

Dr Patricia Tumelty
Executive Director Mind Jersey
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It is no surprise that a growing number of psychologists and ecologists are describing the positive effects of green spaces on people's mental health and well-being.

The links they are uncovering are complex, and not yet fully understood. However, the pandemic has also highlighted them and has also exposed that, for us here in Jersey delivering a population policy that takes account of the need for access to green spaces for all islanders is vital.

The past few years has seen an explosion of research findings making concrete links between increased exposure to green spaces and not just improved physical health, but better mental health too. The evidence of positive effects from green spaces includes studies on specific psychological conditions such as depression, anxiety and mood disorder. Access to nature has been found to improve sleep and reduce stress and negative emotions, whilst promoting positive social interactions for young and old. Green spaces can even help generate a sense of meaning to life.

A systematic review of the effects of nature and green spaces on health in 2019 identified 28 nature-based interventions used in various countries including the U.K. to improve health and well-being. These helpful interventions range from gardening programmes to woodland walks, but they are only part of the story. Besides physical and mental health benefits, we know that healthy green spaces provide as well a range of essential "eco-systems" for free.

In delivering a population policy there are always going to be trade-offs but it's also important to highlight that it isn't just about the amount of green space it is also about the quality and accessibility to all sections of our island community.

We at MindJersey are hopeful that a more systemic and enlightened population control policy will take account of our evolving understanding of nature's broad health benefits. We appreciate that realising the vision will not be easy but our ongoing pandemic experience, is a wakeup call to apply lessons learned from our population about what it was that helped people to keep on keeping on and what didn't. Decades ago, the great Proust argued that a sad soul can kill you quicker than a virus".

Thank you for taking time to involve us .