

Naturally Active Libraries is an exciting new pilot in South Tees. It is trialling embedding nature themed activities into library services, to enable more people to connect with nature and assist them in leading more active lives.

This is a You've Got This initiative, developed in partnership with library services in South Tees and Natural England. The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust will be delivering this 18-month commission, working as a multi-disciplinary collaborative team with Grangetown Generations, The Junction and Natural England.

Why nature?

Enabling people to connect with their local environment through nature-based experiences and activities has been demonstrated to play an important role in maintaining and improving the mental and physical health of participations and strengthening communities.

Why libraries?

Libraries sit at the heart of their communities, with skilled staff and volunteers who are trusted sources of information, learning and activities. Supporting the health and wellbeing of communities through opportunities that inform, engage and connect is one of the four Universal Library Offers.

YOU'VE GOT THIS.

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council

Middlesbrough moving forward

Grangetown Generations

The Junction

Natural England

Libraries…. More than books

Our ambition is that Naturally Active Library Hubs will be seen by library services, locally and nationally, as a valuable mechanism for engaging more and a wider range of people, strengthening the role of libraries as invaluable community assets. Rather than a “nice to have extra”, nature themed health and wellbeing activities and resources will become embedded into roles and services.

Connecting with nature inspires people to be more active

Our approach

We will work in partnership with Library staff and volunteers - creating the delivery and evaluation, responding to the needs and interest of their communities. The development of knowledge, skills and experience on nature-based wellbeing work for library practitioners will be the backbone of the pilot.

Library staff and volunteers will be empowered to develop their knowledge and skills in designing and delivering nature-based health and wellbeing interventions. Improved outdoor spaces and resources will enable libraries to come sustainable nature hubs for their communities.



Our focus

Our focus will be on people who face the greatest barriers to leading active lives and enjoying the benefits that regular contact with nature brings. This includes people with long term health conditions and disabilities, people who are socially isolated, families on low income and young people. We will compliment and add value to the physical activity and wellbeing work currently being rolled out in Redcar and Cleveland Libraries.

We have engaged in widespread and detailed discussions with practitioners in the health, community and environmental sectors across South Tees. This has given us valuable insight. We will continue to develop and co-design activities and join up services with local stakeholders.

Test and learn

This pilot will be an opportunity for experimentation and innovation. We recognise that each library and community is unique and not everything we try will be successful. Our test and learn approach will use continuous reflection and evaluation so that we can incorporate and share learning.

Geographic scope

We will be delivering the pilot programme in the YGT Community Focus Areas of Brambles and Thorntree, Grangetown, North Ormesby and South Bank. In addition, the library at Ormesby and Home Library Services will be included. Once the model is created there will be potential for learning and ways of working from this pilot to be by expanded into other libraries subject to funding.

Delivery

Our approach will be joyful, playful and celebratory. People can connect with nature and physical activity in a multitude of ways. Our delivery will remain flexible and agile, responding to continuous listening of participants so that we can be accessible and relevant to peoples varied interest and needs.

We will explore.....

nature info hubs..... gardening activities and clubs.....,
augmented reality trails.....citizen science projects.....
pram and pushchair adventures ..... outdoor nature play.....
seated nature activities....., heritage walking routes.....
nature explorer backpack loans.....,sensory nature activities..... links to physical activities.....



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