

Frithwood Surgery Circular Walk - Route Map 1.5 miles

Frithwood Surgery Health Walk
PPG Sponsored

Frithwood Surgery is part of NHS Forest an exciting project to encourage people to get involved in using Green Space for Health activities.

Walking has so many health benefits - you can lose weight, lower your blood pressure and improve your mood. - All for FREE!

Information leaflet and map available from Surgery Reception.
www.frithwoodsurgery.nhs.uk

Frithwood Surgery

Introduction:

The link between good health, wellbeing and the use of greenspace is increasingly recognised (Bird, W (2004) 'Natural Fit' RSPB) , however the most effective mechanisms and processes for creating greenspace and subsequently encouraging its use are not clear. This case study this study explores how clinical staff intervention in creating greenspace and a health walk can lead to greater long term benefits for patients and the community.

Method:

A series of interviews were carried out in May 2013 to identify the motivations of the healthcare professionals involved and how to help encourage other GP surgeries to deliver similar projects.



Results: The staff at Frithwood Surgery, Stroud, Gloucestershire were found to be highly motivated to create greenspace adjacent to the surgery and run a series of health walks. In an area of natural beauty many patients they felt could benefit from exercising and increasing wellbeing through regular contact with greenspace. Interview results showed both saw this as an opportunity to engage with the local community getting "enjoyment at being involved with a community project that was not directly clinical medicine... also good for the Surgery to be seen as a community orientated service."

Dr Nattrass felt that "the surgery holds a special place in the local community, with the founders family having provided healthcare here for over 50 years. We saw an opportunity to engage with this community spirit and use our position as the clinical team to demonstrate the connection between green space and health".

This was strengthened through approaching the local residents group, patient participation group (PPG) as well as charitable fundraising through entering a practice team in a local mountain bike race. The route was planned to take in local sights and areas of activity and social contact, but remaining level enough for those in wheelchairs or pushing buggies to maintain access with the scouts helping with the markers.

The planting of fruit trees at the practice and on Parish Council land gave a more visibility to the project and allowed the site entry as part of the 'NHS Forest'.

Discussion:

There are numerous environmental, social and health benefits of greenspace including use as outdoor gym and through the prescription of exercise activities. There are studies providing evidence (Pretty J, Griffin M, Peacock J, Hine R, Sellens M and South N. 2005) but very few that have however focused on the importance of the development of greenspace on healthcare estates by clinicians themselves.

The practitioners involved were driven by personal values including their knowledge of the importance of greenspace and health, their experiences, and a desire to get involved in a community oriented project outside of their everyday responsibilities. These individuals played an important creative entrepreneurial role in the delivery of the project.

This project provides an ideal opportunity to develop a clear methodology through a case study approach to facilitate other GPs to follow suit, in particular establishing a timescale framework, funding, legal aspects and maintenance.

Further work is to be done to identify whether their involvement has encouraged greater long term use of the greenspace. A map is being placed in the surgery reception and leaflets will be made available to patients, and self-monitoring program started. Nurses and GPs will target patients whom they feel will could benefit from increased exercise and speak with them directly at health checks, giving exercise prescriptions. Walking leaders are being sought to expand upon monthly walks starting at the surgery. Outcomes will be recorded and the results collated.

