

Camden and Islington

Parks for Health strategy 2022 – 2030



Foreword

Never has there been a time in living memory when our parks and green spaces have been so necessary for supporting the health of our communities. The Covid-19 pandemic has challenged us all and made our green spaces even more important to our communities. Nearly 2-in-5 of Camden homes do not have access to private outdoor space, the 3rd highest in the country. Our parks act as gardens for people who do not have one and provide space for respite. Parks for Health has been so important in helping us to understand the role of green spaces in our lives and change the way we work to better support our communities to live healthier and more active lives.

The role of parks in helping to improve health and reduce inequality is truly a preventative service that deserves recognition and the continued effort to overcome the barriers that still prevent some from feeling welcome and benefiting from them.

Through this project we have been testing and shaping our strategy with colleagues across all sectors. This strategy sets out our shared learning and how we will take forward our recognition of how integral parks are for a healthy community – linking with our Health and Wellbeing strategy and the Integrated Care Partnership for the borough.

**Cllr Harrison, Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Camden, and
Cllr Callaghan, Cabinet Member for a Healthy and Caring Camden and Deputy Leader**

Parks for Health is supported through the Future Parks Accelerator (FPA). FPA is a collaboration between the National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHCLG)

As Britain's most densely populated borough, parks and green spaces are of huge importance to our communities in Islington. The Parks for Health project has enabled us to really focus on how we can use them to their full potential to support our residents' health and wellbeing.

The need to maximise the public health benefits of our green spaces has been made all the more evident through the pandemic, with usage of parks by every part of our community increasing massively. However, there are still many residents who do not feel able to use these spaces and with such stark health inequalities in our borough, it's crucial that everyone who lives here is able to enjoy the wellbeing benefits our fantastic parks have to offer.

With the lowest quantity of open space per head of any borough in the country, we know that our focus must be on quality as well as quantity – doing the very best with what we have, to deliver better health outcomes for all. It's an essential part of our vision of a more equal Islington and this strategy sets out a clear vision and plan for us to do just that.

**Cllr Champion,
Executive Member for
Environment and Transport, and
Cllr Turan, Executive Member for
Health and Social Care,
Islington Council**



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Part one: Our Parks for Health vision





Our Parks for Health vision

Camden and Islington have developed a new shared vision for parks and green spaces in the 21st century.

Work on this began before the start of the Covid-19 pandemic; since then the value of parks for health and wellbeing has become even more widely recognised.

Our vision is that:

Camden and Islington's public parks and green spaces are used, enjoyed and maintained as health assets for the whole community.

Everyone feels welcome in our parks. More people than ever before visit and stay for longer - enjoying nature and taking part in activities which make them healthy and happy.

Our parks are places where people can come together or spend time alone, be active or pause and reflect.

Our parks are at the heart of community life.

The specific work in each borough is set out in individual Delivery Plans that will be regularly updated.



Future Parks Accelerator and Parks for Health

In 2019, Camden and Islington were jointly awarded an initial £667,000 two-year grant as part of the national Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) initiative, to make our parks and green spaces focal points for improving people's health and reducing health inequalities [1].

We wanted to

- transform our green spaces so that they would take an active and central role in delivering improvements to health and wellbeing;
- build strong partnerships with the health and voluntary sectors to ensure those with the greatest need benefit.

Our Parks for Health programme enabled us to accelerate change and transform the ways we work. The priorities and approaches of this Parks for Health strategy are based on this experience.

In the nearly three years since we first received the grant, we have worked closely with 36 Friends and Parks User Groups, over 50 voluntary and community sector organisations and 9 GP practices, as well as strategic partners such as the newly formed North London Partners which brings together councils, clinical commissioners and health and care providers. Together, we have developed our shared, long-term vision, tested new ways of working, shared our knowledge and expertise, and made joint commitments to ongoing collaboration.

“Future Parks ... is enabling local authorities and communities to take a longer-term, strategic approach to funding and maintaining [their parks], so future generations will be able to enjoy their many benefits hundreds of years from now.”

Ros Kerslake
CEO, National Lottery Heritage Fund



Future Parks Accelerator is a collaboration between the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the National Trust and central government. FPA has been working with local areas to build a sustainable future for the UK's urban parks and green spaces. The aim is to help local authorities transform their green spaces and make sure these valuable places achieve financial sustainability, so that communities can continue to benefit from them for generations to come.

From vision to strategy

Public parks came into being in the 19th century as part of a broader council-led “public health” movement to improve the lives of people in cities.

In Camden and Islington today, we want all our green spaces - large or small, public parks or gardens on our estates - to be places of health and wellbeing for everyone.

We want our public realm as a whole to be green and sustainable – to help tackle climate change and adapt to the climate change effects we are already experiencing, to increase biodiversity and to improve the quality of the air we breathe.

Our Parks for Health strategy is central to meeting our commitments to reduce health inequalities as well as improve health and wellbeing overall. It is an important feature of our post-Covid-19 recovery and renewal plans and supports the London Recovery Programme’s [2] aims to narrow inequalities and accelerate delivery of a cleaner, greener London.

We want to draw on the best of our heritage but also ensure that our diverse communities and future generations are able to enjoy our parks and green spaces. This strategy sets out how we will do this.

“The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown has taught us how much of a valuable asset our inner-city parks are for mental and physical health. These green gems provide the space to exercise our bodies and our minds and facilitate the connectivity that we thrive on. Our parks are our outdoor community hubs.”

**Julie Parish,
Octopus Community Network, Islington**



A Parks for Health strategy for all

We are collaborating with University College London to develop a Healthy Parks framework which can be used by us and other councils to assess and improve their parks.

Above all, we want this framework to help us design and manage parks and green spaces which can be enjoyed by everyone, now and in the future.

We know this will mean responding to different needs over time, as our populations change and grow. It will mean increased investment in maintenance to deal with the effects of welcome but increased footfall. It will mean learning how to accommodate sometimes conflicting demands from different park users. It will mean finding ever better ways to ensure all our communities can and do experience the health and wellbeing benefits of urban green spaces in their local neighbourhood and beyond.

“The incongruity of parks is that they are where one can go simultaneously to have time alone and feel part of a community. That is a neat magic trick.”

Hannah Jane Parkinson,
The Guardian, 15 May 2020 [3]

“Different people have different wants from their parks, and at different times of their lives. Different circumstances also play their part. London property prices in general, and areas where household overcrowding is a problem, mean that many people look to public parks for quiet, fresh air, meeting friends, stretching their legs, growing food, making art, listening to music and more. Indeed, not all city dwellers fantasise about a private garden to maintain for themselves. Rather, they appreciate that public parks are part of the thrilling mix of urban life, places which throw us into a sometimes happy, sometimes a little more challenging co-existence.”

Shared Assets, Parks for Health blog [4]



Our goals

Building on our Future Parks Accelerator foundations, our strategy aims to

- improve the quality and accessibility of all our parks and green spaces, providing an environment and activities suitable for everyone – we call this our “universal offer”;
- create opportunities and spaces for people with particular needs, especially where parks can help improve their health and wellbeing – we call this our “targeted offer”.

Part two of this strategy describes in more detail the thinking behind the strategy and why parks matter for health and wellbeing.

Part three describes the main ways in which we will deliver the strategy in partnership with our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, the NHS, social care, residents and others.

We have set ourselves three overarching goals for this strategy. The delivery themes in part three will contribute to these goals in various ways.

By 2030

1. People from all our communities will spend more time enjoying our parks and green spaces - leading to improved health and wellbeing and reduced health inequalities.
2. Investment in our parks and green spaces will increase year on year - resulting in sustained improvements in quality.
3. Our parks will be recognised by local residents and across the country as exemplar spaces for health and mental wellbeing - strengthening the pride we all have in Camden and Islington as healthy, sustainable places to live and work.

Alongside the joint Camden and Islington strategy, the two councils have drawn up their own local delivery plans to meet the specific needs of their communities.

The strategy and delivery plans are underpinned by a set of outcomes – the difference we want to make - and measures for tracking progress. Over the next year, we will also be developing a set of 5 and 10 year targets for the strategy.





Part two: Parks, health and wellbeing

Why a Parks for Health strategy for Camden and Islington?

People who live in places with rich green infrastructure tend to be happier, healthier and live longer lives. People from more disadvantaged communities benefit to an even greater degree.

This is linked to

- greater physical activity;
- the mental wellbeing benefits of experiencing nature;
- and opportunities for social connection.

Parks and a green public realm also provide the habitats and natural ecosystems needed to improve air quality, and to tackle and adapt to the effects of climate change such as heatwaves and flooding.

Investment in parks and green spaces is a cost-effective way to promote health and wellbeing, reducing the need for expensive medical treatment to manage ill health.

Our Parks for Health strategy is based on what we know about

- the benefits of green space for health in general;
- the relationship between health, inequalities and access to green space;
- the physical and social barriers to accessing green space;
- parks and green space in Camden and Islington;
- health and health inequalities in Camden and Islington.

Our understanding of all these things informs what we need to do and how we plan to go about it.

You can read more about the benefits of our parks and green spaces on the following pages.



Health benefits of parks and green spaces: A snapshot

There is now wide-ranging evidence of the health and wellbeing benefits of everyday contact with nature and regular use of parks for physical activity, social connection and relaxation.

For more detailed evidence, good sources include:

Natural England's Access to Evidence online research library: Health and the Natural Environment [5].

Beyond Greenspace research project by the European Centre for Environment and Human Health, University of Exeter [6].

Publications from the Improving Wellbeing through Urban Nature (IWUN) research programme, led by the University of Sheffield, including policy and practice briefings [7].

Access to high quality parks and greenspaces is associated with better health outcomes overall

Regular use (at least once a week) of open space/ park or woods/ forest is associated with a 43% lower risk of poor general health [8].

Residents of areas with a lot of greenery (including parks, trees, street planting, etc.) are 40% less likely to be overweight or obese [9].

Access to parks is associated with increased physical activity

Populations with access to a park are 20% less at risk of physical inactivity and are 24% more likely to meet physical activity recommendations [10].

A 2019 study found that 89% of parkrun participants reported improvements to their fitness and 85% reported improvements to their health [11].

Parks and green spaces are social as well as physical infrastructure

“A city's network of parks and open spaces supports mental wellbeing and social inclusion as well as providing biodiversity and supporting cleaner air, flood relief and urban cooling. The ecological and the social are interrelated. Habitats should be planned to support both human and non-human wellbeing, paying attention to the ways people connect with nature. The richer the experience of 'nature' people have, the more it is likely to enhance their mental health. Wildlife, especially a wide variety of bird life, and planting that provides interest throughout the year, increases the wellbeing effects of natural spaces.”

Improving Wellbeing Through Urban Nature (IWUN): What Planners and Local Government Policymakers Need to Know [12]

Access to parks is associated with improved mental health and wellbeing for residents

Each additional use of any natural environment per week is associated with 6% lower risk of poor mental health [10].

A 2013 study found that regular use of natural environments for physical activity can cut the risk of experiencing poor mental health by half [8].

69% of parkrun participants reported improvements to their mental health and 79% of parkrun participants reported improvements to their happiness [11].

Research to calculate the social impact and economic importance of sport and physical activity in England found that investing in community sport and physical activity plays an important role in boosting the economy and provides the opportunity to challenge inequalities within communities [13].

The economic benefits of parks and green spaces as health assets

Investment in parks and greenspace is a cost-effective way to promote health and wellbeing. For example, the cost per visit to a park in Camden is £1.73, and results in £20 of health benefits.

The Greater London Authority, National Trust and Heritage Lottery Fund commissioned the Natural Capital Account for London in 2017 [14] which puts a financial value on the elements of nature which benefit people. This found that public green spaces saved £370 million per year through better mental wellbeing – £42 per person per year.

Vivid Economics also produced a Natural Capital Account for Camden and Islington in 2020, with some additional scenario modelling which showed a range of improvements can increase footfall and health benefits. At January 2020, the estimated health value to the local communities of Islington and Camden was £94 million.

Based on 2045 population growth projections, the value of council-owned green spaces in Camden and Islington is predicted to increase by as much as £7.3 million and £10.4 million, respectively.

We have used Vivid Economics' 'Greenkeeper' tool to assess how the value of council-owned greenspace might change against the backdrop of these population changes.

An additional 0.7 million visits are estimated to be made annually to council-owned greenspaces by the year 2045, resulting in additional benefits to local communities valued at £18 million per year. Principal among these benefits are improvements to the mental and physical health of greenspace visitors, which are predicted to increase by £6 million in Camden and £7 million in Islington by 2045.



A full account of predicted changes in annual visits and benefits between 2019 and 2045 is shown in the table below. This takes into consideration predicted visits originating from within and outside of Camden and Islington. The figures show the added demand that will be placed on our parks and the value of the health benefits they can bring to users, provided they are kept in good condition and have the right facilities.

The predicted uplift in property value reflects additional potential benefits of £1 million per year in Camden and £3 million per year in Islington [15].

Similarly, the value of greenhouse gas (GHG) removals within green spaces is expected to more than double by 2045 in both boroughs.

Year	Predicted annual visits	Predicted GHG removal benefits	Predicted property value uplift	Predicted physical health benefits	Predicted mental wellbeing benefits	Predicted total benefits
London Borough of Camden						
2019	2.1m	£21k	£8.8m	£14.1m	£26.4m	£49.3m
2045	2.4m	£58k	£10m	£16.2m	£30.4m	£56.6m
Change	0.3m	£37k	£1.2m	£2.1m	£4m	£7.3m
London Borough of Islington						
2019	2.7m	£14k	£22.2m	£18.8m	£34.7m	£75.8m
2045	3.1m	£38k	£25.4m	£21.4m	£39.4m	£86.2m
Change	0.4m	£24k	£3.2m	£2.5m	£4.7m	£10.4m



A lack of access to green space contributes to health inequalities

Across the UK, cultural, environmental and planning services have been cut by 50% over the last decade even as our populations and demand for green space grow. Research suggests that cuts to spending on these services may be associated with negative health impacts such as increased childhood obesity, particularly in more deprived areas.

There are also a range of barriers to different groups accessing green space. Public Health England's Improving Access to Green Space - a New Review for 2020 categorises these as (i) physical, (ii) social and cultural, and (iii) perceptions, awareness, self-efficacy, and interest [16].

“People who are not used to visiting natural environments may be more uncertain about what is ‘allowed’ in a particular setting and therefore less confident about visiting or more likely to come into conflict with others with different ideas about what the space is for.”

Groundwork UK, Out of Bounds [17]

“A recent Girlguiding survey showed that over 40% of girls aged between 11 and 21 feel unsafe when they go outside, and a third are worried to do things outside on their own... This can be magnified in some cultures where there is a pressure on girls to stay at home.”

Make Space for Girls [18]

Friends of the Earth have highlighted that people from Black, Asian or other ethnic groups are more than twice as likely as a white person to live in an area most deprived of green space. They also identified those neighbourhoods most deprived of green space and needing investment. Islington and Camden ranked 8th and 12th in the country, respectively.

England's Green Space Gap [19]

Groundwork UK's Out of Bounds: Equity in Access to Urban Nature [17] explored six barriers:

1. **Particular demographic groups** and individuals can experience multiple and intersecting barriers to accessing nature.
2. **Childhood habits** have consequences for adult engagement with nature.
3. **Social isolation, loneliness and illness** can be barriers to accessing nature as much as to accessing other services and provision.
4. **Gender:** girls and young women often report feeling unsafe when spending time in parks and green spaces, and that there is a lack of facilities geared towards them.
5. **Experiences of harassment or abuse** can also prevent people from ethnic minority backgrounds from choosing to spend time in green space.
6. **Lack of on the ground staff to welcome park visitors.** Cuts to park budgets have made it difficult to resource this sort of on-the-ground service and led to a loss of staff and skills.

Reducing health inequalities is, therefore, central to Parks for Health.



Part three: Achieving our vision



A strategy which builds on our strengths

Camden and Islington are proud of their many and varied parks and green spaces and their contribution to residents' wellbeing.

Our green infrastructure investment priorities aim to improve health and reduce inequalities as well as strengthen our environmental sustainability and resilience to climate change.

We have played our part in some significant health improvements locally - for example, increased physical activity levels in both boroughs.

At the same time, along with councils across the country, we have experienced significant budget cuts in recent years even as the demand on statutory services, such as social care, continues to grow. There are pressures on us to make savings.

Our approach in this strategy is to work differently and creatively to maximise the benefits for our communities from the best possible use of our resources.

We are, therefore, sharpening our focus on prevention and early intervention because this is better for our residents' health and less expensive in the long run.

We are collaborating closely with other colleagues across both councils and beyond to make the most of our spend on shared priorities and benefit from the full value of investment in parks and green spaces.

We are building on this to secure greater investment with and from external sources.

“Being fully involved with gardening and the community helped me a lot during the third national lockdown, especially with my mental health. I wasn't working at the time, but it pushed me to leave my house. Having a good time with my friends, working in the community, and growing vegetables made me really happy... It's been great for me and my two kids to be involved in such a friendly and welcoming community at our local park.”

Umma (pictured), interviewed for IslingtonLife



Parks and green spaces are central to tackling Camden and Islington's health inequalities

There are differences between Camden and Islington boroughs, but many of our health challenges are the same.

Our communities are characterised by inequalities in health and in access to green space which affect the wellbeing and life chances of particular demographic groups and those living in specific neighbourhoods. Some of these inequalities have become more stark nationwide as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This strategy will maximise the contribution of parks to people's health and wellbeing by preventing ill health in the first place and helping people with health problems as early as possible (also known as "early intervention" in health and care).

Based on research evidence and local insight, we will focus our efforts to address the inequalities in health experienced by priority groups and where we believe parks and green spaces have a beneficial role to play.

Our health priorities

- Improving social cohesion
- Reducing isolation
- Increasing physical activity
- Improving mental health and wellbeing
- Reducing health inequalities



Our priority groups

- People living in the most deprived circumstances (identified by small area, as per the Index of Multiple Deprivation)
- People from Black, Asian and other ethnic groups
- Women and girls
- People with disabilities, including learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities

We will further investigate physical and social barriers to people of different ages enjoying our parks, such as older people or teenagers.

These priorities are in line with council-wide strategies, including the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies with NHS partners, and Islington Together [20] and Camden 2025 [21]. See appendices for detail.

The Parks for Health “targeted offer” specifically aims to challenge health inequalities. It includes:

- Working closely with the voluntary and community sector and with communities themselves in order to understand their needs and preferences in designing our parks and supporting activities for wellbeing in parks.
- Our programme of green social prescribing, developed and delivered in partnership with the NHS and social care.



Strategy Theme 1: Investing in our parks and green spaces to safeguard their future

To date we have...

- Successfully used our Strategic Business Case to protect budgets.
- Secured an additional £120,000 per year for maintenance and improvements in Camden parks.
- Diversified funding sources, with Islington securing £200,000 per year (ringfenced Public Health) for the Ranger Service and an additional £150,000 per year from Housing for a new community gardening team.
- Secured agreement for
 - our joint high level Funding Strategy and funding model;
 - 5-Year Green Space Investment Plans in both Camden and Islington.
- Submitted successful partnership funding bids, drawing on our Parks for Health vision, including £200,000 Future Neighbourhoods 2030 (Somers Town) and £40,000 Grow Back Greener (Swiss Cottage).
- Pursued opportunities to create new public space with health and sustainability benefits. For example, the Mount Pleasant “Fleet Valley” pocket park and rain garden, with £80,000 contribution from Thames Water.
- Begun work with Highways to identify and assess greening measures which support the Healthy Streets framework such as creating the new Alfred Place park as part of the West End Project around Tottenham Court Road.
- Developed and utilised a Parks for Health ‘Toolbox’ including:
 - An audit of the features of our parks which contribute to health outcomes.
 - Steps to identify and promote existing facilities more effectively.
 - Opportunities for improvements.
 - Cross-referencing of those opportunities with health data to ensure we focus on those areas and groups with the greatest needs.



“Our parks and open spaces will be exciting, welcoming and safe, providing places for people to be physically active, and families and communities to gather.”

Camden’s Green Space Investment Programme Report 2020-2025 [22]

What do we want to achieve by 2030?

- More high quality parks, measured by recognised schemes, standards or frameworks.
- Stable parks funding, supplemented by investment from other council departments and external organisations.
 - A higher proportion of funding and investment into parks and parks activities from external sources.
 - Increased and diversified funding for community activity in parks.
- A green and sustainable wider public realm which promotes health, climate resilience and biodiversity.
- Sustained investment in the parks workforce and infrastructure to increase the health benefits of our parks for all.

Wellbeing and a greener public realm: Everyday experiences of biodiversity

- Sitting in the shade of a tree on cool grass on a hot summer day.
- Walking to the bus stop to the sound of birds singing.
- Watching the flowers in the window box nodding with the weight of a bumblebee gathering pollen.
- Smelling the scent of wildflowers in the meadow in the park. Hearing the sound of swifts swooping down your street. Walking home at night and hearing the snuffle of a hedgehog in the undergrowth.
- Watching seasons change through spring shoots, summer fruits and autumn leaves.
- Cycling past swans nesting by the Canal.
- Seeing a wren, out of the corner of your eye, disappear into the hedgerow along your street.
- Enjoying bee-pollinated raspberries and tomatoes.

Creating a space for nature in Camden

[23]

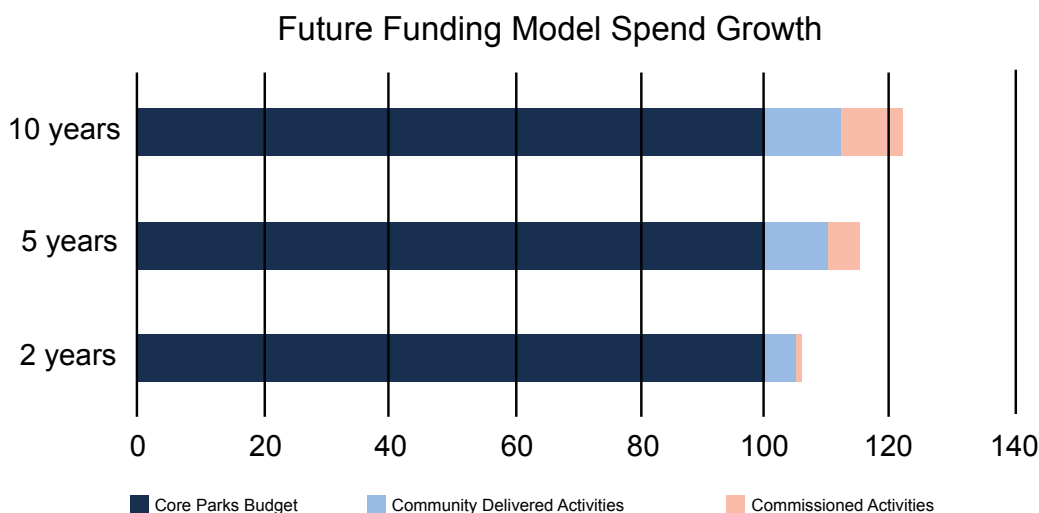


How will we get there?

- Ensure our physical infrastructure investment focuses on health and wellbeing. For example:
 - Embed health outcomes in our Green Space Investment Plans, based on data and insight regarding priority needs and opportunities, using the Parks for Health Toolbox.
- Enhance the quality of our green space offer for all. For example:
 - Resource improvements in access and activities in line with the Healthy Parks framework or other standards which demonstrate contribution to health and wellbeing.
- Develop an area-based approach to provide a range of green spaces and activities to meet different needs within easy reach.
- Support the growth of partner-led funding of activities in parks, including co-ordination of bids by multiple community stakeholders.
- Spearhead a strategic and integrated approach to greening our public realm which will achieve health impacts, working closely with Transport, Environment and Housing teams among others. For example, Islington’s integrated Green Space Investment Programme 2022-27.
- Continue to develop, test and share the Healthy Parks framework as a planning and appraisal tool for parks and green infrastructure more widely.

“Parks for Health is a brilliant example of how we can leverage the assets of our partners and local communities to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our local residents. We see this as a key opportunity to support local residents in accessing and using local parks to improve their physical and mental health through connecting with nature and their local community.”

**Clare Henderson,
Director of Integration,
Islington Directorate,
North Central London Clinical
Commissioning Group**



Strategy Theme 2: Developing our workforce to strengthen our capacity to improve health and reduce inequalities

To date we have...

- Conducted a service review in Camden to inform a new delivery model from April 2023. For example:
 - Embedded health promotion in the Green Space Partnership Officer role.
- Restructured the Islington parks service and redesigned roles to achieve Parks for Health objectives.
- Developed training to meet Parks for Health needs and embed principles over the longer-term.
- Become more outward-facing, strengthening our relationships with
 - other council departments, such as Estates and Highways, on selected greening projects;
 - local groups, including Friends of Parks Groups, to encourage and support more diverse use of parks.
- Begun to explore what cultural as well as structural changes are needed to achieve our vision, such as a greater emphasis on “permission” to do versus prevention or restrictions.
- Worked closely with corporate and employment teams to promote training and job opportunities to local people. For example:
 - Eight parks-based apprenticeships in Islington.
- Initiated discussions with local schools regarding work placements linked to a new vocational training programme.
- Involved voluntary and community sector partners in shaping our workforce plans.
- Begun to work alongside voluntary and community sector organisations as equal partners, using mutual learning and co-production approaches.



What do we want to achieve by 2030?

- A co-ordinated Parks for Health offer across the Camden and Islington parks and green space estate as a whole, including targeted activity to reduce health inequalities.
- A skilled, confident and motivated workforce with the health and wellbeing of park users central to their roles.
- A workforce which is more diverse and reflects the local community.
- A transformed working culture so that
 - joint working with council colleagues and local partners is the norm whether in policy, strategy or frontline services;
 - co-production, collaboration and mutual learning with VCSE partners are standard practice.

“Working with the community within a co-design approach has been a very positive experience for me and I have learnt a lot. Parks for Health has given my team and I more focus in our day-to-day jobs. We know we make a difference but now we have more purpose and knowledge, and this helps us bring the community along with us on this journey.”

**Bhupesh Thapa,
Central Assistant Parks Manager,
Islington Council**

How will we get there?

- Ensure we have the right staff in the right roles to deliver Parks for Health outcomes. For example:
 - In Islington, complete the planned service restructure to embed Parks for Health principles, skills and knowledge.
 - In Camden, recommission the Grounds Maintenance service, looking at different models to deliver a service that has learnt from the Parks for Health programme.
- Adopt a systematic and strategic approach to collaboration with planning, housing, transport and other services to embed Parks for Health at the highest level, including support for a diverse green space offer.
- Sustain our cross-borough collaboration between Camden and Islington councils, local partners and residents for the benefit of our respective communities.

Strategy Theme 3: Working with our voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations

To support and champion the sector's role in delivering the Parks for Health vision

To date we have...

- Deepened our understanding of local assets and needs, including:
 - Mapping health activities in green spaces and community sector opportunities in target wards.
 - Working with VCSE to inform investment priorities to meet the needs of specific communities.
 - Developing new relationships with a wider range of organisations interested in expanding their work into parks settings.
- Invested in training and support including:
 - Healthy Parks Creator initiative, bringing VCSE and parks workforce together to co-create resources and for mutual learning.
 - Training sessions and materials to support use of parks for health and wellbeing.
- Produced an Action Plan with Friends of Parks groups to support the Parks for Health ambitions.
- Facilitated access to new funding including providing
 - seed funding to help organisations achieve and test ideas for new activities;
 - support for joint funding bids such as to the Green Recovery Fund, Future Neighbourhoods and Grow Back Greener.

Outdoor gyms: Physical activity and social connection for older people

Age UK Outreach Workers, Camden Sports and Activity Officers/Personal Trainers and area-based Green Space Partnership Officers worked alongside each other to provide pop-up outdoor gym sessions in different parks, over the summer. Partnership Officers welcomed first-time users, and shared information about other healthy activities and green spaces locally. Further sessions are being offered, with support for older people to enjoy the outdoor equipment.

Octopus Community Network's 'Urban Growing' programme: Healthier communities



Photo courtesy of Octopus Community Network

The Urban Growing Programme has built on a longstanding partnership with Islington Council, connecting the most deprived local families to parks and green spaces. The programme galvanised community action to enhance underused and under-loved green spaces on estates, established community plant nurseries and linked them to local growing spaces in parks and elsewhere. It has led to stronger communities, with active citizens working together to improve identified problems; improved and more accessible environments; healthier and more active people.

What do we want to achieve?

- Our parks are inclusive of a wide range of VCSE users, representing and supporting diverse communities.
- Our local VCSE sector has greater capacity and confidence to make use of parks for their activities.
- Productive relationships between VCSE organisations and with the parks, health and social care services, in the interest of our communities' health and wellbeing.

How will we get there?

- Strengthen our local relationships:
 - In Camden, further develop our “neighbourhoods-working” approach to increase the use of parks and connections with priority health groups.
 - In Islington, develop our local connections through our Fairer Together partnership.
- Continue to learn, and apply our learning, from priority communities to how we manage and enhance parks over the longer term.
- Continue to work alongside local VCSE organisations to increase, diversify and improve the programme of health-related activities in our parks. For example:
 - Develop and sustain our partnerships and new ways of collaborative working established under the Parks for Health grant-funded programme.
- Support the ongoing development of capacity and capability of stakeholders around parks. For example:
 - Promote the use of Parks for Health resources co-produced with Healthy Parks Creators.
 - Connect horticultural volunteering and apprenticeship roles in areas around parks.

“Parks for Health is already changing the way we work with other groups. The networking alone from the project has been invaluable and is helping us to support more volunteering, more schools’ involvement and better co-ordination between different groups.”

**Miriam Ashwell,
Chair of Friends of Caledonian Park**



Strategy Theme 4: Working with our health and social care partners

To put parks and green spaces at the heart of wellbeing

To date we have...

- Formed new strategic and frontline relationships with health and care colleagues, including our respective Integrated Care Partnership and Clinical Commissioning Groups, Primary Care Networks and Social Prescribing Link Workers, and GP practices.
- Built on these to embed opportunities to realise the health benefits of parks, including in our Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategies.
- Ensured green spaces are embedded in partner strategies and plans.
- Collaborated on the development of parks-based green social prescribing, described further below.
- Taken opportunities to work with a variety of partners and council departments on shared Parks for Health projects and programmes for mental health and wellbeing. For example:
 - Secured joint national funding for Prevention and Promotion for Better Mental Health via targeted health and wellbeing activities in parks, in partnership with children's services Bright Start (for under 5s) and Bright Futures (for 5-19 year olds).
 - Supporting Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust's Physical Activity in Improving Access to Psychological Therapies, alongside London Sport.

“The Green Social Prescribing pilot has been a wonderful opportunity to connect green spaces with patients, colleagues and the parks in general. It has opened up a dialogue and created some wonderful connections and positive outcomes already in a short space of time.”

Dr Radhika Shah, Goodinge Practice, Islington



Green social prescribing

Social prescribing is when health professionals, such as GPs or GP practice nurses, refer people to local, non-clinical services in the community. The aim is to help people improve their health and wellbeing, prevent or slow their progression to ill health and/or self-manage long-term conditions such as type 2 diabetes. Common examples are connecting people to opportunities to be more active, such as “health walks” designed for different groups and levels of fitness, and healthy cookery classes.

Green social prescribing is when people are referred to activities which involve access to nature. They include gardening, outdoor gyms and other activities which take place in parks.

Green social prescribing is a core element of the Parks for Health targeted offer for priority groups. Our boroughs are recognised leaders in green social prescribing and previously received central government funding to pilot activities and learn how best to promote, support and scale up this offer.

We continue to collaborate with our partners on the development of a parks-based green social prescribing offer which

- focuses on the health benefits for priority groups;
- strengthens the connections between GPs, local green space and community “social prescribing organisations”.

Our joint Parks for Health Charter provides quality assurance of the activities referred to.

We will continue to test and expand our green social prescribing in order to reach more people, including further work with colleagues in social care.

“At 81 and through the first lockdown I wondered how I was going to take pleasure in my remaining time on earth. These walks opened up a new lease of life and the start of a new community which I could embrace.”

Green social prescribing pilot participant

“Walking to Camden’s green spaces with a group of local residents I had never met before four weeks ago has changed my life and changed me.”

Green social prescribing pilot participant



The charter links Primary Care Networks and GP practices in Camden and Islington to local parks to help residents gain the health benefits of a park

What do we want to achieve by 2030?

- High quality, accessible health and social care services - delivered in partnership with parks services - that support independent living, prevention and recovery
- Health and social care partners utilising parks and green spaces year-round for activities which improve health, connect people and communities and help reduce health inequalities
- Joint Parks for Health roles and principles embedded in mainstream health and care service provision
- The Parks for Health vision and principles being recognised nationally as best practice in improving health and reducing inequalities through prevention and early intervention

How will we get there?

- Ensure the role of parks and green spaces in health and wellbeing is integral to council and stakeholder strategies.
- Regularly collaborate with NHS, adult social care and children's services colleagues to structure improvements on a small area basis (Camden neighbourhoods and Islington localities), targeting health benefits.
- Support and encourage health and social care commissioners to integrate a parks and green spaces offer into mainstream services and programmes.
- Commission and resource roles and programmes for prevention, self-management of health and care and supporting independence.
 - For example, ongoing delivery and development of green social prescribing by primary care and mental health and community service partners.



Strategy Theme 5: Working with our residents

To share and promote the benefits of parks and green spaces for all

To date we have...

- Created a public communications and engagement strategy and started to implement it.
- Reviewed and updated where residents, local groups and health professionals can look for information in line with Parks for Health goals, across different sites.
- Put together a suite of key messages and images for use by all Parks for Health partners.
- Developed and begun implementing a plan to regularly promote information about parks and beneficial offers.
- Begun working with partners to disseminate targeted content to key audiences who do not currently use our parks - including women and girls, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

“It feels like nature is under threat at the moment and it’s easy to feel powerless in the face of big global challenges such as deforestation. I believe that we can help nature thrive in our own borough, though. Having access to well-maintained greenspaces is also important for us as human beings. I find Gillespie Park to be such a peaceful environment – it’s a real haven. I’m pleased that many other local people feel the same way. ”

Stella, Gillespie Park nature conservation volunteer (pictured, fifth from left), interviewed for IslingtonLife” [24]



What do we want to achieve by 2030?

- All members of our local communities recognise the health benefits of local parks and are able and confident to make use of them – such that health is improved overall and inequalities are reduced.
- People choose to visit parks and green spaces more often, spending more time there and enjoying what they have to offer in different ways which benefit their health and wellbeing.
- An increasing number and diversity of residents are actively involved in the stewardship, promotion and activation of our parks whether as volunteers or employees.

How will we get there?

- Deliver the Communications Strategy in full, including:
 - Targeted campaigns each year to encourage priority groups to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of our parks.
 - Maximising communication opportunities, reaching and learning from our residents. For example, closely working with internal and external partners to incorporate regular messages about the health benefits of parks in their communications and responding to the needs of our residents.
- Run projects and schemes which support self-led exploration of our parks and green spaces, enhancing wellbeing.
- Expand and enrich our community network. For example:
 - Build on our Healthy Parks Creators scheme to diversify community-based leadership.
 - Work alongside other networks such as the Mental Health (Camden) or Wellbeing (Islington) Champions.

“I went to secondary school in Camden and spent a lot of time here as a teenager. I started volunteering with Camden Green Gym after I graduated from university. I helped run their free outdoor nature conservation sessions. I loved every moment, working alongside fantastic individuals and conservation professionals.”

**Adam Shaffer,
We Make Camden [25]**

Strategy Theme 6: Widening our strategic partnerships to maximise the reach of Parks for Health

To date we have...

- Incorporated Parks for Health principles into new design guidance for Camden's £1 billion Community Investment Programme.
- Worked with Bright Start children's services in Islington to deliver environmental education activities for under-5s, with accredited training.
- Embedded Parks for Health principles into selected new strategies and plans. For example:
 - Islington's Community Gardening and Food Growing Review.
 - Highways, public realm and estates-based greening initiatives in Camden, such as the Green Estates project in Somers Town.
- Begun discussions with potential funders in different sectors. For example, Islington Giving.
- Initiated partnerships with higher education to build the local evidence base, test innovation and explore distinctive and practical approaches to assessing the health impact of our parks. For example:
 - University of the Arts London/ Central Saint Martin's Mobile Maker Space engagement trial in Somers Town.
 - University College London (The Bartlett) collaboration on the Healthy Parks framework development.
 - Exploratory conversations with London Metropolitan University with a view to implementing the award-winning Rewild My Street initiative in Holloway [26].

- Shared learning across London via
 - The new Parks for London Centre of Excellence [27].
 - Future of London's Healthy Neighbourhoods programme for the built environment sector [28].

Community Workbench is a new public structure to bring neighbourhoods together through collaborative creative activities in urban spaces. Local residents are invited to engage with the maker space and develop new ways to be creative and inspire one another within a short walking distance from their homes.

A collaboration between Central Saint Martins, Public Collaboration Lab/T-Factor, Make@Story Garden, Mind in Camden, Fitzrovia Youth in Actions/ Regent's Park Estate Champions and Camden Council. Prototyped with residents of Regent's Park Estate.



What do we want to achieve by 2030?

- The Parks for Health vision and principles are expanded into the wider public realm.
- Parks and green spaces are embedded in partners' area-based strategies with health and wellbeing objectives.
- Major landowners systematically and substantively invest in green space for community health and wellbeing.
- Local business and business partnerships contribute to public realm improvements in line with the Parks for Health vision.
- Long-term research collaborations enable us to assess and disseminate our health impact over time.

How will we get there?

Internal partnerships

Work strategically and systematically with:

- 1. Children's services.** For example, with Bright Futures in Islington to extend the Parks for Health offer to 5-19 year olds.
- 2. Planning colleagues** to influence major developments and leverage developer investment for measurable community benefit. For example, Camden's West End Project, Euston, Murphy's Yard.
- 3. Estates Services** to test and expand Parks for Health principles and approaches to our wider green space holdings more comprehensively.
- 4. Housing** to embed Parks for Health principles in to housing design requirements.
- 5. Highways** to integrate Parks for Health into greening schemes.
- 6. Climate change and biodiversity teams** to help increase community resilience and wellbeing through environmental measures.

External partnerships

- Facilitate a joined-up green infrastructure for the boroughs as a whole, further strengthening our relationships with the Canal and River Trust, Royal Parks and Corporation of London.
- Work with the Mayor of London, Police and local community safety partners to help improve women's safety and tackle gender-based violence.
- Explore opportunities to align with the "Greener NHS" objectives of our local hospital estate such as the Great Ormond Street cancer centre and public realm improvements, and Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust's new in-patient facilities.
- Support Business Improvement Districts to maintain a green and inclusive public realm.
- Sustain mutually beneficial working relationships with universities to research and disseminate learning and good practice.



Thank you

“Parks are the lungs of our towns and cities. They provide space for us to escape, explore, rest, relax and play. They keep us healthy, soften hard urban landscapes, help to clean the air and provide crucial homes for wildlife.”

Future Parks Accelerator

We wish to extend our thanks to all our colleagues at Future Parks Accelerator. This collaboration between the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the National Trust and central government provided us with essential funding, expertise and support. This has included many opportunities to share with and learn from other grant-funded sites across the country. As a result, we were able to accelerate change, transforming the way we work and strengthen our relationships with local partners across sectors.

Appendices





Appendices

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Parks and green spaces in Camden

Just under a quarter of Camden is green space, compared with the London average of 40%.

There are significant inequalities in provision of public open space across the borough, exaggerated by the presence of large spaces (such as Hampstead Heath and Regent's Park) on the fringes of the borough.

Some wards have access to more than 4,000m²/person while others have less than 15m²/person. In some areas with high deprivation this is compounded by low levels of access to public open space.

Overall, 39% of Camden residents do not have direct access to private green space.

Some areas of high deprivation have relatively high levels of green space however, providing an important opportunity to maximise their contribution to reducing these inequalities.

Parks managed by Camden have an average size of just 0.6 hectares, which puts immense pressure on individual sites.

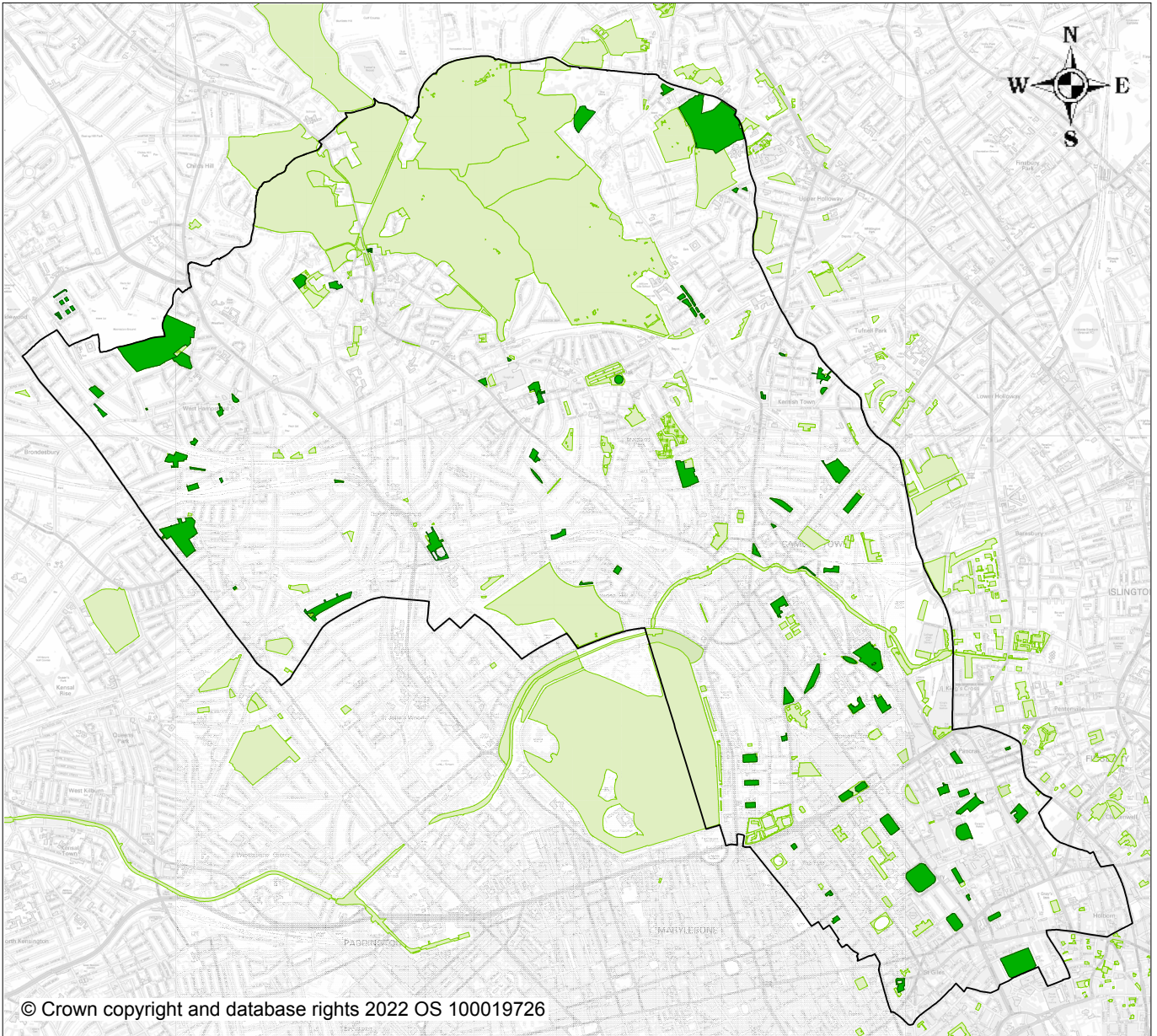
There are also a large number of designated London Squares, particularly to the south of the borough.



There are an estimated 2.6 million recreational visits to 70 greenspaces each year [\[15\]](#).

A third of the housing stock in Camden is social housing, and green space on the council's housing estates (50 hectares) is greater in area than our council-managed formal parks (47 hectares).

This housing land also contains the majority of the borough's 270 playgrounds.





-  Parks managed by Camden Council
-  Other parks and green spaces

Parks and green spaces in Islington

Islington Council manages 89 hectares of parks and greenspaces.

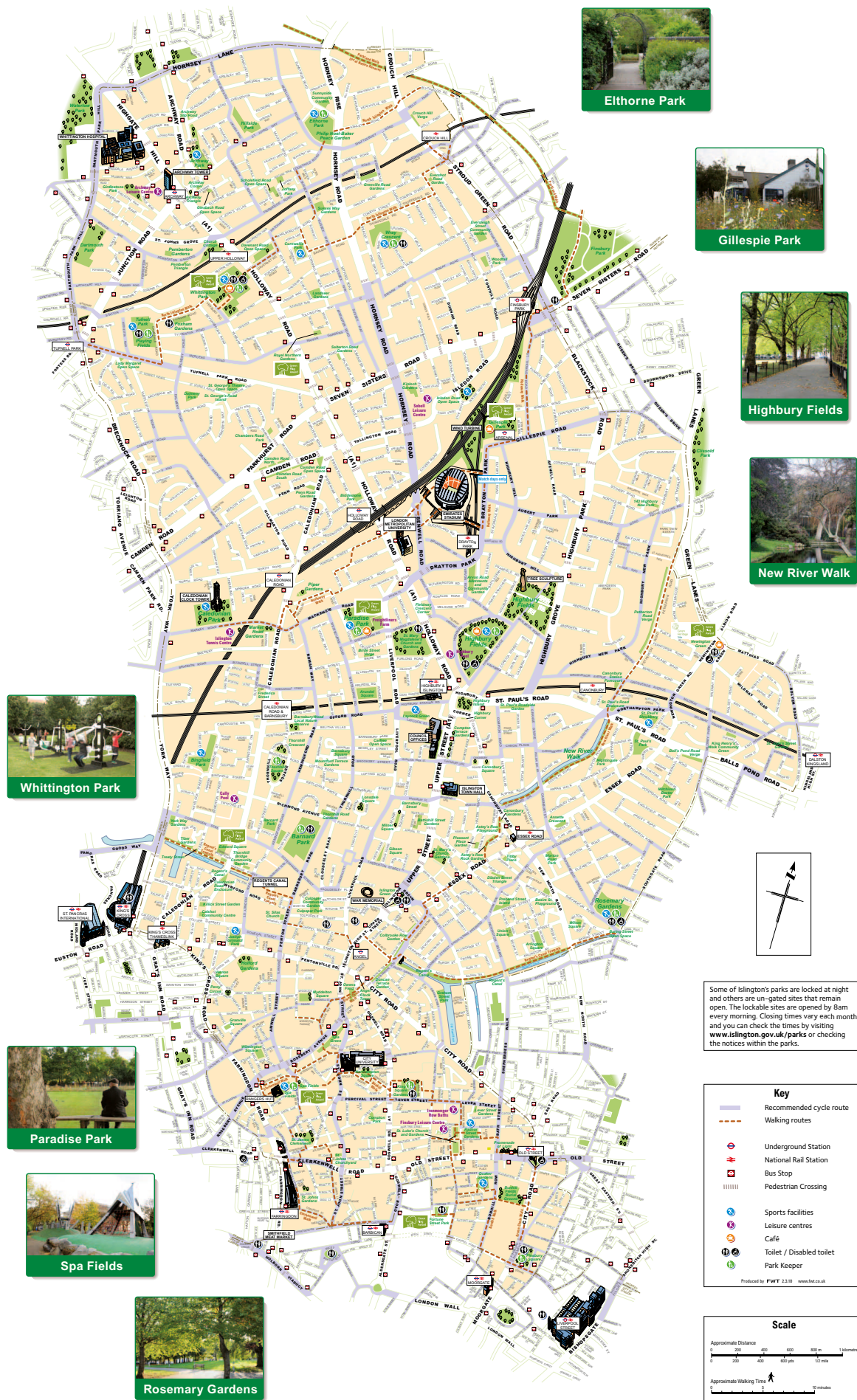
There are an estimated 2.2 million recreational visits to 93 locations each year. [15]

Islington is the most densely populated local authority area in England and Wales, with 16,097 people per square km. This is almost triple the London average and more than 37 times the national average. The population is estimated to grow by a further 3% by 2030.

Only 13% of the borough's land is green space. This is the second lowest proportion of any local authority in the country and far lower than outer London boroughs such as Barking and Dagenham where approximately a third of the borough is green space. 29% of Islington residents do not have direct access to private green space.

Urban green space in England declined from 63% to 56% between 2001 and 2016. Friends of the Earth's data analysis and mapping identifies those neighbourhoods most deprived of green space, which most need investment. Islington and Camden are number 8 and 12 on that list.

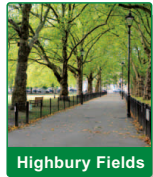




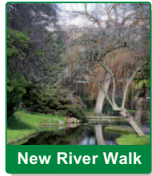
Elthorne Park



Gillespie Park



Highbury Fields



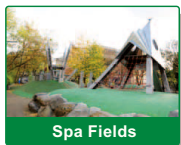
New River Walk



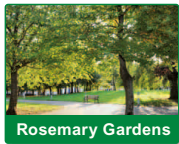
Whittington Park



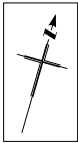
Paradise Park



Spa Fields



Rosemary Gardens



Some of Islington's parks are locked at night and others are un-gated sites that remain open. The lockable sites are opened by 8am every morning. Closing times vary each month and you can check the times by visiting www.islington.gov.uk/parks or checking the notices within the parks.

Key	
	Recommended cycle route
	Walking routes
	Underground Station
	National Rail Station
	Bus Stop
	Pedestrian Crossing
	Sports facilities
	Leisure centres
	Cafe
	Toilet / Disabled toilet
	Park Keeper

Produced by FWT 2.3.10 www.fwt.co.uk

Scale	
Approximate Distance	
Approximate Walking Time	

Mapping health inequalities and access to green space in Camden and Islington

Our shared health priorities are:

1. Improving social cohesion.
2. Reducing isolation.
3. Increasing physical activity.
4. Improving mental health and wellbeing.
5. Reducing health inequalities.

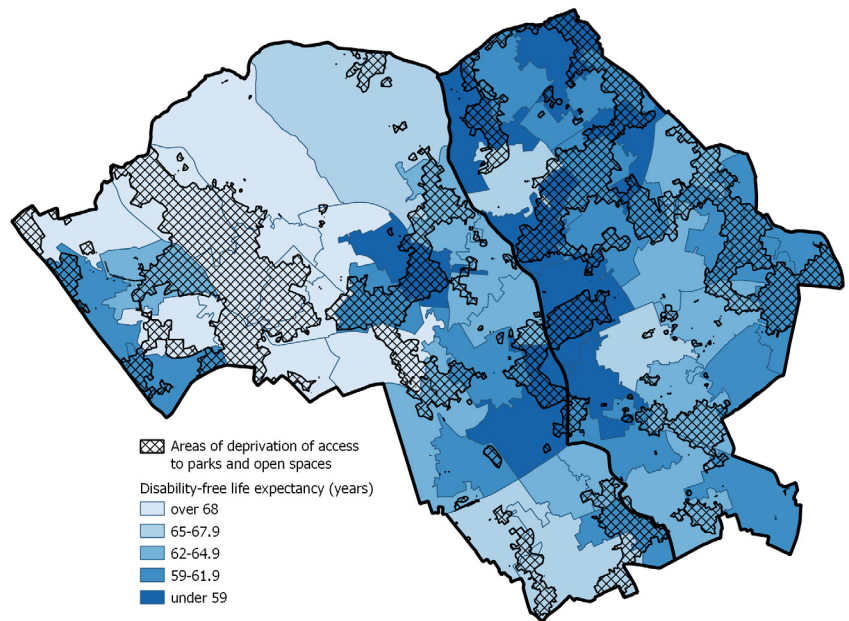
Our Parks for Health targeted offer focuses on improving the quality and accessibility of our parks infrastructure and activities taking place for our priority groups. Currently, these are:

- People living in the most deprived circumstances (identified by small area, as per the Index of Multiple Deprivation).
- People from Black, Asian and other ethnic groups.
- Women and girls.
- People with disabilities, including learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

“The evidence suggests that people who live in neighbourhoods with greater amounts of green infrastructure tend to be happier, healthier and live longer lives than those who live in less green places. It is likely that everybody benefits from green infrastructure. However, it may be that more disadvantaged communities benefit to a greater degree.”

Natural England, Rapid Scoping Review of Health and Wellbeing Evidence [29]

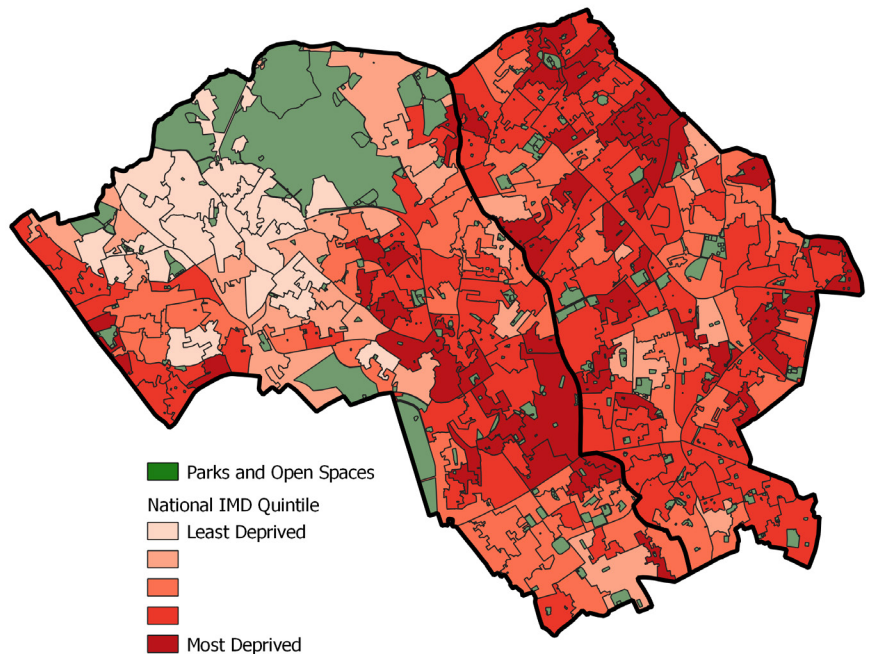
Disability-free life expectancy is defined by the ONS as “an estimate of lifetime free from a limiting persistent illness”. It is based upon a self-rated assessment of how health conditions and illnesses reduce an individual’s ability to carry out day-to-day activities. This map shows the variations in disability-free life expectancy across our communities alongside areas of deprivation of access to parks and open spaces.



Camden and Islington Parks and Open Spaces and Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) looks at deprivation in England across 39 separate indicators. Areas are ranked according to their level of deprivation, and then grouped in to 10 equal categories (deciles) from most to least deprived, which are shown here.

This map shows how areas within Camden and Islington score alongside the location of parks and green spaces in the boroughs:



Abbreviations and key terms

Asset

Something which has a social and/or economic value to a person, community or organisation who owns or has an interest in it.

Biodiversity

The variety of living things (animals, plants, fungi, and microorganisms like bacteria) that make up our natural world. These work together in natural ecosystems. Biodiversity supports everything in nature that we need to survive: food, clean water, medicine, and shelter.

Bright Futures Services in Islington for children and young people aged 5 – 19 and their families.

Bright Start Services in Islington for under fives and their families. Run in children's centres, nurseries, health centres, community centres and libraries.

Business Improvement District (BID)

Business-led organisations funded by a mandatory levy on all eligible businesses after a successful ballot. BIDs provide additional or improved services for their area such as extra safety, cleaning or environmental measures.

CCG Abbreviation of **Clinical Commissioning Group**.

Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) A system set up in 2012 where GP practices and other health professionals, such as nurses, come together to plan what hospital and community NHS services are needed for their local area (borough in London). Subject to legislation, CCGs will be abolished in April 2022, with their functions and most of their staff transferring to the local **Integrated Care System (ICS)** body.

Climate resilience

Ability of a place, the environment and/or people to adapt or respond to the impacts of climate change - for example, heatwaves or flooding.

Co-design

Term for a way of working which brings citizens, local authorities and others together on an equal footing to design new products, services and policies. See also **co-production**.

Community resilience

The ability or characteristics of a community as a whole to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adverse situations. People's health and the environment they live in play a major part in this.

Co-production

Term for a way of working where citizens and decision-makers, decision-makers work together as equals to design products or services or to solve problems. See also **co-design**.

FPA Abbreviation of **Future Parks Accelerator**.

Future Parks Accelerator (FPA)

Collaboration between the National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust and central government which aims to help secure the future of the UK's urban parks and green spaces. Further information: futureparks.org.uk/about

Greener NHS

Programme led by NHS England. Shares ideas on how to reduce the impact of climate change on public health and the environment, save money and reduce carbon emissions. Further information: england.nhs.uk/greenernhs/

Green infrastructure

The network of natural spaces and features in a place. Can include, for example: parks, gardens, wildlife areas, road verges and green walls or roofs. Also includes canals and rivers, sometimes known as “blue infrastructure”.

Green social prescribing

See **Social prescribing**.

Green space

Any vegetated land or water within an urban or built up area. This includes parks, public gardens, playing fields, sports areas, play spaces, allotments and community gardens.

Grey infrastructure

The network of human-engineered services and facilities of a place (contrasted with **green infrastructure**).

Health

“A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” (World Health Organisation)

Health inequalities

“Health inequalities are unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population, and between different groups within society. Health inequalities arise because of the conditions in which we are born, grow, live, work and age. These conditions influence our opportunities for good health, and how we think, feel and act, and this shapes our mental health, physical health and wellbeing.” (NHS England)

Healthy Parks Creators

A programme bringing together organisations from the VCSE sector in Camden and Islington to support others to build their skills, knowledge and confidence to deliver health activities in and around parks.

Healthy Streets

Approach adopted by Transport for London (TfL) to improve air quality, reduce congestion and help make communities greener, healthier and more attractive places to live, work, play and do business. TfL has funded Healthy Streets Officers in some London boroughs to encourage more walking and cycling. Further information: tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/planning-for-the-future/healthy-streets

ICP Abbreviation of **Integrated Care Partnership**.

Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) Brings together a broad range of partners including councils, NHS providers, voluntary and community sector organisations, social care providers and others, to join up the planning and delivery of health and care services at a local level. Responsibilities and budgets may be delegated to ICPs by the **Integrated Care System (ICS)** which covers a larger geographical area. For Camden and Islington, this is the North London Partners ICS.

ICS Abbreviation of **Integrated Care System**.

Integrated Care Partnership (ICS) Brings together providers and commissioners of services across a geographical area with local authorities and other local partners to collectively plan health and care services to meet the needs of their population. The central aim of ICSs is to integrate care across different organisations and settings, joining up hospital and community-based services, physical and mental health, and health and social care. An ICS may delegate budget and responsibilities to a more local **Integrated Care Partnership** (see above). Camden and Islington are part of the **North London Partners ICS**.

IMD Abbreviation of **Index of Multiple Deprivation**.

Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)

Assesses deprivation in England across 39 separate indicators. Areas are ranked according to their level of deprivation, and then grouped in to 10 equal categories from most to least deprived. Further information: [gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/english-indices-of-deprivation)

Link Worker

An NHS role connecting people with local community activities and services that can help improve their health and wellbeing, also known as social prescribing.

Localities (Islington)

Area based local multiple agency working area. Brings together Council, VCS, NHS and Primary Care to work together to deliver early intervention and prevention work for vulnerable residents.

Mental Health Champions

Camden-based community workers or volunteers who increase mental health awareness and provide information, advice and guidance for Black, minority ethnic and refugee groups (BMER). Further information: [mentalhealthcamden.co.uk/services/mental-health-champions](https://www.mentalhealthcamden.co.uk/services/mental-health-champions)
For Islington, see **Wellbeing Champions**.

Natural ecosystems

The web of all the organisms in a place and the physical environment with which they interact.

Natural Capital Accounting

Way of counting the value of the elements of nature which benefit people directly or indirectly. This includes parks, rivers, trees and features such as green roofs. Designed and managed as **green infrastructure**, natural capital can improve health and lessen the impacts of climate change.

Neighbourhoods (Camden)

In Camden, people and place lead the way. We are accessibly where people live and believe everyone should be empowered to live a good life. Our services are local, connected and built on relationships; enabling people to grow their strengths and find solutions.

North London Partners

The name of the **Integrated Care System** which includes Camden, Islington, Barnet, Enfield and Haringey. Further information: [northlondonpartners.org.uk/](https://www.northlondonpartners.org.uk/)

Primary Care Network (PCN)

GP practices working together with community, mental health, social care, pharmacy, hospital and voluntary services in their local areas to meet the needs of their communities.

Public health

“The science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life and promoting health through organised efforts of society.” (Sir Donald Acheson) There are three domains of public health: health improvement (including people’s lifestyles as well as inequalities in health and the wider social influences of health), health protection (including infectious diseases, environmental hazards and emergency preparedness) and health services (including service planning, efficiency, audit and evaluation). In England, the responsibility for public health is largely located within local authorities but the NHS and others have significant roles as well.

Public realm

Outdoor areas (streets, parks, squares) in towns and cities which are owned by or open to the public.

Social care

Services provided by councils or other organisations which help people to lead independent lives. For example, disabled people of any age or older people with particular needs such as getting around.

Social cohesion

The way and extent to which a community or group of people feel bound together by a sense of belonging or shared values.

Social isolation

A lack of social contacts and having few people to interact with regularly. It is different from loneliness as it is possible to feel lonely among other people, and you can be alone but not feel lonely. Older adults are at higher risk of social isolation and loneliness due to changes in health and social connections that can come with growing older, hearing, vision, and memory loss.

Social prescribing

When health professionals, such as GPs, refer people to local, non-clinical services in the community aimed at improving their health and wellbeing. For example, connecting people to opportunities to be more active, such as “health walks” designed for different groups and levels of fitness, healthy cookery classes, arts and culture. **Green social prescribing** is when people are referred to activities which involve access to nature. They include gardening, outdoor gyms and other activities which take place in parks.

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector

A broad category of organisations with a charitable or social purpose.

Wellbeing

General term for the overall physical and mental health of individuals and communities. Wellbeing may be personal or subjective and includes such things as how we feel about ourselves, our relationships and sense of purpose as well as more objectively measurable factors such as medical conditions. Read more: whatworkswellbeing.org/about-wellbeing/what-is-wellbeing/

Wellbeing Champions

Network of people in Islington promoting positive mental and emotional wellbeing and helping to reduce stigma. Further information via Manor Gardens community centre. manorgardenscentre.org/our-services/community-wellbeing/wellbeing-champions/

For Camden, see **Mental Health Champions**.

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