

PARKS

THE NATIONAL
PLAYGROUND
GROWING THE NEXT
GENERATION

theparksalliance.org
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The
PARKS
Alliance



INTRODUCTION

The United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out every child's right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities; and to have access to a clean environment so that they can stay healthy. For a large number of our children, Parks are crucial to delivering these basic rights, but our Parks are under threat.

- **Parents with children under 10 are also the most concerned about the impact of local budget cuts on local parks, with 7 out of 10 worried about this prospect.**
(Heritage Lottery Fund – State of UK public parks 2014)
- **If council budgets are squeezed, the majority (61%) of the park-going public see providing facilities for children and young people as the most important feature for councils to continue funding in parks.**
(Heritage Lottery Fund – State of UK public parks 2014)
- **Just over a third (34%) of local authorities are expecting the number of their formal parks, including playgrounds, to decrease.**
(APSE (2013). State of the Market Survey 2013: Local Authority Parks Services. Briefing 13/38. Association for Public Service Excellence)

Parks are an integral part of the local heritage and have personal meanings for many. Parks and green spaces are where families share time and space together, where grandparents take children. They are used and enjoyed in different ways by all generations.

Research on parks' importance is undoubted. The long term trend data from Natural England's Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment continues to prove this. Recent Heritage Lottery Fund research, 'State of UK public parks 2014' and '20 years in 12 places' has found that parks and open spaces are highly valued by local residents and are often regarded as among the primary attractions in their area. Residents valued the central locations of these attractions, the fact that they are largely free, the community spirit they generate and affirmed that they used parks and green spaces frequently for leisure.

For many, the research found that early childhood memories included visits to local parks. Postings on social network sites for parents such as Mumsnet, regularly share tips on the best local parks for children with parents of small children, the highest users of parks.

Parks and green spaces enable families to spend quality time together with parents enjoying taking their children to sites that they themselves had visited as children.

Parks are a valuable social asset and can offer the solution to the current obesity crisis, especially amongst children.

KEY PARK FACTS

Visits to parks accounted for an estimated 827 million visits taken to the natural environment in England 2014/15.

(Natural England – Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment year 6 annual report)



£2.1bn

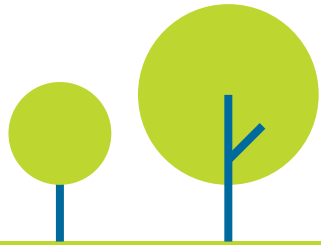
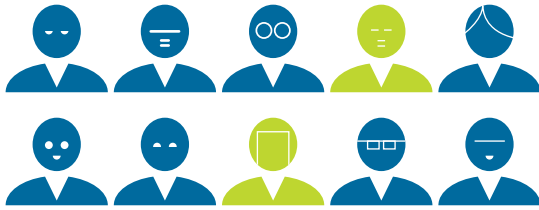
Natural England estimate that if every household in England were provided with equitable access to good quality green space, then savings of £2.1bn could be achieved every year in averted health costs to the NHS.



8 in 10 people

Parks are clearly crucial to family life in the UK; over 8 in 10 people with children aged under 10 in the household use parks at least once a month (82%). That's the highest number of users.

(Heritage Lottery Fund – State of UK public parks 2014)



69%

Two thirds (69%) of people state that the loss of parks would be detrimental to children's development and half of respondents admitted that they would be less active if their local green space was lost.

(Fields in Trust survey November 2015)



68%

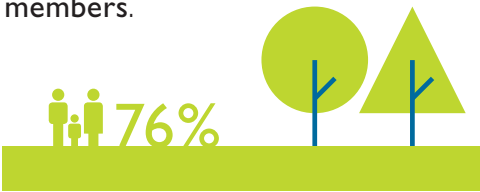
68% of park users consider spending time in their local park as important or essential to their quality of life. This rises to 71% in urban areas.

(Heritage Lottery Fund - State of UK public parks 2014)



MOST CHILDREN'S VISITS TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ARE MEDIATED BY THE ADULTS IN THEIR HOUSEHOLD. LOCAL GREEN SPACE WAS THE PRIMARY DESTINATION FOR CHILDREN VISITING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, REGARDLESS OF ETHNICITY OR SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS.

Every month, on average, **three quarters of children (75%) visited the natural environment with adults from their own household.** In an average month, **15% of children took visits with their grandparents and 15% visited with other family members.**



The role of grandparents in visits decreased with the age of children, with **18% of children aged under 5 taking visits with grandparents compared to 7% of those aged 13 to 15.**



PLAY was the dominant reason given by adults for the visits they took with children to the natural environment. **47% of children took visits that were motivated by adults wanting to play with their children** and 43% took visits where the motivation was 'to let the children play'.

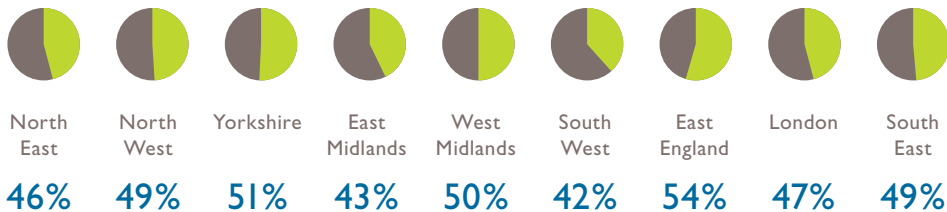


Other significant motivations provided by adults for the visits they took with children included getting **fresh air (40% of children)**, spending time with family (35%), **relaxing and unwinding (25%)** and **doing something physically active (24%)**.

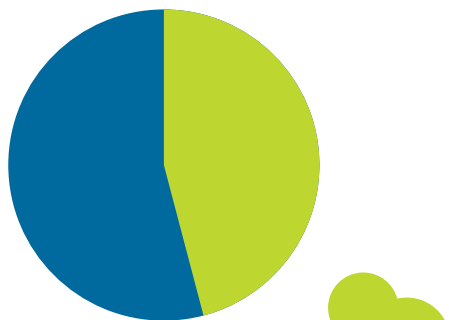


TYPES OF LOCAL PLACES VISITED IN PREVIOUS MONTH BY REGION (% OF CHILDREN)

PARK IN TOWN OR CITY



PARKS IN TOWNS AND CITIES WERE THE MOST VISITED TYPE OF PLACE FOR CHILDREN



48%

In an average month, 48% of all children in England (4.9 million) visit local urban parks



70%

70% of children in England (c 7 million children) visited the natural environment at least once a week



HUNT, A., STEWART, D., BURT, J. & DILLON, J. 2016
 Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment: a pilot to develop an indicator of visits to the natural environment by children –
 Results from years 1 and 2 (March 2013 to February 2015). Natural England Commissioned Reports, Number208

MOORSIDE PARK

Moorside Park in Crosby was opened in the 1930's for the enjoyment of the local community. The population of Crosby according to the 2011 census was 50,044.



AGE GROUP USING THE PARK

5.6%

18-24 years

19.4%

25 to 34 years

27.8%

35 to 45 years

27.8%

45 to 60 years

19.4%

over 60s years

HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE MOORSIDE PARK?

Daily

52.9%

More than
once a week

17.6%

Weekly

23.6%

Monthly

5.9%

WHAT IS YOUR MAIN REASON FOR VISITING THE PARK?

Walking
dog

50%

With
children

19%

Exercise

11.9%

Use of
facilities

11.9%

Circuits

4.8%

Volunteering

2.4%



From an open Consultation between 21st November - 5th January, participants were able to complete the survey online or as a hard copy. A total of 36 responses were received between these dates.

SANDRINGHAM PARK

Sandringham Park in Wetherby covers 1.21 hectares and is classed as a pocket park. The population of Wetherby according to the 2011 census was 19,979.



Children and adults using the park from January 2015 to January 2016.
50% walk to the park 20% cycle to the park 30% drive to the park.

JANUARY 2015 TO MARCH 2015 PER WEEK

On average: in total over 7 days

1,222 visits

Weekdays see **853 visits** by children with adult supervision and teenagers
At weekends **369 visits** by families with children and teenagers

APRIL TO JUNE 2015

On average: in total for 7 days

2,264 visits

Weekdays see **1486 visits** by children with adult supervision and teenagers
At weekends **778 visits** by families with children and teenagers

JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2015

On average: in total for 7 days

4973 visits

Weekdays see **3276 visits** by children with adult supervision and teenagers
At weekends **1697 visits** by families with children and teenagers

OCTOBER TO JANUARY 2016

On average: in total for 7 days

1250 visits

Weekdays see **834 visits** by children with adult supervision and teenagers
At weekends **416 visits** by families with children and teenagers

SANDALL PARK

Sandall Park in Wheatley Doncaster, is affectionately known locally as the 'Boating Lake' and was opened in 1940. The population of Wheatley according to the 2011 census was 14,742.



GENDER

Male 45%



Female 55%



WHY DO YOU VISIT THE PARK?

Feed the ducks	55%
Children's play area	35%
Walk the dog	31%
Café	8%
Exercise	62%
Use toilet facilities	18%
Picnic facilities	35%
Fishing	1%
Play outdoor games	33%
Be in open air	38%
Other (State)	2%

AGE

5 - 10	4%
11 - 15	6%
16 - 20	17%
21 - 40	38%
41 - 60	28%
60 +	9%



HOW OFTEN DO YOU VISIT THE PARK?

Once a day	13%
More than once a day	26%
Once a week	50%
More than once a week	6%
Once a month	4%
More than once a month	1%
Ad Hoc	3%

HOW DO YOU TRAVEL TO THE PARK?

Walk/Run	62%
Cycle	8%
Public Transport	2%
Organised Coach	3%
Car	31%
Motorcycle	2%
Other (State)	1%



WHO WE ARE:

The Parks Alliance was formed in 2013 to be the voice of UK parks, representing together for the first time the people and organisations that create, maintain, invest in and use the public green spaces at the heart of British life.



The Parks Alliance includes organisations and senior park industry figures from local government parks services, private contractors, industry bodies, NGOs and volunteer and park friends groups.

www.theparksalliance.org

THE PARKS ALLIANCE WORKS TO:

- Protect and improve the country's public parks for future generations.
- Increase understanding among national politicians and policy makers of the value of public parks to the current and future quality of life and health in the UK.
- Increase understanding among national and local politicians and decision makers that parks are a crucial part of social and physical infrastructure supporting education, flood control, health improvement, social cohesion, wildlife and helping us adapt to climate change.
- Secure and boost the existing world-leading skills and expertise delivering UK parks as well as quality training and employment opportunities.
- Influence national, regional and local policies and funding decisions that impact on parks.

WE ARE CALLING FOR:

- The appointment of a Minister for Parks ensuring that they have a good understanding of the sector.
- Invest in the sector to help it generate its own income. Further cuts will lead to inefficiency and few tangible savings.
- Establish an independent national commission to investigate the State of UK Parks, as highlighted by the Heritage Lottery Fund's report: The State of the UK's Public Parks (June 2014).
- Work with local authorities to provide and protect funding for parks that are so vital to national health and well-being.
- Work with local authorities across the UK to identify a 'Park Champion' in each council.
- Support the creation of a national standard to map and measure the quality of all green spaces.