



Press Release | 19 August 2013

## **Walk on the wild side - Halton residents encouraged to explore green spaces**

Halton residents are being urged to take part in a programme of green health and fitness activities starting from September.

The programme will run for three months and will include weekly activities such as walking for health, green volunteering and horticultural therapy. The activities will all take place in Halton's wealth of green spaces.

Studies have shown that spending time outdoors can drastically improve mental and physical health, boosting fitness as well as improving self-esteem and reducing anxiety and stress.

The programme is being delivered by the Natural Health Service, which consists of 21 partners who have come together to improve mental and physical health through evidence-based, activities and services in the natural environment.

Paul Nolan, Chair of the Natural Health Service and Director of The Mersey Forest, said: "As the kids go back to school and winter approaches, it's important to stay active and getting out and about in local green spaces is a great way to do this.

"There is something for everyone in our programme of green activities – from walking through to more hands-on activities such as green volunteering and gardening in a 'green gym'."

To get involved, please phone 01925 816217. Further information about the Natural Health Service can be found at [www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk](http://www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk).

**ENDS**

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## **Notes to editors:**

### **The Natural Health Service**

The Natural Health Service is a social enterprise that offers health commissioners a single point of access to a range of well-developed, evidence-based, natural environment-focused products to help tackle a range of health and wellbeing issues.

The consortium consists of 21 delivery organisations, whose mission is to work together to develop a financially sustainable service to treat physical and mental illness, and promote and enable good health through high quality, natural environment based products.

[www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk](http://www.naturalhealthservice.org.uk)

### **The Mersey Forest**

The Mersey Forest is a growing network of woodlands and green spaces spread across Cheshire and Merseyside, which has been creating 'woodlands on your doorstep' for more than 20 years.

The Forest is one of the leading environmental regeneration initiatives in the North West. Through community and partnership working, we have planted 9 million trees - equivalent to five new trees for every person living within the Forest area.

The Forest helps our towns and cities adapt to climate change, creates woodlands that 20% of local people visit at least once a week, and by improving the image of our towns and cities sets the scene for growth within the region's £98 billion economy.

We achieve all of this and more through our partnership of local authorities, landowners, the Forestry Commission, Natural England, the Environment Agency and businesses.

[www.merseyforest.org.uk](http://www.merseyforest.org.uk)