



Role of parks in supporting a healthy community

A case study from Camden and Islington

Our Healthy Parks Vision

Parks as public health assets for the 21st Century



Why it is so important.....

- 2-in-5 residents in Camden do not have access to private outdoor space. 3rd highest in country.
- Islington is the 2nd most densely populated borough in the country.
- Life expectancy is 12.6 years (Camden) and 9.4 years (Islington) lower in men in the most deprived parts of the borough compared to the least
- Camden has the 3rd highest prevalence of serious mental illness in London and 1 in 6 people in Islington registered at a GP are diagnosed with depression



Our shared Parks for Health vision

Public parks were created in the 19th century as a direct response to public health needs. Building upon this legacy, we want to transform the management of parks and green spaces to ensure they continue to actively address health challenges but also improve health and reduce inequalities. We set out the following aspirations:



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



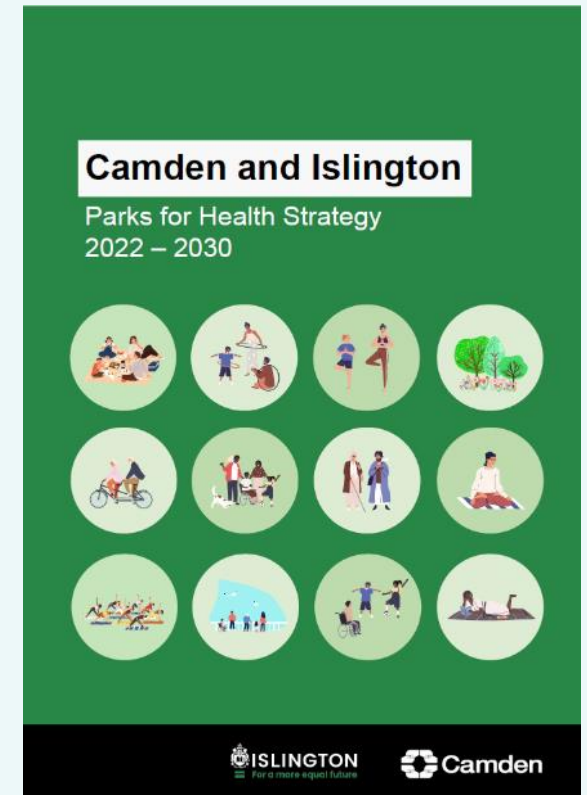
Everyone feels welcome in our parks. More people than ever before visit and stay for longer - enjoying nature and taking part in activities which make them healthy and happy.



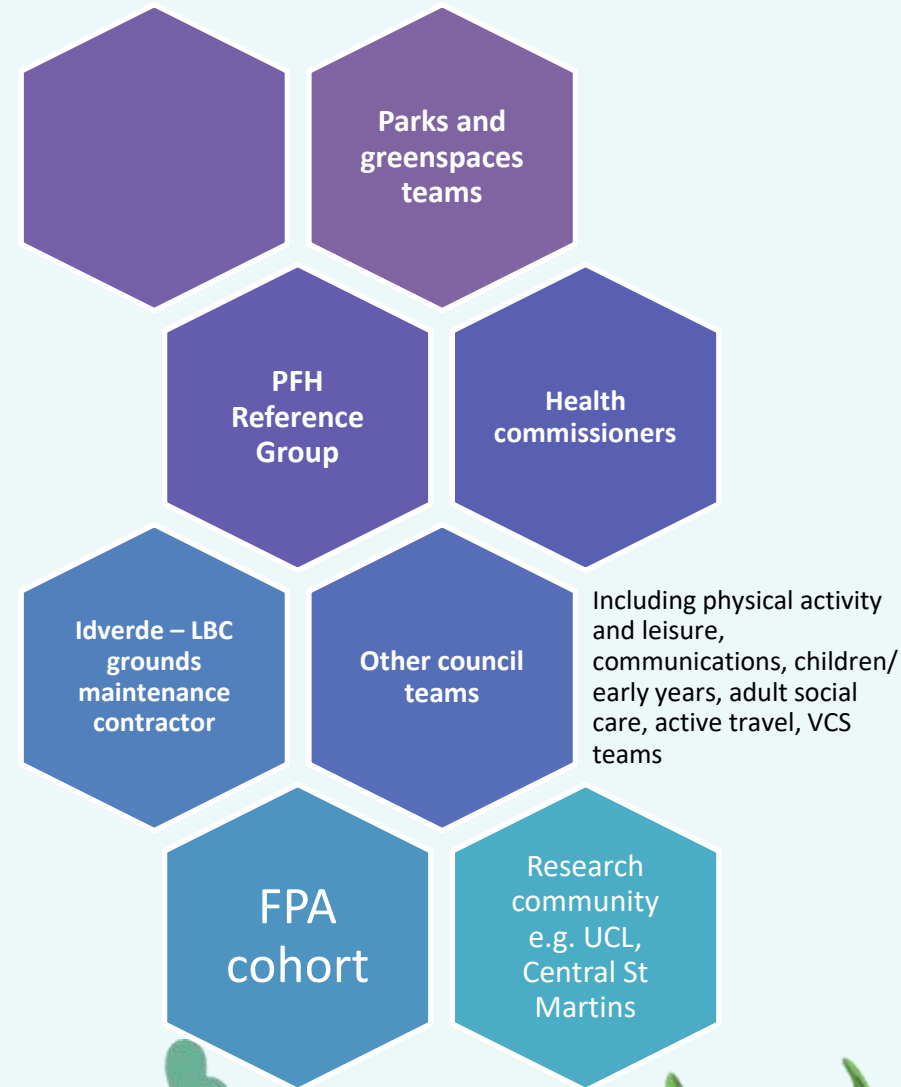
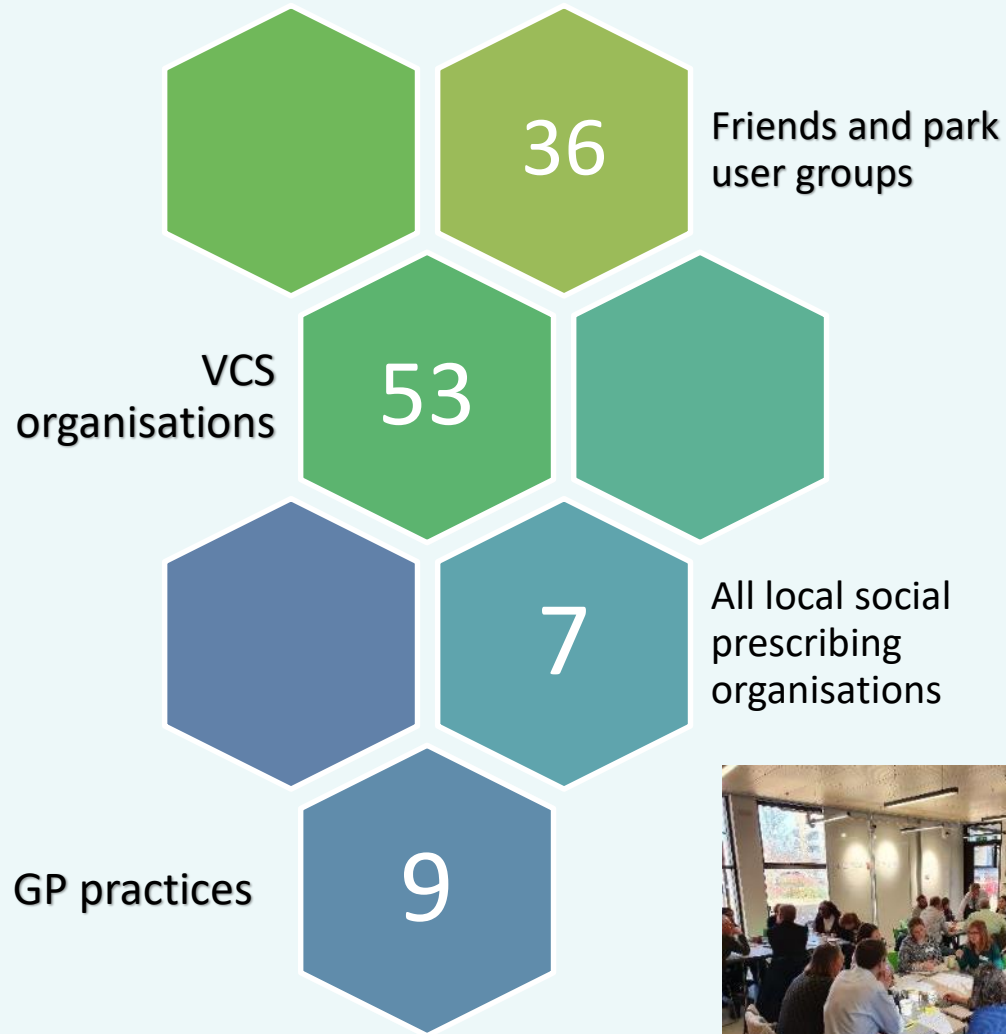
Our parks are places where people can come together or spend time alone, be active or pause and reflect.



Our parks are at the heart of community life.



We worked with a broad range of people





Understanding
the physical....

...and social
infrastructure
of our spaces



The map displays the geographical distribution of two variables across the wards of Greater London. The legend indicates that areas with a cross-hatched pattern represent 'Areas of deprivation of access to parks and open spaces'. The color shading represents 'Disability-free life expectancy (years)', with a scale ranging from light blue (over 68) to dark blue (under 59). The map shows a high concentration of areas with deprivation of access to parks in the central and eastern parts of the city, particularly in the areas around the City of London and the inner suburbs. These areas often overlap with regions of lower disability-free life expectancy, indicated by darker blue shading. The western and northern parts of the city generally show higher disability-free life expectancy, indicated by lighter blue shading, and less deprivation of access to parks.

The map displays the geographical distribution of parks and open spaces (green) across Greater London. It also shows the National IMD Quintile (light orange) and the National Deprivation Index (Least Deprived) (red). The map indicates that parks and open spaces are more concentrated in the western and northern parts of the region, while the eastern and southern parts are predominantly red, indicating higher deprivation.



Building Partnerships



**GLOBAL
GENERATION**



Activating Our Green spaces : Empowering our communities



Chair yoga



Community gardening



Men's shed



Outdoor gym support



Walks programme



Arts & crafts



Breaking Down Barriers



Marketing Our Parks



Today, 10 October is World Mental Health Day! 🧠

Did you know that walking for just 30 minutes a day can improve your mental health and wellbeing? 🚶‍♀️

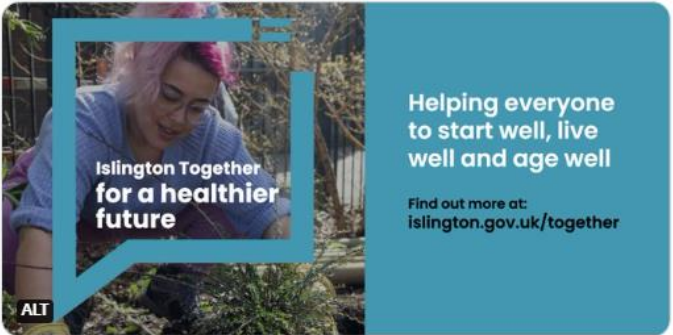
If you'd like great company and fresh air, join us today for a free walk starting at Red Lion Square from 12pm.



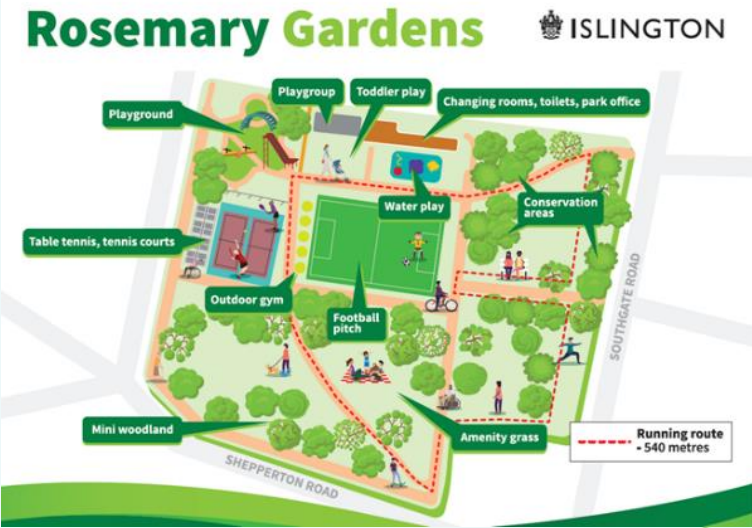
9:00 AM - Oct 10, 2022 - TweetDeck



We want a healthier future for all. That's why we're talking about how local parks and shared spaces can boost your health and mental health over the summer – through exercise, enjoying nature and connecting with others. Stay tuned for updates and inspiration! [#IslingtonTogether](#)



2:22 PM - May 18, 2022 - Twitter Web App



Welcome back

Thank you all for your cooperation and patience during the improvement works

Walking for just 30 minutes a day can improve your mental health and reduce the risk of conditions such as heart disease and diabetes.

This project was completed as part of Camden's Green Space Investment Programme. Scan QR code for information about Camden's green spaces, trees, biodiversity, health and wellbeing and our parks rules/byelaws

@WeMakeCamden @CamdenCouncil Camden Council

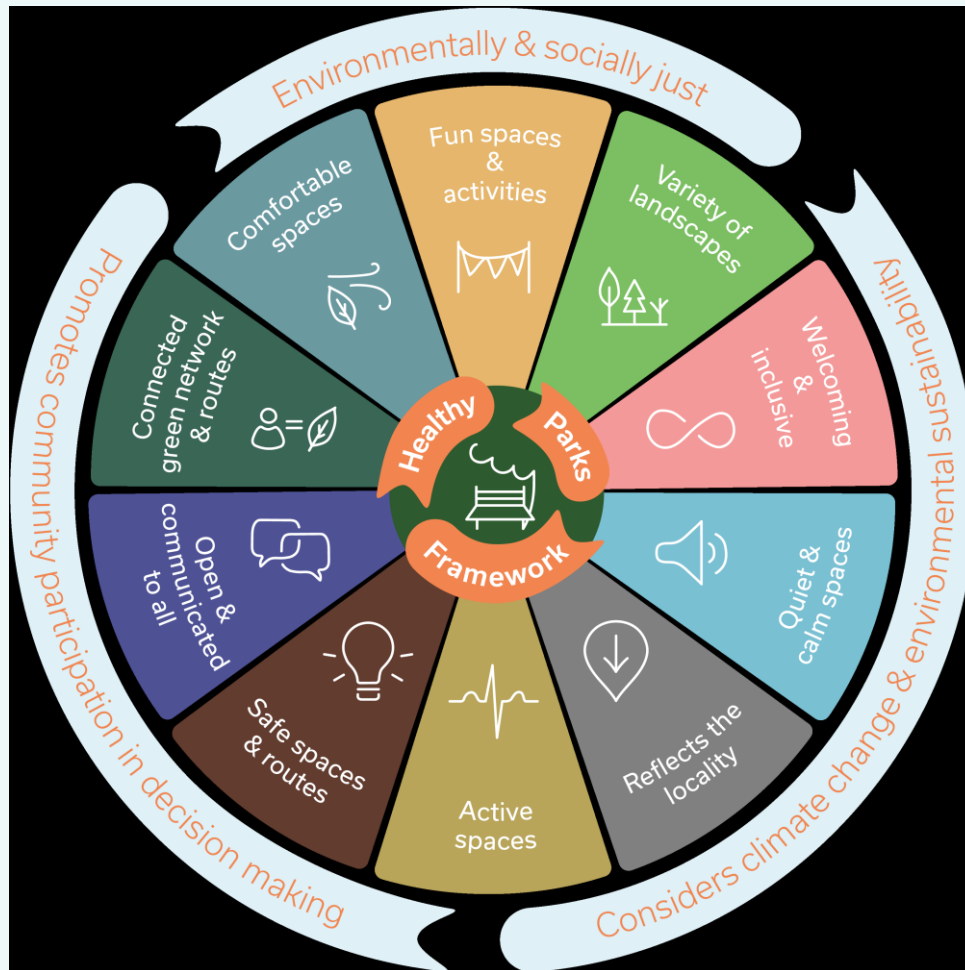
Our parks close at dusk, please leave the park at this time and when asked to by staff.



Developing our workforce



Healthy parks framework



Researchers at UCL, along with Camden and Islington, have co-developed an evidence based visual framework & Assessment, this is being tested through the Autumn.

Icons show the different **characteristics** of a park or greenspace that will promote health & address health inequalities

Each characteristic can be assessed by park managers & communities via a range of simple **indicators**

Values underpinning the governance of parks & greenspaces to promote **social justice, participation & environmental sustainability** are shown outside the wheel



What's Different

- A Green Social Prescribing Offer
- Aware of barriers that exist to participation for priority groups and are working to remove these
- Clear information about our parks and activities
- Helped communities to use parks for themselves
- Investing in health outcomes
- Integrated partner in the health and social care system.
- Strong focus for all parks staff

"Parks for Health information, workshops and meetings, and green social prescribing pilots, are really helping to change minds and present a different view of how residents can use and benefit from their local parks. This is really useful for our prescribing work where you can encounter a lot of resistance to doing things outdoors!"

Donna Turnbull, Voluntary Action Camden



"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."

Camden participant in Green Social Prescribing pilot



The takeaway.....

Three things we want to leave you with:

1. Spending time in green spaces is proven to be good for our physical and mental health.
2. We can maximise these benefits by putting health at the heart of parks, repurposing parks as public health assets.
3. We have a guide for it....

www.futureparks.org.uk/health-in-parks



RESOURCE HUB

Future Parks Resource Hub

The Future Parks Accelerator programme has spent three years working with local authority partners to help redefine the role of urban green space. Some key themes have emerged through this work. These resources have been developed to share the programme's learnings and help others to make similar changes in their towns and cities.

[Explore The Resources](#)



RESOURCE HUB

Health In Parks

Spending time in green spaces is proven to be good for our physical and mental health. We can maximise these benefits by putting health at the heart of parks, repurposing parks as public health assets.

[Download The Guide](#)



A quick video of some of those involved



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyWf-WLUNhI>



Any questions?



Andrew Bedford

Head of Greenspace and Leisure, Islington Council

andrew.bedford@islington.gov.uk

Oliver Jones

Head of Green Spaces, Camden Council

oliver.jones@camden.gov.uk

