

Map pack study: Live It, Breathe It, Walk It

Overview

Many urban residential areas experience lower than average indicators for health and wellbeing. These areas often have green and open spaces on their doorstep, yet the health boosting potential of these natural resources can be undermined by various interlinking social and environmental factors. These assets have great potential to benefit health and wellbeing, but work is required to increase the number of people accessing these spaces on a regular basis.



Background

In order to improve health in Scotland more people need to become physically active on a regular basis. Creating and maintaining high quality outdoor spaces that support physical activity is one part of the challenge. Engaging and supporting people to use these spaces will ensure they derive the physical, psychological and social benefits that access to high quality greenspace and woodland can provide.

The map pack study was piloted by Forestry Commission Scotland in partnership with Paths to Health and Castlemilk Environment Trust.

The research study monitored the impact map packs had on walking prevalence in Castlemilk.

The study used participatory appraisal techniques to help local people contribute to the design and development of the map pack and walking routes. Residents were consulted about the natural environment in Castlemilk in order to highlight the

barriers and motivations to walking and enjoying the outdoors. Participatory appraisal activities included a competition with local schools to name the partnership project and design a suitable logo. The winning entry was: Live It, Breathe It, Walk It.

Objectives

- To increase the use of woodlands in and around Castlemilk for walking on a regular basis.
- To offer community led health walks in local woodland and greenspace.
- To investigate the impact of map packs on walking levels in Castlemilk.
- Develop effective partnership working between forestry and local environment trusts and other non-governmental organisations.
- To support health improvement activities in local woodland.

Map pack study

Actions

- A development officer was appointed to take forward community engagement, map pack development and evaluation work.
- 6 walking routes in Castlemilk were identified. The routes included a range of different environments and were of varying degrees of intensity and length.
- A steering group was established chaired by Castlemilk Environment Trust, which included representatives of all the partners. This group provided direction and guidance for the development officer's work.
- Collection of pre and post map pack data on number of people walking, routes used and attitudes to walking in Castlemilk.

Achievements

- The participatory appraisal approach enabled local residents to articulate their views on the environment. This process also identified barriers (real and perceived) to people walking more.
- Design and print 4,000 map packs containing 6 individual walking routes.
- A weekly walking programme being delivered by trained volunteers.
- Engaged with local teenagers to develop onsite interpretation and art. Funding secured to produce and install waymarking.
- Conservation, bushcraft and other informal led woodland activities gave local people the chance to engage with the outdoors and contribute to woodland improvements.
- A full evaluation report detailing findings and recommendations was produced.



Evaluation Results

- The awareness of the map pack was high with 52.5% of a random sample stating they had seen the pack.

Quotes

"The routes in the map packs are highlighted clearly and I enjoy checking out the different trees"
Helen Gavan local resident.

"The maps are full of interesting information to turn people on to the valuable wildlife and heritage of their area. The other activities we've got involved with are important in making the most of the beautiful woodland that surrounds us"
Jason Stuart local resident.

"It's great to see more people getting out and about as this brings a better vibe"
Jean Devlin local resident.

- 34.5% of those who had seen the map pack had actually used it for walking.
- The follow up research recorded a 3.7% increase in individuals meeting the minimum recommendations for physical activity. This is above the 1% increase set by the Scottish Government.
- More females than males used the map pack for walking. This is of interest due females being less active than males nationally.

Funding Partners

Forestry Commission Scotland
Paths to Health
Castlemilk Environment Trust

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