

Case study: Sheffield Health and Social Care

Name of project or group

Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust, at East Glade centre at Intake, Sheffield. January 2022

What actions for nature did your group want to take and why?

East Glade Centre is one of around 30 sites owned by Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust. The centre, near Intake, is surrounded by a circle of green lawn with a few trees and a small publicly accessible woodland runs along the edge of the site.



When the East Glade contacted SRWT in September 2021, they had already started making the site better for nature; in 2020 an area of lawn was left to grow, with the ambition of making it into a wildflower meadow. Some wildflower seeds have been planted near the main entrance of the centre, and holly saplings have been planted in a hedge along the side of the building that gets the most sun. Holly provides berries and flowers for birds and pollinating insects to enjoy; it will also provide shade to the building, an increasingly important function of trees and hedges as average summer temperatures rise due to climate change.

A few weeks after Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust visited the site to give some advice on how to increase biodiversity, the East Glade team had put together a plan for improving the site for nature. Along with health service users, they rolled up their sleeves and started to plant native trees. Berry-bearing trees such as rowan will provide food for birds and insects, while the newly planted willow tree will be coppiced to provide willow wands for weaving and crafts. The saplings were supplied by Sheffield City Council Community Forest Team.

The East Glade team carried out two further sessions in December to expand existing flower beds and plant them with pollinator-friendly plants, with three service users and three or four staff attending each session. SRWT were invited to each session (one of which we were able to attend and record some audio and photos).

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One of the occupational therapists based at the site then contacted NRCEO in January to ask for support in developing a walking map of routes from the centre. We were able to provide weblinks to examples of how other community groups have achieved similar walking routes - for example, Zest community centre in Upperthorpe and Meersbrook and Heeley Community Gardens - and NHS Forest were able to provide support.

The East Glade team are continuing to make small tweaks to the way the grounds are maintained in order to make them more nature and people friendly. They have achieved NHS Forest status <https://nhsforest.org/>

Across the 30 wider sites owned by SHSC, there are plans to install swift boxes at Nether Edge Hospital and trees have already been planted at Lightwood House in Moss Valley.



Nature benefits our mental and physical health. Being in nature, even in small doses, has been shown to boost confidence and self-esteem, reduce feelings of stress, and increase the likelihood of making social connections (Mind, 2021 <https://bit.ly/3i8Xq9z>). If all 30 Sheffield Health and Social Care NHS Foundation Trust sites were great for nature, they would be even better for patients and staff too.