

Filling the Gap between Policy and Practice

Jim Burt, Principal Adviser, Natural England

1. Context and opportunities

2. Challenges

3. Implications

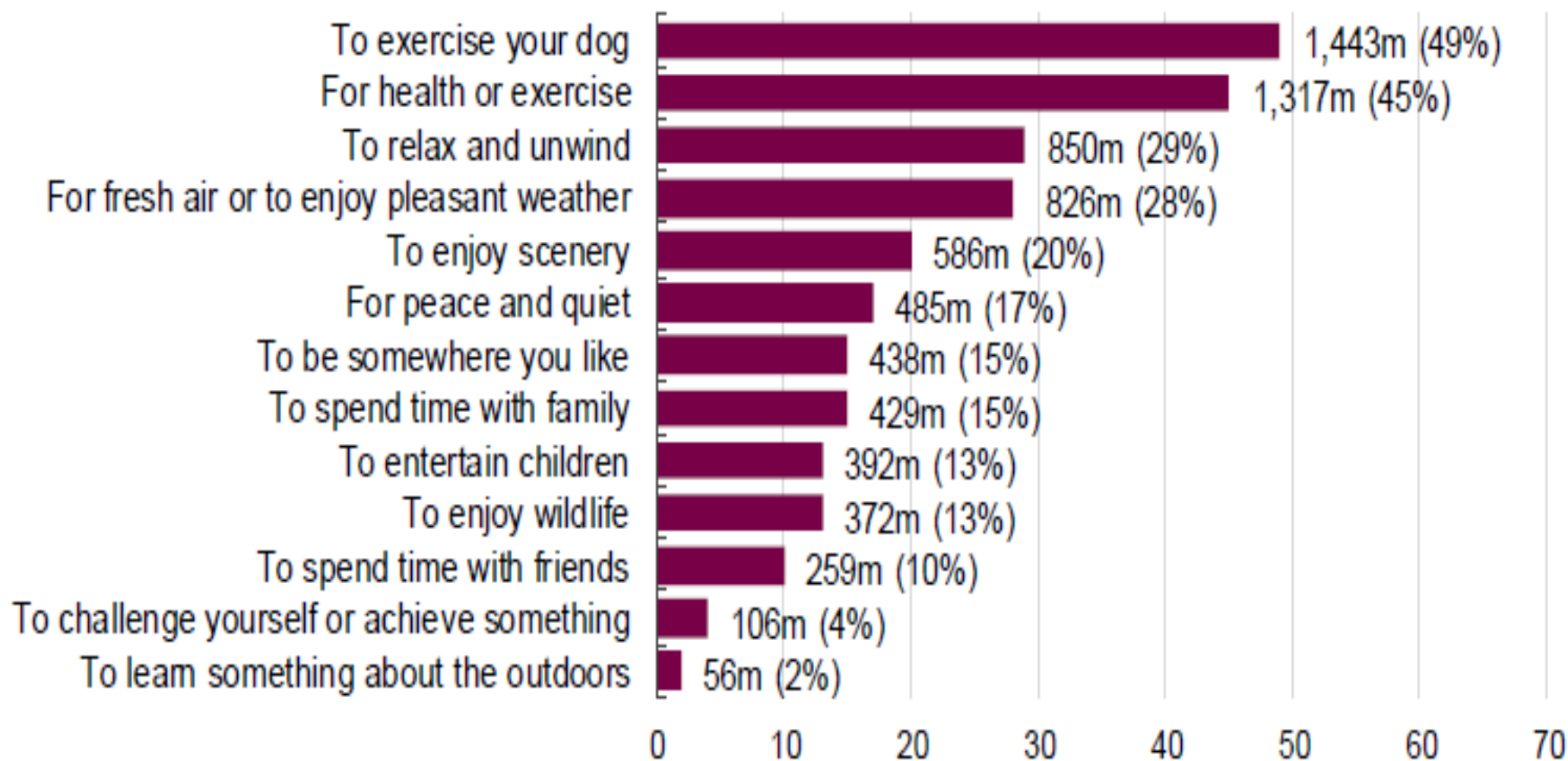


Public Money for Public Goods

Ensuring everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the **full range of social benefits** that come from **experiencing** the natural environment.

Green & blue spaces – pocket parks to National Parks, farms to the coast and sea.

Motivations



Motivations - Proportions of visits where health/ exercise cited as a motivation



Health benefits linked to greenspace

“The evidence shows that urban green space has health benefits, particularly for economically deprived communities, children, and senior citizens. It is therefore essential that all populations have **adequate access to green space**, with particular priority placed on provision for disadvantaged communities”

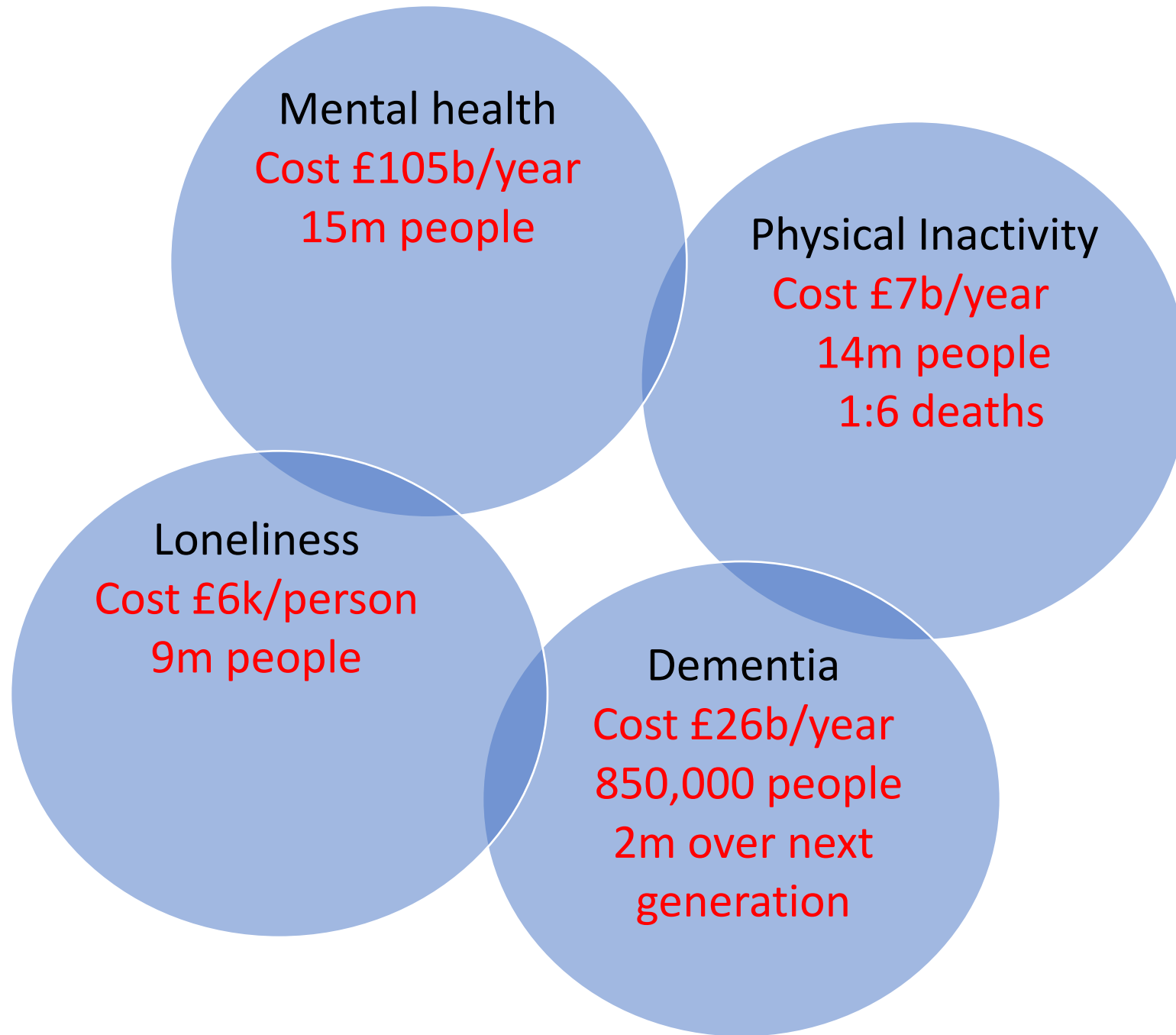
WHO, 2016: Urban green spaces and health - a review of evidence



Urban green spaces and health

A review of evidence





Mental health

*No Health without
Mental Health*

Physical Inactivity

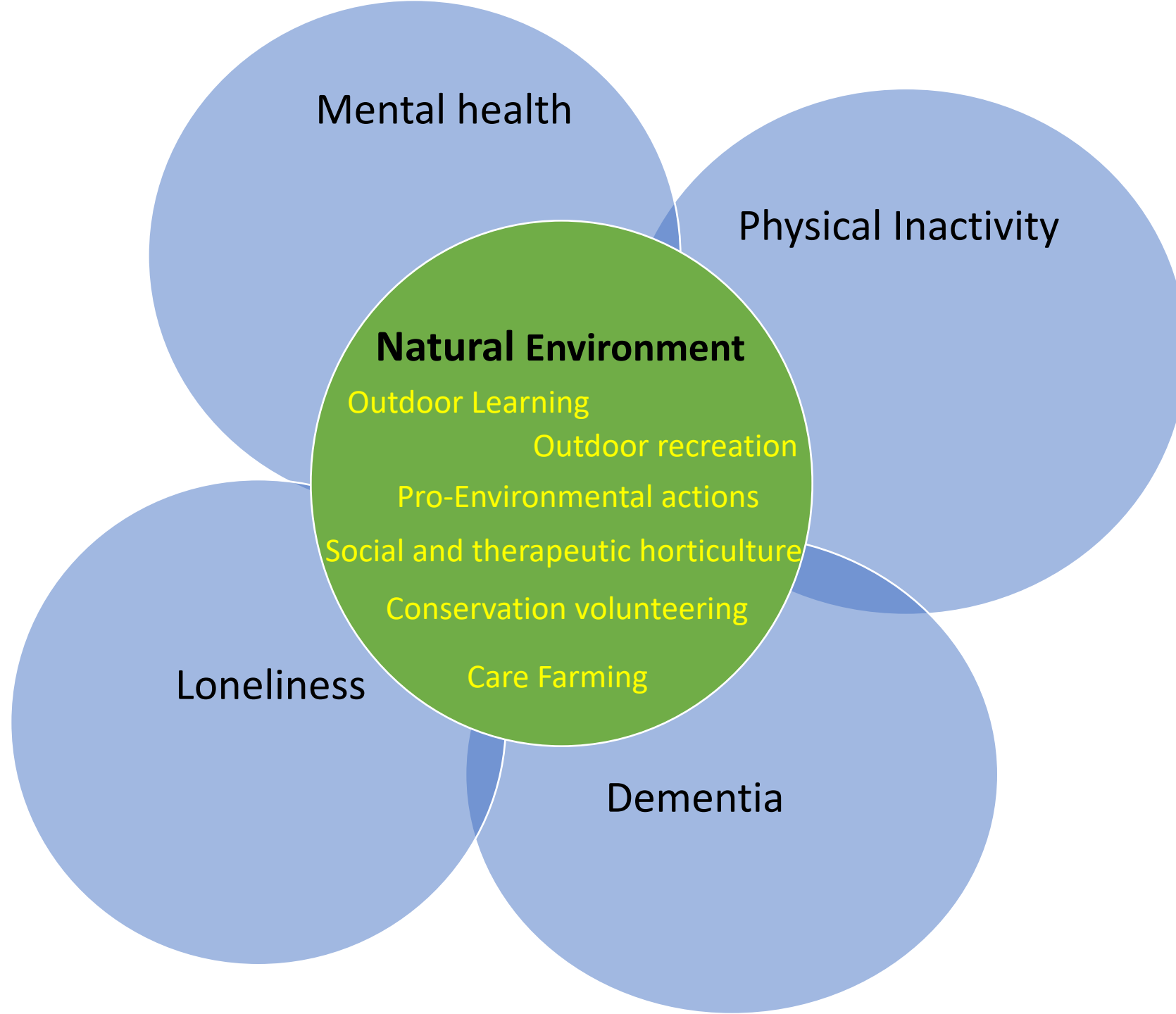
*Sporting Future:
A New Strategy for
an Active Nation*

Loneliness

*A Connected Society:
A Strategy for Tackling
Loneliness*

Dementia

*Challenge on
Dementia 2020*



25 Year Environment Plan

Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing

1. Helping people improve their health and wellbeing by using green spaces
2. Encouraging children to be close to nature, in and out of school
3. Greening our towns and cities
4. Making 2019 a Year of Action for the environment



Strategic challenges



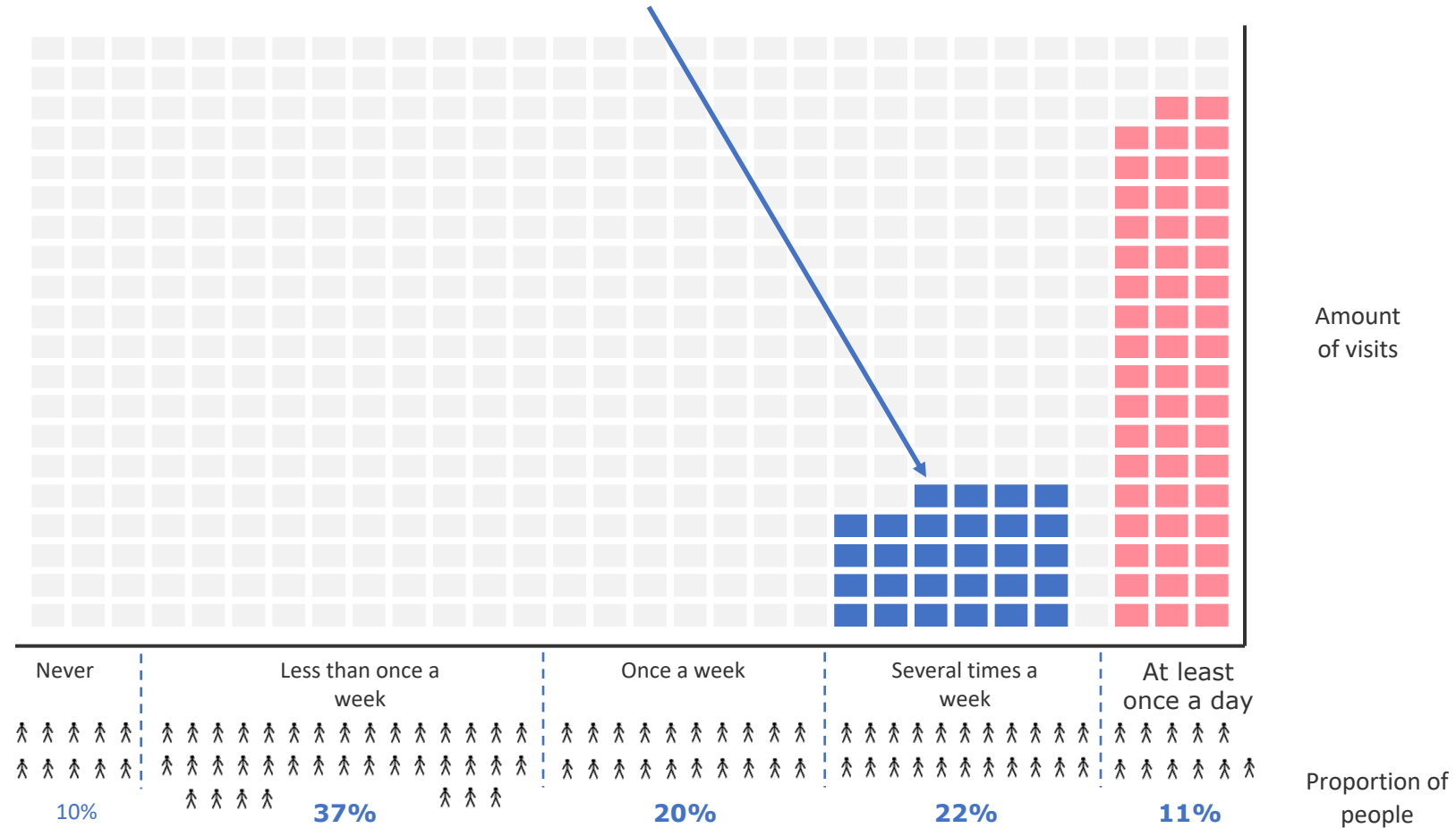
1. Extend our reach to new audiences



2. Achieve greater impact on people at a personal and societal level

Challenge 1. Visit behaviour is highly skewed

A third of the English population account for more than 80% of all visits to the natural environment.



Frequency of visits to greenspace vary between social groups



	Average annual visits to the natural environment	Numbers (%) millions
English adult population	64	42 (100%)
People with disabilities	56	7.4 (18%)
Aged 65+	55	8.1 (19%)
DE socio-economic group	50	11.5 (28%)
Urban Deprived	40	4.2 (10%)
BAME population	27	5.4 (13%)

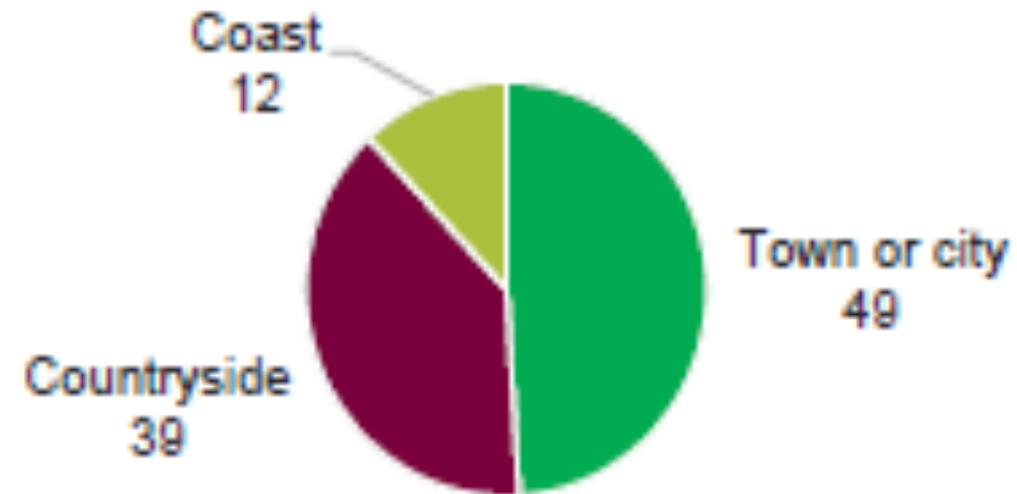
Local green space is a critical resource !



68% of all visits by adults to the natural environment are within 2 miles of home.

In an average month, 74% of children visited **local** natural places: mostly urban parks (47%), and playgrounds (29%)

(% of visits taken 2017/18)



Importance of local greenspace varies between social groups

	Visits to parks in towns/cities 2013/14 %
Age	
16-24	36*
25-44	32
45-64	22
65+	20
Social grade	
AB	23
C1	29
C2	26
DE	30**
Ethnicity	
White	25
BAME	56*
Deprivation index	
10% most deprived areas	37*
10% least deprived areas	22

Summary

- Health inequality in England is estimated to cost up to £70 billion/yr
- Increasing the **use** of greenspace can be part of a low cost package to address health inequality and improve health outcomes.

But

- Access to greenspace is NOT available to all:
 - The most affluent 20% of wards in England have 5 times the amount of greenspace compared with the most deprived 10%.
- Use of greenspace is lowest in those groups where health needs are often greatest.

Challenge 2: Impact

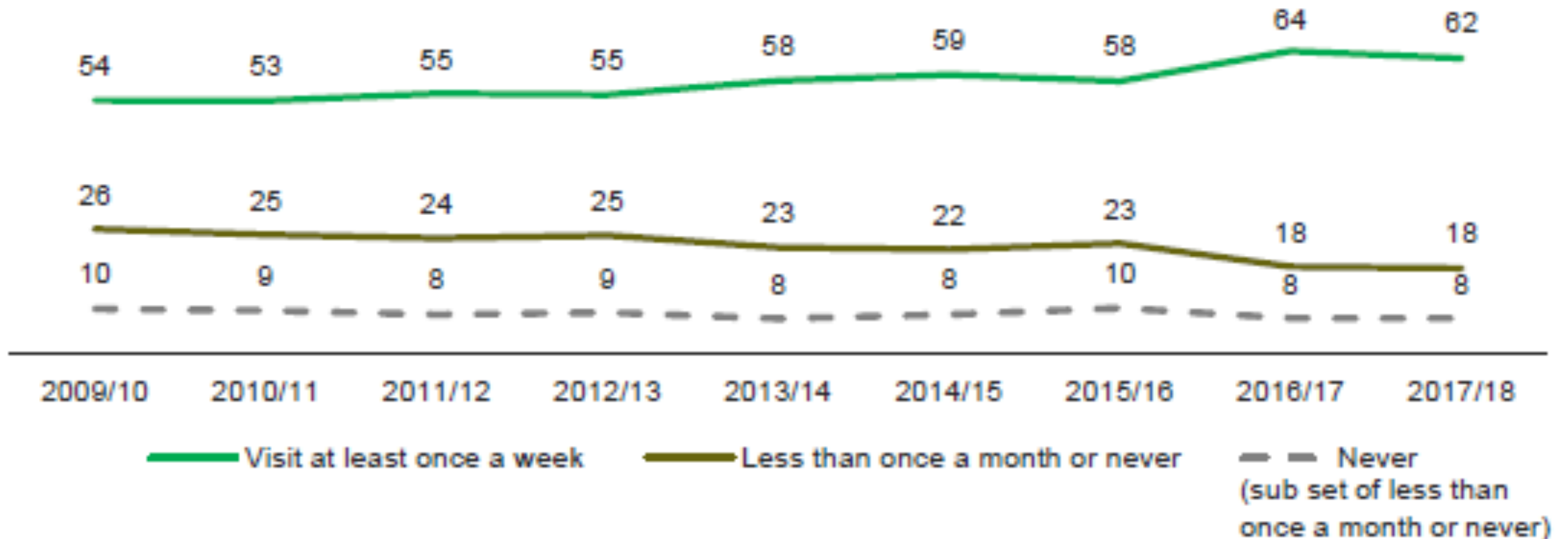
Achieving greater impact on people
at a personal and societal level



Increasing trend in visit frequency to the natural environment



FIGURE 2 Frequency of visits
(% of adults, 2009/10 to 2017/18)



Strong, positive attitudes to the natural environment



Last year:

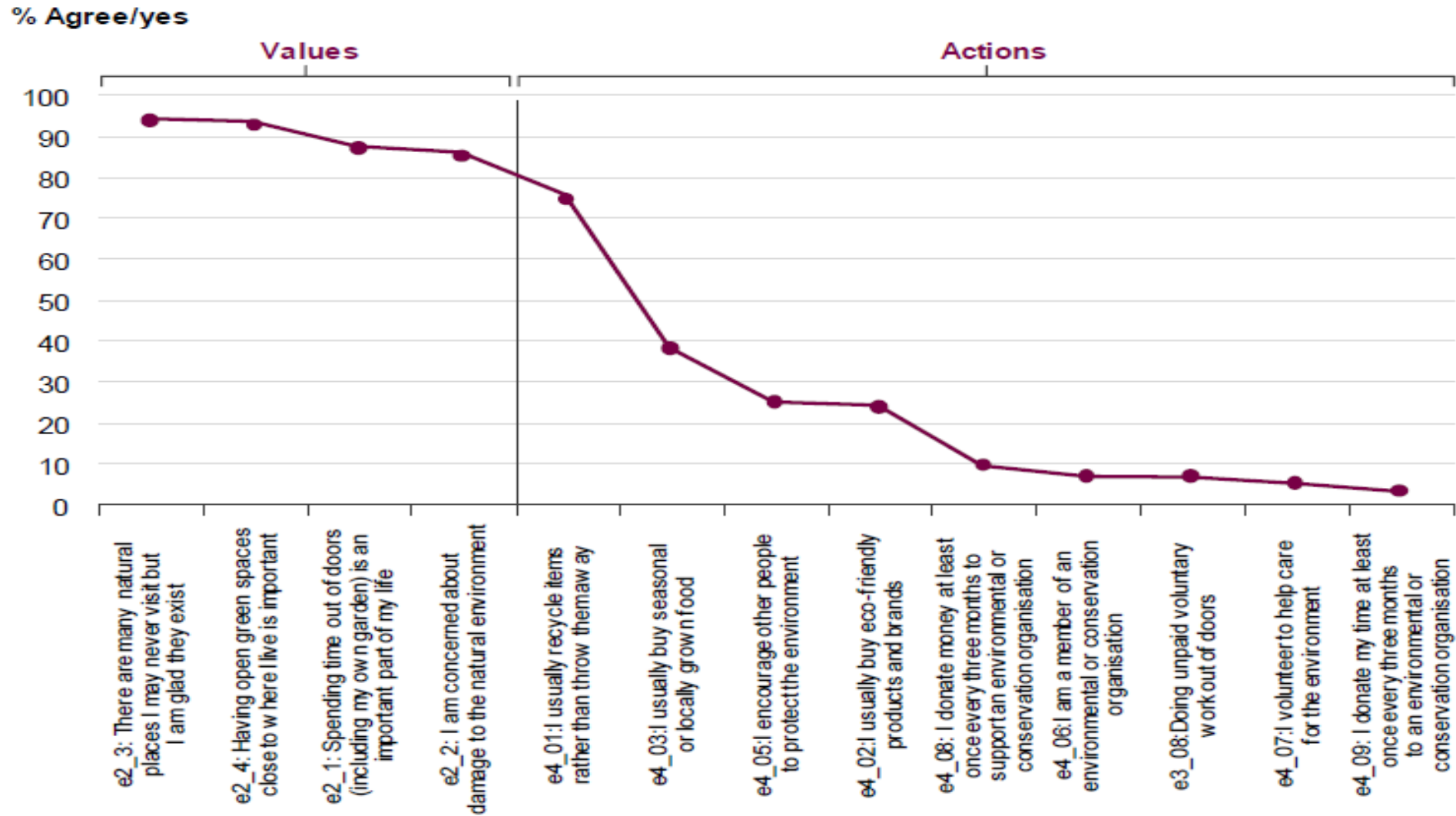
- 86% of adults in England were concerned about damage to the natural environment
- 94% recognise the importance of natural places
- 87% see spending time outdoors as an important part of their life

However since 2009,

the percentage of people stating they like their lifestyle the way it is
and are not likely to change,

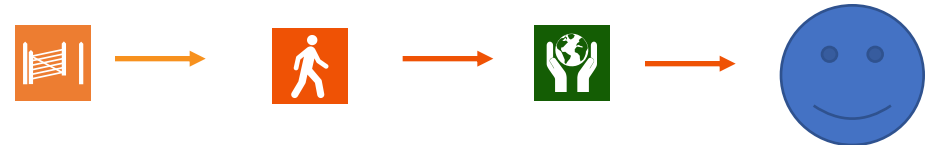
it has **increased** from 26% to 33%

Value Action Gap



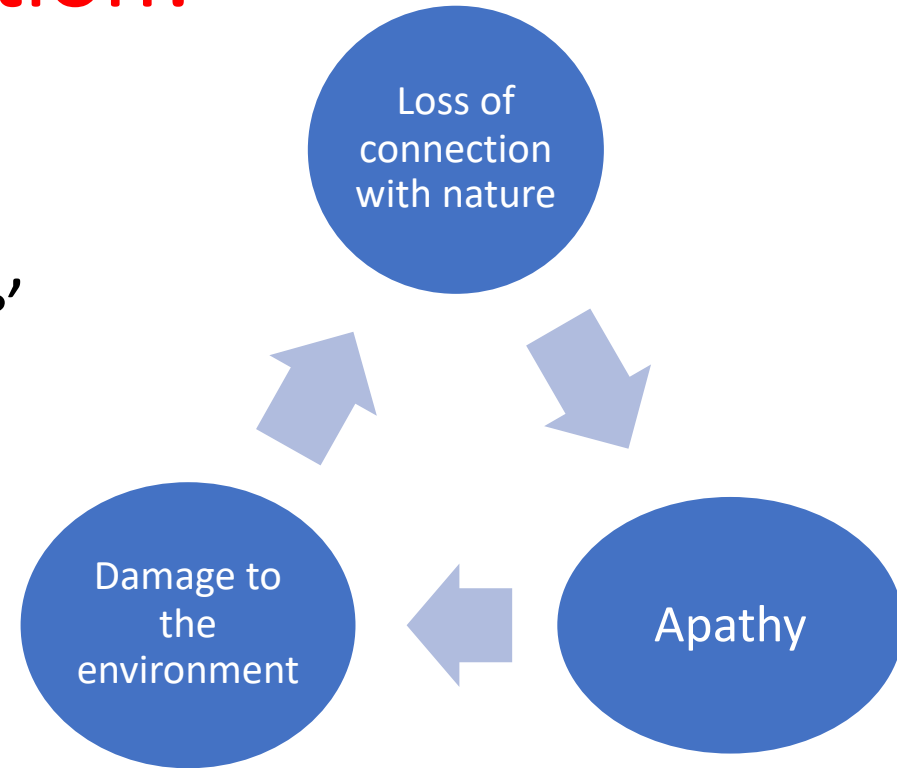
Summary

- Visit frequency is not strongly related to concern for the natural environment or to environmental action
- Concern does not necessarily lead to action (Value Action Gap)
- Common approach to engagement: *Access - Visits - Concern - Action:*



Moving beyond contact with nature to connection!

Robert Pyle (1975) *'Extinction of Experience'*



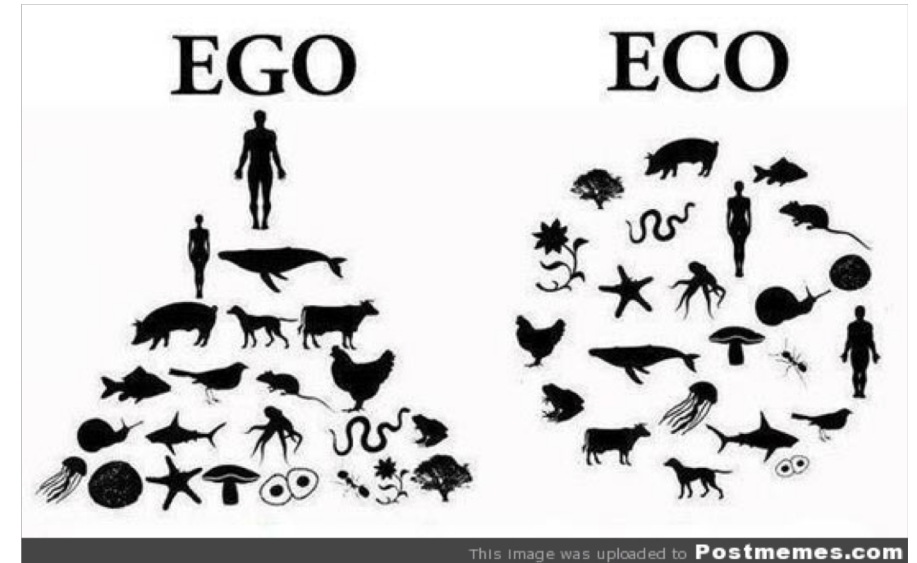
Richard Louv (2010) *'Last Child in the Woods'* - Nature deficit Disorder in children

David Attenborough (2018) *'No one will protect what they don't care about, and no one will care about what they have never experienced'*

What is a Nature Connection?

A person's sense of their relationship with nature.

- Affective – emotional, wonder & joy.
- Cognitive – beliefs, part of.
- Self – inclusion in nature.



From postmemes.com/meme/ego-vs-eco/

New Nature Connection Index (adults and children)

- 6 item scale - validated against existing measures
- Piloted in a nationally representative survey (MENE)

- 'I treat nature with respect'
- 'I find beauty in nature'
- 'Being in nature makes me happy'
- 'Spending time in nature is important to me'
- 'I find being in nature is amazing'
- 'I feel part of nature'



Headline findings

- **NCI is a stronger predictor** of environmental conservation behaviour and wellbeing than visit frequency
- **Visit frequency and nature connection are independent predictors** of pro-environmental behaviours and wellbeing
- **Visit frequency and nature connection appear additive** – wellbeing and pro-environmental behaviours are higher among those who have high nature connection regardless of their visit frequency, **BUT** is highest among the population who report **both** high visit frequency and high nature connection.

Increasing understanding of nature (cognitive pathway) is not a substantial pathway to action.

Study of children's environmental education found that *environmental knowledge* explained 2% of ecological behaviour.

Nature connectedness explained 69%

Otto & Pensini, 2017



Summary



- People's **concern** for wider environmental conservation is related to how important the natural environment is to their daily lives.
- Importance of the natural environment to people's daily lives is related to the **benefits** people report from their visits (eg. physical health, wellbeing, socialising).
- Enabling people to get experiences that build the **relevance** of the natural environment into their lives is a critical step in supporting wider environmental attitudes and behaviours.

If the 'quality' of the experience is critical, we must understand our audiences' motivations and their needs.

Implications for policy and practice

1. **Align outdoor services with strategic drivers:** mental & physical health, learning, loneliness etc.
2. **Increase the scale of nature-based services:** meet the service standards and volumes required by commissioners.
3. **Make your services relevant:** Design and target services to meet the outcomes of commissioners and the needs of users.
4. **Improve the impact of your services:** increase the 'quantity' and 'quality' of peoples experience of nature. Support peoples contact and connection with nature through a better understanding of audience motivations and personal needs.

***“To Change Behaviour
You Have To Engage A Person”***



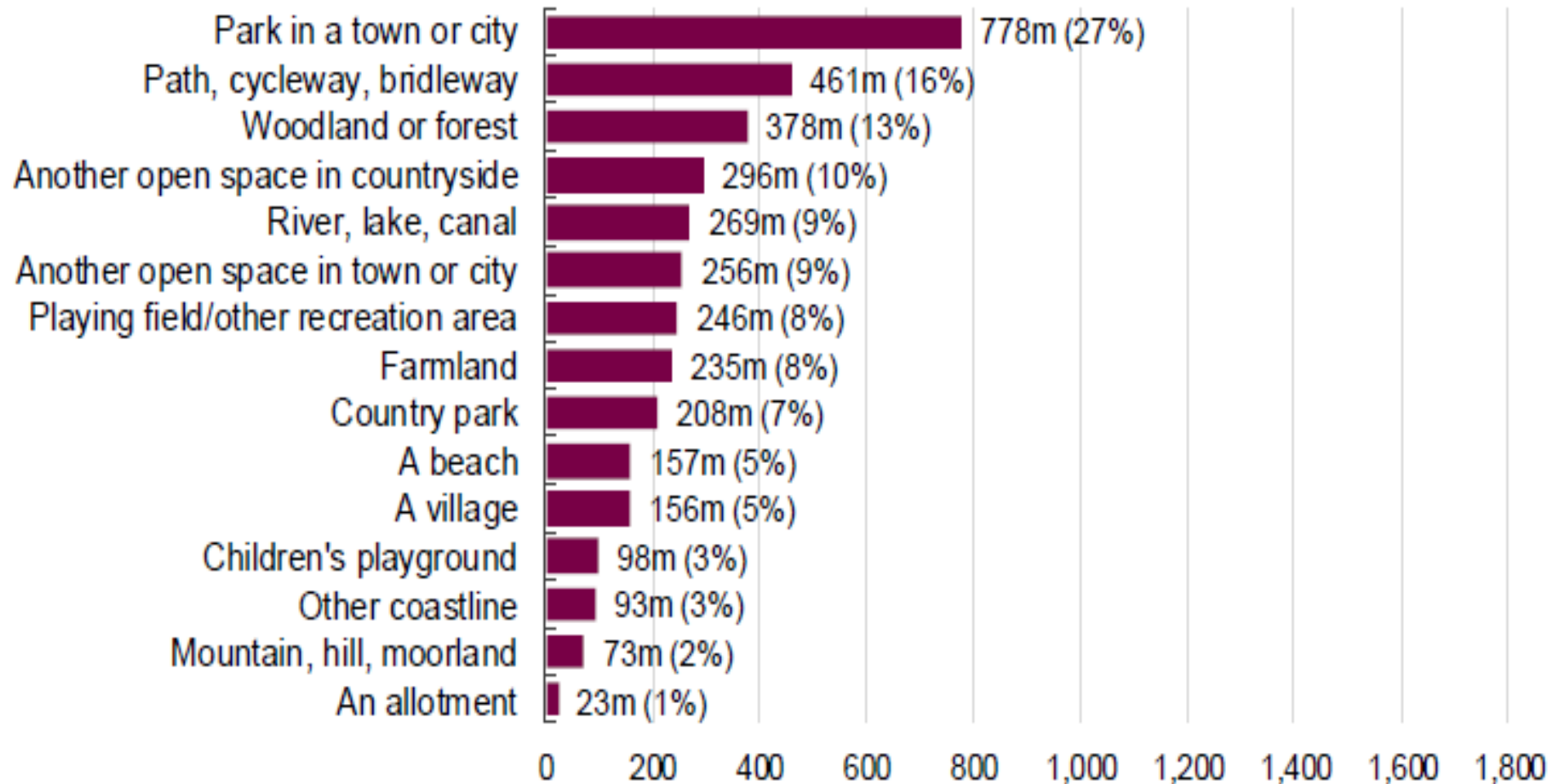
Thank you

Jim.burt@naturalengland.org.uk

Additional slides

Where we visit ?

Places visited (millions)



Changing lifestyle to protect the natural environment

	Intend to make changes %
Age	
16-24	22**
25-44	22**
45-64	13
65+	5
Ethnicity	
White	13
BAME	28*

Outdoor Adventure Learning: the evidence

- Studies **consistently show positive benefits** on academic learning (+ 4 months)
 - One-to-one tuition + 5 months
- Evidence of similar effects on **non-cognitive outcomes** (e.g. self-confidence)
- Unusually, impacts seem to **grow over time**
- Impacts appears to be strongest for:
 - Longer courses (at least one week)
 - Vulnerable students
 - Older learners (teenagers)
 - Wilderness-based courses

