



England's green space gap

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- Identifies priority neighbourhoods for green space investment, by local authority area.
- Includes the first England-wide analysis of the correlation between green space deprivation and income and race.
- Complements the work of others e.g. Fields in Trust, Natural England, NHS.



England's green space gap - headlines

- Millions (1 in 5 people) live in areas deprived of green space.
- A strong correlation between green space deprivation and ethnicity, and a correlation with deprivation and income.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are about 2.7 times as likely as white people to live in England's most green space-deprived areas.



Lack of quality green space is a problem

- Insufficient public green space for densely populated areas, as highlighted in C-19 lockdown.
- The large proportion of the population lives more than 5 minutes' walk from 2 hectares of green space (Natural England's ANGSt standard).
- 1 in 8 households have no garden (1 in 5 in London).
- Both the quantity and the quality of green space matters and is critical for physical and mental health, and for nature's restoration.



Multiple benefits of quality green space

- Numerous studies show that green spaces help save the nation money in multiple ways.
- Every £1 spent on quality green space avoids costs which society would otherwise have to bear.
- Contact with green spaces and parks helps reduce and avoid demands on health services, relieving pressure on NHS budgets – and those savings can be quantified.



The 25 Year Environment Plan says...

“Spending time in the natural environment – as a resident or a visitor – improves our mental health and feelings of wellbeing.

"It can reduce stress, fatigue, anxiety and depression. It can help boost immune systems, encourage physical activity and may reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as asthma.

"It can combat loneliness and bind communities together...



The government seems to get it...(?)

25 YEP continued:

"...In the most deprived areas of England, people tend to have the poorest health and significantly less green space than wealthier areas.

"Our aim is for more people, from all backgrounds, to engage with and spend time in green and blue spaces in their everyday lives."

"People need parks" - Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP during lockdown





England's green space gap Analysis and results

The analysis identifies:

- Those neighbourhoods (of on average 7,200 people) with the least green space nearby (i.e. small amounts of public green space and tiny gardens).
- Relationship between green space access and income / ethnicity.
- The local authority areas with the most neighbourhoods deprived of quality green space, and which should be prioritised for green space investment to address inequalities and reap the multiple benefits.

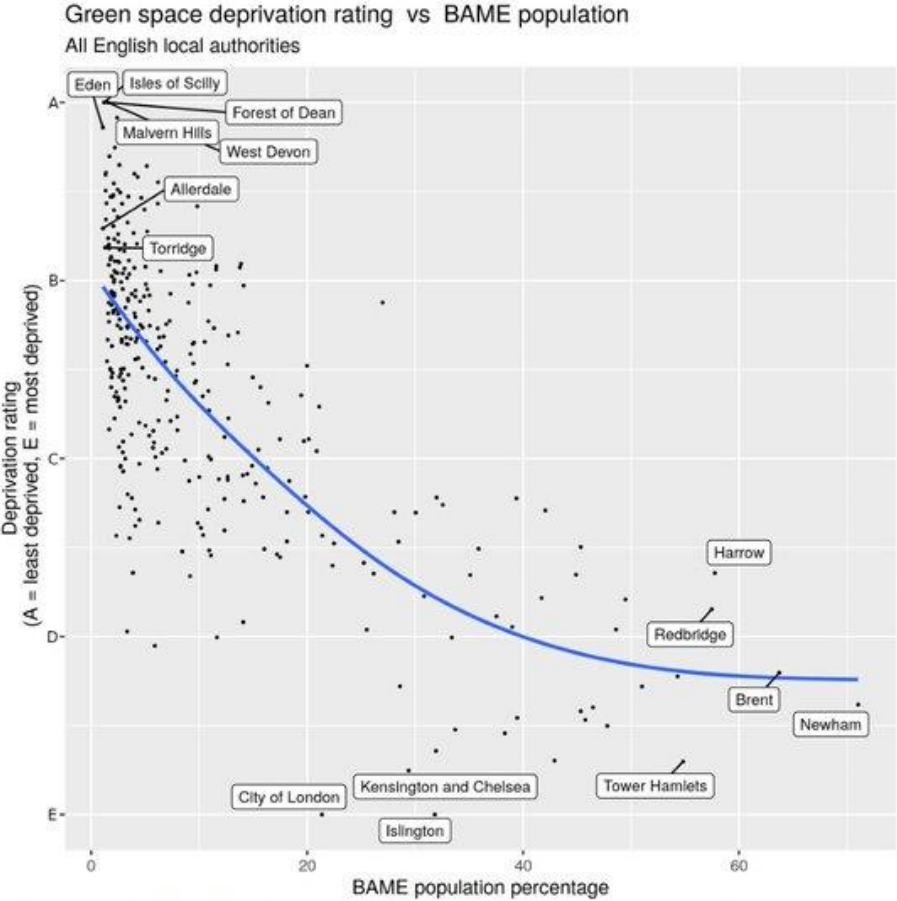
Note:

- The analysis can't identify issues around quality, nor the presence of other green infrastructures (e.g. street trees, planters, pocket parks)
- The data is the average at a neighbourhood level. An individual household in a neighbourhood with an average very low green space may still have a large garden.
- The data is not perfect, but it is the best that exists.

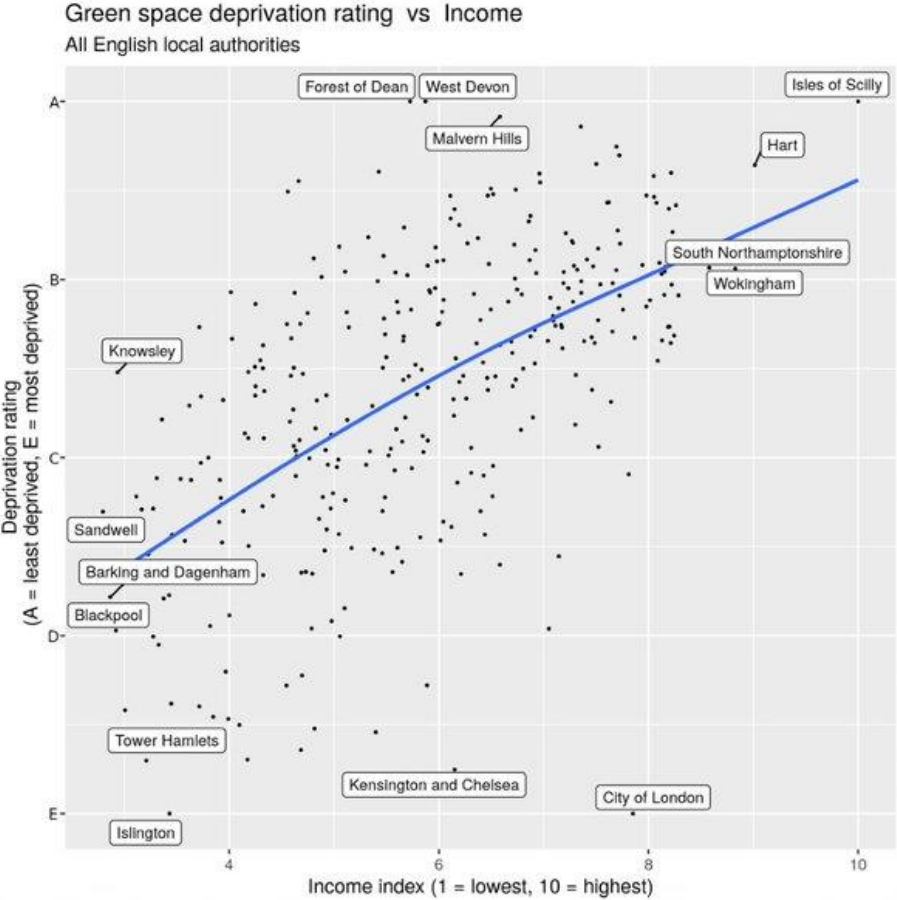
Green Space Deprivation - E and D ratings

- 1,108 neighborhoods in England are rated E.
- 9.6 million people live within these neighbourhoods.
- That is roughly 1 in 5 of the population of England.
- 955 neighbourhoods are rated D.
- 38% of England's black, Asian and minority ethnic communities live in the most green-space deprived neighbourhoods.

The relationship between green space and ethnicity



The relationship between green space and income



The 25 local authority areas with the greatest number of E-rated neighbourhoods

1. Lambeth
2. Birmingham
3. Tower Hamlets
4. Haringey
5. Newham
6. Islington
7. Manchester
8. Wandsworth
9. Southwark
10. Camden
11. Hammersmith and Fulham
12. Lewisham
13. Brent
14. Westminster
15. Liverpool
16. Bristol
17. Waltham Forest
18. Leicester
19. Kensington and Chelsea
20. Leeds
21. Hackney
22. Ealing
23. Croydon
24. Southampton
25. Brighton and Hove



England's green space gap Recommendations

1. Protect existing space forever

A legal requirement to protect and enhance the quality of all existing public green space for people and nature.

Protect existing green space through Fields in Trust 'Green Spaces for Good' and other means.

2. Require creation of new green space where provision is lacking

There is not a lack of available space

There is plenty of poor urban design and over-development

Considerable space is given over to roads, parking, service areas and hard surfacing, even in green space-deprived areas where car ownership is low.

3. A land use planning system that works for green space, health and nature

The planning system (and any reforms) must ensure that:

- existing parks and green spaces are protected
- quality green space is part of new development as standard
- green spaces and parks are treated as part of the wider realm, not as isolated oases.

4. Ensure both quality and quantity

The multi-functional role of green spaces should be factored into aims and strategies for health and wellbeing, fitness and physical activity, skills and learning, and climate and biodiversity.

This requires inter-departmental and cross-governmental working at local and national levels.

5. Green space for all

Ensure green space is developed with and for people of all cultures and fund community engagement.

Residents and users' voices must be heard in the management of green space to ensure inclusive spaces.

6. Proper sustained investment

Capital funding of around £2 billion per year for the next 5 years, making up for decades of underinvestment.

c£2 bn for ongoing annual maintenance and community engagement to ensure lasting good use of the investment.

Savings in health benefits and quality of life would dwarf even these levels of expenditure.

7. Fully factor in cost savings and benefits

The many and varied financial cost savings and benefits should be factored fully into policies and decisions about land use, the design and layout of development, and ongoing use and aftercare.

8. Explore new forms of funding

Allocating proportions of the cost savings provided to society by the functioning of quality green spaces.

Nesta's Rethinking Parks work has been exploring new ways to finance and manage public parks since 2012.

The Social Market Foundation has reflected on C-19 and the funding squeeze and ways to secure funding for parks.

9. Make parks and green space a statutory service

End the situation where local councils run and manage parks and open spaces, but not always as a statutory requirement.

10. Make parks and green space hubs for learning and skills

Green spaces, parks and nature areas can and should be places where people can acquire new skills, knowledge and confidence, through informal outdoor learning and formal skills and education strategies.



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Methodology

A first Green Space Prioritisation Index

England's Green Space Gap builds on the work of Fields in Trust and the Office for National Statistics by combining data for the first time:

- on proximity to public green space¹ using Natural England 5 minute / 2 ha standard, ONS Public Green Space data, plus Open Access Land data
- on total per capita green space in a local authority area, using World Health Organisation and Fields in Trust benchmarks
- on Garden Space at neighbourhood level (MSOA) using ONS data
- on income and ethnicity (ONS data) and the Index of Multiple Deprivation

Note that the ONS Public Green Space will not capture all publicly accessible green space, for example, many wildlife sites will have free access

1 – we use the same definition of public green space as the ONS, namely Parks and public gardens, playing fields, cemeteries and religious grounds. It does not include other sports grounds (e.g. cricket pitches), allotments, bowling greens or golf courses, although in some places some of these might be publicly accessible

Methodology

We scored each neighbourhood (MSOA) according to three factors:

Garden space

- 1 = lowest quartile (very small)
- 2 = second lowest (small)
- 3 = second highest (large)
- 4 = highest quartile (very large)

Proportion of population 5 minutes from 2 hectares of public green space

- 1 = < 25%
- 2 = 25% to 50%
- 3 = 50% to 75%
- 4 = > 75%

Total public green space

- 1 = <9m²¹ (very small)
- 2 = >9m² but < 33m²² (small)
- 3 = >33m² but < 50m²³ (large)
- 4 = >50m² (very large)

We then assigned neighbourhoods⁴ a Green Space Rating:

- A = most green space
- F = least green space

We mapped these against income and ethnicity to see if there is a relationship.

- 1 = World Health Organisation (WHO) minimum
- 2 = Approx. mid-point between WHO's minimum and aspiration
- 3 = WHO aspiration and approx. FiT target
- 4 = using ONS MSOAs (average 7,200 people)

Green Space Ratings

- Neighbourhoods assigned to a rating using judgement and logic i.e. is score 1, 1, 2 better / worse than score 2, 2, 1 for the amount and access to green space, etc?
- Rating A has on average more green space than rating B; B has more than C; and so on.
- We have published the full data set so that others can use alternative ranking approaches.

Categories	Total green space	Access	Gardens
RATING E (Least green space)			
Very small gardens and very small amount of public green space	1	1 to 4	1
Very small gardens and small amount of public green space more than 5 minutes' walk for 75% or more of residents	2	1	1
RATING D			
Small gardens with very small amounts of green space more than 5 minutes' walk away for 75% or more of residents	1	1	2
Very small garden and large or very large amounts of green space within 5 minutes' walk, although more than 5 minutes' walk away for 75% or more of residents	3 to 4	1	1
Very small garden with small amount of green space less than 5 minutes' walk for up to 75% of residents	2	2 to 4	1
Small garden with very small amounts of public space less than 5 minutes' walk for up to 75% of residents	1	2 to 4	2
Small garden with small amount of public green space more than 5 minutes' walk for 75% or more of residents	2	1	2
RATING C			
Small garden and large or very large amounts of public green space more than 5 minutes' walk for 75% or more of residents	3 or 4	1	2
Small garden and small amounts of green space less than 5 minutes' walk for up to 75% of residents	2	2 to 4	2
Large or very large garden and very small or small amount of public green space more than 5 minutes' walk for 75% or more of residents	1 or 2	1	3 or 4
RATING B			
Very small or small garden but large or very large amounts of public green space less than 5 minutes' walk for up to 75% of residents	3 or 4	2 or more	1 or 2
Large gardens and a small amount of public green space less than 5 minutes' walk for up to 75% of residents	1 or 2	2 or more	3 or 4
RATING A (Most green space)			
Large or very large gardens and large or very large amounts of public green space	3 or 4	1 or more	3 or 4



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Summary: <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/englands-green-space-gap>

Full report: <https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/download/englands-green-space-gap-full-report>