



MYPLACE,
YOUNG
PEOPLE,
AND OUR
BRIGHT
FUTURE

The Evaluator

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EVALUATION REPORT

Myplace, young people, and Our Bright Future.

Our Bright Future and Myplace 2016-2021

Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT)

Lancashire Wildlife Trust (LWT) are part of The Wildlife Trust movement, the UK's leading conservation charity dedicated to all wildlife. Founded by volunteers in 1962 The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Greater Manchester and North Merseyside has grown in to the largest nature conservation body in the area. Uniquely positioned they work daily at a grass roots and local level, whilst also being part of a strong cohesive movement. With a key priority being to inspire people about the natural world and encourage everyone to take action for wildlife LWT has worked closely with people and communities for decades.

Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust (LSCFT)

Lancashire Care was established in April 2002 as a mental health and learning disability provider and authorised as a Foundation Trust on December 1, 2007. The Trust provides health and wellbeing services for a population of around 1.8 million people. The services provided include community nursing, health visiting and a range of therapy services. Wellbeing services provided include smoking cessation and healthy lifestyle services. The Trust specialises in secure, perinatal, inpatient and community mental health services, including services for children and young people and patients with learning disabilities. LSCFT covers the whole of the county and as March 31, 2020 employed 6,342 staff across more than 400 sites, working with a multitude of partners. Care and support is provided in a range of settings. Service provision is delivered to meet the physical and mental health needs of the local population. The Trust has 25 CQC registered locations.

Myplace

In 2015 LWT and LSCFT began working together to find a way of developing a non-clinical, community based service that would support young people to improve their wellbeing by connecting with nature, while simultaneously taking action to support their local environment. In 2016 they were successful in an application to Our Bright Future, and so Myplace began.

Our Bright Future (OBF)

Our Bright Future is an ambitious and innovative partnership of 8 organisations led by The Wildlife Trusts which brings together the youth and environmental sectors. This £33 million programme, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund, is formed of 31 projects across the UK. Each project is helping young people aged 11-24 gain vital skills and experience and improve their wellbeing. At the same time, they act as catalysts for delivering change for their local environment and community; whilst contributing to a greener economy.

How would Myplace develop a service that aligned young people's mental health and nature?

Aim

To provide young people with the richest possible opportunities to learn skills that will enable them to secure health and quality of life in the long term and gain an appreciation of and connection to the natural environment.

Outcome 1

1,000 young people considered most at risk, will be empowered to shape and deliver environmental enhancements in their communities

Outcome 2

1,000 young people will feel healthier and we will be able to demonstrate the cost benefit for all that take part in activity, highlighting an alternative way to treat health issues using Social Return On Investment (SROI) methodology

Outcome 3

1,200 members of the wider community will be actively involved in making decisions and practical action to manage their local spaces leading to increased community cohesion, resilience and mentoring opportunities

Outcome 4

120 green spaces will be improved located within urban neighbourhoods, that will demonstrate benefits for both people and the natural environment

Outcome 5

The project will generate £120,000 worth of improvements

In Practice

Myplace is a project which uses the tagline; '[A natural way to wellbeing](#)'. It's person-centred and nature does not judge. People are encouraged to take part gently, and there is no pressure.

Based across green spaces, Myplace encourages both young people and adults to reconnect to nature. They use the five ways to wellbeing to connect people with nature and place.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing:

1. Connect
2. Be active
3. Take notice
4. Keep Learning
5. Give something back

Activities range from bush craft, conservation, cooking over a fire, nature walks, species identification, mindfulness, and growing food.



Activities are deliberately broad to give people the best possible opportunity to find their preferred way to connect with nature. Programmes are then built around the needs and preferences of each group and site.

Alongside self-referrals, participants are signposted here from the NHS. Myplace take referrals directly from mental health, social prescribers and local authority amongst others. At times when waiting lists for mental health services are increasing, Myplace can respond and help people quickly.

Analysing a sample of referral codes from the project shows that Lancashire and South Cumbria Foundation Trust refer 45%, Schools and Colleges refer 9% (this figure was lower than expected due to the pandemic), 11% are self-referrals, and the remaining 35% were from a range of other referral partners including social prescribers, link workers, local authorities and other charities.

New Directions is a service which is part of Blackburn Council and is a young people's advice and guidance organisation for young people experiencing or at risk of being NEE, and they are one of the referral partners for Myplace. **"I feel that the most suitable young people are those who have mental health/anxiety issues and are struggling to engage in 'mainstream' provision and who need a slow step by step supported approach to getting back into learning/local and community."** Janet Hope. Learning and Training Adviser at New Directions



One young person said **"It's the best experience"** while another described Myplace as **"Very challenging and fun. I wish I could do it again"**. One other young person said, exuberantly **"Bang on! Ace! Cool! Yey! Wooho!"**.

The model of Myplace is clearly identified as 'person-centred' a fact that was made clear by both staff and participants alike.

Rhoda Wilkinson, Myplace Manager explains: **"There are lots of amazing parts of Myplace, but I think that it is flexible and responsive to the needs of people, encouraging them to take the lead through a person-centred approach. It's also a very gentle approach and takes advantage of some beautiful settings that allow and encourage people to be kind to each other in a way that you rarely see in other walks of life."**

The key word to pick out here is 'gentle'. Myplace is clearly an eco-therapy project, and its roots are firmly grounded in the natural environment. Being out in nature has been proven to have relaxing benefits, to affect all of the five senses, and to produce some physical benefits including lower blood pressure, better sleep, lower stress-hormones. Humans are bred to be in nature, but in our increasingly complex technological world, we are forgetting that we need this.



IMPACTS OF MYPLACE

Darren, whose daughter had attended CAMHS, explains **“Before Myplace [my daughter] wouldn’t come out of her bedroom and wouldn’t even go to school... We didn’t expect much from Myplace to be honest, but we talked her into going one Thursday morning... she met new friends... someone she could relate to... it gave her support and confidence... she started opening up a bit more with us”** and went on to say Myplace had made an **“absolutely massive difference since she started and it didn’t take very long to notice that”**. Darren’s daughter started attending school again, talking to her family and even occasionally going out for a meal with them, something she had not done for a long time.

Participant
Quote

"I feel as though it makes you feel a lot better within you, so you can see the effect nature can have on yourself."

Participant
Quote



Myplace has trialled several different types of impact measurement, including Youth Star, The Warwick-Edinburgh Scale of Wellbeing (WEMWBS), Connected to Nature Scores, the Campaign to End Loneliness and the Outcomes Flower. All have shown impact in different areas, some more clearly than others and some have been preferred by young people. We have looked at the results of everything to tell the widest story of change.

In addition, young people have told us what changed over time in their own words, and these quotes are shown throughout the report.

Participant
Quote

"It has helped me become more relaxed and talkative in groups. I understand confidence is something that waxes and wanes throughout life, but participating in Myplace has certainly helped "wax" and give me happier years and helped me determine a direction in life."

Participant
Quote

Evaluating wellbeing amongst young people has been a challenge. Young people at times found questionnaires a challenging mechanism for evaluation. Evaluation can also be especially challenging during a period in time when wellbeing fluctuates for multiple reasons. It is worth considering trialling a test and learn coproduced evaluation methodology with young people.



Young people at Myplace



Myplace has worked with 1030 young people across Lancashire, all of whom were aged 11 and over and struggling with their wellbeing when they joined.



"I already feel happier, socialising with other people. Being here has massively improved my mental health and has inspired me to do more."



INCREASED WELLBEING

Young people who attend increase wellbeing across the board; on average by 2 points on the Warwick Edinburgh Scale of wellbeing, but this increases to a 5 point rise if that young person is feeling very low wellbeing at the start.

MYPLACE HAS THE MOST IMPACT ON THOSE WHO ARE FEELING VERY LOW

EVERY YOUNG PERSON TAKING PART IN THE PROJECT

WARWICK EDINBURGH SCORES

46

Average Start Score

Increase of 2.2 points

48.2

Average Next Score

Whole project average based on 682 young people providing start scores and 281 people providing further scores, some after one month, some after three months

THOSE WHO STARTED WITH 'LOW MENTAL WELLBEING'

WARWICK EDINBURGH SCORES GROUP WHO SCORED BETTER THAN AVERAGE

+ 5.3 Points

Average increase in Warwick Edinburgh Scores for those who started with a score below 40. (based on 195 individuals)

THOSE WHO WERE AGED 20-24

WARWICK EDINBURGH SCORES GROUP WHO SCORED BETTER THAN AVERAGE

+ 5.2 Points

Average increase in Warwick Edinburgh Scores for those who were aged 20-24. (based on 108 individuals)

THOSE WHO WERE FROM AN ETHNIC MINORITY BACKGROUND

WARWICK EDINBURGH SCORES GROUP WHO SCORED BETTER THAN AVERAGE

+ 3.5 Points

Average increase in Warwick Edinburgh Scores for those who from an ethnic minority background. (based on 133 individuals)

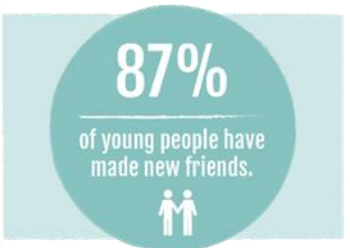
92% of young people have given something back.



97%



97% of young people attending Myplace have learned something new.



"It's been a brilliant time, I have made a new friend and learnt so much about wildlife and nature."



"I attended Myplace at a time I really needed it. I made new friends and did lots of activities I enjoyed. Thanks for looking after me."



Myplace assesses impact on young people using the Youth Star outcomes framework and had the most impact in the sub-categories of Making a Difference, and Hopes & Dreams.
Average youth star scores increased from **15 to 22** during their time on the project

Myplace improved **170** spaces including parks, woodlands, community gardens, river catchments and nature reserves.



1030 Young People took part in total and Myplace also worked with **1379** members of the wider community



ADAPTABLE

During lockdown, Myplace continued to support communities with their mental health through online sessions, phone calls and a range of free growing kits and resources for people to enjoy at home; even building Myplace in Minecraft and using this to bring nature to people.



"I will look at myself and the environment around me differently" PARTICIPANT

"I spend more time outside and understanding parts of the wildlife like birds and trees" PARTICIPANT



AWARD WINNING

Myplace, won the Mental Health Innovation of the Year Award at the Health Service Journal Awards evening in 2021. It has also won a Children and Young People Mental Health (CYPMH) Award and a Partnership in Innovation award was given to the project at the North West Coast Research and Innovation Awards



LEARNING NEW SKILLS

108 Young People achieved a John Muir Award

JOHN
MUIR
AWARD



Myplace had made an "absolutely massive difference since she started and it didn't take very long to notice that."

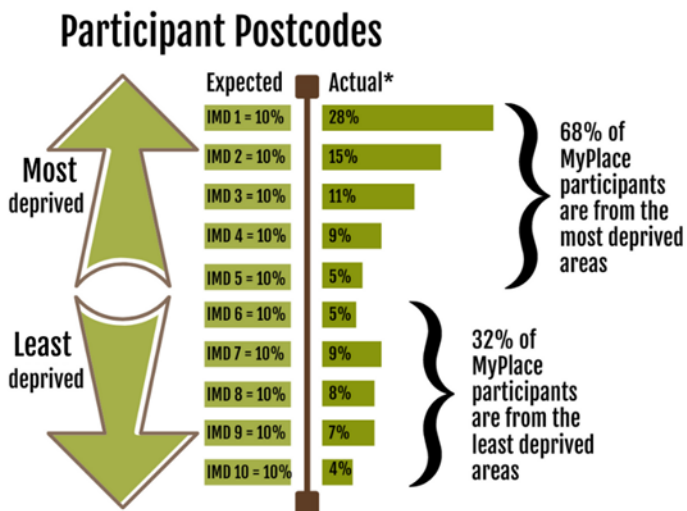
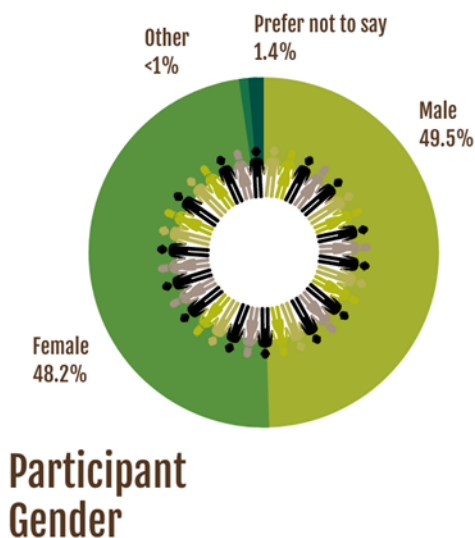
"It was almost like a miracle in her."

PARENT OF YOUNG PERSON ATTENDING MYPLACE



"Before coming to Myplace, I suffered with addiction, depression, social anxiety. I would isolate and close myself off from the world."



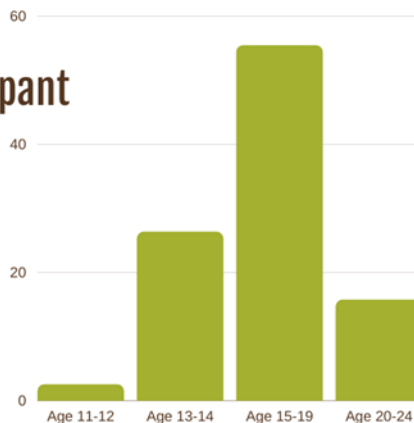


*Based on data from 694 matched postcodes, matched to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation

28% of participants are from the 10% most deprived areas in the UK



Participant Age



Participants are from the following ethnic backgrounds; White (85%), Mixed (2%), Black 2%, Asian (13%) and only 1 participant preferred not to say

Our Bright Future- Outcome Flower

Running alongside project specific evaluation tools Our Bright Future also commissioned an evaluation process 'Outcome Flower'. Out of the various tools used this anecdotally proved to be the preferred mechanism for quantitative evaluation with young people attending Myplace. We analysed a sample of 53 young people's results who had completed these forms. In addition, participants added their ages and the year attending Myplace to the above forms, and there was an average age of respondents of 18.3 years. The range of ages represented was 13-23 and participants had mostly attended in 2018 or 2019. The full table of results is shown below.

Time/ Average Score	...I cared about the environmen t"	...I enjoyed being outside"	...I felt relaxed"	...I felt I could make a difference to the environmen t"	...I felt confident in myself"	...I felt close to other people"	Total Scores
Before	3.7	3.3	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.4	17.2
After	4.5	4.4	3.8	4.0	3.6	3.8	24.1

The before flower average is 17.2 (range 7-30) and the end flower is 24.1 (range of 8-30). We checked if different ages saw a difference and the improvements were consistent across ages. Under 18 years, the average before score is 16.1 and average after score of 23.2 (change of +7.1). Compared to those aged 18 and over, who have an average before score of 17.9 and average after score of 24.7 (change of +6.8), which is a consistent result and reveals no real difference in age related scores. We were unable to segment any further as this only collected age and results.

Overall, though, the outcome flower reveals a lot of positive changes. Only 7 people out of 53 saw a negative change – which means 87% saw an overall increase in agreement with the statements. 18 young people saw their score increase by 10 or more points, which is a very large change. **In total an average improvement of 23%**

The biggest changes are in confidence and feeling closer to other people which seems to best fit the comments made by

Participant Quote
"Have more confidence in my abilities and enjoy meeting new people"
Participant Quote

young people on the programme. We would recommend using and expanding the use of the outcome flower, with some additional demographics and some additional comparable wellbeing and connection to nature measures as a measure which does show overall change for the project.

"The learners grew with confidence. Some learners that have not really engaged with others in the group before they took part and engaged in the programme. It's been an easy partnership and one which I hope will continue." Abigail Wilcox (Abby), Assistant Head of Animal Studies Myerscough College Witton Park.

LESSONS LEARNT

THE NEED FOR DIGITAL ADAPTION

Covid-19 necessitated adaptation, and every organisation has tried to support people as best they can. For young people, 18 months (the length of the pandemic at time of writing) is a much larger proportion of a young person's life than an adults. Young people are much less likely to be in roles where working from home has been an option and have often lost jobs and not been placed on furlough.

“Young people in the UK are more than twice as likely to lose their jobs compared with older workers, according to a study that documents the growing divisions in the workplace since the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March. In the past two months, the proportion of people to lose their job aged 16 to 25 was 11.1%, compared with 4.6% for those aged 26 and over, academics at the London School of Economics found¹.”

Additionally, teenage years are often ones where friends replace families as important and young people were prevented from seeing friends. These are the kind of issues that all young people have faced, but when we talk about Myplace we must remember that these are young people who were struggling with their mental health before the pandemic. **“We also had young people return to our service who had moved on. Mental health has deteriorated in many young people”** one staff member at Myplace explained. Conversely some young people experienced improved wellbeing during periods where they did not have to attend school, and challenges when required to re-join in person studies.

During the initial lockdown Myplace digitalised all delivery, both young persons and adults. Early assumptions were that this would be relatively easily adopted for young people where adults might struggle. The reality was far from this. Young people found the intensity of eye to eye contact on zoom difficult, struggled with the anxiety of turning on cameras, and without the structure of school struggled to maintain routines and attendance. They also already had lots of screen time.



One of the more unique and creative responses to the pandemic seen, Myplace have used the expertise of the young people it employs to create an engaging digital world in Minecraft which mimics the real world Myplace experience and is run as a weekly group session. **“ I like playing Minecraft and I also like the environment/nature so this seemed like a nice mixture of the two things.”** Described one of the young players. Another detailed **“ It feels different**

¹ <https://www.lse.ac.uk/News/Latest-news-from-LSE/2020/j-October-20/One-in-10-young-people-lost-their-job-during-covid-19-pandemic>

from just playing Minecraft because I normally play alone or with one or two friends but here I get to play in a group in a world that feels less crowded and more natural than usual (If that makes sense)".

It seems clear that the use of technology here has created a space which is safe, and which is different from just playing Minecraft. "It has a lot more focus on the active environment. Normally my focus would be mining and building a house without much other focus but there I get to focus on actively thinking about the nature around" one young person told us, and another explained "I feel like I'm part of something and what I do actually effects the world around me - even if its digital world. It has an impact, and that mentality carries over to the real world (sic)". One young person recounted that it is a "Chance to talk more about the environment and talk to others at a safe distance and doing activates surrounding it(sic)"



Minecraft sessions have now become a regular feature and several young people who find this an easier entry point have progressed on to attending in person groups.

THE NEED FOR YOUTH VOICE

In 2016 LWT was awarded funding to be one of the 31 national projects via Our Bright Future (OBF). Involvement with OBF challenged LWT to review its approach to youth voice, especially when it became one of young peoples 3 Asks. The OBF Youth Forum, was a forum made up of young people from across the 4 nations on OBF programmes and required Myplace to identify two young people per year to represent Myplace on the national forum. This highlighted the lack of structure from which young people could channel information both into and out of the forum within both Myplace and ultimately LWT. Despite this there were still exciting opportunities for young people to come together and develop a Youth Voice. This led to Myplace taking three young people to the Houses of Parliament in 2018 as well as also youth representatives attending events in Belfast, Manchester & London.

In 2019 five young people from Myplace attended 'The Time is Now' mass lobby in London demonstrating what was already becoming clear, that young people had passion dedication and drive to campaign for nature, and natures recovery. In order to understand how to support young people explore this energy and commitment Myplace staff researched how a Youth Council might work and visited Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, Tomorrow's Natural Leaders, another OBF project and spoke to others across the Movement also considering the importance of greater youth involvement.

LWT's first Youth Council (YC) was created in 2019. A structure for the Council was created between inaugural members and LWT from meeting schedules through to roles descriptions. Key learning from this experience showed the importance of clear communication and commitment at all levels of the organisation. There was initial concern too that involvement not be tokenistic, and how comfortable and useful young people would find the process. Feedback from both staff and young people demonstrates

the value of retaining open and inquisitive dialogue, and a bold 'can do' approach. Particularly critical factors were the engagement of the Chair of LWTs Board of Trustees, Barriers to attendance were also removed, for example travel costs were met and meetings were held at weekends.

Common initial concerns presented to Myplace staff initially included; "Young people don't want to attend meetings," and "Young people won't understand the high levels of technical conversations."

An approach adopted early on was to work with positive internal advocates and early adopters. Here being part of the OBF portfolio does appear to have been key to LWT having the time, resource, and professional support to trial a new approach. A solution was also to focus on diversity of recruitment so that the Youth Council reflected a wide variety of skills, backgrounds, interests, confidence, and experience. This seems to have created a body of young people able to support and encourage each others development.

The development of a dedicated Youth Advocacy Officer role in 2021 does appear, perhaps unsurprisingly, to have made a significant impact on the scope of the Youth Council and the impact YP felt they were able to have, as well as the impact of the experience on the young people.

When asked, here were their highlights. Impact, 2021;

- Young people invited to participate in formal governance meetings, trustee board meetings and departmental meetings.
- YP advocating through speaking at events such as the Common Purpose Lancashire 750 leadership course.
- Championing youth empowerment leading up to and throughout COP26.
- YP met with Metro Mayors Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham at the COP26 Green Zone Youth Generation event.
- Muhammed (YC rep) presented his poem on nature - Bygones - on the UN Global Stage at COP26 Green Zone event.
- YP presented at The Chester Zoo Youth Symposium on Youth Governance in Conservation.
- YP featured on 'Young Conservationist' and 'Countryside Job's Service' advocating for more young people in conservation roles.
- YP met with politicians Cat Smith MP and Speaker of the House Sir Lindsey Hoyle on the importance of youth voice in environmental decision making.
- Appeared on a BBC Northwest Tonight feature - What matters to young people (environmental) in the lead up to local elections.
- Contributors for LWT's magazine Lapwing.
- Blog writing - topics include invasive species, mental health awareness and India v UK wildlife management
- Featured on 'The Green Files' podcast which discusses entering into the green sector job market as a young person.
- Monthly Instagram takeovers.
- Appeared on BBC North West Tonight undertaking conservation work at Little Woolden Moss (Peatlands)

- Featured on BBC Radio Manchester - twice - discussing the importance of peat restoration and a debrief on YPs experience at COP26.
- Featured on BBC Asian Network discussing how vital nature is.
- YP appeared on The Student Experience Podcast - <https://youtu.be/gtbb1OgLUCEthe>

“It’s a collection and a collaboration of like-minded young people who are passionate about the environment and who are campaigning to make a difference”, explains Katylily, 22, Youth Councillor. Muhammed, 13, Youth Councillor expands on this **“it’s a place for you to give your ideas and input.”** The Youth Councillors take on different opportunities, not each person has to do each task. Muhammed had just taken part in a marketing workshop and had suggested a Youth Membership scheme, as The Trust struggles to retain people once they reach teenage years, although they do often get them back once they are 18. **“it’s important to try and look at why they’re disengaging... not just try and look at engaging people”** he explained. Katylily had been the ‘no-mow-may’ campaign lead, drafting letters to MP’s and Councils and Universities. **“I was happy in what I was able to achieve”** she explains and also that **“it’s pushing me out of my comfort zone and I’m liking that”**.

Muhammed particularly likes the way he has engaged with campaigns and found opportunities that he would not have known about before. He has recently given a speech to a different group of 50 Young People, those taking part in the Lancashire 750 leadership event **“I talked about connecting with nature and inspiration and creativity and the response was amazing...it gives you a sense of achievement”**. Daniel mentioned watching an open day video he had made in September again in March and deciding not to use it, as he was so much more confident in speaking. **“There were lots of ‘erms’ and I could see I was really jittery and the change has been so rapid”** he explained as he decided to just speak live at this open day. **“I was quite an introvert ... but now I’m actively putting my hand up and not at all nervous. It’s taken the nerves and anxiety away”** Katylily explained confidently.

Daniel took part in a work experience shadowing the CEO of Lancashire Wildlife Trust, as part of his placement year with the Trust – he also plants trees, volunteers with the carbon landscape project and is honing his campaign and social media skills as part of the Youth Council. **“It was a chance to peep behind the curtain”** says Daniel, and it has given him a taste for the amount of detailed thought that goes into all the decisions made, explaining the shadowing was **“really eye opening”**.

The youth council have used connecting to nature as a way to connect to each other, telling the other councillors what they noticed recently. **“Spending time in nature has been good fun”** says Daniel. Muhammed mentions **“I could spend time in the house and have no ideas, but it’s different outside... being in nature is like a green-high”**.

Katylily and Daniel both want to work in conservation in the future, and Muhammed prefers to keep his options open, as he is only 13, **“maybe business or sport”** he says. Thanks to the youth council and the opportunities they have had, it seems like they will all be able to follow their dreams.



Figure 1 The Saturday Dirtworks group on site at Brockholes Nature Reserve, with volunteers

There are always challenges in implementing change.

How to ensure engagement is real and valuable and avoids tokenism? How to reach out to young people? Transport and accessibility whether in person or digitally? How to support young people’s participation at all levels of the organisation and geographical footprint? How to consider safeguarding for youth led groups? That said the focus given to Youth Voice by Our Bright Future has clearly empowered LWT to develop a strong Youth Council, with several other Trusts nationally seeking to learn from their experience.

The Future of Youth Voice

Whilst it is clear that initial concerns about levels of interest and engagement in the Youth Council were not founded, it was true that YP face a multitude of pressures. Many want to contribute but might struggle with the time commitments involved. LWT have responded through the development in 2021 of a new Wilder Youth campaigning group was established. An online offer, Wilder Youth looks to help galvanise the passion of young people across the north west who want action to help nature’s recovery and the climate crisis, with a flexible model of engagement.

While there have been challenges in November 2021 Lancashire Wildlife Trust were awarded the Dame Mary Smieton Award for the work in advancing youth voice. It is also encouraging to discover that not only are the senior leadership within LWT are advocating and sharing this experience with other Wildlife Trusts, but are building Youth Voice into future business plans.

<https://www.lancswt.org.uk/news/national-award-youth-council>

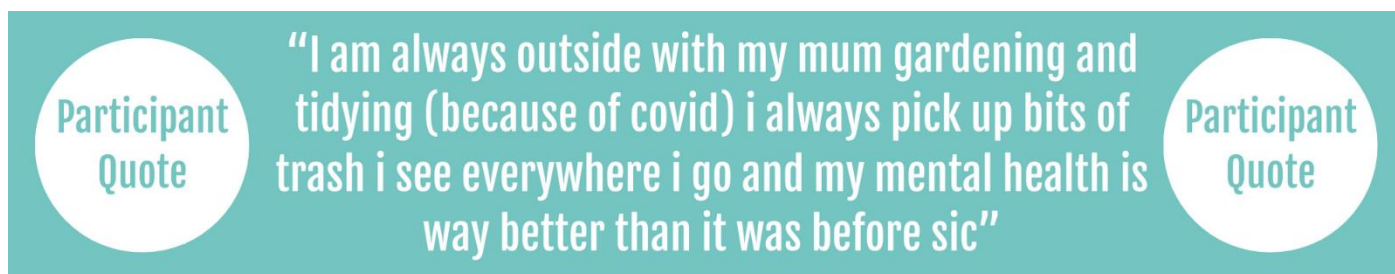
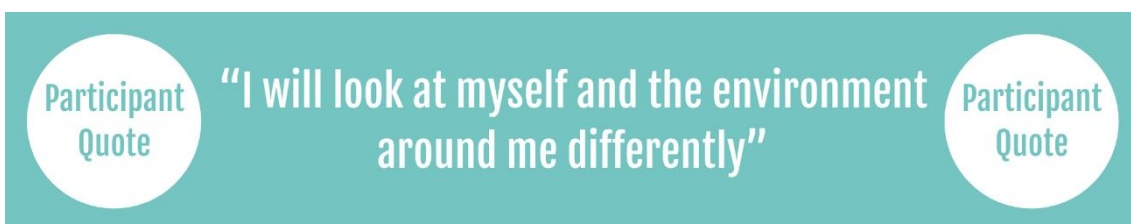
OUR BRIGHT FUTURE 3 ASKS

Our Bright Future consulted nationally with young people to identify 3 programme wide Asks, allowing young people to find strength in numbers to campaign for change.

ASK 1: MORE TIME LEARNING IN AND ABOUT NATURE

Myplace directly asked young people to tell them 'Can you think of something that

you have achieved on a Myplace session?' 'Learning' 'things' 'nature' 'new' are the main ways young people describe their experience. Other popular terms include; outside, people, skills, everything, know, tools, about and work.



One of the ways Myplace has tried to measure a connection to nature is using the nature relatedness scale. This is a set of statements which include: "I always think about how my actions affect the environment," "My connection to nature and the environment is a part of my spirituality," "My relationship to nature is an important part of who I am," and "I feel very connected to all living things and the earth." Two additional items capture individual differences in the need for nature and comfort with wilderness, as well as awareness of local wildlife or nearby nature: "My ideal vacation spot would be a remote, wilderness area" and "I take notice of wildlife wherever I am"²

At Myplace the average score was 3.46 when people started and this rose to 3.52. This compares favourably with the UK mean (which is based on similarly aged people³) of 3. This indicates that the people who engage with Myplace are already more connected to nature than the average UK teenager, and become even more connected during their time on the project.

OBF Ask 1:
Aim achieved

It is clear that Myplace has supported young people to spend more time learning in and about nature, as evidenced by their own words and their nature relatedness scores.

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3814587/>

³ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3814587/>

ASK 2: SUPPORT TO GET INTO ENVIRONMENTAL JOBS

When young people were asked **'What have you found most useful at Myplace?'** their top answer was skills, although closely followed by fire! They also used 'learnt' a lot. Young people mentioned how this has encouraged them to consider green careers, and this is demonstrated through many of the case studies collected.

Here we have selected a few key stories to let young people tell their career aspirations in their own way.

Being part of Myplace, Curtis explained **"It helped me gain confidence... to speak to people"** and described how **"After Covid-19 hit... I decided it was time for me to become more independent... to use all the skills Myplace has given me... [I'm] now a reserve ranger... which will help me in college"** Curtis has taken part in Myplace, joined the Youth Council and volunteered.



"Without Myplace I wouldn't have the connections to ask for volunteering roles. I wouldn't have the confidence to email people"

Curtis felt quite lonely after leaving school and with no friends found himself in a dark place. Nature **"was just background... something I never noticed."** Now he realises we depend on nature for all things and is

Participant
Quote

"I decided to study Wildlife Conservation at University, and I hope to have a career in the wildlife and environment sector."

Participant
Quote

about to start a level 3 conservation course with plans to work in environmental sciences. This story from Curtis is also available on YouTube and can be watched at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCZnXK8uEsc>

This impact on careers and aspirations is something partners had noticed too. **"The programme enabled our students to experience things they never had. It connected them very much with nature and each other. It did this by taking them on trips to the beach to collect plastics, bare foot yoga in the woods, making things from wood, making nettle curry and having campfires etc. Some of our learners are still taking about this and they took part on the programme 3 years ago! It clearly made an impact."** Abigail Wilcox (Abby), Assistant Head of Animal Studies Myerscough College Witton Park.

“Young people I have referred in the past have made progress in soft skills like communication, increased confidence or just actually leaving the house. I have had other young people who have progressed into formal learning courses.” Janet Hope. Learning and Training Adviser at New Directions.

OBF Ask 2: It is clear that Myplace has supported young people to aim for more environmental jobs and has also helped some young people achieve those career goals already!
Aim achieved

ASK 3: GOVERNMENT, EMPLOYERS, BUSINESSES, SCHOOLS AND CHARITIES TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Myplace has worked hard to encourage young people to use their voice, to learn the skills needed to campaign, and to choose the issues that they care about most. The Youth Council in particular have successfully engaged with MP’s, with CEO’s and have carried out social media campaigns and more traditional media campaigns to address issues and get people to pay more attention to young people in a positive and respectful way.

“I want to make a difference in my local area” explains Daniel, who found that Myplace has “developed my social media skills... been able to go out more and do more filming”. Also, that “nature helps me be calm. It helps me be more me.” Daniel used to be really nervous and struggled to communicate and now he wants to do more campaigning and site visits and “wants to work outside”

Three youth councillors share how to reach other young people and set up a youth council.

- Initial contact of getting people involved can be hard; think about leaflets and reaching out to people in a variety of ways to reach a variety of young people
- Think about reaching out through the schools “especially 15–18-year-olds who need help deciding what to do in the future” says Katylily.
- Communication is the key – being able to have a dedicated space or platform where young people can learn to interact as a team is vital
- Enthusiastic people who lead it is very important, explains Katylily and Muhammed agrees “they can make anything interesting” he says of the LWT team
- Having core teams has been really good explains Daniel, “I’m on the peat-free core team and it means I’m in charge of certain elements but also that I have the chance to learn how to summarise what we have done, or learn to take meeting notes”
- Make sure everyone is heard – maybe think about having a 1:1 with everyone in the early days of setting up the council to make sure they’re all ok
- Be really positive and have a range of opportunities people can get involved in
- Make sure young people have some power, “they are full of ideas and passion” explains Muhammed

OBF Ask 3: It is clear that Myplace has supported young people to use their voice, to campaign and to raise environmental issues effectively to a wide range of stakeholders.
Outcomes

Aim

To provide young people with the richest possible opportunities to learn skills that will enable them to secure health and quality of life in the long term and gain an appreciation of and connection to the natural environment.

Outcome 1

1,000 young people considered most at risk, will be empowered to shape and deliver environmental enhancements in their communities

- ***Over 1030 young people directly participated in Our Bright Future Myplace delivery***

Outcome 2

1,000 young people will feel healthier and we will be able to demonstrate the cost benefit for all that take part in activity, highlighting an alternative way to treat health issues using Social Return On Investment (SROI) methodology

- ***Data from Myplace supported SROI study across The Wildlife Trusts by Leeds Beckett University which concluded that green wellbeing programmes returned £6.88 for every £1 invested.***

Outcome 3

1,200 members of the wider community will be actively involved in making decisions and practical action to manage their local spaces leading to increased community cohesion, resilience and mentoring opportunities

- ***Our Bright Future Myplace delivery supported the additional engagement of over 1329 members of the local communities***

Outcome 4

120 green spaces will be improved located within urban neighbourhoods, that will demonstrate benefits for both people and the natural environment

- ***Throughout the programme over 170 were improved by young people and communities***

Outcome 5

The project will generate £120,000 worth of improvements that will be invested

- ***With this original target met Myplace became the start of a much wider approach to nature and wellbeing delivery across Lancashire Wildlife Trust and LSCFT. Additional funding supports work with adults, within inpatients facilities for LSCFT, and over a much wider footprint. Learning and support shared with other Trusts nationally has enabled similar programmes to be adopted elsewhere. To date an additional over £2 million has meant that what originally began as a young people's project is now seen as a vital green wellbeing service within communities. Current work extends to a partnership with Cumbria Wildlife Trust and Eden Project to use learning from Myplace to develop a nature based social prescribing offer for the whole population of the coastal communities surrounding Morecambe Bay.***

Recommendations

· The flexibility of the Our Bright Future-The National Lottery Fund funding and the 5 year length of the funding allowed for real development, upskilling, and huge amounts of learning. Being part of a national portfolio also provided vital support for LWT to confidently approach the creation of their own Youth Council. They are now sharing this knowledge across other Wildlife Trusts. The length and breadth of this funding portfolio has allowed the work to evolve and develop, in a way shorter funding streams, or funded projects driven only by number-based targets sometimes don't. It is critical that funding for nature based social prescribing offer security and consistency in order for delivery to become a service that can be relied upon by local communities.

· There has been some key learning around evaluation methodologies which would benefit from further exploration in regards of working with young people. Barriers to completing specific wellbeing questionnaires included length, the number of questions and the language used, as well as people's naturally fluctuating wellbeing. Many existing measurement tools approach wellbeing from a point A to point B movement that equates success to a linear improvement which does not allow for the reality that wellbeing is something that will fluctuate and need managing across a person's lifetime with the potential to be impacted by many external factors. The Outcome Star and Outcome flowers developed by Our Bright Future did provide a more popular tool. A key recommendation would be to explore a 'test and learn' approach to developing a coproduced wellbeing measurement tool.

· The Our Bright Future programme enabled LWT to develop and grow its own Youth Council. This has been slowly establishing itself and evolving. LWT currently now has a dedicated member in post to support this work as its reach and work has expanded greatly. The OBF programme encouraged LWT to truly embrace youth voice, and to make bold decisions that involved trialling new approaches. A key recommendation would be that Lancashire Wildlife Trust continue to build and support this initial investment, and that other Trusts and nature and wellbeing programmes consider a strong role for Youth Voice. Particularly in the face of a Nature and Climate crisis at a time where young people are proving themselves to be a crucial voice for change. To effectively support real systemic change though this needs to be realistically resourced and supported.

· The skills set of the Myplace Team has been a key element to the success of the project. There is a strong focus upon patience, flexibility and humanity throughout delivery. The delivery teams' non-judgmental, open approach encouraging kindness and acceptance has helped towards the project's success. For nature and wellbeing delivery to successfully engage new audiences of people who are 'nature deprived' a person-centred approach alongside a passion for nature is key to delivery.

· The development of Myplace through the Our Bright Future programme has profoundly impacted LWT as an organisation. Nature and Wellbeing delivery is now viewed as a key service offer supporting not just those who are furthest away from accessing support but at all levels of people's engagement with nature. A key recommendation is that all Wildlife Trusts embed a whole service approach to nature and wellbeing harnessing the value nature can bring to all of our lives, and in doing so supporting more people to appreciate the importance of taking action for nature.

· As we enter a phase of time that requires profound Climate Action, the work around nature's recovery and human recovery are inextricably linked. There has never been a greater need for a National Nature Service. Nature based social prescribing opportunities, like Myplace, must be invested in for young people

and our whole population as a consistent alternative mechanism for support with wellbeing. Both as a preventative measure, and to aid 'step down' and recovery for those accessing clinical mental health support. Access to nature should be embedded throughout our whole approach to health and social care, as well as our education system. This requires a systemic shift in the national approach to commissioning and funding of nature-based services.

Participant
Quote

"I already feel happier, socialising with other people. Being here has massively improved my mental health and has inspired me to do more."

Participant
Quote

ABOUT THE EVALUATOR

The Evaluator is a creative evaluation company who specialises in visual evaluation, and is committed to making evaluation enjoyable for participants, easy for staff and professionals to take part in. All of the work of The Evaluator is underpinned by easy to read, visual reports. The Evaluator says, 'We'll figure it out for you!'

This report was written by Kirsty Rose Parker, founder director of The Evaluator and an experienced project manager and evaluator, who previously specialised in arts, regeneration and wellbeing projects. Kirsty has an educational background in Maths and Economics, which covered many statistical topics, leading to an MA Hons in Economics from the University of Edinburgh.

Kirsty has 16 years of charitable project management experience including working with artists and audiences, and 9 years' experience of arts development. She is trained in negotiation, motivational interviewing and 'social return on investment' and is passionate about helping organisations to run the most effective programmes they can.

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