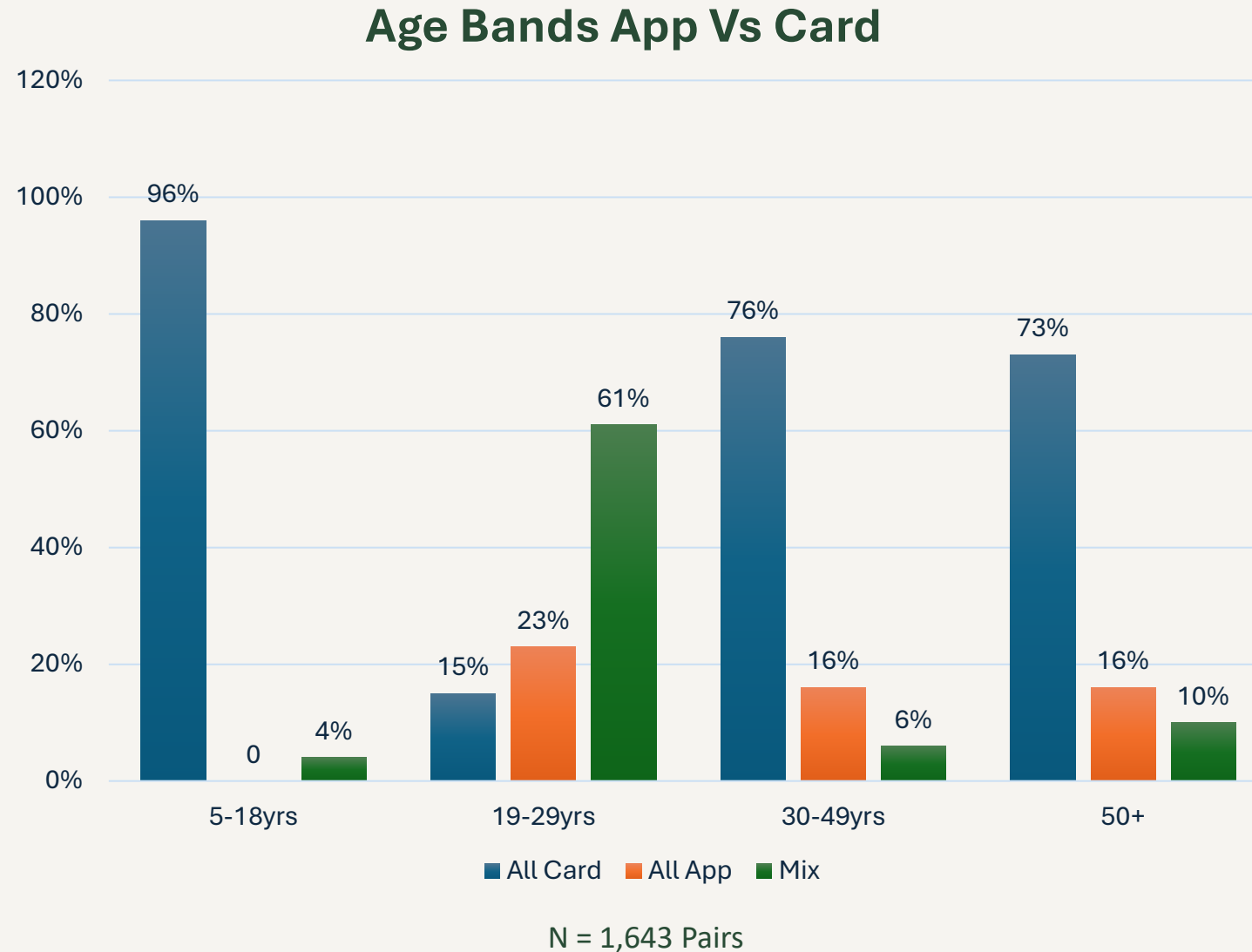




Why not just create an app?



The card is by far the most popular method of playing






**By connecting
people through
movement, making
it easy and fun.**





**By connecting people
to each other and
where they live.**





**Acting as a bridge
from a screen-filled life to
one where every step
counts.**

And showcasing green
spaces as public assets for
everyone



Game at its heart

Digital technology (app, web and dashboard) is combined with physical game cards, with Beat Boxes ensuring inclusion and brand awareness.



Game at its heart

Schools, community groups and workplaces compete on leaderboards to earn points and win prizes.



We engage
with breadth
and depth.

13%

of the local
population

50%

children

40%

from most deprived
40% communities

20%

Ethnically
culturally diverse

20%

adults with long
term conditions

4%

with a
disability



2 million participants

200 places

Biggest behaviour change for those facing greatest inequalities



Learnings: How can we better connect people to urban green spaces



Beat the Street South Reading

A collaboration with Natural England,
Intelligent Health and The Eden Project

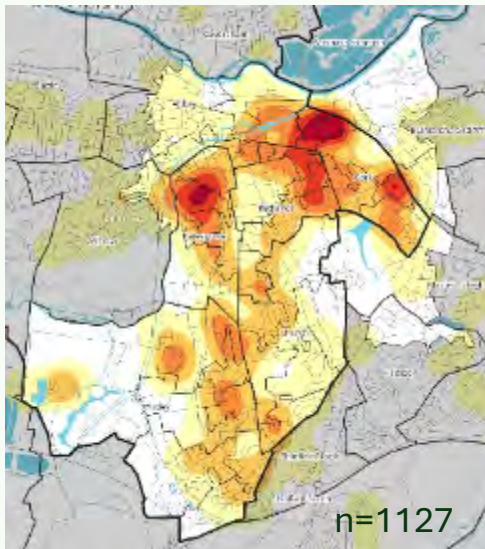


Heatmaps of Visitors to leisure & recreation sites (Survey)

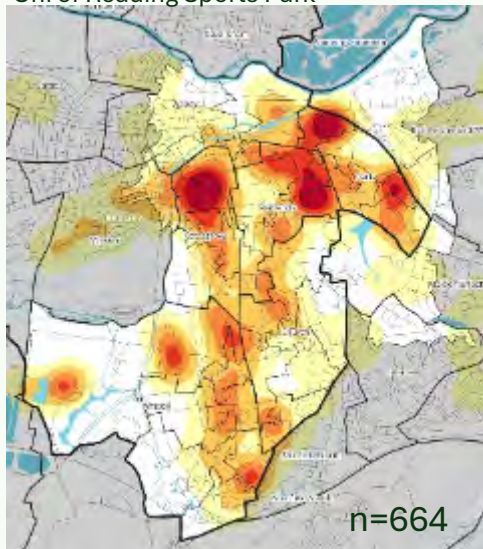
Reading South & East



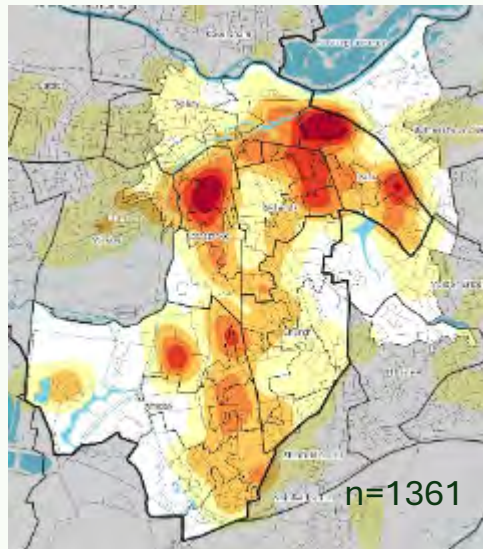
Palmer Park Leisure Centre



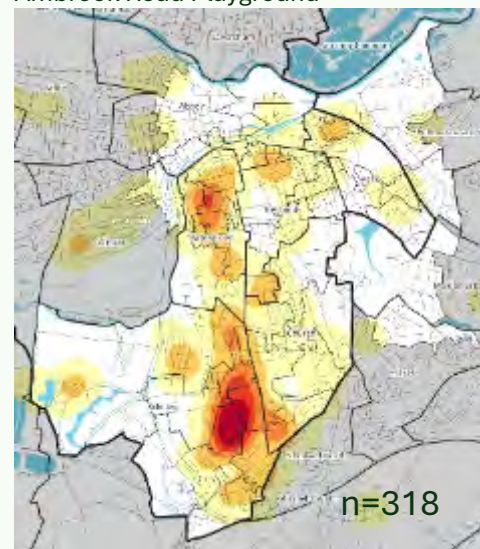
Uni of Reading Sports Park



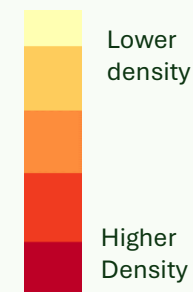
Palmer Park



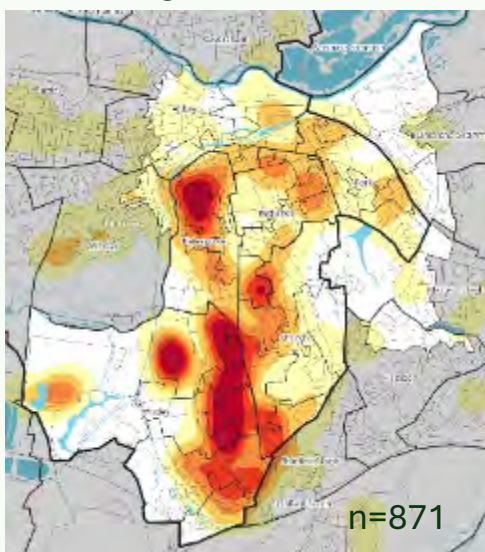
Ambrook Road Playground



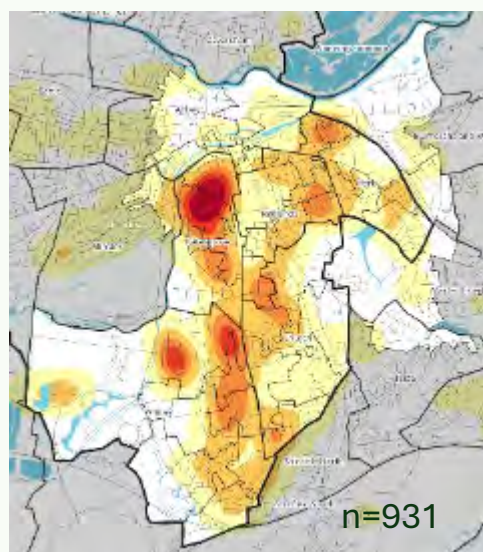
The maps show the distance decay effect of different greenspaces. In the South we see that Ambrook Park has a very tight catchment, John Rabson a wider pull. Generally places are drawing either from the north or the south as catchments.



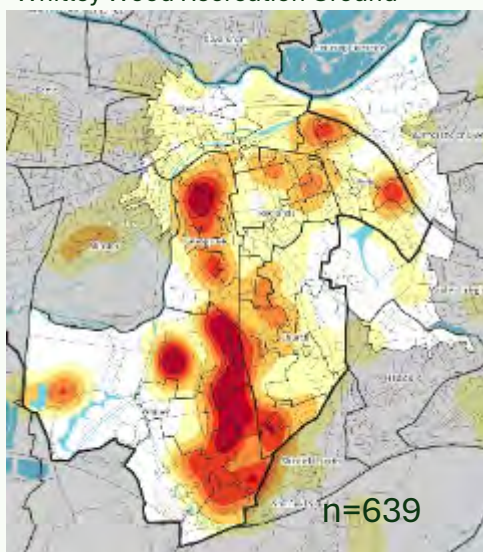
South Reading Leisure Centre



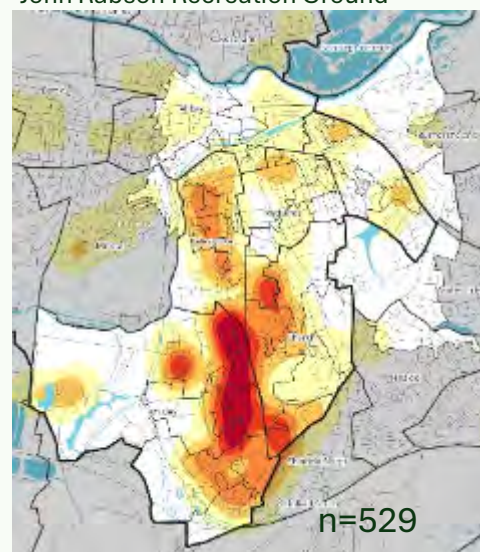
Cintra Park



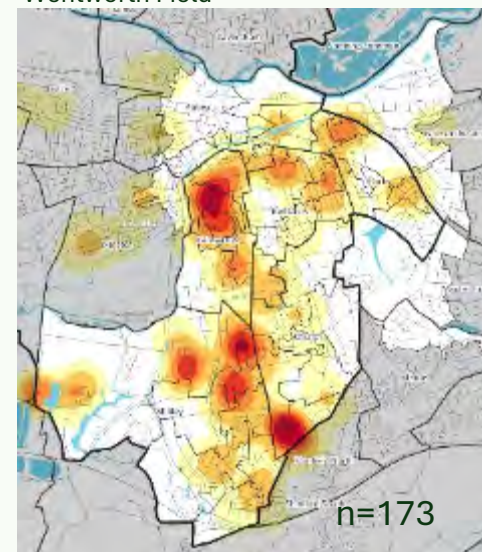
Whitley Wood Recreation Ground



John Rabson Recreation Ground



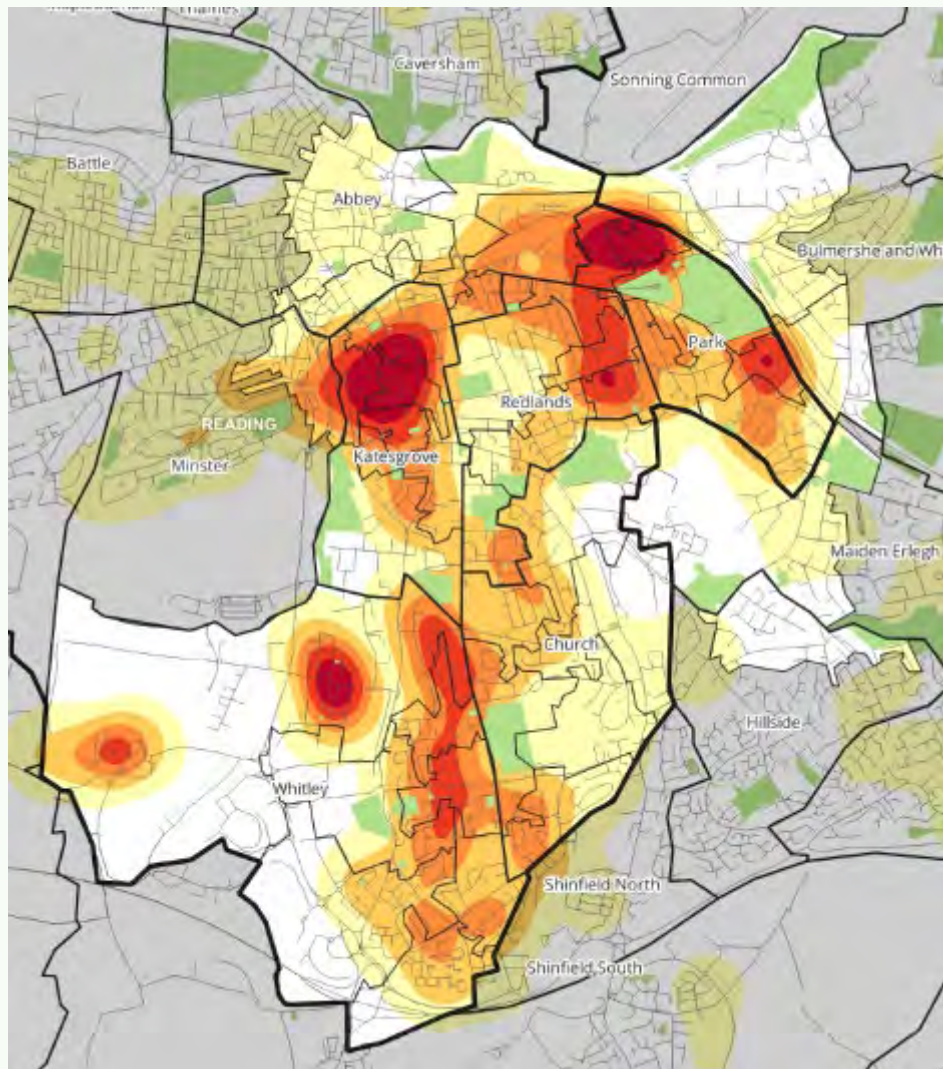
Wentworth Field



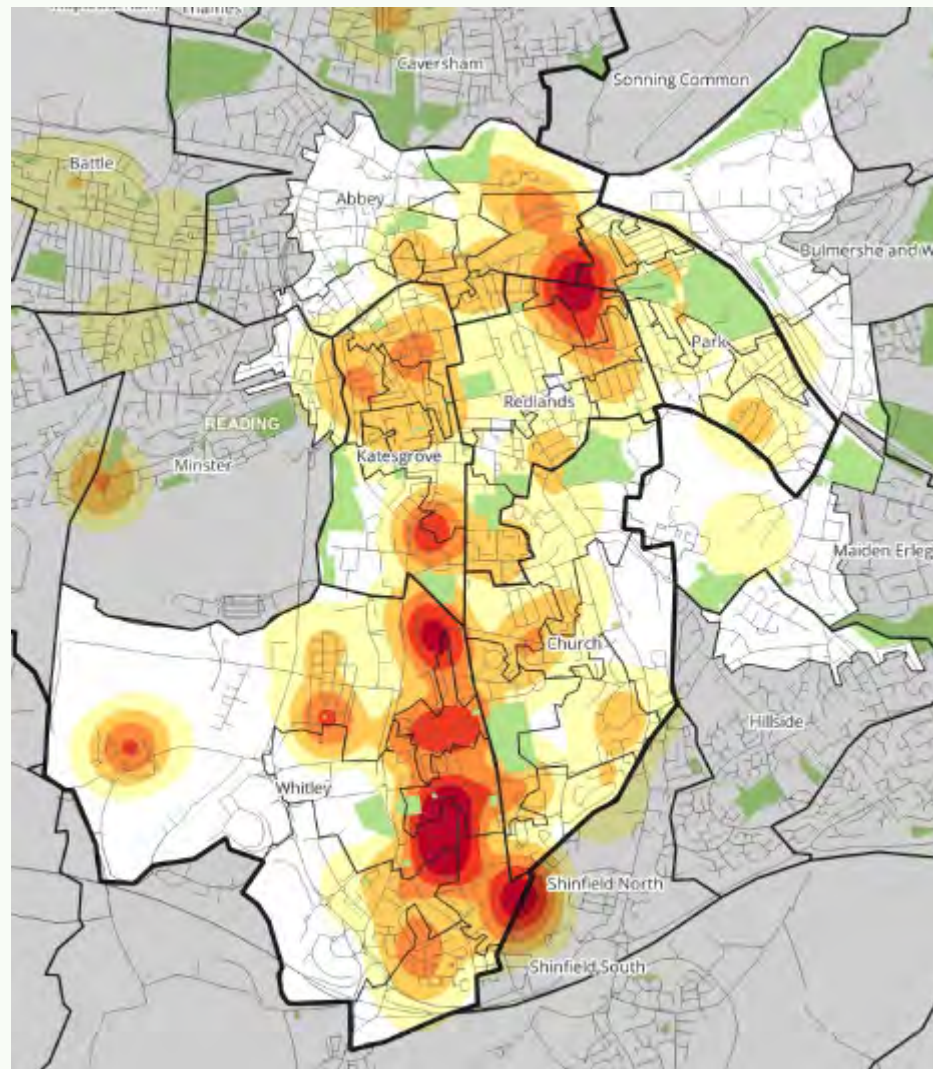
Heatmap of feelings of safety in greenspace (Survey)

Reading South & East

Do you feel safe when visiting local parks or greenspaces? Yes
(n=1637)



Do you feel safe when visiting local parks or greenspaces? No
(n=174)

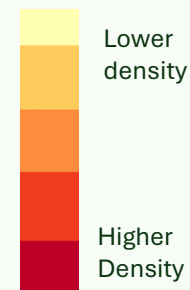


The maps shows the distribution and clustering of Beat the Street participants who both agree they feel safe when visiting local parks and do not agree they feel safe.

The majority of people do feel safe, the map shows that there is a greater density of people in the north of the area who feel safe.

Whilst there are far fewer people who feel unsafe it is clear that these are more commonly distributed in the south of the game area.

The patterns illustrate the disparity in feelings of safety associated with the greenspaces in the North area vs the south.

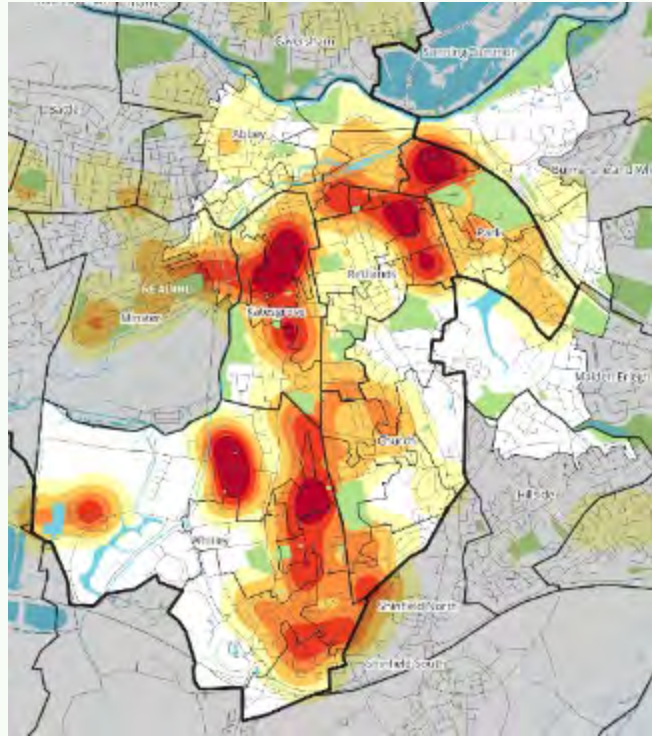


Heatmap of nature connection (Venn)

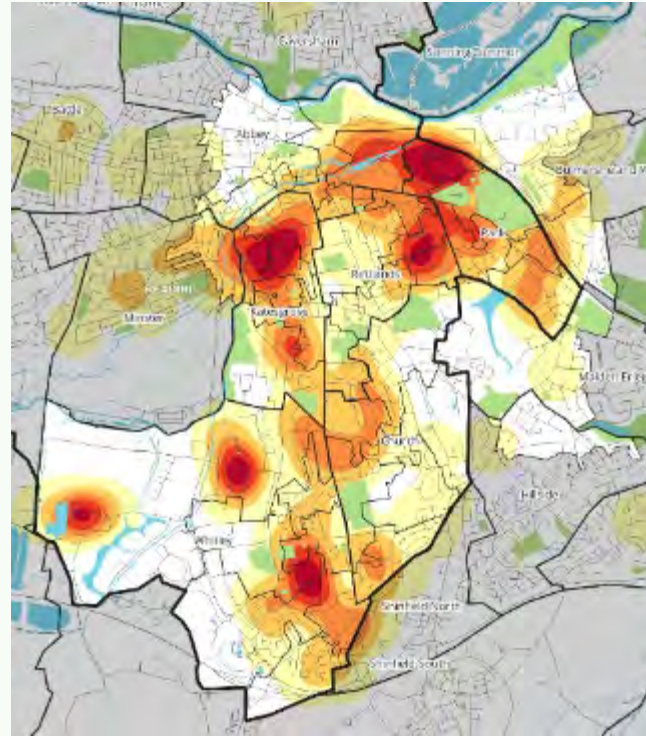
Reading South & East



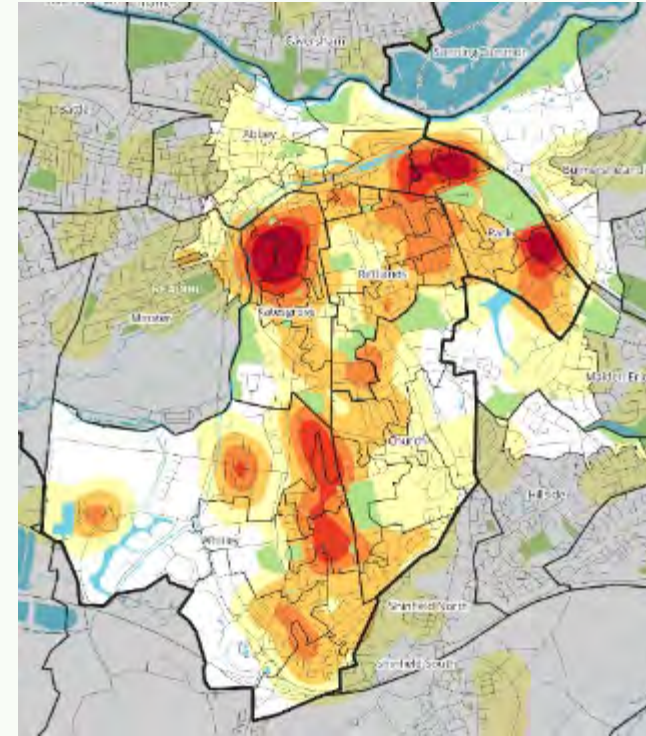
Low (A, B or C) (n=412)



Medium (D) (n=440)

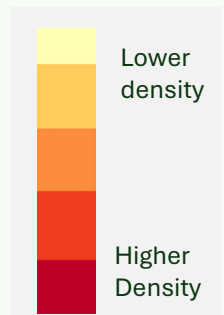
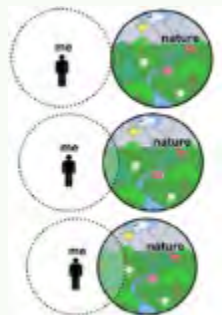


High (E,F,G) (n=765)



There is a higher density of participants with high and medium nature connection in the North of the game area.

Low nature connection is found across all areas where players live but it notable for being the dominant sentiment in the south game area.





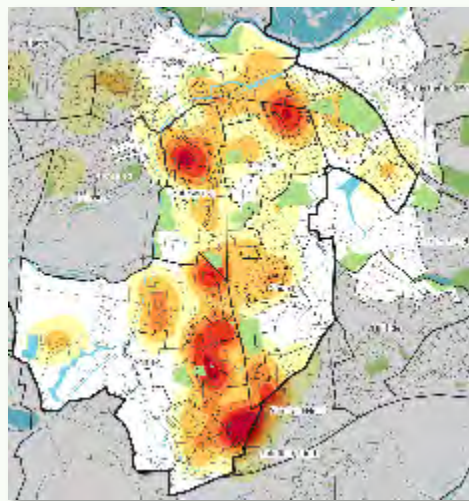
The Acorns

25% of the participants



Oaks are strong and sturdy but can take time to grow and flourish. This reflects their challenges with health and lower community and nature engagement but their potential to endure and thrive with the right support.

Where they live...



This group faces significant health challenges and exhibits lower levels of community engagement and connection. While they represent a slightly higher proportion of Black individuals, they are generally less integrated into local networks. They are less connected to nature and greenspaces, with limited engagement and lower perceptions of greenspaces' benefits. Practical motivations, such as walking dogs, shape their greenspace use more than relaxation or social reasons.

Socio-demographics

Higher rates of females, white British and black, long-term conditions and disabilities.

Lower rates of Males, Asian, White (Non British).

Slightly below average rates of physical activity.

Lower rates of subjective wellbeing for Happiness, Worthwhileness and Life Satisfaction

Higher rates of anxiety

Lower rates of resilience and of ABCD maturity especially for;

Networks, Stories and Organisational trust

Nature Connection

Nature connection lowest group

Least likely to have visited a Beat Box in Greenspace or to say they have visited a greenspace in the last week.

Less likely to feel safe in a greenspace or agree that Reading is a safe place in general

Much less likely to have taken time to notice nature, have positive sentiment to the environment or consider nature is part of who they are.

Rate the quality of spaces for Diverse nature, Historic, Attractive and Distinct as lower

Far less likely to consider greenspaces as places that offer benefits, really low rate consider them a high enough standard to want to spend time in, as good places for children to play, to meet others.

Aspire to...

Most motivations are less likely such as being able to take a break such as lunch, but they are much more likely to use a greenspace to walk a dog.

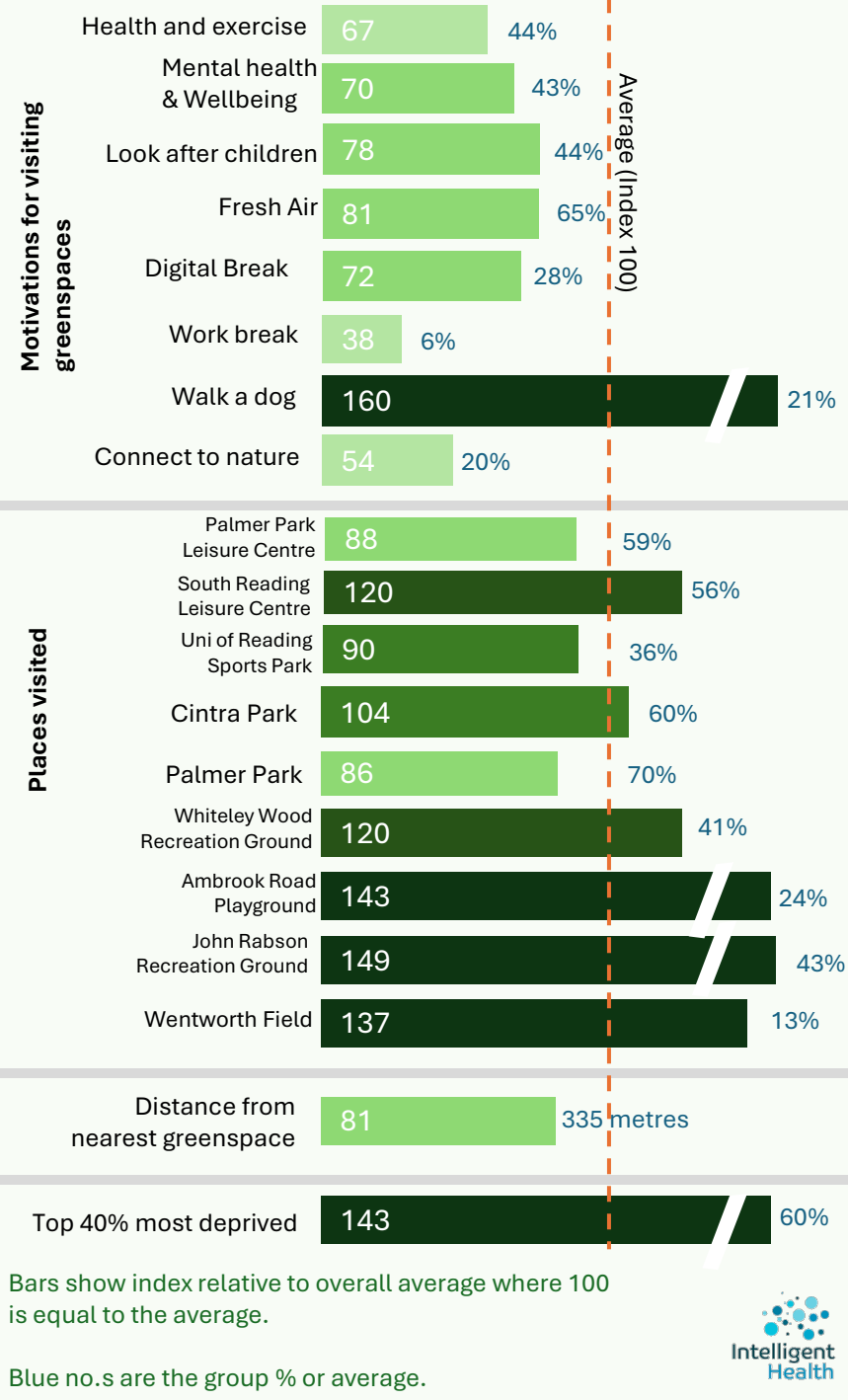
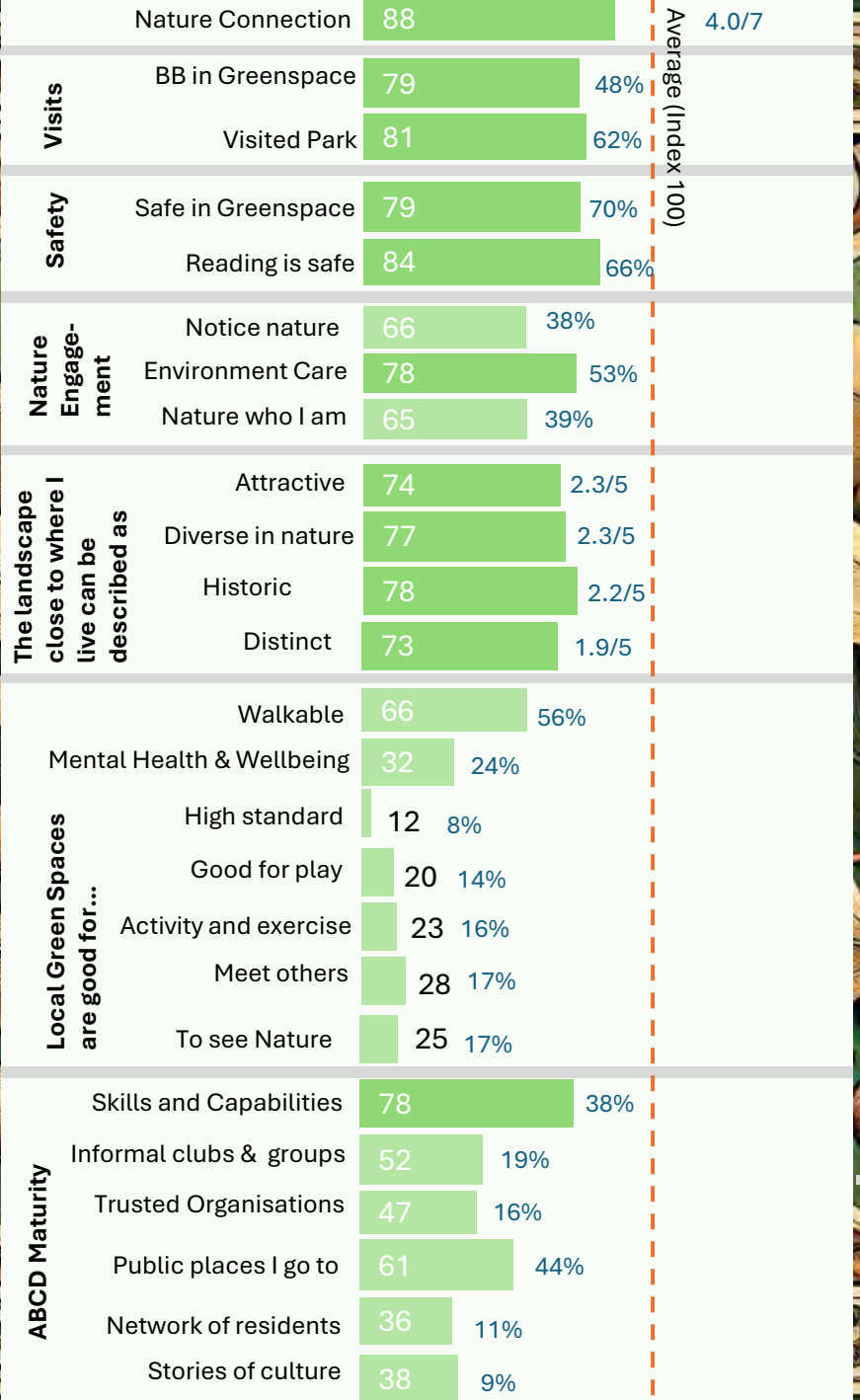
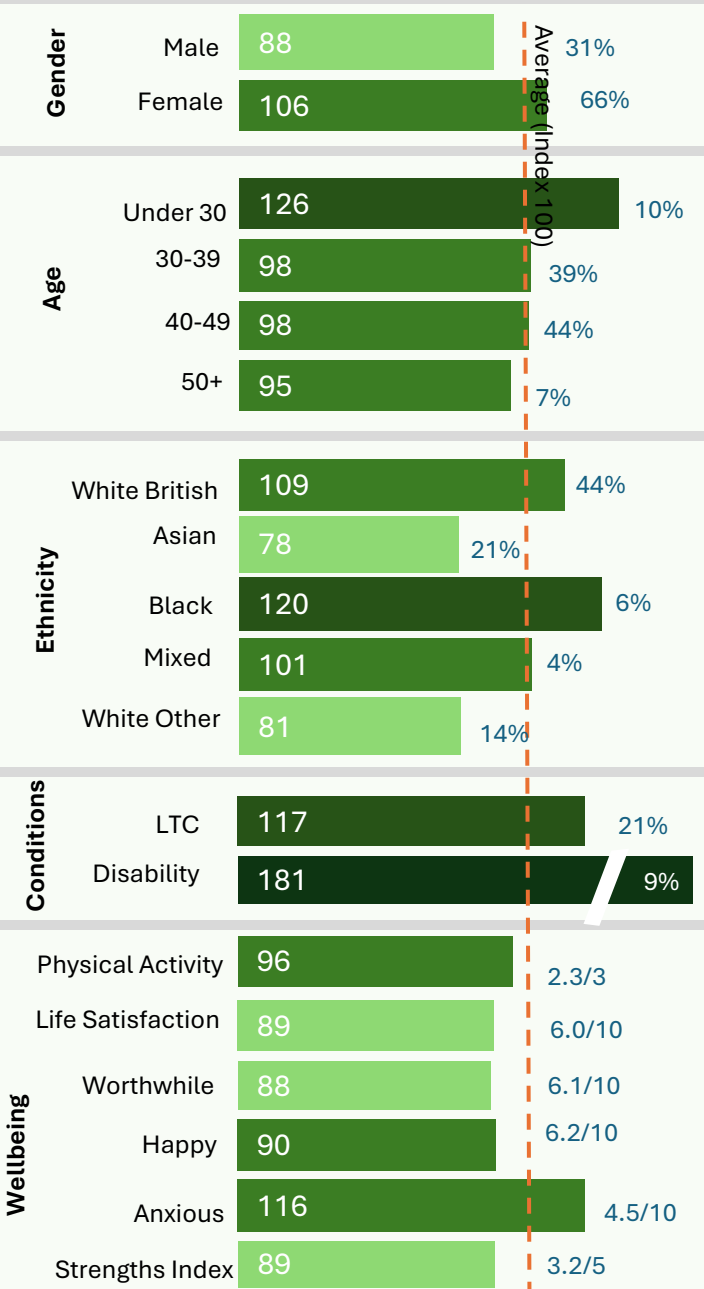
More likely users of parks like John Rabson, Ambrook, Wentworth Field, Whitely Wood, South Reading Leisure Centre

Tend to have the shortest distance to a greenspace from home.





The Acorns



Bars show index relative to overall average where 100 is equal to the average.

Blue no.s are the group % or average.



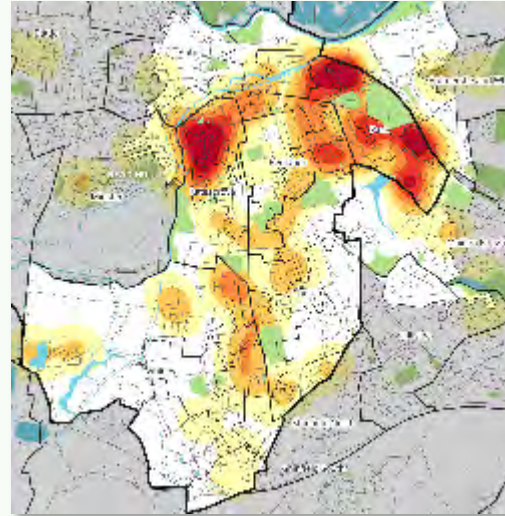


The Hazels

36% of the participants

Known for growing in groups or coppices, hazel trees work well together in a "community" to thrive—symbolising interconnectedness and collaboration. They are versatile, supporting biodiversity and representing strength and adaptability.

Where they live...



Hazel people thrive on community engagement and environmental stewardship. They are deeply connected to their neighbourhoods, actively participating in community life, and leveraging strong local networks. They are particularly attuned to environmental issues and highly value greenspaces for their mental health, relaxation, and social connections.

Socio-demographics

Higher rates of males, Asian and mixed backgrounds

Slightly above average rates of long-term conditions but much lower rates of disabilities.

Slightly above average rates of physical activity.

Higher rates of subjective wellbeing for Happiness, Worthwhileness and Life Satisfaction and lower rates of anxiety

Higher rates of resilience and markedly higher rates for ABCD maturity across all aspects but especially;

Stories and networks

Nature Connection



Nature connection highest group

Slightly more likely to have visited a Beat Box in Greenspace or but more likely to say they have visited a greenspace in the last week.

More likely to feel safe in a greenspace or agree that Reading is a safe place in general

Much more likely to have taken time to notice nature, have positive sentiment to the environment or consider nature is part of who they are.

Rate highly the quality of green spaces for their Diverse nature, Historic, Attractive and Distinct character

Much more likely to consider greenspaces as places that offer benefits, especially as good places to meet other people, provide good opportunities to see nature and of a high enough standard to spend time in.

Aspire to...

Most motivations are less likely except slightly below average to walk a dog. High motivations include to take a lunch break/break from work, to get a break from TV or electronic devices and to connect to nature and wildlife.

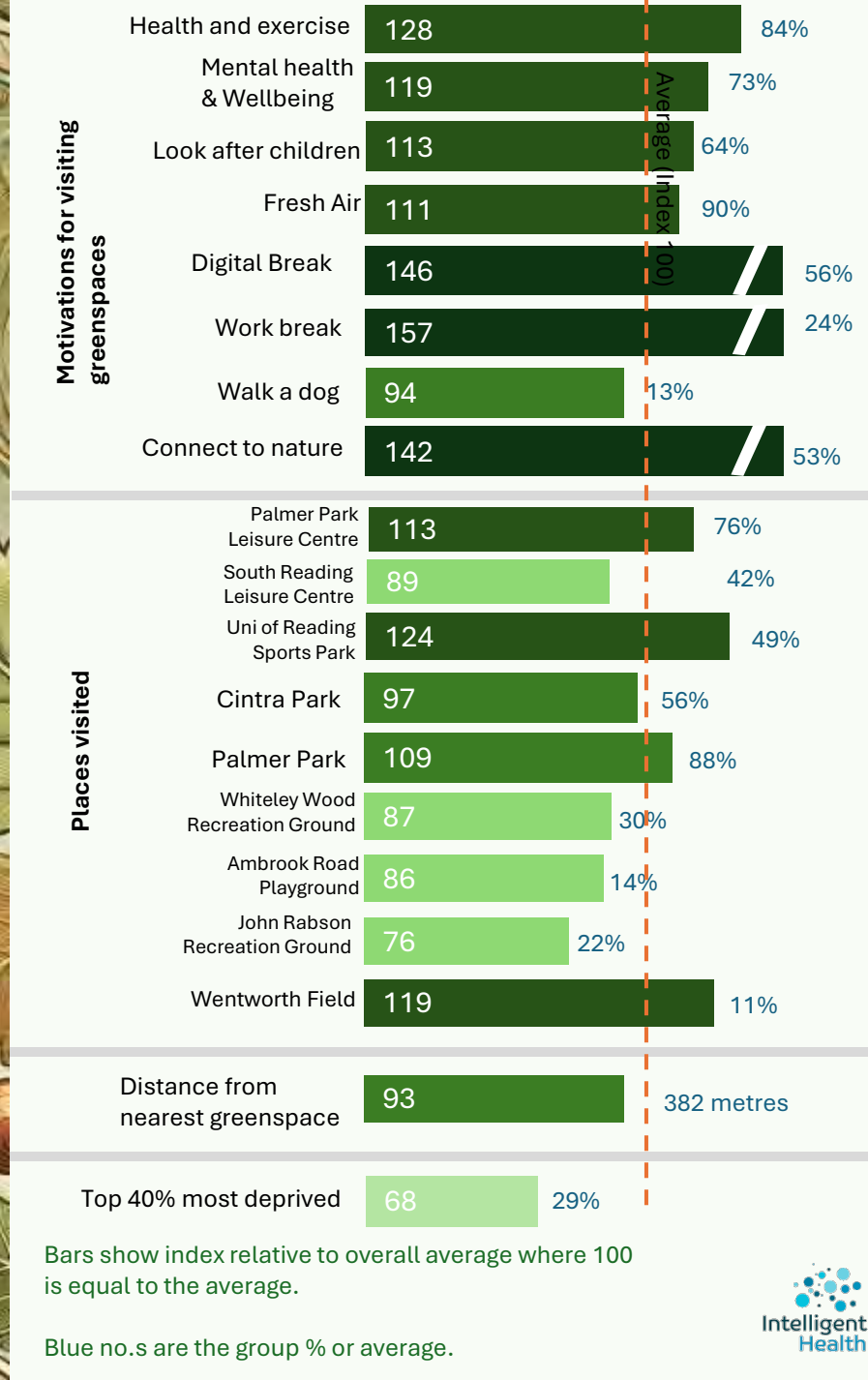
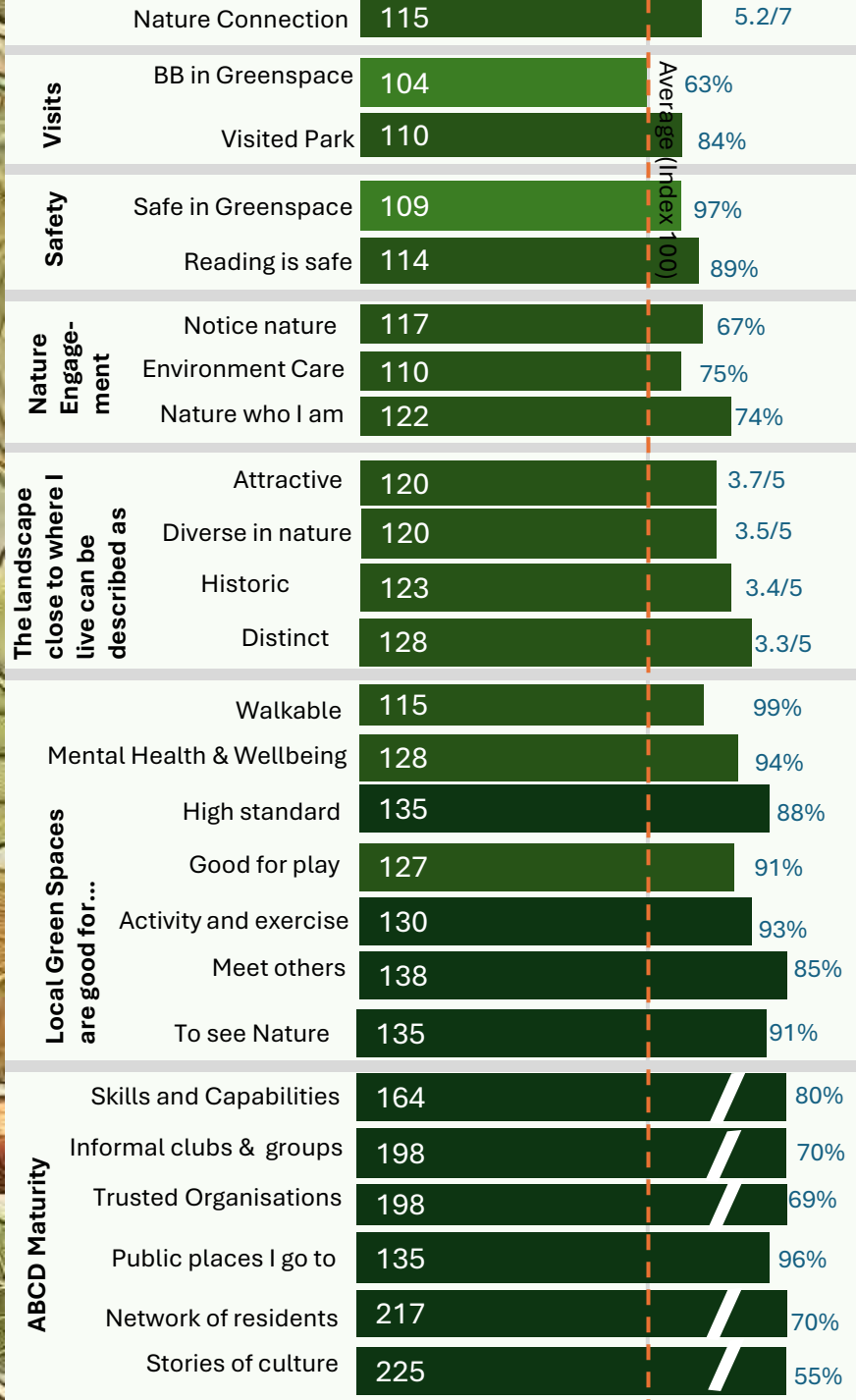
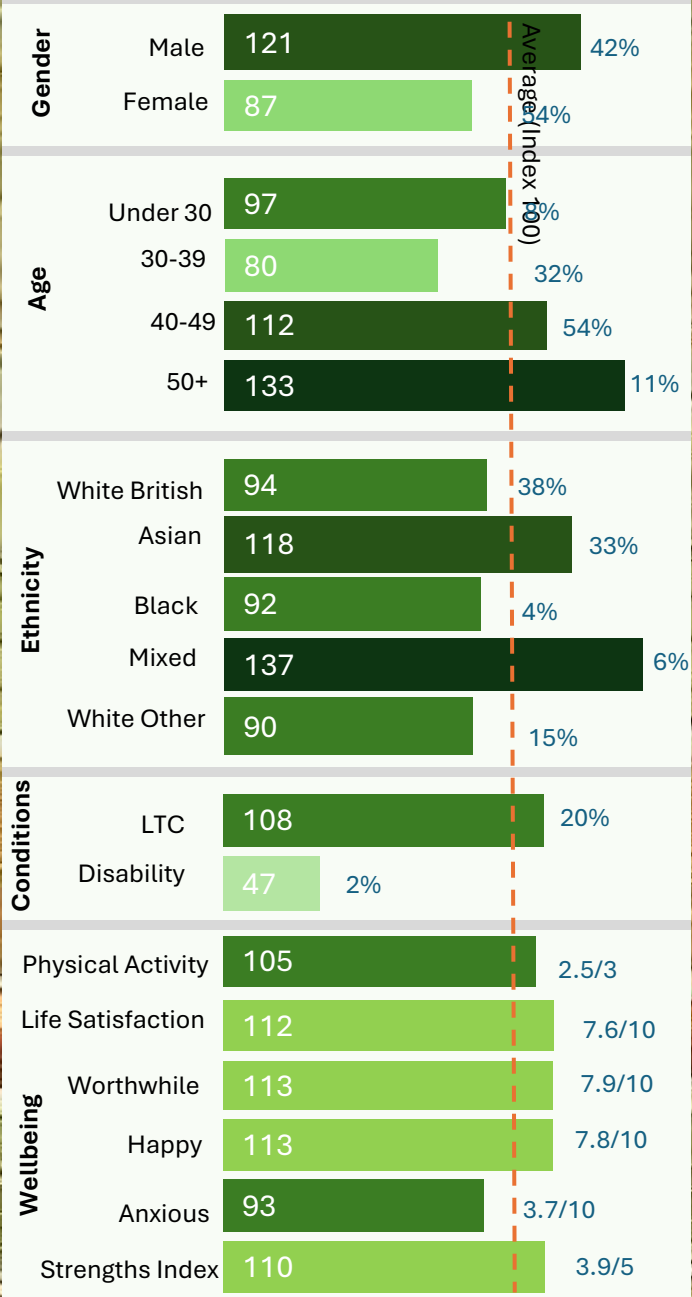
More likely users of University of Reading Sports Park, Wentworth Field and Palmer Park.

Slightly closer to nearest greenspace than average.





The Hazels



Bars show index relative to overall average where 100 is equal to the average.

Blue no.s are the group % or average.



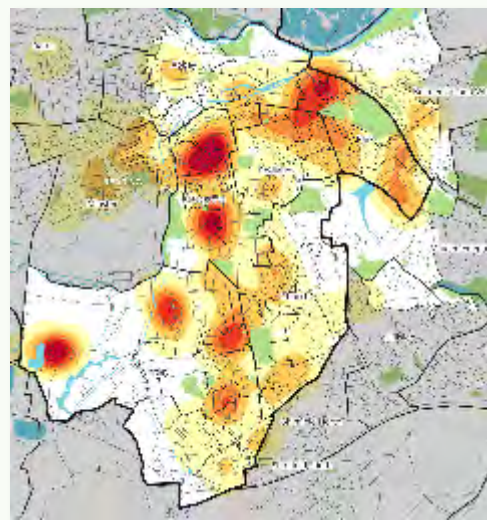
The Willows

39% of the participants



Willows are flexible and adaptable, able to thrive in a variety of conditions. This aligns with their wellness-focused lifestyle, urban convenience, and moderate connection to both nature and community.

Where they live...



This group is health-conscious and values greenspaces for their wellness benefits, including physical activity and mental health. They are less engaged with their local communities but still appreciate green spaces' aesthetic and recreational qualities. Urban living and convenient access to greenspaces suit their lifestyle.

Socio-demographics

Higher rates of females, of white non-British ethnicity and lower rates of mixed.

Lower than average rates of long-term conditions but and average rates of disabilities.

Average rates of physical activity.

Generally average wellbeing with slightly lower than average rates of subjective wellbeing for Happiness, Worthwhileness and Life Satisfaction and slightly higher rates of anxiety

Average rate of resilience and markedly lower rates for ABCD maturity across all aspects but especially;

Stories and networks

Nature Connection

Nature connection slightly lower than average

Most likely of clusters to have visited a Beat Box in Greenspace or but slightly more likely to say they have visited a greenspace in the last week.

Slightly higher rating of feeling safe in a greenspace or with average safety rating for Reading in general

Slightly more likely to have taken time to notice nature, have positive sentiment to the environment, average in terms of considering nature is part of who they are.

Slightly lower than average rating of the quality of green spaces for their Diverse nature, Historic, Attractive and Distinct character

More likely to consider greenspaces as places that offer benefits, especially as good places for children to play, of a high enough standard to spend time in , places that encourage physical activity and exercise and support mental health and wellbeing.

Aspire to...

Average motivations for getting fresh air, to look after children or family and for mental health and wellbeing. Less likely to be motivated to get a break from electronic devices, to walk a dog, take a break or to connect to nature.

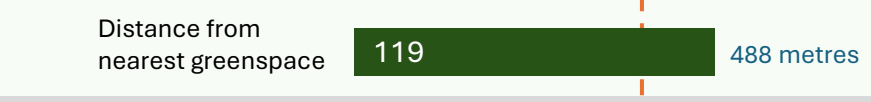
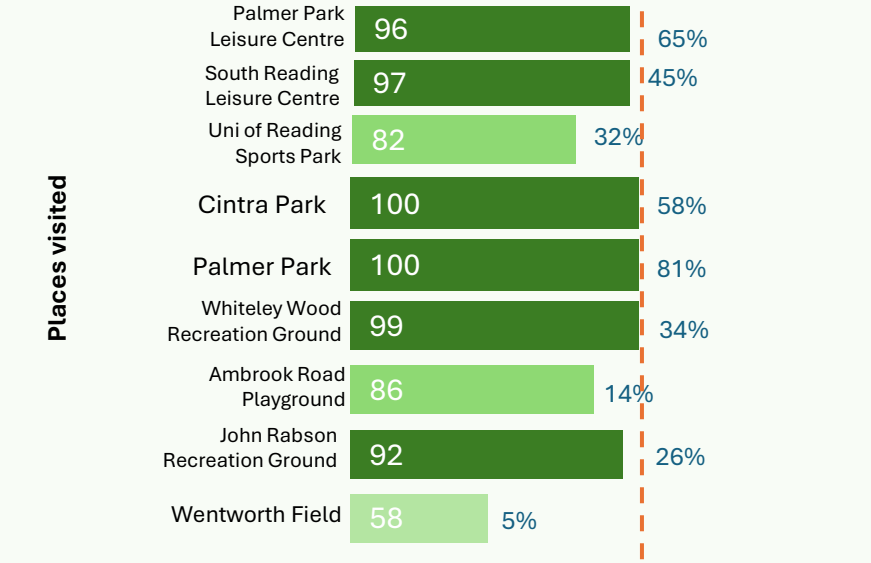
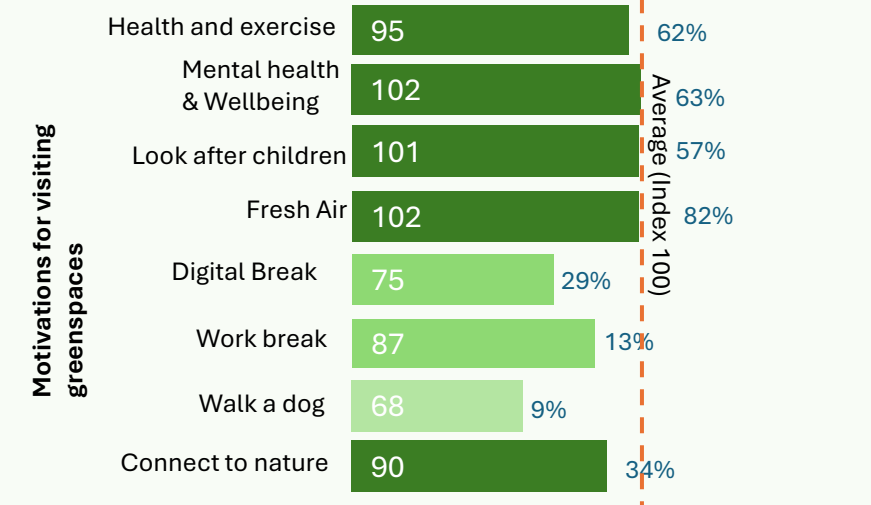
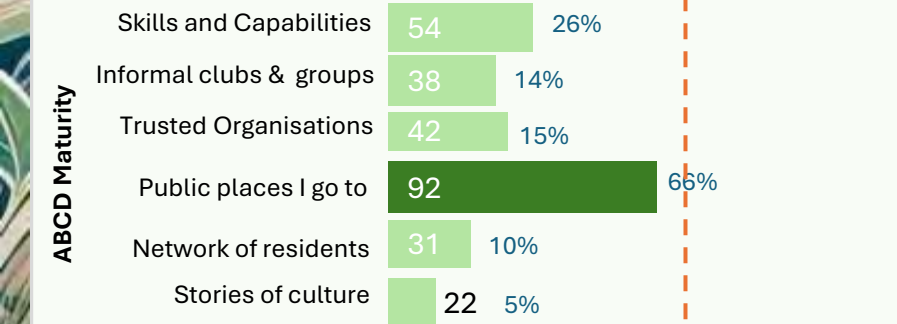
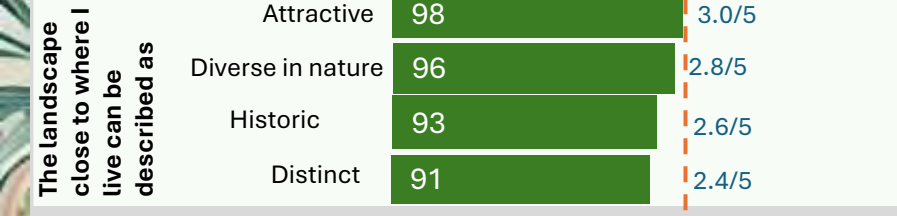
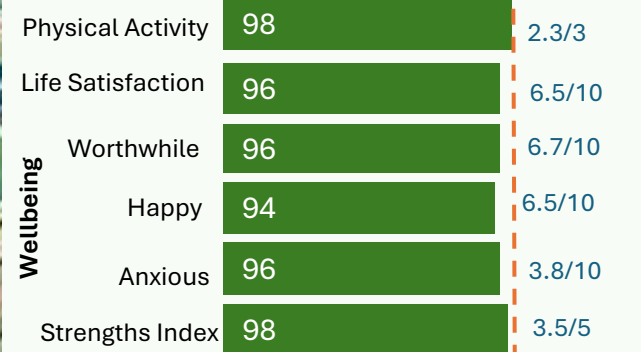
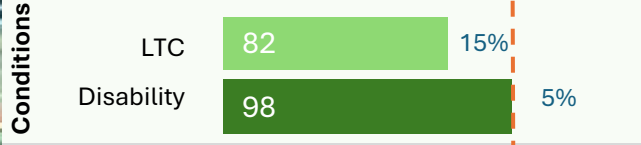
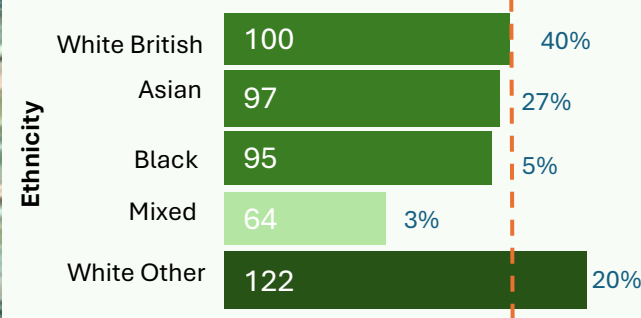
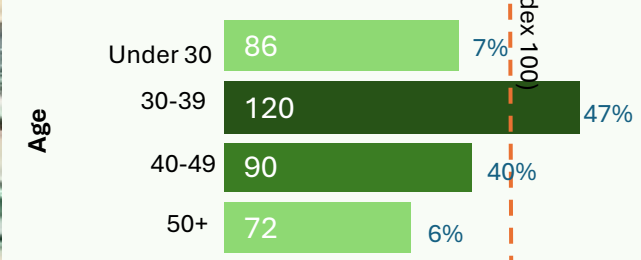
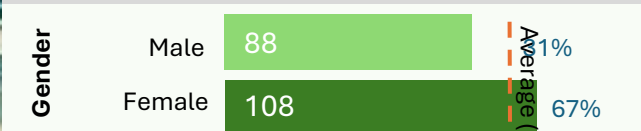
Average users of Cintra Park and Palmer Park but tend not to go to Wentworth Field.

The group who live furthest away from greenspaces. Slightly closer to nearest greenspace than average.





The Willows



Top 40% most deprived: 102 (43%)

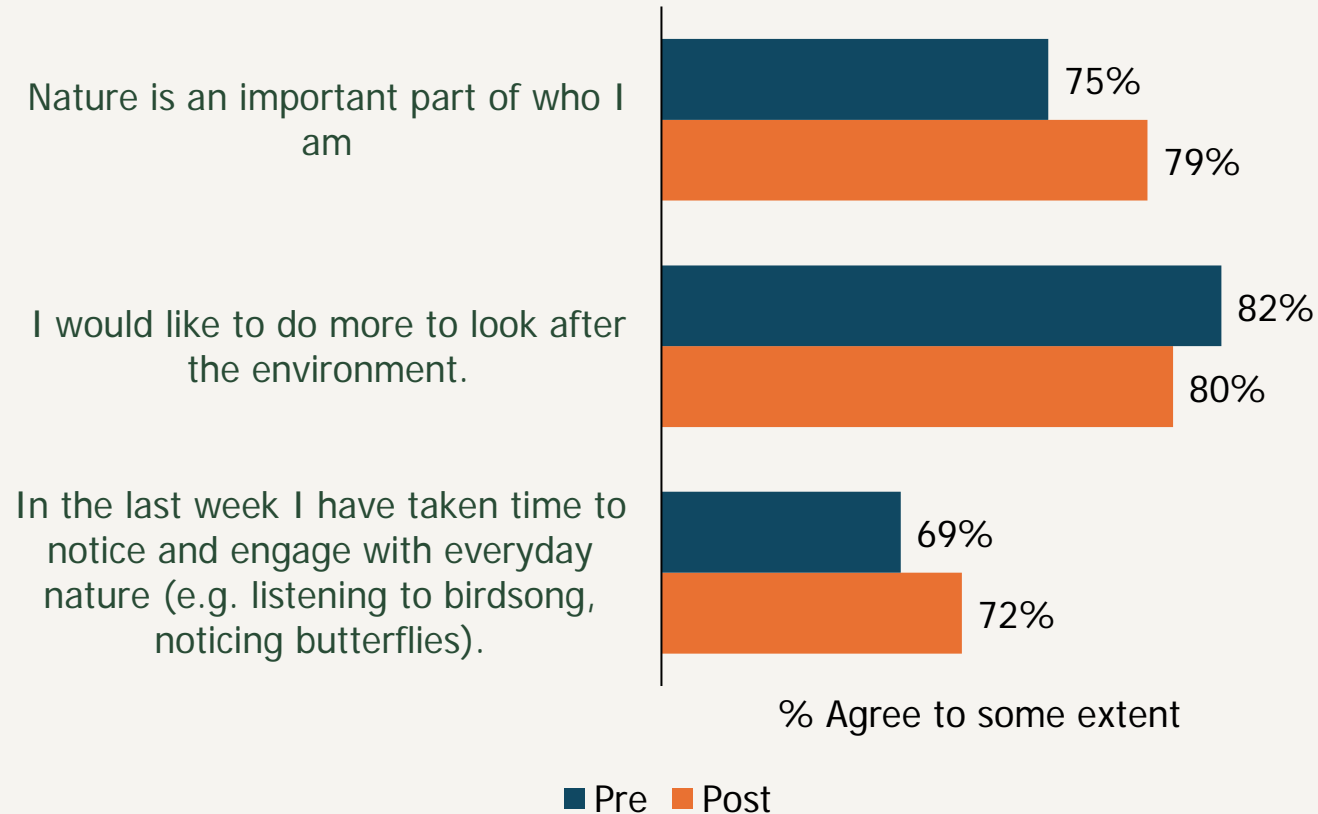
Bars show index relative to overall average where 100 is equal to the average.
Blue numbers are the group % or average.

Salford Case Study, 2025



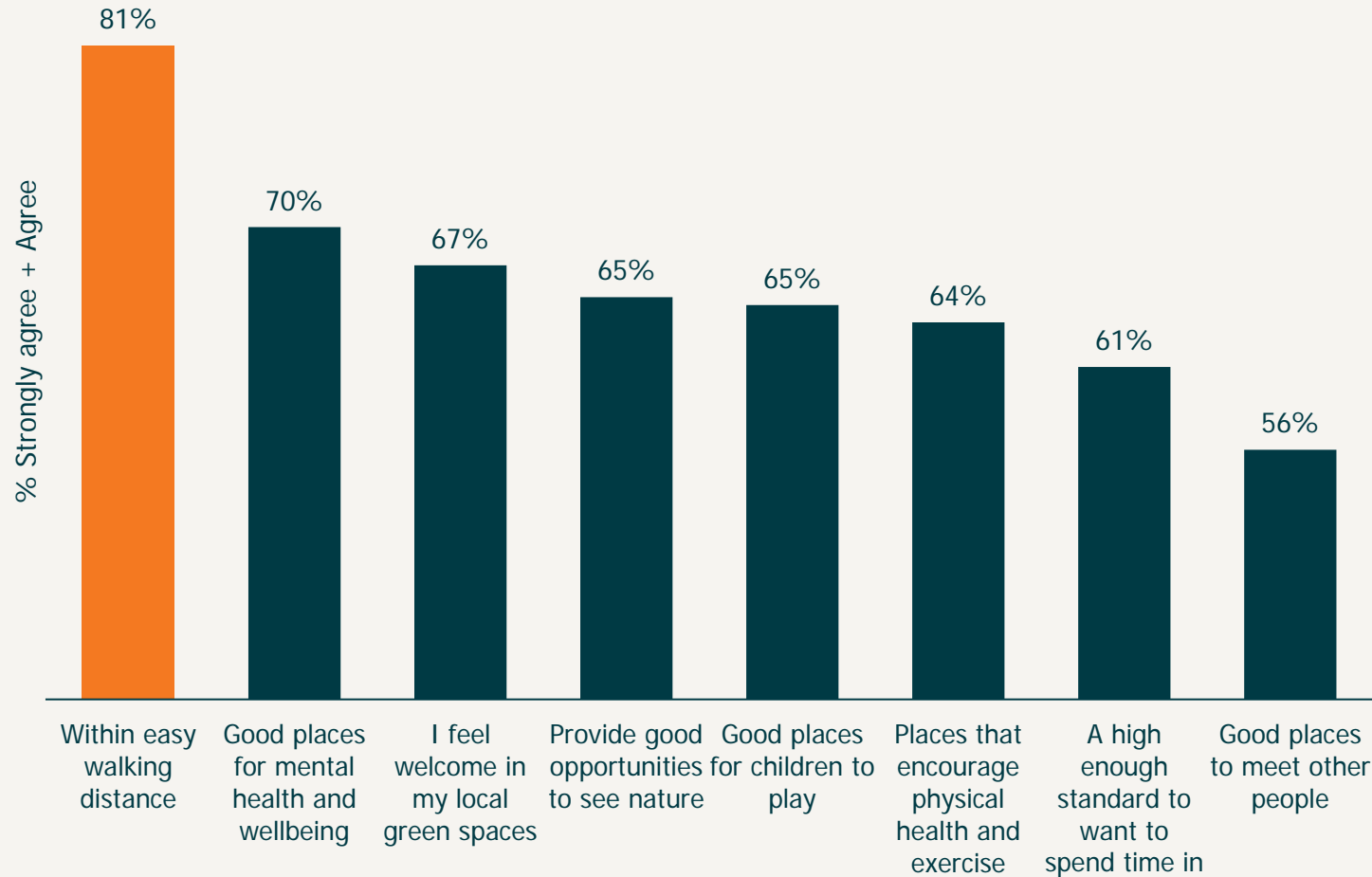
Salford: How Nature Connects

Children - Mechanisms of Nature Connection
(n=206)



Increases in Nature as important part of who I am and noticing nature

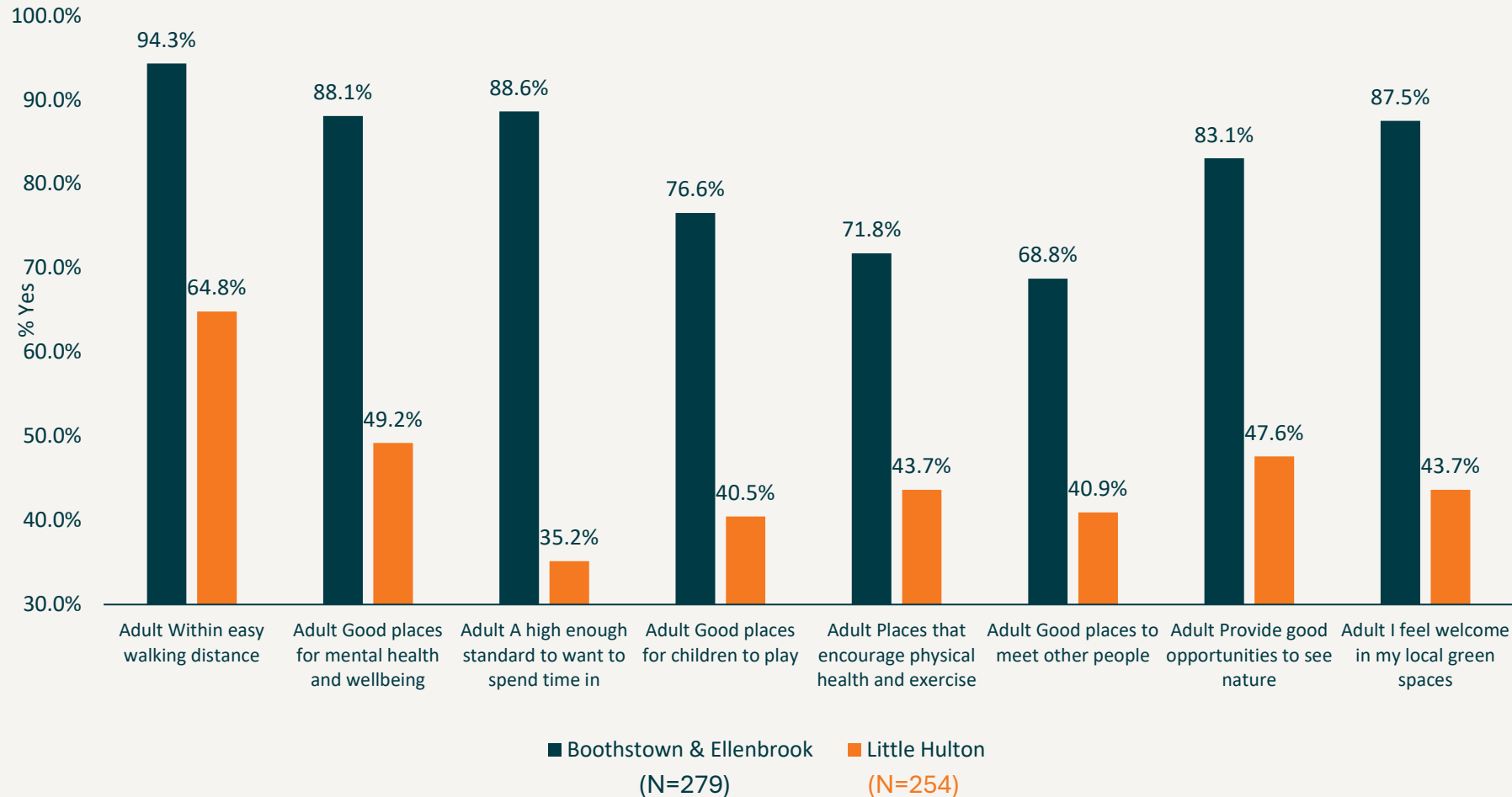
Thinking about green spaces close to where you live. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? My local green spaces are: (n=2,833)



Proximity is high

Function as a social space is much lower

Thinking about green spaces close to where you live. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? My local green spaces are (Adults):



Boothstown is able to use the mechanisms that convert greenspace assets into Health and Wellbeing compared to Little Hulton

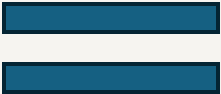
How greenspace affects health in Salford

Overall we see that

Spending time in greenspace  Improved life satisfaction

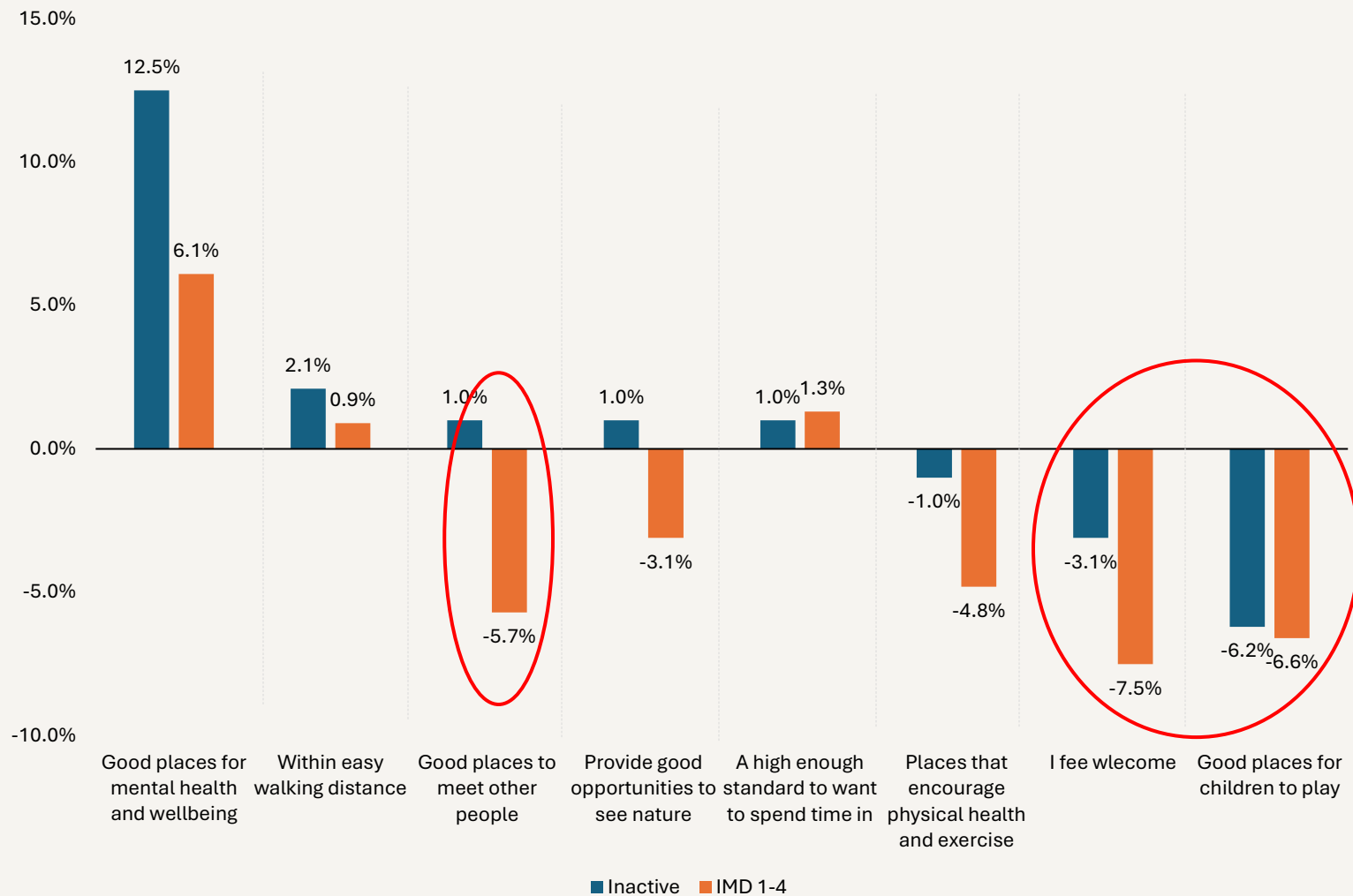
But that hides a pattern within

Spending time in greenspace (only)  Improved life satisfaction

Spending time in greenspace + Greenspace strengthens social connection, psychological agency, and attachment to place  Improved life satisfaction

Greenspace improves health primarily by strengthening social connection, psychological agency, and attachment to place

Thinking about green spaces close to where you live. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? My local green spaces are: (n=2,833)



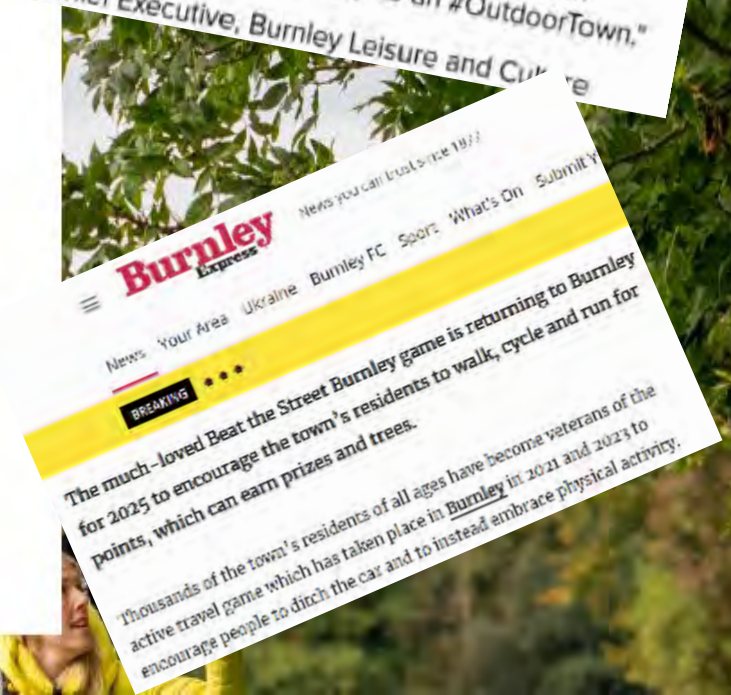
We see that after playing BTS the ratings of green space as good places to meet others, welcoming and good places for children see no gain and for IMD1-4 go backwards.

Need a focus on how greenspaces can promote physical activity AND social connection in order to generate wellbeing.

#OutdoorTown

WELCOME TO BURNLEY, AN #OUTDOORTOWN.

#Outdoor Town is all about focusing on the amazing things we already have right here in Burnley. Our outdoor spaces are the heart of the town. Our parks, canal, trails, blue and green spaces aren't just places to play—they're places where we can learn, grow, and connect.



Over 2,500 trees were earned through playing Beat the Street in Burnley (2,000 points = 1 tree)

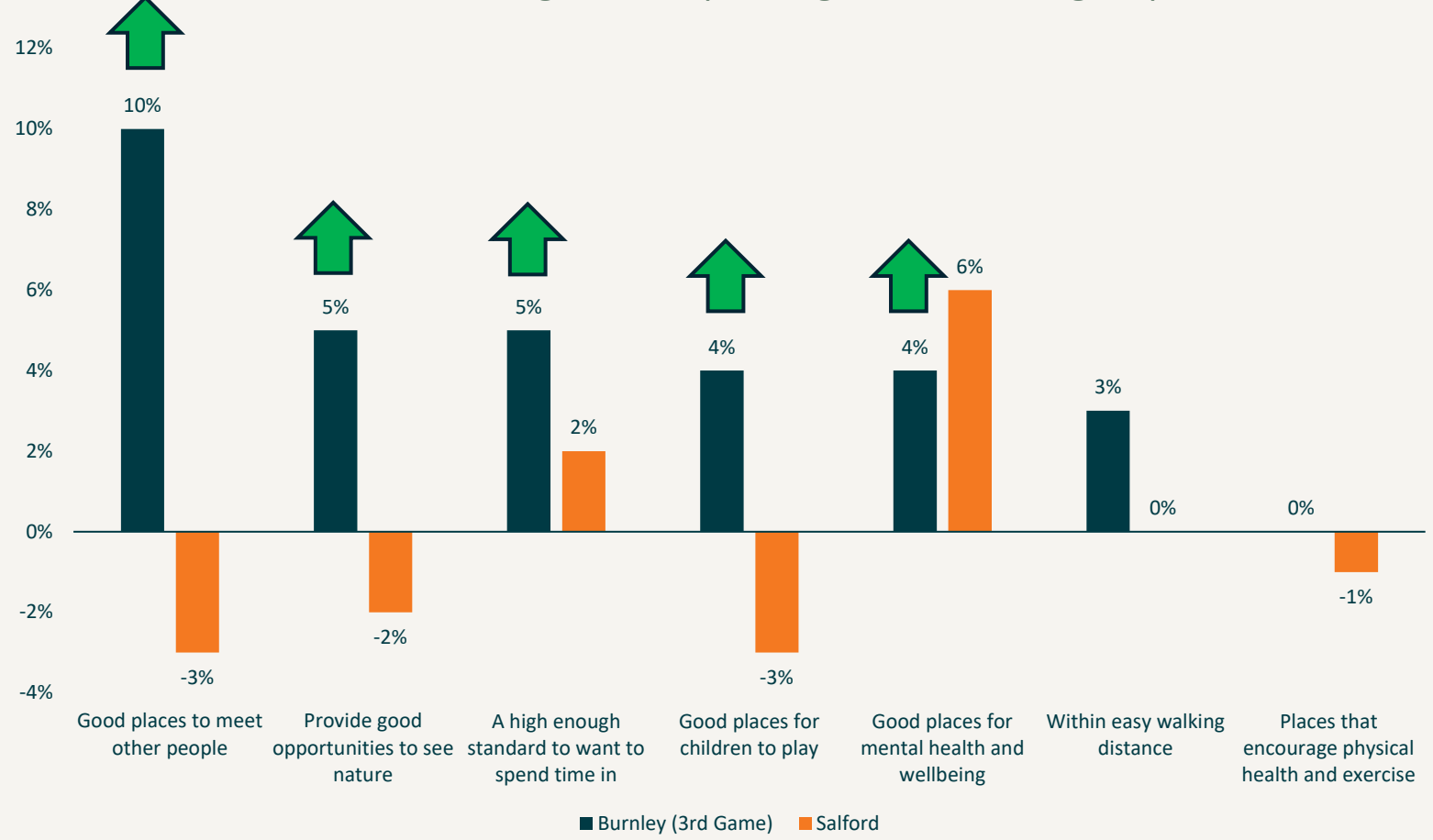


Schools and community groups were invited back to help plant them across the borough.

The combination of tree planting and active community engagement helps foster a sense of pride of Place

Change in Views on Local Green Spaces – a comparison

Parks are good for (Change in % who agree)



Burnley:
Power of parks socially

Salford:
Parks offering less social benefit

Thank you

Theo Bird
Partnerships Manager
theo.bird@intelligenthealth.co.uk

