

Myplace online ecotherapy FAQ's

Phone: 07738 102274

Email: myplace@lancswt.org.uk

Self-refer: www.lancswt.org.uk/ourwork/projects/myplace

Myplace is an ecotherapy offer run by Lancashire Wildlife Trust in partnership with Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust. We work with anyone aged 16 years and over, that is feeling anxious, isolated, or has poor mental health, and lives in Lancashire or Greater Manchester.

As part of our offer, we run online ecotherapy sessions which are ideal for anyone who might be needing to shield, self-isolate or would otherwise struggle to get out with us in person for any reason. You might also attend online sessions whilst you wait to join one of our face-to-face sessions.

Virtual Myplace sessions take place weekly. We offer small groups of people the chance to learn about nature and wellbeing alongside our trained team. For example, we might make bird feeders, sketch from nature, or learn to connect to the 5 Ways of Wellbeing.

Myplace aims to help you feel better connected, meet new people, learn about nature, improve your wellbeing and start to look positively to the future. Connecting people to nature and improving our wellbeing is at the core of what we do.

Frequently Asked Questions

What's the difference between online and face-to-face sessions?

Apart from the obvious, our online and face-to-face sessions will be very similar. All sessions are focussed on feeling the benefits of the outdoor world in whatever way we can and are led by a fully trained member of our team.

How do you decide which session I might attend?

We will try to accommodate what you want and feel comfortable with as much as possible but factors like location, local lockdown measures and capacity will also play a role in what type of session you join initially.

We are looking at running our face-to-face sessions on a rotary basis where possible to give more opportunities for people to get out with us in person.

How long are the online sessions?

The sessions run once a week, and last an hour and half. Currently you can join these sessions for up to 3 months. This might be extended.

How much does it cost?

It's free. We are funded by Our Bright Future, Reaching Communities and The European Social Fund through More Positive Together. We are a partner of Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust.

Is it safe?

Yes, it is. Only people registered can join the online sessions. No personal details are passed to anyone else. Every session is delivered by experienced staff and volunteers. All the staff that run the sessions are Mental Health First Aid Trained, and fully trained to provide a safe, nourishing environment. Steps have been taken to reduce the risks interacting with the virtual world can bring, you will never be on your own with someone during a session.

How big are the groups?

There are never more than 8 participants in a session, there may also be up to 2 volunteers and there is always 1 member of staff present. The groups are no larger than 8 people. We make sure the groups are very friendly and supportive.

How does it work?

We use a secure online platform. To join a session people are sent an email with a link, they simply click on the link and this will take them to the session. Participants do not have to have their camera or microphone on if they don't want to be seen or heard.

I am interested but very nervous about signing up.

That's ok, most people are. It is fine to come along and not participate in everything that is going on and allow yourself to gradually build up more confidence.

I'm retired. Can I join?

Yes, anyone that is retired, unemployed, employed or furloughed and feeling isolated can join. Anyone aged 16 years or above, that lives in Lancashire or Greater Manchester, can access this service.

My child is under 16 can they join?

We currently can only take young people under the age of 16 that have been referred to us via another agency, such as CAMHs. This is because we do not have the capacity to work with all young people currently not in school and our service is not designed to be an alternative education curriculum. Our service is focused on people struggling with poor wellbeing. If in doubt you can give us a call.

I've heard that joining Myplace can help me get into work?

Part of our funding is provided through the More Positive Together project whose aim is to help people find employment or further training. Therefore, joining a Myplace session can help you get into work. By attending regularly to either an online or outside session you will naturally be improving your employability skills.

Every Myplace session promotes key skills such as: team working, communication, good timekeeping, leadership and a positive work ethic. During your 6 months with Myplace you will be supported to explore options for your future; this could be entering the workplace, further training or education or trying another volunteering opportunity to get you closer to where you want to be. There are also opportunities to attend accredited training throughout the project to enhance your CV.

On completion of the project your Project Officer can provide a reference as well. In order to receive all these benefits, you will need to complete our registration paperwork and provide evidence that you currently out of work.”

Do I need to register with the project?

We will ask you to complete a registration form before you commit to the project. (You can join one session first to see if you like it before signing up.) This is to make sure we have relevant information about you to help keep you safe whilst with us. We also have to report back to our funders about where our participants live, how old they are etc.

If you are signing up to the More Positive Together project (see above) we will also ask you to provide evidence that you have the right to live and work in the UK (this is usually a passport or birth certificate or your National Insurance number) and that you are currently out of work (this is usually a benefits letter or screenshot of a Universal Credit page but can also be a self-declaration if you are not claiming benefits). This is to make sure that we are focussing our resources on the people that need our support most.