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Branching Out
Positive Mental Health
Through Nature

Case Study of a Green
Prescription Model

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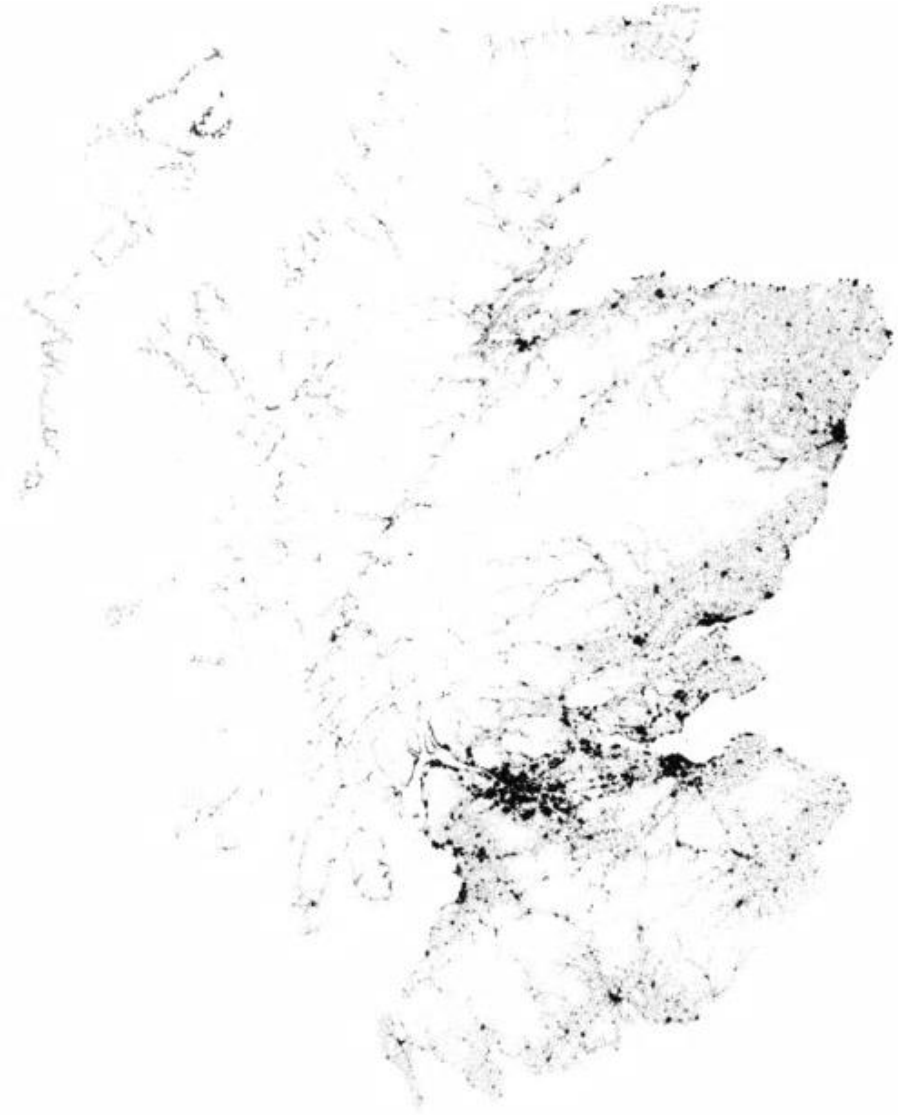
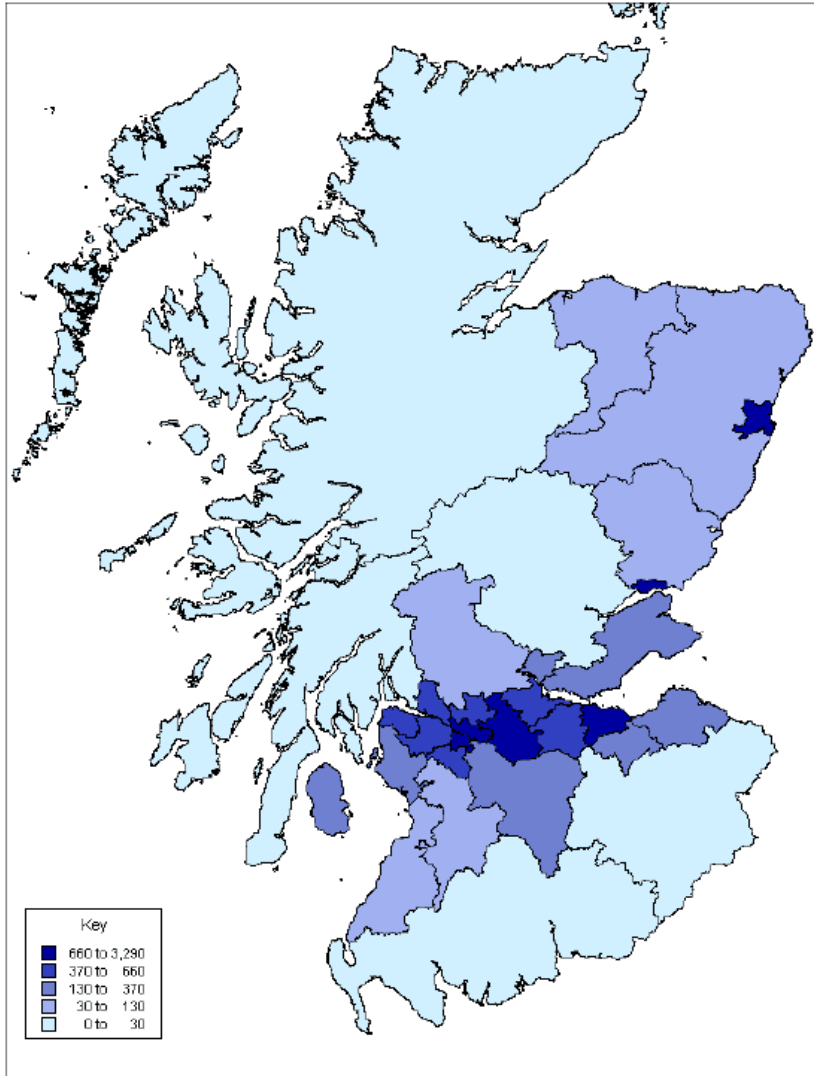


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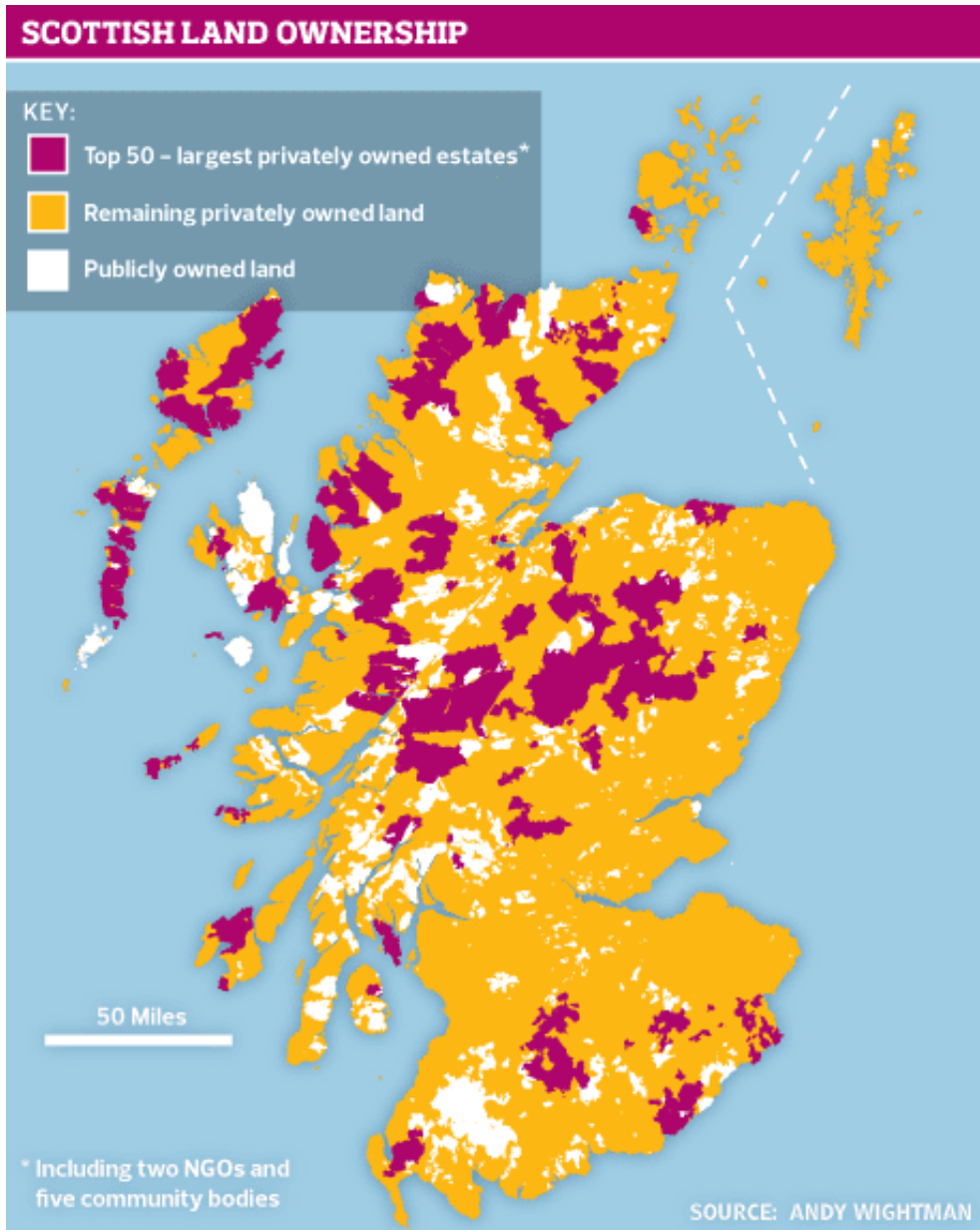
Scotland is beautiful and we have a lot of Nature!





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- Population of Scotland is 5 million
- Most people live in the Central belt and the North East
- 1% of the Population (or 1100 individuals & organisations) own 70% of the land



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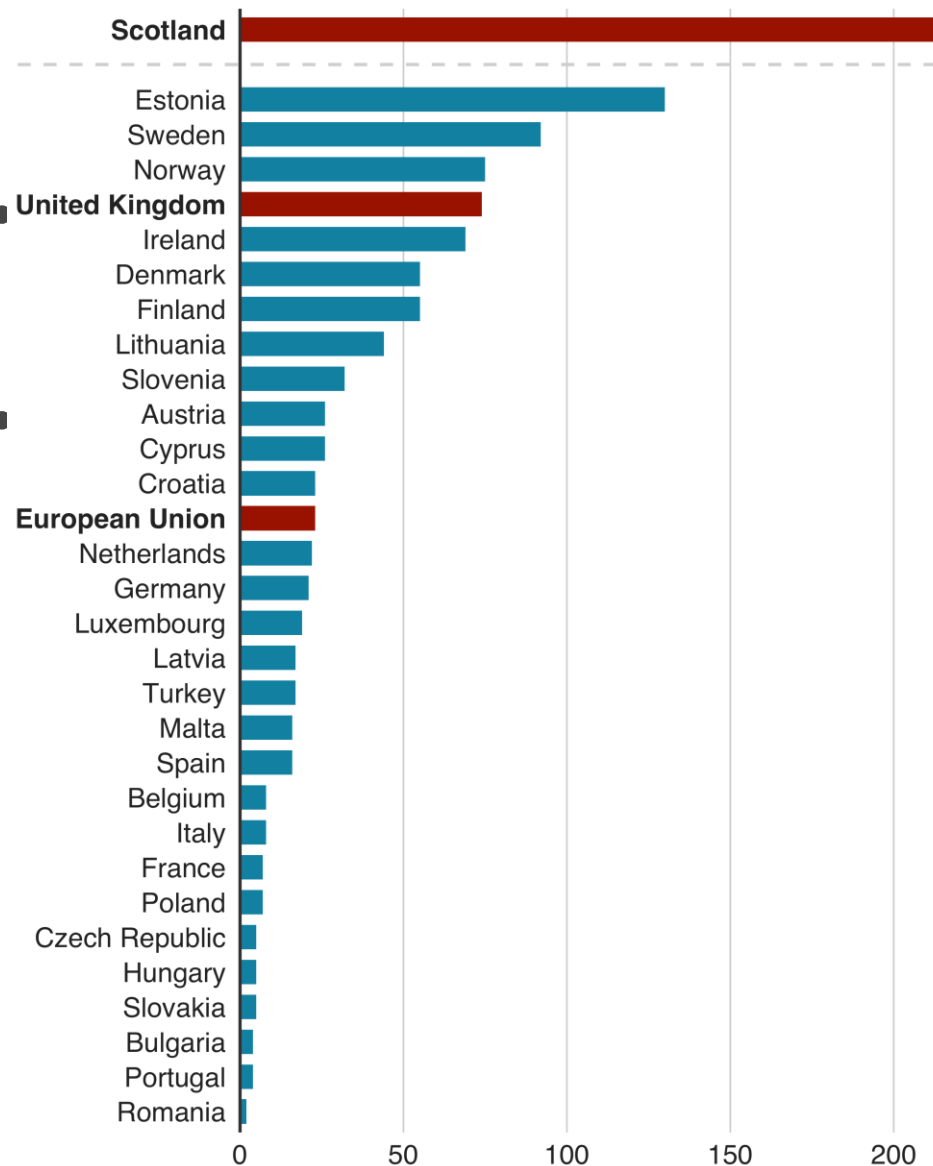
The history of Scotland in context

- An almost complete removal of native woodland by the end of 16th Century
- Founding of The Forestry Commission in 1919
- A loss of 'Forest Culture'
- The end of industrialisation and ship building meant high rates of unemployment and bleak futures.
- There was a huge disparity between the rich and the poor, and the negative consequences of this continues to this day.



Scotland has more drug deaths per capita than any European country

Number of deaths per million people, latest available data



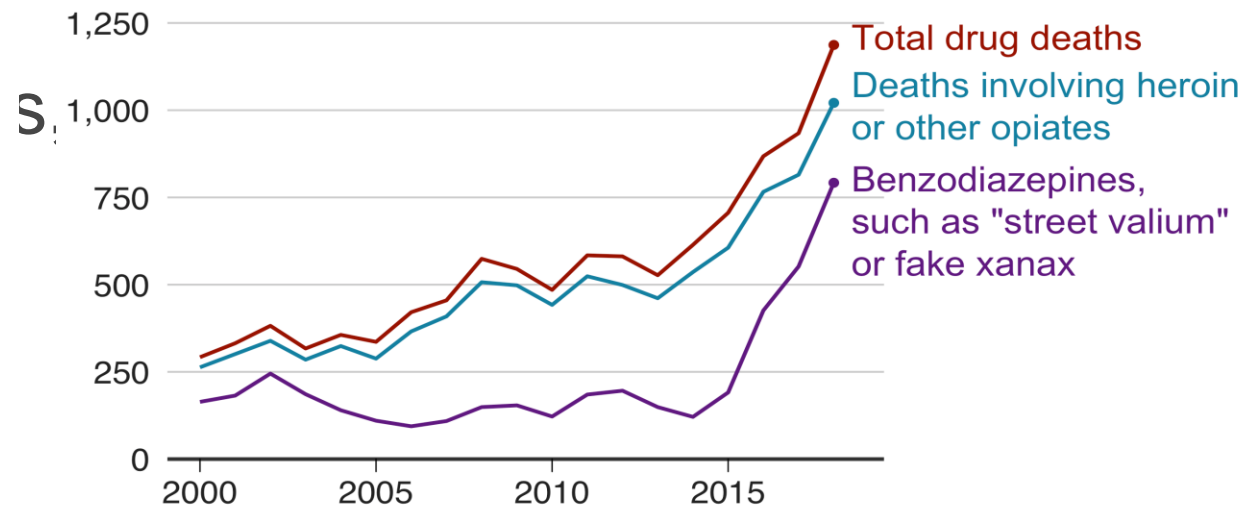
Source: National Records of Scotland. Note: No data available for Greece



erty crisis:

Record number of drug deaths in Scotland

There were more than 1,000 drug-related deaths in 2018, with cases involving benzodiazepines increasing rapidly



Note: Many cases involve more than one type of drug

Source: National Records of Scotland



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A health and poverty crisis:

Suicide in the UK

Registered suicides per 100,000 population in 2016, by country:



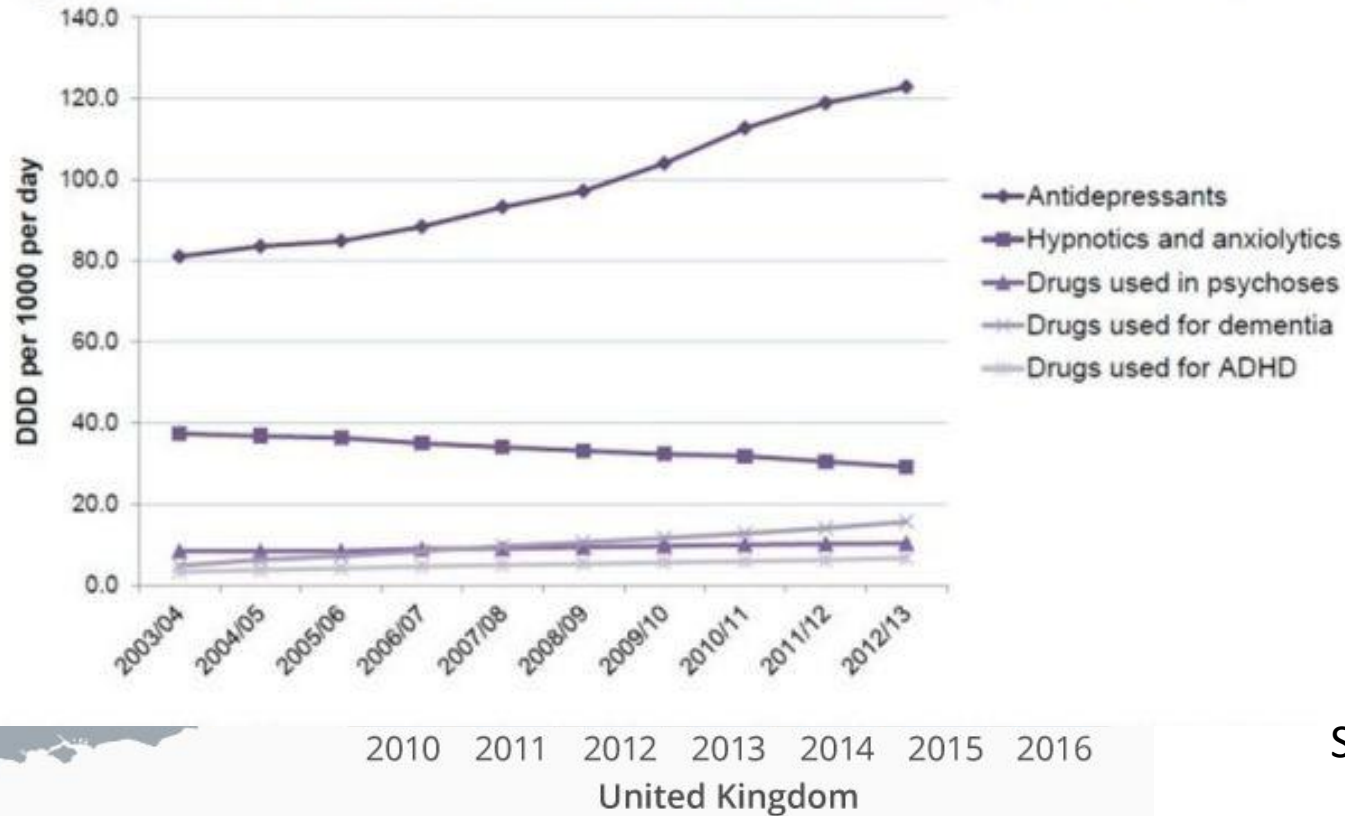
Scotland's levels of obesity in the UK.¹

More than 1 in 5 Scottish children and 1 in 4 Scottish adults are obese.²



Source: Cancer Research UK

Figure 9. Medicines used in the treatment of mental health conditions, 2003/04 to 2012/13.



Is our rich natural heritage the answer?

- Yes!
- Forests and nature are known to improve physical and mental health.
- Who has access to Nature?
- Barriers?



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Scottish Forestry Strategy 2019 - 2029

Objective No 3

Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances.

Priority Action No 6

Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands.



What is Branching Out

- 12 week ecotherapy programme for mental health patients (in- and/or outpatients).
- A three hour session one day a week.
- Group of up to 12 people referred by a healthcare worker at a mental health service (NHS or charity).
- Fun and easy going programme to allow clients to build their skill set in a wide variety of areas



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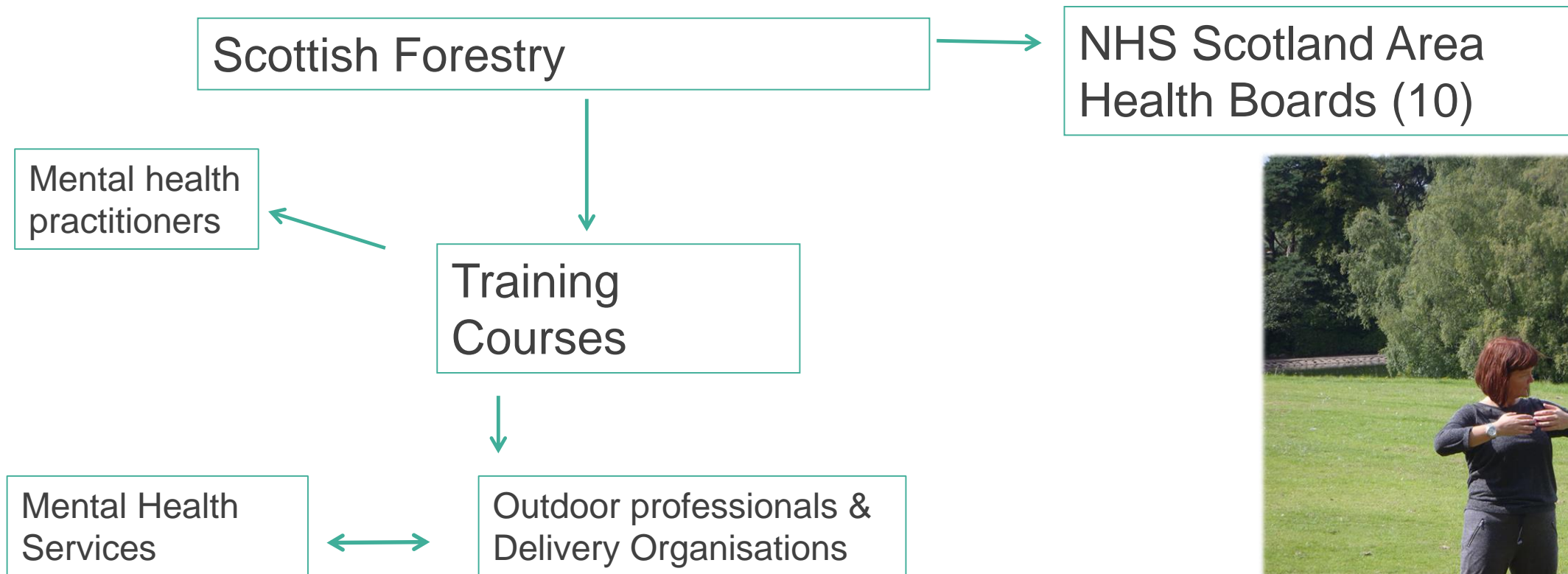
Activities

Activities carried out appeal to all ages and across all genders. Patient centred approach with a range of opportunities, including:

- Traditional crafts (wood working, weaving)
- Photography & environmental art
- Ecological surveys
- Bush craft
- Tool use
- T'ai chi



The Branching Out Structure



Training Courses

- Training course for outdoor professionals (3 days)
- Add-on outdoor skills course for healthcare professionals (2 days)

Pre-requisites to be a Branching Out Leader:

- Outdoor professional with work experience (Min 2 years)
- Mental Health First Aid
- Outdoor first aid certificate
- Optional Food Hygiene certificate
- Optional John Muir Leader certificate
- Public Liability Insurance



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Successes



Delivered in **11** of Scotland's
14 health board areas



3200 participants
since 2007



22 delivery
organisations



310 Branching Out
Groups (April 2019)



Over **300**
graduates p/a



5 Awards



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Programme Outcomes

- Programme cost effectiveness 2014/15: £17,300 per QALY, compared to NICE guidelines of £30,000.
(Crabtree *et al*, 2016)
- Completion rate 2007 – 2018 is 71% (1890 participants)
- Adults with moderate to severe & enduring conditions show the most improvement.
- Focus groups (2007) reported 5 areas of improvement (Wilson, 2009)
 1. Mental wellbeing
 2. Physical health
 3. Daily structure and routine
 4. Transferable skills acquisition
 5. Social skills and networking



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Future aspirations

- Embedding green prescription into the healthcare system
- Continued expansion of programme across Scotland



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References:

Willis, K., Crabtree, B., Osman, L. M. & Cathrine, K. (2015). Green space and health benefits: a QALY and CEA of a mental health programme. *Journal of Environmental Economics and Policy*, 5(2), 163-180.

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Crabtree, R., Willis K. & Osman L. (2016). *Branching Out Economic Study*. Report to Forestry Commission Scotland. CJC Consulting, Oxford.

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