opportunities for rest, relaxation and connection with nature

enhancing community and social cohesion

helping reduce the impacts of risks to health (air pollution, noise, urban heat islands, flood risk)

developing children's skills and capabilities

£370 million saved by greenspace in London alone, by contributing to better mental health

£2.2 billion health benefits in England due to people exercising in green & blue space

£2.2 billion health benefits in England due to people exercising in green & blue space

27,900 tonnes of air pollutants were removed by urban green & blue space in Great Britain in 2017

helping promote higher quality life through a better living environment

Interventions to increase or improve urban green space can deliver positive health, social and environmental outcomes for all population groups, particularly among lower socioeconomic status groups. There are very few, if any, other public health interventions that can achieve all of this.

WHO Report 2017
Urban Green Space Interventions and Health
Green spaces have the potential to help local authorities address other key delivery issues. They can help:

- Reduce health inequalities
- Provide a setting for physical activity
- Support action on climate change
- Tackle excessive noise
- Combat loneliness and improve social cohesion
- Improve air quality
- Keep people healthy & help them recover more quickly
- Promote active travel

What can local authorities do to enhance health benefits of green space:

**Improve**
- Improve, maintain and protect existing green space to ensure they are being used for maximum effect.
- Improve transport links, pathways and other means of access to green space.
- Provide imaginative routes linking areas of green space for active travel.

**Engage**
- Establish interventions, such as community or green social prescribing initiatives.
- Introduce natural capital accounting to demonstrate value of green spaces.
- Act as a green space ambassador and work with colleagues in other departments to make the links.
- Incorporate health into Local Plan and develop supplementary planning documents that cover green space.

**Expand**
- Provide new, good quality green space that is inclusive and equitable (especially in new developments).
- Increase green infrastructure within and between public spaces and promote healthy streets.

Principles of successful interventions:

- **A dual approach** of physical changes to green space and well-targeted social promotion activities has been shown to be most effective in encouraging use and benefit.

- **Accessibility of green space** needs to be considered, for all communities. This includes the distance from home to green space, the ease and safety of the route and the familiarity of different groups with visiting green spaces.

- **Quality of green space** has an impact on benefits – both the ecological quality (biodiversity and planting) and the condition of the space (amenities, how well they are maintained, aesthetics, perceived safety).

- **Community engagement** is key – at all stages, from designing and maintaining to supporting people to use green space – this is especially important to reach more disadvantaged/excluded groups.

Further information, evidence and resources, including case studies are available at [http://beyondgreenspace.net/making-the-most/](http://beyondgreenspace.net/making-the-most/)