



# Healthy Parks Healthy People

EUROPE



**HPHPe TOOLKIT**  
Annex: What you need to know  
to start your HPHPe programme!



# 1) Making the Case

## Making the case > Strategic Planning

The positive links between health and environment are well established, and are becoming more evident in many policy areas such as planning, transport, sport, education and tourism. This provides an opportunity for Protected Area site managers to show that they are responding to these policies, and that their sites represent a valuable asset which can contribute to an overall policy framework that seeks public health benefits from a well managed suite of nature sites.



Policy

### Goal

A clear link between the strategic objectives of Protected Area site management and health policies and priorities at national / regional / corporate level.

### What to do

Obtain an understanding of relevant wider health policies so that the principles of site management can be shown to fit within this strategic framework.

Prior to management planning, assess the site in terms of its potential to deliver health objectives – include aspects such as: accessibility (including by public transport and active travel) and facilities for public use; current uses related to physical activity and well-being.

A site management plan that responds to local health issues.

Assess the potential for site improvements that will enhance the health-promoting potential of the site – including additional tree cover for shade; short, circular easy-going routes for people with mobility issues.

Ensure that local health stakeholders – health sector, providers of supportive outdoor health programmes, and local communities – are engaged in the management planning process.

Identify specific health objectives to be achieved, and methods to evaluate delivery.

Consider a zoning approach to site planning that aims to cater for a range of visitor experiences and health outcomes – these could include: areas for group activities; areas for quiet contemplation etc – and establish compatible and non-compatible uses and activities.

## 2) Building Partnerships

### HPHPe Check List



#### Building Partnerships > Strategic Planning



Leadership

##### Goal

To establish strategic partnerships and connections to local communities / target groups.

##### What to do

Engage with local authorities and other relevant stakeholders including intermediary groups.

Use Protected Areas' governance bodies (steering and advisory boards, management groups, etc.) as health forums to promote and foster local partnerships.

Discuss the principles of Healthy Parks Healthy People with strategic partners, and explore the development of programmes / projects based on 5 Ways to Well-being through Nature (see page 22 of the Toolkit).

#### Building Partnerships > Outreach

A key aspect of Parks and Protected Areas' role in contributing to health and well-being is to encourage people to use natural assets by reaching out to local communities and communities of interest. To deliver health outcomes to those who would benefit the most, outreach programmes need to be targeted at priority groups such as:

- Physically inactive
- People with long term health issues or disabilities
- People experiencing mental health problems
- BAME (black and minority ethnic)
- Refugees / immigrants
- Older people
- Teenage girls and young women

These segments of the population are often found within communities / groups experiencing inequalities because of deprivation, disadvantage or social exclusion.

Outreach work is about connecting with, and making natural assets relevant and accessible to, target groups.



Partnerships

##### Goal

Outreach programmes that influence healthy behaviours by inspiring and enabling people to connect to Parks and Protected Areas.

##### What to do

Identify and work with local stakeholders / intermediary bodies connected with target groups.

Take information about the Parks and Protected Areas to the people eg Ranger Services can provide motivational talks and activities to target groups within community settings- including clinical rehabilitation groups, migrant re-settlement programmes- to promote Parks and Protected Areas and their health benefits.

Help the people get to the Parks and Protected Areas eg work with health sector / community groups / NGOs to provide free / subsidised transport to local sites.

## 3) Developing Capacity and Practice

### HPHPe Check List



#### Developing Capacity and Practice > Staff training and development

Protected Area staff are the vital resource to demonstrate how their sites can be ‘natural health centres’. They have roles in policy development, site planning, and providing services and experiences that will engage people in health-promoting activities. One or more staff at all levels are needed to act as champions within their own organisations – helping to secure corporate commitment to this work and sharing good practice, and also invest effort in building working partnerships with health-related bodies so that the benefits are targeted at those in most need.



##### Goal

Parks & Protected Area staff have the necessary skills and confidence to work in partnership with the health sector and local health groups.

##### What to do

Identify appropriate staff at all levels of the organisation to act as champions for the health agenda.

Ensure that staff have access to appropriate training and development opportunities, including job shadowing, study tours, networking etc.

Parks & Protected Area management organisations recognise the contribution their sites can make to health and well-being at individual, community and wider population levels, and show commitment to achieving on this objective.

Provide all staff with access to information on the range of social issues, including health, that engaging people with nature and greenspace can contribute to.

Provide opportunities for Parks & Protected Area staff to share experience and good practice within the organisation in order to build understanding and capacity.



## Developing Capacity and Practice > Site management

A range of good and well-managed provision for visitors is essential if national Parks and Protected Areas are to deliver health outcomes for everyone.



### Goal

Identify and protect the qualities of the national Park and other Protected Areas which are important for health outcomes.

### What to do

Ensure that places important for wildlife, landscape and scenery and quiet enjoyment are managed and protected effectively alongside other uses of the area.

Identify and develop the potential of areas important for health outcomes viewpoints, places to relax and eat, trails near water or native woodland etc.

Promote opportunities to discover wildlife first-hand without disturbance, viewing hides; interpretation points; hands-on displays etc.

A range of accessible destinations and opportunities for green exercise that meet diverse needs.

Audit the accessibility of key paths and places to ensure that the range of provision provides opportunities for all to experience and enjoy nature.

Provide information online and on-site to the public on the facilities they can expect at key sites and on the accessibility of paths and trails.

Consider and provide for the needs of specific health programme groups – this may include all-ability paths, regular seating, and provision of areas for meeting, undertaking activity and rest.

Versatile, high quality destinations and people that provide opportunities for physical activity and contact with nature.

Engage target groups in assessing the suitability of sites / services for their needs, and make reasonable adjustments.

Provide activity programmes, such as [5 Ways to Well-being](#) (see page 22) through Nature – directly, or through green exercise providers (voluntary sector / outdoor recreation businesses etc) - that address identified barriers and represent nature-based solutions to health and social needs.

Review the provision and roles of rangers, wardens or other staff involved in visitor management and outreach to maximise support for health outcomes.

## HPHPe Check List



# Developing Capacity and Practice > Monitoring and Evaluation

Research information on the significance of contact with nature on human health and well-being is continuously increasing and becoming more versatile. Information on health benefits of Protected Areas is important at various levels. It is essential for local land managers and for local health sector, as well as for regional, national and international health policy.



### Goal

Generate evidence of the health benefits resulting from the use of Protected Areas and use the findings to aid future site management, contribute to wider planning and policy, and support the case for further investment in nature-based solutions.

### What to do

Ensure that your site's visitor monitoring system includes the gathering of quantitative information on visitors and their characteristics as well as their views on health and well-being benefits.

To provide more detailed information on the site's contribution to health outcomes, consider using on-site visitor surveys.

Establish monitoring and evaluation methods for any specific nature-based health programmes using your site.

Report and disseminate the results in an appropriate form in order to make the information available and understandable to target audiences such as decision makers and general public.

## 4) Connecting People and Nature

### HPHPe Check List



#### Connecting People with Nature > Project Development

Nature-based health projects can be developed at various levels, from national public health communications campaigns to targeted health interventions delivered on-site. Projects should be developed in partnership with health and other relevant sector staff, and ideally co-produced through engagement with the envisaged communications audience / intervention participants (people from the target area or clinical group).

##### **Health-focused projects in Parks and Protected Areas can be seen as providing:**

Promotion of sites for individuals taking part in independent everyday contact with nature – e.g. recreation, pastimes, volunteering, outdoor learning, active travel; or supportive programmes:

- Nature-based health initiatives e.g. health walks groups, conservation volunteering, community growing initiatives
- Nature-based interventions for people with a defined health or social need e.g. weekly on-site sessions of therapeutic & exercise activities as a treatment or recovery intervention for a fixed period



#### Goal

Partnerships developed with healthcare practitioners, green exercise providers and community-based services / groups

#### What to do

Identify key stakeholders to discuss the site's potential to offer beneficial activities for people with physical / mental health issues

Develop project proposals that will increase the site's contribution to addressing local health priorities and seek partnership funding as appropriate

Agree a monitoring & reporting framework

A range of opportunities available that help people maintain, improve or recover their health and well-being

Provide and promote opportunities provided by site-based staff or voluntary sector green exercise providers / community-based groups

Implement monitoring & reporting framework

## HPHPe Check List



### Connecting People with Nature > Outreach



#### Goal

Parks & Protected Area staff understand how health and well-being can be enhanced through connection with nature, and have the skills to connect to and communicate with target groups

#### What to do

Engage target groups in assessing the suitability of sites / services for their needs, and make reasonable adjustments.

Carry out an audit of local healthcare centres and community-based health promotion groups and invite them to help co-produce outreach programmes based on 5 Ways to Well-being through Nature to suit their needs.

Work with health & care partners and green exercise providers to deliver learning exchange.

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Outreach programmes that influence healthy behaviours by inspiring and enabling people to connect to Parks and Protected Areas

Provide specific site-based activities for the visiting groups eg guided walks, environmental art, conservation work.

Signpost to wider opportunities to help participants sustain long-term behaviour change.

## HPHPe Check List



### Connecting People with Nature > Communications

Communication including promotion and dissemination should address two main groups:

**Health professionals** communications aimed at this audience need to stress the health benefits, because Protected Areas are generally safe, accessible and free places for recreation, exercise and relaxation. Protected Areas can provide opportunities for physical exercise, locations and activities that are beneficial to mental health, and a range of other well-being benefits linked to therapeutic activities.

**Wider public** communications aimed at this audience need to stress fun and enjoyment that can be derived from the environment.



#### Goal

Health professionals have greater awareness and understanding of the health and well-being benefits from contact with nature

#### What to do

- Identify local health partners / champions that will help to “spread the word” on how nature can benefit people’s health.
- Establish regular meetings between Protected Areas and health professionals to exchange information and experience.
- Invite health professionals to wider meetings (with Protected Area authority, local community, entrepreneurs, etc) to raise awareness about health issues and how to improve it. These wider Protected Area partners will communicate health benefits to their clients/visitors.
- Provide opportunities for health professionals to engage in nature-based activities / health interventions such as 5 Ways to Well-being through Nature so that they can see the impact themselves / in participants.

Health practitioners and the public have easy access to information about local nature places and opportunities to participate in health-promoting activities

Make sure Protected Areas are included in local information / directories, and that these are promoted to the health sector and target health groups.

## HPHPe Check List



### Goal

People spend more time in nature and they understand health benefits

### What to do

Increase the integration of health objectives into visitor programs offered by guides, nature centres, nature education specialists, rangers, etc.

Organise promotional events/initiatives for target groups to encourage them to enjoy the environments while also learning that Protected Areas are an accessible resource that can contribute to their health and well-being. Events can be on a wide range of topics designed to motivate participation by under-represented groups.

Attractive messages for different target groups. Main channels of communication are:

- Banners on Protected Areas website
- Posters on web, and at nature centres, schools, hospitals, etc
- Campaigns for children and youth to inspire and encourage them to engage with nature
- Cooperate with interesting social media actors to motivate groups, and children and young people in particular, to engage in outdoor recreation
- Health messages based on the 5 Ways to Well-being through Nature encourage positive and enjoyable behaviours that are within individuals' own control

The HPHPe Check-list summary below is designed to encourage you to consider your current practice and help you think about:

- how best to **plan, manage and promote your sites to a wider range of people** to improve their general health and well-being; and
- how to **link your sites to the health sector** so that people at risk of or experiencing specific illness / health conditions can be supported to make use of your sites

Detailed advice on each of these topics has been provided in the 4 chapters of this toolkit. A separate resource which brings together all of this advice on the 7 topics can be found at [europarc.org/healthy-parks-healthy-people-europe](http://europarc.org/healthy-parks-healthy-people-europe).



## 1) Strategic planning is there:

A link between the management objectives of your site, and the national / regional / local health and well-being policy framework ✓

A site management plan that engages with local health stakeholders and responds to health issues and priorities / target groups ✓

## 3) Project development is there:

A project / range of activity programmes specifically designed to improve health & well-being and delivered directly, or through green exercise providers ✓

A mechanism which enables you to connect and work with local partners from the health sector to co-produce nature-based projects aimed at health improvement ✓

## 5) Communications is there:

Active engagement with local health professionals, providing information and opportunities to experience the ways your site can support health outcomes ✓

A communications plan for your site that specifies appropriate messages for health professionals and for the public / target health groups ✓

Easily accessed information about the site and what it offers to a range of visitors ✓

## 7) Staff training

Do site staff have appropriate skills and confidence to work with health groups ✓

Can you build wider awareness and capacity in your organisation on health ✓

## 2) Site management does your site have:

Easily accessible information on the facilities provided at the site ✓

A sense of welcome for visitors ✓

Visitor facilities such as Parking for people with disabilities; toilets ✓

A range of access provision, from easy-going paths for people with health issues / disabilities, to specific equipment / furniture to promote physical activity ✓

A range of activity programmes delivered directly, or through green exercise providers ✓

Staff who are well trained to support visitors with health issues ✓

## 4) Outreach does your site have:

Engagement with health sector, intermediary bodies and target groups to ensure activity programmes and volunteering opportunities cater for their needs ✓

Outreach programmes aimed at key target groups or communities ✓

## 6) Monitoring & evaluation does your site have:

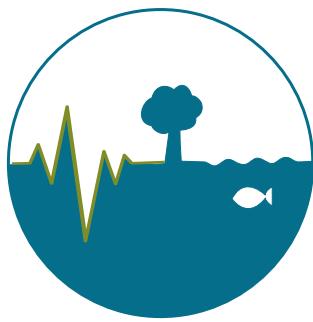
A visitor monitoring system that gathers feedback on health benefits ✓

Monitoring systems for the health benefits delivered through specific activity programmes / health interventions ✓

## Other opportunities are you able to:

Identify local health sector partnerships and provide a place / activity programme / visual identity for green exercise referrals / sign-posting ✓

Make access to information easier for health professionals and target groups to find by inputting into / establishing a central information service for a wide range of Parks / Protected Areas ✓



# Healthy Parks Healthy People EUROPE



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For more information about the Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe :  
[europarc.org/healthy-parks-healthy-people](http://europarc.org/healthy-parks-healthy-people)



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**EUROPARC**  
F E D E R A T I O N



The Healthy Parks Healthy People Europe is managed by the EUROPARC Federation, the largest and most representative Protected Area network in Europe. EUROPARC members comprise almost 40% of the Natura 2000 network, with Nature and Regional Parks alone covering 8% of Europe's land. More information at: [europarc.org](http://europarc.org).