

Public concern for nature reaches all-time high

More people than ever before are concerned about damage to nature, new national statistics published today (3 September 2019) by Natural England show.

In the world's biggest scientific study of its kind, [Natural England's 'Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment' \(MENE\)](#) report shows that nine out of ten adults in England are concerned about increasing threats to the natural environment, with nearly two-thirds specifically worried about biodiversity loss.

While more people are spending time in nature than ever before, the research indicates clear inequalities in opportunity for engagement. Children from the most deprived areas are 20% less likely to spend time outside than those in affluent areas, while 70% of children from white backgrounds spend time outside once a week compared to 56% of children from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds.

The research also shows how important local parks and greenspaces are to the nation's mental and physical wellbeing, with health and exercise the main reason why adults spend time outside and green spaces in towns and cities the most frequently visited natural environments.

Marian Spain, Interim Chief Executive of Natural England, said:

The overwhelming evidence published today makes clear the priority the public give to investing in nature's recovery. Wildlife and greenspaces are hugely important for people, providing them with places to exercise, socialise, learn and experience the wonder of the natural world. Natural England is committed to restoring nature by working with partners and the public to help deliver Government's 25 year Environment Plan.

This research also underlines how important it is that we create new opportunities for people to connect with nature wherever they live and whatever their age. We want everyone to enjoy the many benefits nature brings and also to take part in caring for their environment.

In its tenth year, MENE is the longest-running survey of its kind which tracks changes in how people use and relate to the natural environment. It comes during the [Year of Green Action](#), a year-long drive to inspire and support people to connect with and improve the natural environment.

The report also found:

- Use of our natural environment is the highest on record – with visits to the natural environment up from an estimated 2.9 billion visits in 2009/10 to almost 4 billion in 2018/19;
- Most people’s experience of the natural environment is close to home, on their doorstep. This is especially key for people living in the most deprived areas. For example, children living in the 10% most deprived areas of England are most likely to visit urban greenspaces (62%) compared with only 30% who visit the countryside; and
- Most visits to nature are taken on foot and are increasingly close to home, with 44% of visits taken within 1 mile.

Natural England is committed to promoting health and wellbeing through the natural environment, helping more people from a wider cross-section of society benefit directly from the environment. It is currently working with the Department for Education and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on the Children and Nature programme to improve the physical and mental wellbeing of children from disadvantaged backgrounds. This includes delivering green school grounds, supporting pupil visits to green spaces and improving woodland outreach activities.

The MENE survey is funded by Natural England, with support from Defra. First commissioned in 2009, it provides a wealth of evidence relating to outdoor recreation, behaviour and attitudes.

This year, for the first time, Natural England has created an interactive map allowing users to see the results for their specific area and better understand how their community uses its local natural environments. The raw data has been provided for each Local Authority to allow more advanced analysis. A [short story map providing infographics of key things learnt over the decade of MENE](#) is also available.

Natural England uses the research to understand how people use, enjoy and are motivated to protect the natural environment and to help monitor changes in use of the natural environment over time.

More information:

[Transforming lives in developing countries: apply for funding](#)



The [Global Challenges Research Fund](#) is a £1.5 billion UK government fund that supports cutting-edge research and innovation that addresses problems faced by developing countries.

It aims to encourage UK businesses to work with overseas partners to develop new innovations that could help to transform lives in countries that receive overseas development assistance.

Disadvantaged people in poorer economies can benefit from new and innovative products and services and from the markets and jobs created by them. UK businesses develop and test new products overseas and find new research partners and markets.

Funding comes from the UK's Official Development Assistance and must meet its guidelines.

Projects must meet UN sustainable development goals

Projects have to meet 1 or 2 of 10 [sustainable development goals](#) recognised by the United Nations:

- good health and well-being
- quality education
- clean water and sanitation
- decent work and economic growth
- sustainable cities and communities
- responsible consumption and production
- climate action
- life below water
- life on land
- peace, justice and strong institutions

They must show understanding of the culture and needs of the relevant country and of the specific challenges and opportunities presented in that country by the innovative technologies.

The competition is in 2 phases

In phase 1, project teams will investigate the feasibility of a demonstration project in a country that receives development assistance and build

partnerships in that country.

Successful projects will be invited to apply for phase 2 funding to work with at least one partner in the relevant country on research and development and trials.

Competition information

Published 3 September 2019

[Ministry of Justice statement in fee-paid judicial litigation: August 2019](#)

MOJ's update to the Employment Tribunal confirms to all affected fee paid judicial office holders the MOJ approach to claims for pre 7 April 2000 service. In our last update, we described the methodology by which pension entitlement will be calculated for eligible judges. We undertook to work with the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) to develop worked examples to give a clearer indication of how this methodology will work in practice for eligible judges who began their fee-paid service prior to 31 March 1995. The GAD paper is published on this page for information.

Related link

[Ministry of Justice statement in fee-paid judicial litigation: July 2019](#)

[Leicester revenge arsonist has sentence increased](#)

A man who lit a series of fires in a revenge arson attack has had his sentence increased under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

In December 2017 Darren Finnemore, 49, was subject to a police enquiry, and sought revenge in January 2018 against those he considered responsible for the investigation.

In order to cause a distraction, Finnemore first started 2 fires in the bin areas outside flats while the residents were asleep. Residents had to be rescued by emergency services after smoke from the fires stopped them from

escaping, with many requiring medical assistance. It took the fire brigade almost 6 hours to tackle the fires and extensive damage was caused to the flats.

After lighting those fires, Finnemore visited the property of those he considered responsible for the investigation against him and posted a burning magazine through their letterbox. The flames went out before anything inside the flat caught fire, and Finnemore was arrested later that morning.

Finnemore was originally sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment at Leicester Crown Court in June 2019. Following the Solicitor General's referral, this has been increased to 10 years' imprisonment.

Commenting on the increase, Solicitor General Michael Ellis QC MP said:

"Finnemore put the lives of many of his neighbours at significant risk. It is extremely fortunate that more people weren't seriously harmed, and this is now reflected in the length of his sentence."

[Cleveland Bridge wins contract in Sri Lanka with UKEF support](#)



About the transaction: Cleveland Bridge

Sector

Infrastructure: rural transport

Project location

Sri Lanka

UKEF support

Buyer credit

Cleveland Bridge has designed and built a number of iconic landmarks including the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Tyne Bridge. The company designs its modular bridges in the UK and they are easily assembled to meet the specific needs of each project.

This project has been designed to accelerate Sri Lanka's development through improvements in its rural transport infrastructure. Families and businesses will benefit directly; the bridges will reduce the distance people need to travel to reach essential services such as healthcare and education, and

bring rural communities closer together by cutting transport costs.

Don Underwood, Commercial Consultant, Cleveland Bridge said:

We are delighted UKEF has chosen to support this project, and Cleveland Bridge's continued growth. UKEF's flexible support is hugely important for our international success, helping us build confidence with our overseas customers and access financing to deliver dynamic projects.

We work with banks to provide flexible, innovative, and competitive financing solutions. We support UK exporters, international project sponsors and buyers of UK goods and services.

[Tell us about the project](#)

Published 3 September 2019