

# Big Green Week For All?

How accessible are  
Birmingham's Green  
Spaces?

## Big Green Week for all?

This Big Green Week you might have seen lots of information about how green is good for you - the wellbeing benefits are well evidenced and there is no doubt that connecting to the wonder of green space can support health and wellbeing on almost all levels.

But what if these benefits were masking the real story for so many residents? The reality of course is that like everything else, green space and access to it is not equally distributed. Here are some facts:

- There is currently 32.94 square metres of green space provision per person in the UK, but 2.69 million people do not live within a 10-minute walk of a green space (Fields in Trust, 2020).
- One in eight households has no access to a private or shared garden, in England, Black people are nearly four times as likely as White people to have no access to outdoor space at home. (Office for National Statistics, 2020).
- Almost 40% of people from ethnic minority backgrounds live in the most greenspace deprived areas, compared to 14% of White people (Friends of the Earth, 2020).
- People from low-income households are also less likely to have good access to green space. People on low incomes are less likely to live within a 5-minute walk of a green space. (Improving Wellbeing through Urban Nature, 2019).
- Evidence also suggests that urban nature is less accessible to disabled people. (Natural England 2020)
- To compound these issues, pressure on urban green space is likely to grow in future as the UK population increases; by 2040 it is estimated that the amount of green space provision per person will have reduced by 7.6% (Fields in Trust, 2020).

## So, what do we do about it?

We believe that access to nature should be a human right not a privilege. If so, the answer might mean doing more than promoting the benefits that green space offers but also starting to break down the complex systemic barriers that exclude or make many people feel uncomfortable or unwelcome. It will require us to support girls, young women, and people with disabilities to have safe accessible green spaces near their homes. It also means overcoming the systemic barriers that are present for far too many people from ethnic minority backgrounds and low-income households.

Some of the things we are doing to change this:

1. Pioneering Green Social Prescribing in partnership with GP surgeries and Primary Care Networks across Birmingham and Solihull.
2. Working to support communities to access and use the small patches of green space near where they live so they become thriving little patches of wildness.
3. Supporting community food growing through the Food Justice Network so that more people have access to land to grow and be active.
4. Working in partnership with programmes such as the Future Parks Accelerator in Birmingham on initiatives to address the inequality of access to green space in parts of the city.
5. Finding ways to offer new ways to be active in parks, streets and local green space that support more residents to experience the wellbeing benefits.
6. Continuing to highlight and overcome the barriers in as many ways as we can whilst championing the work of the many pioneering community groups working to address these challenges every single day.

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**If you want to read more about equity in access to green space have a look at the Out of Bounds Report, convened by Groundwork UK and to which we are glad to have participated in.**



**Let's make Big Green Week  
something that everyone gets  
to enjoy.**