NHS Forest press kit

The NHS Forest is a network of healthcare sites working to transform their green space to realise its full potential for health, wellbeing and biodiversity, and to encourage engagement with nature. The project is run by the Centre for Sustainable Healthcare, an independent UK charity, as part of its Green Space for Health Programme.

Since the NHS Forest was founded in 2009, around 300 healthcare sites across the UK have joined our alliance, and almost 100,000 trees have been planted on or near to their estates. Like all forests, the NHS Forest comprises far more than just trees. Our sites have established a wide range of green spaces which offer multiple benefits to people and wildlife. These include:

- Peaceful gardens for staff and patients
- Woodlands and native wildflower meadows
- Allotments and orchards
- Nature-based play
- Outdoor rehabilitation and therapeutic activities
- Green Health Routes that link GP surgeries to local green spaces

Our pilot **Nature Recovery Rangers** programme launched in spring 2021. Following its incredible success, we now have five rangers are embedded in hospitals in London, Liverpool, Newcastle and Bristol, where they expand and enhance green spaces, and encourage staff and communities to engage with nature.

Email vicki.brown@sustainablehealthcare.org.uk to arrange:

- **Interviews with our expert team** on the links between green space and health, and our associated projects
- **Interviews with our Nature Recovery Rangers** and their hospital teams
- **Interviews with representatives from our NHS Forest sites**
- **Visits to the sites**

Downloads and multimedia

You can download high resolution logos and photos from our **media library**.

See a selection of **short films about the NHS Forest**.

Watch our 2021 online **NHS Forest conference**, on the theme of *An Equitable Recovery for People and Nature.*

NHS Forest: www.nhsforest.org | Twitter: @nhsforest
Centre for Sustainable Healthcare: www.sustainablehealthcare.org.uk | Twitter: @sushealthcare

Why is the NHS Forest important?

A growing body of **evidence** points to the benefits of access to green space for mental and physical health, including positive outcomes for:

- heart rates and blood pressure
- stress levels
- mood and self-esteem
- obesity
- type 2 diabetes
- post-operative recovery
- birth weight
- children's cognitive development
- cardiovascular disease
- income-related health inequalities

Based on these benefits, in England alone, it has been calculated that the NHS could save an estimated £2.1 billion every year in treatment costs if everyone had access to good quality green space.*

The NHS Forest and biodiversity

While woodland covers just over 13% of the UK's land area, around half of this comprises non-native plantation trees. The NHS Forest supplies health sites with native species, which can be used to create woodlands, orchards and hedgerows – vital habitat for many at-risk wildlife species. Many NHS Forest sites have planted native, perennial wildflowers to support pollinators; this in turn can see the return of wildlife such as bats and house martins.

Programme staff

- **Rachel Stancliffe:** Centre for Sustainable Healthcare Founder and Director
- **Felicity Harris:** Green Space for Health Programme Director,
- **Miriam Dobson:** NHS Forest network coordinator
- **Andriele Madison:** Green Space for Health Communities Lead
- **Emma Edwards:** Nature Recovery Ranger Manager
- **Nature Recovery Rangers:** Karen MacKelvie (Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, Northwood, London); Phoebe Webster (Southmead Hospital, Bristol); Naomi Paine (Homerton Hospital, East London); Sally Johnson (Freeman Hospital, Newcastle); Nick White (Liverpool Hospitals)

* References for all benefits and figures are published on our [About Us](#) page

NHS Forest in the media

- **The Daily Mail:** How trees can heal: Research shows that patients looking at greenery from their hospital beds can cut the need for painkillers and even reduce post-op problems
- **This is Local London:** Planting Trees for the NHS
- **The Guardian:** Scottish GPs to begin prescribing rambling and birdwatching
- **Newbury Today:** Tiny Forest at West Berkshire Community Hospital a first for the NHS
- **The Star:** First-of-its-kind memorial forest created by Yorkshire Ambulance Service to remember Covid victims

Testimonials

"I think green spaces are very important in patient outcomes. It's well known that just the thought of chemotherapy and the sight of the building can make some people nauseous. So knowing that you've got your friendly spaces, your areas that you can use outside of the hospital wards and corridors, is very important." – **Pete Ostler, Consultant Clinical Oncologist, Mount Vernon Cancer Centre**

"When I came here as a patient, the gardens, the green spaces really made me feel like there was a light at the end of the tunnel, because when you're in a hospital environment, it's very clinical, it's quite scary. Being able to see some nature, some green spaces and even some flowers, makes the whole process a little bit softer and kinder. I think nature and the outside can have a real big effect during a patient's journey; it certainly did for me." – **Juliet Fitzpatrick, former patient at Mount Vernon Cancer Centre**

"There are many great examples of work on biodiversity across the NHS, and I would like to highlight some of the great practice I have seen up and down the country. The NHS Forest initiative has led to over 77,000 trees already being planted across 200 different NHS organisation estates... I am keen to see more of this sort of action across the NHS." – **Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, former Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, in his open letter to all NHS trusts in England, 2021**