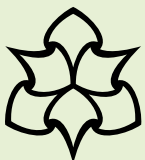


RECONOMICS PLUS

The Economic, Health and Social Value of Outdoor Recreation

February 2017



Manchester
Metropolitan
University

SPORT+
RECREATION
ALLIANCE

Reconomics Plus

[Reconomics Plus](#) sets out the unique value of outdoor recreation. It was launched in February 2017 with outdoor recreation enthusiast David Rutley MP in his Macclesfield constituency on the outskirts of the Peak District.

The Alliance worked in partnership with **Manchester Metropolitan University** to provide a resource that we hope will support members and the wider outdoor recreation sector to demonstrate the value of outdoor recreation to stakeholders such as policy makers and funders.

Reconomics Plus, builds on [Reconomics \(2014\)](#) and the accompanying evidence document (Comley & Mackintosh, 2014). Since 2014, there have been several major changes to the policy context surrounding outdoor recreation in England. For example, the Government's [Sporting Future](#) strategy broadened the traditional definition of 'sport' to physical activity which, significantly, includes outdoor recreation. There have also been public health drives around physical activity and we are expecting a cross-government 25-year environment plan which has a strand on engaging people with the natural environment.

All of these changes provide the outdoor recreation sector with the opportunity to demonstrate the positive difference being active in the natural environment can make. So we wanted to refresh our publication with updated information and also expand its focus to include not just the economic value, but also how outdoor recreation can contribute to the other *Sporting Future* outcomes.

What's included in *Reconomics Plus*?

Statistics for the main resource have been gathered from information that is openly available on the internet. There are links throughout that you can click on to see more detail.

Manchester Metropolitan University reviewed academic literature specifically on the health benefits of outdoor recreation as tackling inactivity and mental health are currently top, current issues for policy makers.

The resource is primarily focused on England with some data drawn from UK or GB sources.

Areas covered are:

- [Policy context](#)
- [Outdoor recreation](#)
- [Economic value](#)
- [Health value](#)
- [Educational value](#)
- [Community and social value](#)

Case studies

Alongside the statistics and facts, we have gathered a range of case studies from Alliance members which bring the many benefits of outdoor recreation to life. The case studies link to one or more of the Government's five key outcomes from [Sporting Future](#); the economic, social, individual and physical and mental health benefits of being active outdoors.

The case studies provide a summary of what the projects are and also share what organisations learnt through delivering the activities. This will hopefully be helpful to you to consider in relation to your own projects. Contact details are provided so you can follow-up with the right people.

You can find out more information and [download the case studies here](#).

Policy context

There have been several major changes to the policy context surrounding outdoor recreation in England since *Reconomics* was first published in 2014. This is why we have decided to refresh this publication. *Reconomics Plus* builds on the first edition by considering the wider benefits of outdoor recreation to include not just the economic value, but all five of the key outcomes of HM Government's *Sporting Future* strategy.

Strategic landscape

The Alliance worked with its members and partners to influence the development of the Government's [Sporting Future](#) strategy. *Reconomics* was praised for clearly setting out how significant a contribution those taking part in outdoor recreation make to the economy in the strategy launched in December 2015. The Government also pledged to track outdoor activity participation levels and to work to better understand behaviours as they want to see the outdoor recreation sector thrive.

The Government also stated that Sport England will work with organisations in outdoor recreation and will bring together partnerships to deliver the objectives of *Sporting Future*. When Sport England's [Towards an Active Nation](#) was released in May 2016, a noticeable shift in Sport England's approach was reflected. This includes Sport England broadening the definition of sport to include physical activity such as walking for leisure.

Towards an Active Nation also demonstrated Sport England's new approach to how they will invest in sport and physical activity and will now include spaces and places as well as built sports facilities. This is because both of these strategies recognise that both indoor and outdoor settings have enormous potential to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors and to get physically active.

The top priority of tackling inactivity provides the outdoor recreation sector with opportunities to demonstrate how it can contribute:

- Sport England has committed 25% of its resources, more than £250 million, to get the inactive moving;
- Public Health England's (2014) [Everybody Active, Every Day](#) set out a framework to get the nation moving;
- HM Government's [Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action](#) recognises the health benefits of physical activity for children.

Alongside the implementation of these strategies and plans, it is understood that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is leading the development of a cross-Government, 25-year environment plan. This is important for outdoor recreation as it is expected to include a strand on engaging people with the natural environment. The Alliance will work with members to respond to the consultation document when it is published.

Brexit

Brexit raises several as yet unanswered questions that could impact on outdoor recreation; will there be changes in tourism activity? Will people stop buying expensive outdoor recreation equipment? What will it mean for qualifications? Will existing EU regulations and directives, e.g. protecting the environment and fish, be torn up?

The Alliance will monitor these areas closely and will keep our members up to date with any developments and opportunities to engage with policy making.

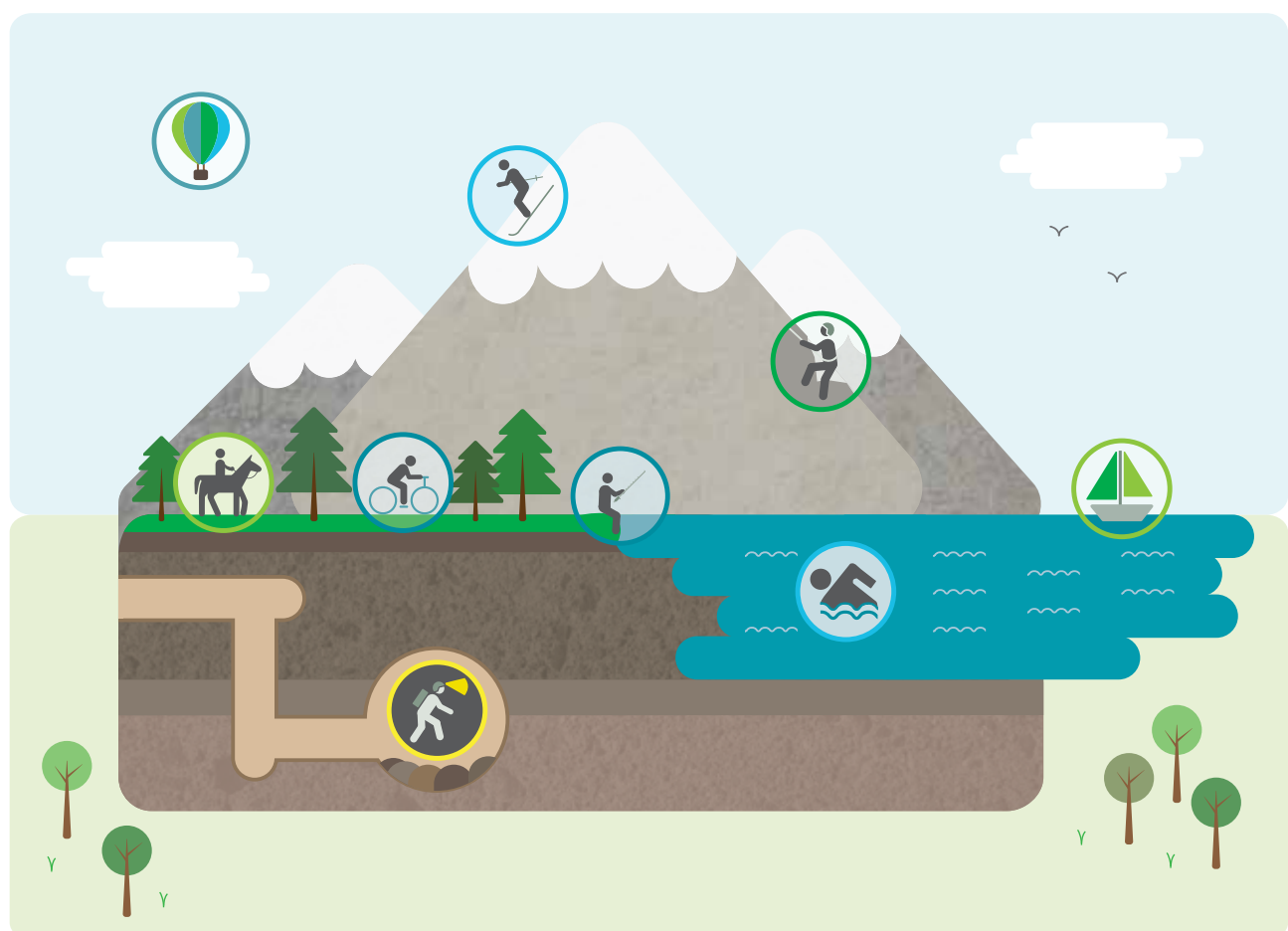
Outdoor recreation

Reconomics (2014) brought together all the existing information, research and evidence relating to the impact of outdoor recreation and provided a compelling case to politicians of the true value of outdoor recreation. It defined outdoor recreation as:

Outdoor recreation refers to any physical activity taking place in the natural environment.

Many images come to mind when you think of outdoor recreation so throughout *Reconomics Plus* we will continue to keep this definition as our focus, whilst remembering that the natural environment refers to both rural and urban spaces.

The activities below are just a few examples of what is on offer:



UNDERGROUND
Caving, Potholing



ON WATER
Angling, Canoeing,
Water Skiing



HIGH UP
Mountain climbing,
High ropes



IN WATER
Outdoor swimming,
Scuba diving



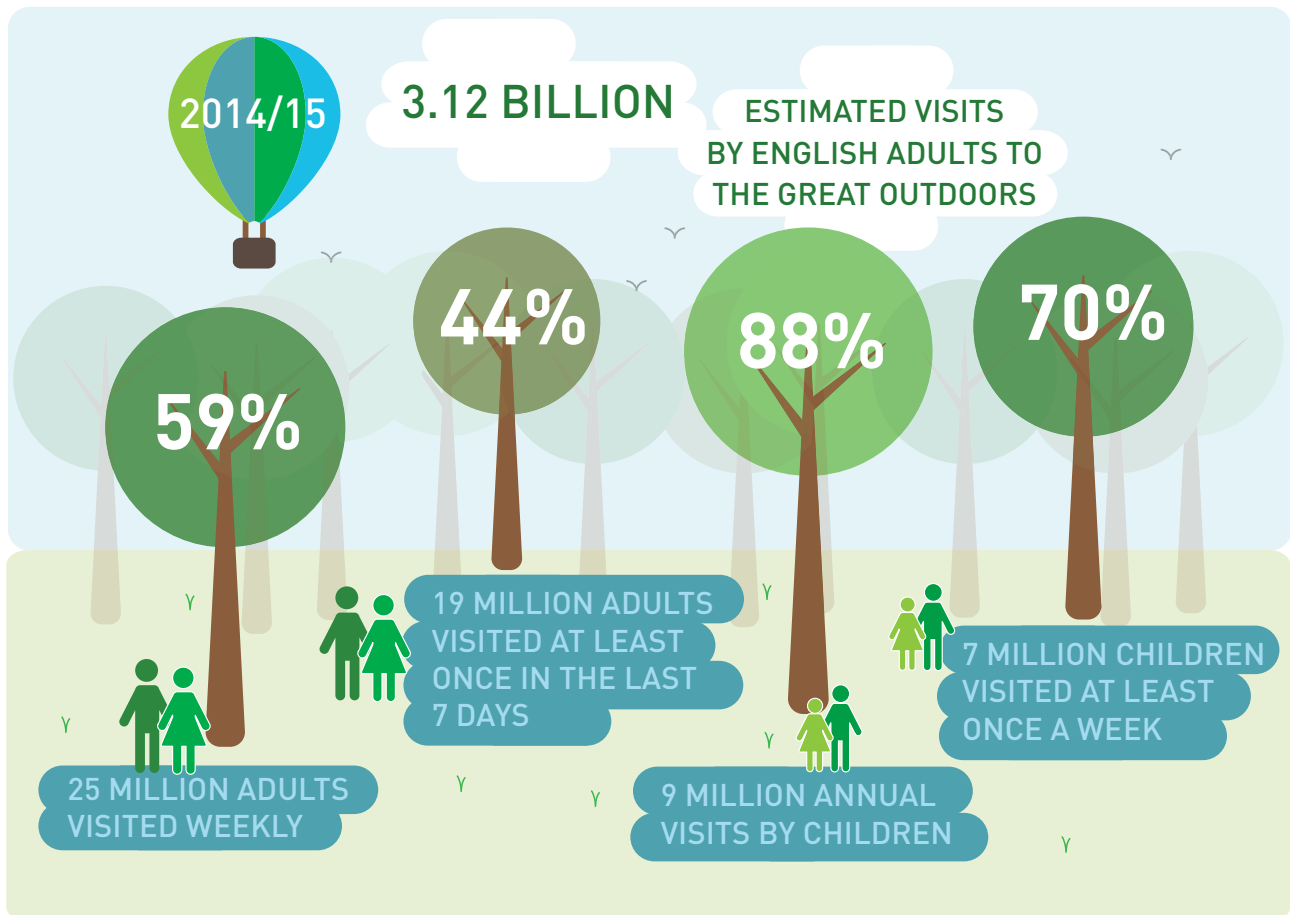
ON LAND
Walking, Horse
riding, Off-road
cycling



IN THE AIR
Gliding, Sky diving,
Paragliding

Scale and motivations

STEPPING OUT: Visits to the natural environment



Natural England (2015) [headline report for 2014/15](#)

Natural England (2016) [report on indicator of visits by children pilot](#)

Children, adults and families can all enjoy visiting the natural environment. [Natural England's \(2015\) Monitoring Engagement with the Natural Environment \(MENE\) survey](#) found that during 2014/15:

- There were 3.12 billion estimated visits by adults in England to the natural environment during March 2014 - February 2015:
 - 1.50 billion visited the outdoors in towns and cities
 - 1.31 billion went to the countryside
 - 0.2 billion visited a seaside resort
 - 0.11 billion visited other coastal areas
- An estimated 827 million visited parks in towns and cities making them the most visited specified destination
- An estimated 456 million visits were taken to paths / cycleways / bridleways and 417 million visits to woodlands / forests
- Walking was the most popular activity undertaken outdoors. It's estimated that:
 - 866 million visits (28%) were from people out walking with no dog
 - 326 million visits (10%) were spent playing with children.

Parks

Emma Boggis, CEO of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, presented [oral evidence](#) at the Communities and Local Government Committee inquiry on parks in October 2016. She supported parks as free, accessible places to get everyone active and championed our members' activities in this area.

Heritage Lottery Fund's (2016) [State of the UK public parks 2016](#) report found that:

- 57% of the UK population visit their local parks at least once a month or more often
- 90% of families with children under 5 visit their local park at least once a month
- 70% of people aged 25-34 use their local park

Getting active outdoors

[Research](#) carried out by the Outdoor Industries Association (OIA) on behalf of Sport England (2015) found that millions of people are already getting active outdoors and importantly millions more want to:



Sport England and OIA (2015:3) *Getting Active Outdoors*

The research identifies eight market segments that outdoor consumers could be split into and examines what motivates individuals from each group to take part in outdoor activities:

1. Explorer
2. Thrill seeker
3. Learner
4. Adventurer
5. Freestyler
6. Fitness in nature
7. Challenger
8. Tribe

The report also looks at the potential demand and what activities could appeal to those who are not currently participating in outdoor activities but say they would like to.

The research suggests that there are over 9,000 providers of outdoor activity split into four broad categories:

1. Sport and active recreation
2. Commercial facilitation
3. Development and learning
4. Social connection

Reconomics Plus does not go into detail on what motivates people to get active outdoors but instead looks at the value outdoor recreation provides. Further insight into behaviours can be found in research carried out in [Getting Active Outdoors](#). Manchester Metropolitan University's [literature review](#) also considers behavioural research insight.

Economic value

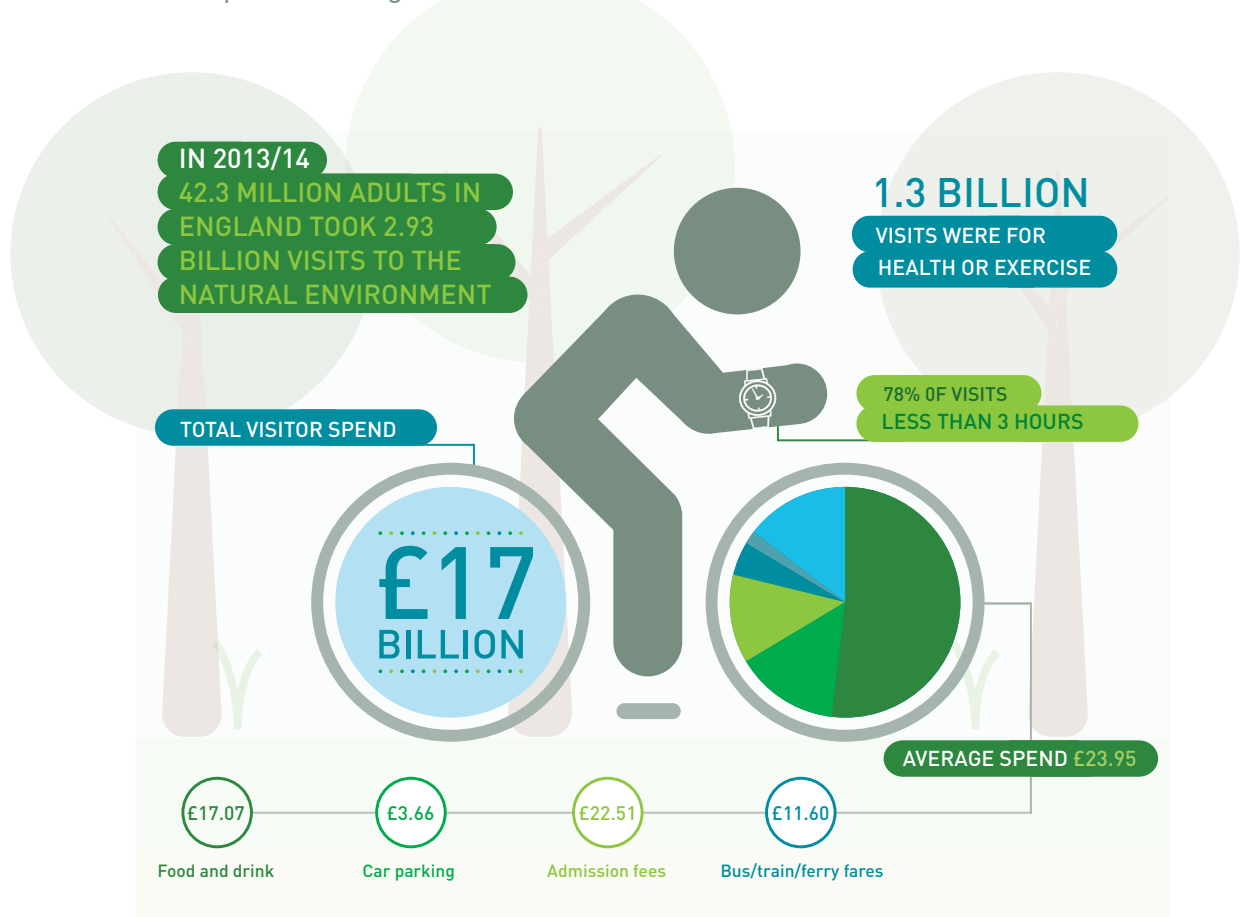
Outdoor recreation makes a significant contribution to the national and local economies. For example, people may holiday in areas where they know there are opportunities to be active outdoors. People spend money on equipment as well as on food and drink in a local café. People are also employed in the outdoor recreation sector which offers a wide range of development opportunities.

Here we will look at this contribution across the following areas:

- Spending money outdoors
- The visitor economy
- Specific activity data
- The outdoor specialist market
- Creating jobs and skills

Spending time and money outdoors

The economic impact of being active outdoors



Natural England (2015) [Annual report from the 2013-14 survey](#)

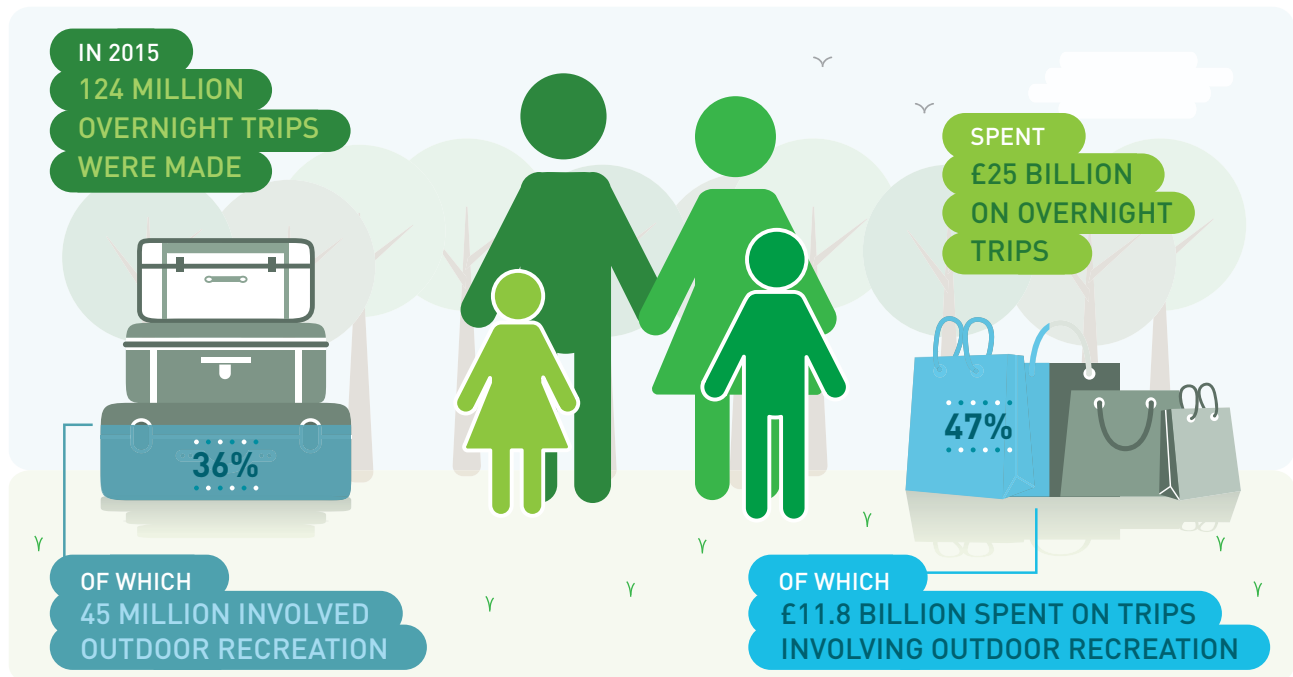
A [report](#) (2013) produced by National Parks England states that:

- Public expenditure on national parks in England equates to less than £1 per year per head of the population.
- 90 million visitors to national parks spend more than £4 billion

Visitor economy

Outdoor staycations

Overnight domestic tourism in Great Britain involving outdoor recreation in 2015



Visit England (2016) [GB Tourist Statistics 2015](#)

Day visits

According to Visit Britain's [GB Day Visitor report \(2015\)](#):

- In 2015, there were 255 million day visits in Great Britain where one or more of the main activities involved taking part in outdoor activities. 113 million visits had outdoor activities as the single main activity.
- £2.6 billion was spent in Great Britain on outdoor activities (£2.1 billion in England, £186 million in Scotland and £300 million in Wales).
- The average amount of money spent per visit when undertaking an outdoors activity was £23
- Undertaking outdoor activities was the second most popular activity by people visiting rural locations with 60 million people taking part (17%).

Visit Britain's report also considers the volume of day visits and the type of activities done during them. This is broken down in the table below (please note that more than one activity can be undertaken during a single visit).

Activity during day visits to rural locations	No. of visits (millions)
Long walk / hike /ramble	83
Visited a beach	47
Centre-based walking	46
Visited a garden	40
Visited a country park	33
Swimming	19
Cycled	17
Played golf	17
Running / jogging / orienteering	12
Other outdoor sports	11

Specific activity data

APS stats

According to Sport England's (2016) [Active People Survey 10 figures](#) :

- 2.01 million adults participated in cycling
- 104,300 adults took part in mountaineering
- 100,600 adults participated in angling
- 42,600 took part in canoeing

Walking and cycling

The Department for Transport's [Local Area Walking and Cycling statistics for 2014/15 in England](#) sets out participation for walking and cycling per month and per week. These include:

- 86% of people walk for at least once a month for any purpose, equivalent to 38.3 million people
- 81% of adults walk at least once a week - 43% for recreational reasons
- 62% walk at least three times a week - 25% for recreational reasons
- 51% walk at least five times a week - 17% for recreational reasons
- 15% of adults cycled at least once a month for any purpose, equivalent to about 6.5 million people
- 10% cycled at least once a week - 5% for recreational reasons
- 4% cycled at least three times per week - 2% for recreational reasons
- 3% cycled at least five times a week - 1% for recreational reasons

[Active Living Research \(2015\)](#) looked at studies on the economic benefits of walking and cycling interventions and found that in the UK, the return is as high as £19 for every £1 invested.

A [report commissioned by the Department for Transport, *The Value of Cycling* \(2016\)](#), found that:

- Cyclists visit local shops more regularly, spending more than users of most other modes of transport
- Per square metre, cycle parking delivers 5 times higher retail spend than the same area of car parking
- Cycle tourists on average spend more: around 9% per head per trip, or around £81 per head per trip.

[Cycling UK \(2016\)](#) states that if cycle use increased from less than 2% of all journeys (current levels) to 10% by 2025, and 25% by 2050 (as recommended by the Parliamentary Cycling Group's 'Get Britain Cycling' report), the cumulative benefits would be worth £248 billion between 2015 and 2050 for England – yielding annual benefits in 2050 worth £42 billion in today's money.

[Research conducted by Sustrans \(2015\)](#) discovered that leisure and tourism cycling on the National Cycle Network directly contributed over £650 million to the UK economy each year. Occasional, regular and frequent cyclists contributed a 'gross cycling product' of around £3 billion to the British economy.

[Research](#) conducted by the South West Coast Path in 2015 found that visitors walking the south west coast path spent around £468 million during 2014 which supported over 10,000 jobs for over 200 businesses.

According to an [Economic assessment of the health benefits of walking on the Wales Coast Path \(2014\)](#) by Natural Resources Wales, the economic value of the health benefits of walking on the Wales Coast Path is £18.3 million per year.

Hillwalking, climbing and mountaineering

British Mountaineering Council's (BMC's) [Outdoor Survey 2015-16](#) highlights that 'an important characteristic of behaviour of hillwalkers, climbers and mountaineers is their propensity to spend money in the areas visited, thus benefitting local businesses and helping maintain services of value to visitors and locals alike.'

The survey is the first of its kind but initial evidence suggests that each of the BMC's 83,000 members spent around £60 on each day of a weekend visit to go hillwalking, climbing or mountaineering. This adds up to nearly £10 million if each BMC member spent only one weekend staying away per year. The actual annual spend by hillwalkers, climbers and mountaineers in the UK is much higher than this because of multiple visits by BMC members and spending by non-members.

Sailing

The [Royal Yachting Association's \(2014\) report](#) into the economic contribution of the recreational boater revealed that:

- The average annual economic contribution arising from marina based boats is between £9,500 and £19,000
- The minimum UK Total Economic Contribution (TEC) from 'leisure boats' is estimated to be £1.3 billion per annum

Shooting

According to a report on the [economic value of shooting \(2014\)](#) by Public and Corporate Economic Consultants:

- Shooters spend £2.5 billion each year on goods and services
- Shooting is worth £2 billion to the UK economy

Equestrian

The British Equestrian Trade Association's [National Equestrian Survey \(2015\)](#) found that:

- The equestrian sector generates £4.3 billion of consumer spending across a wide range of goods and services per year
- Indirect spending on equestrian items such as hats and body protectors, clothing, books and magazines stands at £560 million
- An estimated £3,600 is spent on each horse
- Riding for pleasure, at 96%, was the most popular equestrian activity, with 59% of riders taking part in non-affiliated competitions

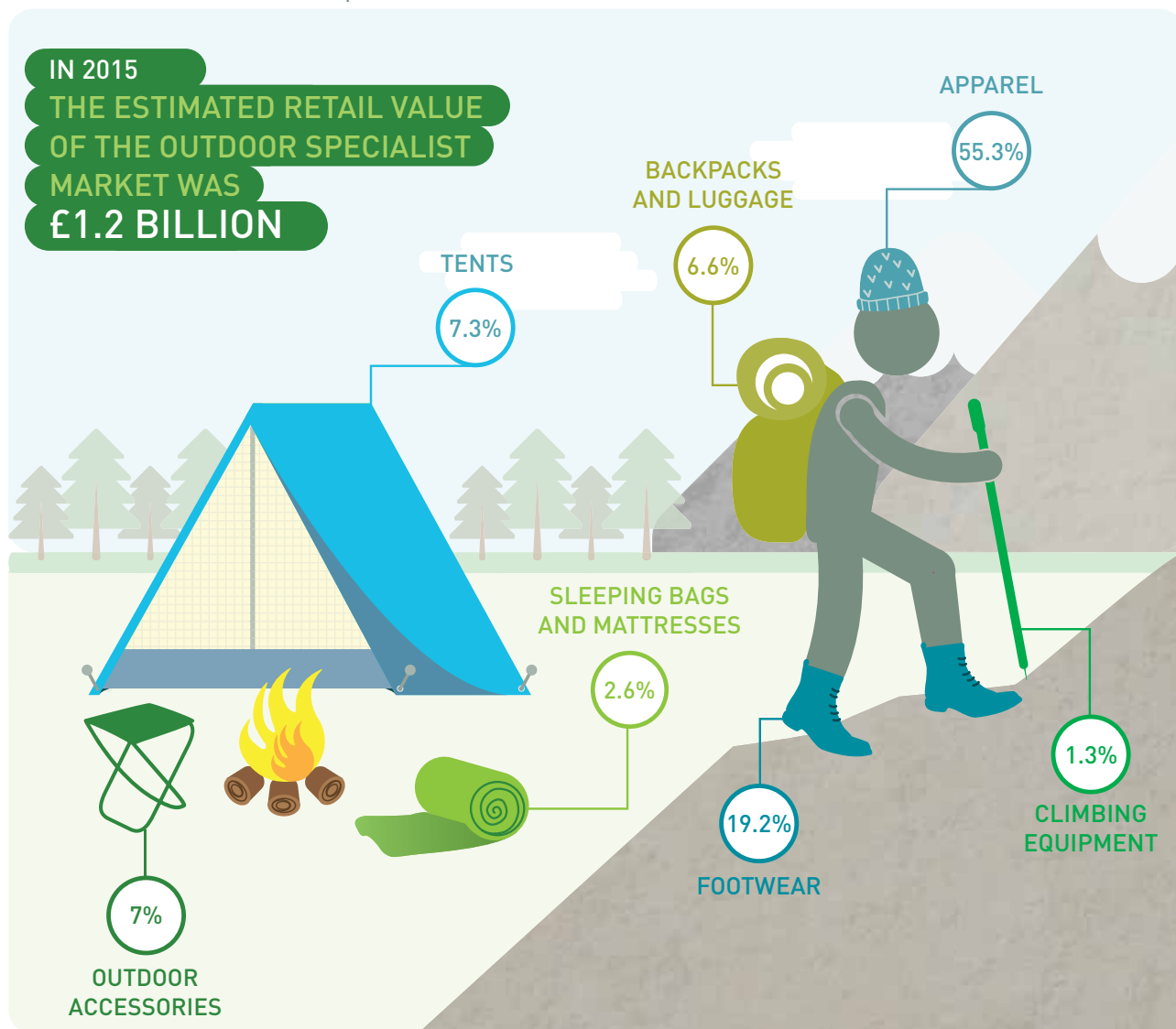
Angling

There is no recent data available on the national economic impact of angling. However, the [Broads Angling Strategy Group](#) has found that angling and fishing contributes in excess of £88 million to the Norfolk economy each year.

Outdoor specialist market

An industry for all weathers

The value of the outdoor specialist market



[Outdoor Industries Association in partnership with the European Outdoor Group \(2016\)](#)

[Sport England \(2015\) *Getting Active Outdoors*](#) revealed that the climbing, mountaineering and walking sector alone is worth £3.2 billion.

The [British Mountaineering Council](#) states that its members spend on average £72 million a year on outdoor gear, accommodation, food and travel costs in the UK.

[Sheffield Hallam's Sports Industry Research Centre \(2014\)](#) found that consumer spending on outdoor equipment in Sheffield is £93 million. The gross added value of outdoor activity per head in Sheffield is £96.24.

Creating jobs and skills

The outdoor recreation workforce

Estimates of employment supported by outdoor recreation



Sources included in 'The Economic Contribution of Outdoor Recreation: The Evidence', Sport and Recreation Alliance (2014) with updated shooting figure from [Public and Corporate Economic Consultants \(2014\)](#)



Walking tourism
245,500



Sporting shooting
74,000



Retail and manufacturer
of outdoor equipment
27,500*



Horse riding
(excl. racing)
28,000



Outdoor activity industry
26,400*



Cycling economy
23,000*



Boating tourism
14,900



Freshwater angling
37,400



Tackle trade
20,000

* denotes estimate for number of people directly employed within that sector.

Numbers employed in outdoor recreation

[According to National Parks England \(2015\)](#), the 260 million people who visit national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty spend in excess of £6 billion and support over 85,500 businesses and more than 120,000 jobs.

[Public and Corporate Economic Consultants \(2014\)](#) found that shooting supports the equivalent of 74,000 full time jobs. Shooters also spend £3.9 million work days on conservation, which is the equivalent of 16,000 full time jobs.

[Sustrans \(2015\)](#) states that leisure and tourism cycling on the National Cycle Network supports over 15,000 jobs – including over 10,000 jobs in the food and drink sector.

Outdoor recreation also brings benefits to the local economy. [Sheffield Hallam's Sports Industry Research Centre \(2014\)](#) found that:

- the estimated employment generated by the outdoor economy in Sheffield is 1,597 Full-time Equivalent jobs (FTEs)
- There are approximately 2,647 outdoor volunteers in Sheffield, equivalent to 700 FTEs
- The estimated economic value of outdoor-related volunteering is an additional £14-18 million

Case studies

For case studies relevant to the points we have made above and to find out more about key learnings from members of our sector [click here](#).

Health value

The Alliance partnered with [Manchester Metropolitan University \(MMU\)](#) to gain more in-depth academic insight into the benefits of outdoor recreation. MMU was keen to be involved as it recognises the need to increase the evidence-base for outdoor recreation so that it can fulfil its potential to contribute to Government agendas and improve the lives of individuals and benefit communities and the economy.

We already had a lot of information on the economic value, building on *Reconomics* (2014) and the accompanying evidence document (Comley & Mackintosh, 2014) so we wanted to focus on one of the other outcomes of Government's Sporting Future strategy. We decided that MMU would look into the health benefits of outdoor recreation given the prominence of the health agenda in policy making and outdoor recreation's potential to make a positive difference to health outcomes.

MMU produced a [literature review](#) which draws together evidence on both the physical and mental health benefits of outdoor recreation. It covers themes including:

- the benefits of 'green exercise'
- outdoor recreation as 'useful natural medicine'
- outdoor recreation and under-represented groups

MMU concludes that the literature indicates 'that investment in outdoor recreation offers a considerable opportunity for a meaningful return on investment, yet these benefits have remained largely untapped'.

MMU used the evidence to [suggest recommendations](#) which fall in three key areas:

- the need to utilise ecotherapy as an economic, upstream intervention
- the need to reframe outdoor exercise as 'restorative recreation'
- the idea that 'free play is free': that the true value of nature as a free and effective resource should be far more greatly exploited

[Download the full literature review](#)

[Download a summary of recommendations](#)

MMU also created a short video '[Outdoor Recreation - Resources for Health](#)' which gives an overview of key findings.

More health references

In addition to MMU's in-depth analysis, here are some open source references which set out the physical and mental health benefits of being active outdoors.

[University College London \(2014\)](#) looked at the use of natural solutions to tackle health inequalities and found the research indicates that:

- The amount of green space available in a neighbourhood can lead to increased physical activity levels
- People who live in the most deprived areas are ten times less likely to live in the greenest areas, while in contrast the most affluent 20% of wards in England have five times the amount of parks or general green space than the most deprived 10% of wards
- Green spaces may provide health benefits through being linked to better sleep, improved immunity, greater social interaction and physical activity

It also suggests benefits for mental wellbeing:

- There are trends in reduced hospital admissions for mental illness associated with more green space, even after controlling for levels of deprivation and population density
- Less green space in a living environment is associated with a greater risk of anxiety and depression, feelings of loneliness and perceived shortage of social support
- Contact with nature has been linked to a number of mental health benefits, including improved mood and reduced stress, anxiety and severity of children's symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- People living in urban areas with larger amounts of green space show significantly lower mental distress and higher well-being

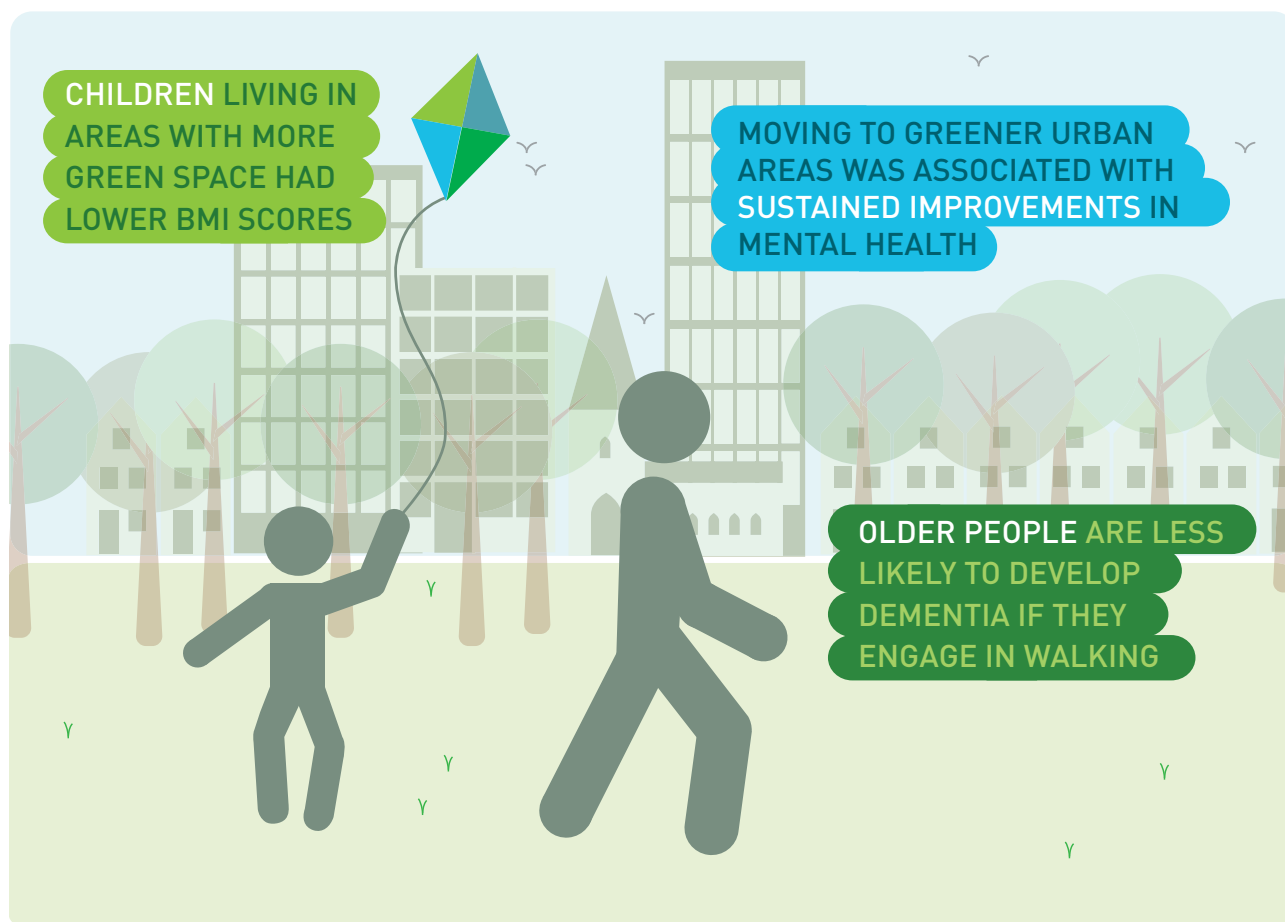
[Public Health England and the UCL Institute of Health Equity \(2014\)](#) highlights that:

- Children living in areas with more green space had lower BMI scores than children living in areas with less green space
- People who lived further away from urban green spaces were less likely to visit them than those who lived nearby. They were also less likely to meet the recommended guidelines for physical activity and more likely to be overweight or obese
- On average people living in greener urban areas were happier than when they lived in areas with less urban greenery

It also outlines evidence that links access to green spaces with benefits to people's health and mental wellbeing:

- People living in greener areas experienced significantly lower levels of mental distress and significantly higher levels of wellbeing
- Moving to greener urban areas was associated with sustained improvements in mental health
- Older people who engaged in walking were less likely to develop dementia
- Morbidity data found lower rates of disease among people living in environments with more green space within a kilometre radius of the home. The relationship was strongest for anxiety disorder and depression.

GREEN SPACES: Tackling health inequalities



[M.P. White, L.R. Elliot, T. Taylor, B.W. Wheeler, A. Spencer, A. Bone, M.H. Depledge, L.E. Fleming \[2016\]](#) found that outdoors exercise delivers an estimated £2.2 billion of health benefits to adults in England each year.

In 2016, Green Gym by The Conservation Volunteers was [awarded Nesta's Level 2 evaluation. Research](#) found that Green Gyms:

- Increase the physical health of volunteers by an average of 33% - worth £2.6 million
- Provide a social return on investment of £4.02 for every £1 spent
- Reduce social isolation – worth in excess of £700,000

A joint [report](#) by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support (2014) revealed that walking can:

- Prevent 37,000 deaths per year
- Slash the risk of getting heart disease, type 2 diabetes, Alzheimer's, stroke and cancer by 20-50%

[Ecorys UK and the University of East Anglia \[2016\]](#) evaluated the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support Walking for Health programme and found the potential to be highly cost-effective, with £3,775 per Quality Adjusted Life Year (QALY) gained. QALY is a measure of the state of health of a person or group in which the benefits, in terms of length of life, are adjusted to reflect the quality of life. One QALY is equal to 1 year of life in perfect health. Read a NICE explanation [here](#).

Furthermore, the return on investment is estimated to be £3.36 per £1 invested in Walking for Health, with an estimated cost saving to the NHS of £0.58 for every £1 invested.

You can see a [case studies](#) of Green Gym and Walking for Health in our [Physical activity and health](#) report produced in partnership with ukactive.

Case studies

For case studies relevant to the points we have made above and to find out more about key learnings from members of our sector [click here.](#)

Educational value

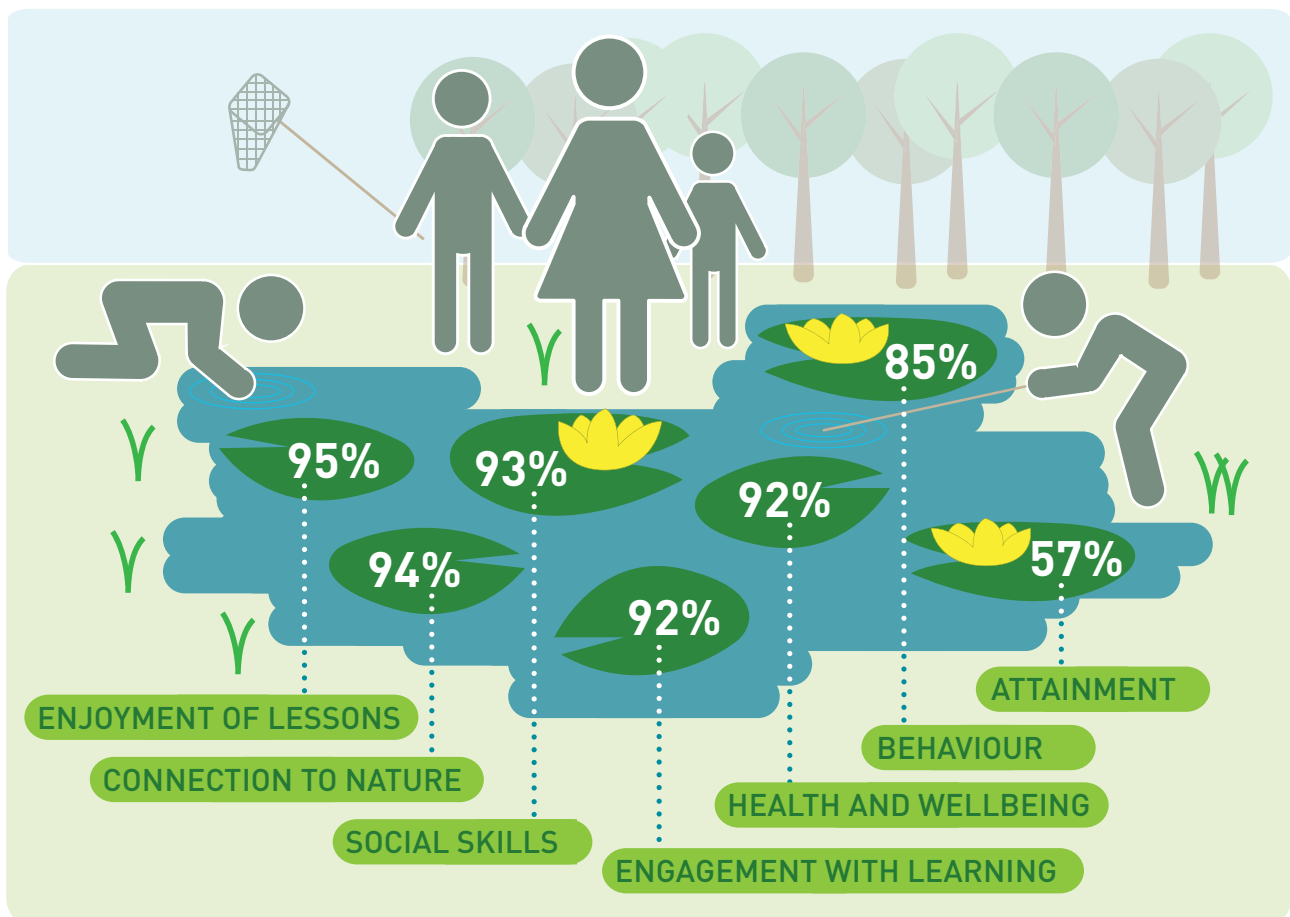
Learning outdoors can take place across a range of subjects such as geography, science and maths. The following research considers the benefits of outdoor learning to children's development and educational attainment.

[Natural England \(2016\)](#) found that:

- Students who learn in the natural environment achieve higher grades in reading, maths, science and social studies, compared with students who do not learn outdoors
- Students who participate in outdoor adventure learning make approximately three months' progress in terms of learning outcomes in comparison with students who do not
- Greener school environments have been linked with better motor skills in children

[Plymouth University \(2016\)](#) led the Natural Connections Demonstration Project which evaluated learning outside the classroom in the natural environment (LINE). The following proportions of schools agreed that LINE has positive impacts for pupils:

- Enjoyment of lessons - 95%
- Connection to nature - 94%
- Social skills - 93%
- Engagement with learning - 92%
- Health and wellbeing - 92%
- Behaviour - 85%
- Attainment - 57%



Alongside this, pupil feedback included:

- 92% agreed that they enjoyed lessons outside
- 89% agreed they felt happy and healthy in lessons outdoors

The following proportions of schools agreed that positive impacts of LINE on teachers included:

- Teaching practice – 79%
- Health and wellbeing – 72%
- Professional development – 69%

[The Education Endowment Fund \(2014\)](#) surveyed over 800 primary and secondary school pupils and found that learning experiences outside the classroom, such as visits to farms or parks, can improve children's writing standards by nine months on average, increasing to 18 months for pupils on free school meals.

[The Paul Hamlyn Foundation \(2015\)](#) evaluated learning away from the classroom residential and found that after taking part:

- 71% of Key Stage (KS) 2 and 80% of secondary school pupils felt they got on better with their peers
- 78% of KS 2 and 87% of secondary school pupils stated that they felt more confident to try new things as a result of learning outdoors
- 63% of KS 2 pupils said they were better at problem solving because of learning outdoors
- 67% of KS 2 pupils felt that, because of the residential, they found it easier to make new friends, while 89% of secondary school pupils liked trying new things while 85% said they were happier working with new people, were better at coping with new situations and found it easier to make new friends
- 68% of secondary school students felt that they knew more about the subject they studied outdoors, they were better at problem solving (69%) and they felt the subject was more interesting and important to them (69%)
- 67% of secondary school pupils felt that learning outdoors had made them realise they could be a role models to others, while 79% said they had enjoyed leading activities whilst on residential

The research also asked teachers about the impact of the residential:

- 75% said that the residential had already begun to improve pupils' resilience, confidence and wellbeing
- 70% said that the residential had led to an improvement in cohesion and interpersonal relationships amongst pupils

Case studies

For case studies relevant to the points we have made above and to find out more about key learnings from members of our sector [click here.](#)

Social and community value

Outdoor activities can bring people and communities together, whether they are participating, helping to make it happen or supporting others to take part.

[Public Health England and UCL's Institute of Health Equity \(2015\)](#) found that a street play programme aimed at getting children playing in their local communities created a 'strong consensus among organisers about the perceived benefits of the scheme for children, families and communities – especially in terms of social interaction'.

[Public Health England and UCL's Institute of Health Equity \(2014\)](#) suggests that open spaces provide a platform for community activities, social interaction, physical activity and recreation, as well as reducing social isolation, improving community cohesion and positively affecting the wider determinants of health.

The same report noted that a study investigating the relationship between older people's health and perceived neighbourhood environment, social contact, social support and self-efficacy, found that neighbourhoods with good quality facilities were associated with positive self-rated health and physical functioning. In contrast, poor neighbourhood perceptions were associated with poorer self-rated health.

[Natural England \(2016\) considered the link between natural environments and learning](#) and found that there is evidence that learning in natural environments helps foster a sense of belonging, pride and involvement in the community for both adults and children.

Case studies

For case studies relevant to the points we have made above and to find out more about key learnings from members of our sector [click here](#).

Case studies

Stats and facts tell a story but it is also helpful to share case studies and real life, personal stories. So, we have gathered a range of case studies from Alliance members which bring the many benefits of outdoor recreation to life. The case studies link to one or more of the Government's five key outcomes from [Sporting Future](#); the economic, social, individual and the physical and mental health benefits of being active outdoors.

The case studies provide a summary of what the projects are and also share what organisations learnt through delivering their activities. This will hopefully be helpful for others to consider in relation to their own projects. Contact details are provided so you can follow-up with the right people.

If you have a case study you'd like to share with us, please send it to policy@sportandrecreation.org.uk

Clay Shooting at the Jamboree - British Association for Shooting and Conservation

Scouts and Girl Guides at a week-long International Jamboree in Essex learned how shooting can give them the opportunity to get out, meet new people and build friendships.

Climbing Pathways - British Mountaineering Council

A series of climbing taster sessions for young people from a diverse range of backgrounds which helped increase their self-esteem and self-worth.

Xplorer - British Orienteering

A navigational challenge for children and their families that has increased interest in orienteering and footfall in local parks and open spaces.

Braybrooke angling - Braybrooke Community Nature and Fishing Club

A local fishing club in Berkshire that promotes the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of angling and offers tailored events for all sections of the community.

Breeze Cycling - British Cycling

A project to get more women riding their bikes and get them fit, have fun and meet new friends. Club leader and cycling trainer Maryam also explains how leading rides has increased her confidence and self-esteem.

Free Your Instinct Parkour - Parkour

Parkour sessions for people with long-term mental health difficulties in London that have led to increased levels of positive wellbeing for participants.

Get Kids Camping - Camping and Caravanning Club

A pop-up campsite roadshow that promoted the benefits of camping on children's education and social skills to children and their parents.

Get Set to Go - Middlesbrough and Stockton Mind and British Canoeing

Canoeing sessions in Stockton-On-Tees for people with mental health issues that demonstrates both the physical and mental wellbeing of the sport.

South Peak Loop - Peak Horsepower and British Horse Society

How the creation of a 70-mile riding loop in the Peak District will give people more confidence to take up horse riding and help the local economy. Experienced local rider Flick also explains how riding the loop has inspired her to volunteer more regularly in her local bridleway group.

Walking for Health - The Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support

An England-wide programme of community-based short walks for people with long-term conditions to increase their physical fitness, improve their mental wellbeing, contribute to the local economy and get out and make friends.