



Review of barriers to use of the outdoors for equalities groups

Slide pack resource for policymakers and practitioners

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Objectives

1. Identify the barriers to use of the outdoors experienced by people of different equalities groups
2. Assess the data available on barriers for equalities groups across Scotland and the UK
3. Identify evidence gaps for Scotland and draw conclusions

Use of the outdoors:*

Visits to the outdoors for leisure or recreational purposes. The 'outdoors' refers to open spaces in the countryside as well as in towns and cities, such as woodland, parks, farmland, paths, beaches.

*Use of the outdoors defined in line with National Indicator [Visits to the Outdoors | National Performance Framework](#)

Scope

- A narrative review of academic and grey literature published between 2011 and 2021
- Focus on Scottish evidence, but including UK
- Keyword searches of Google Scholar and agency websites:

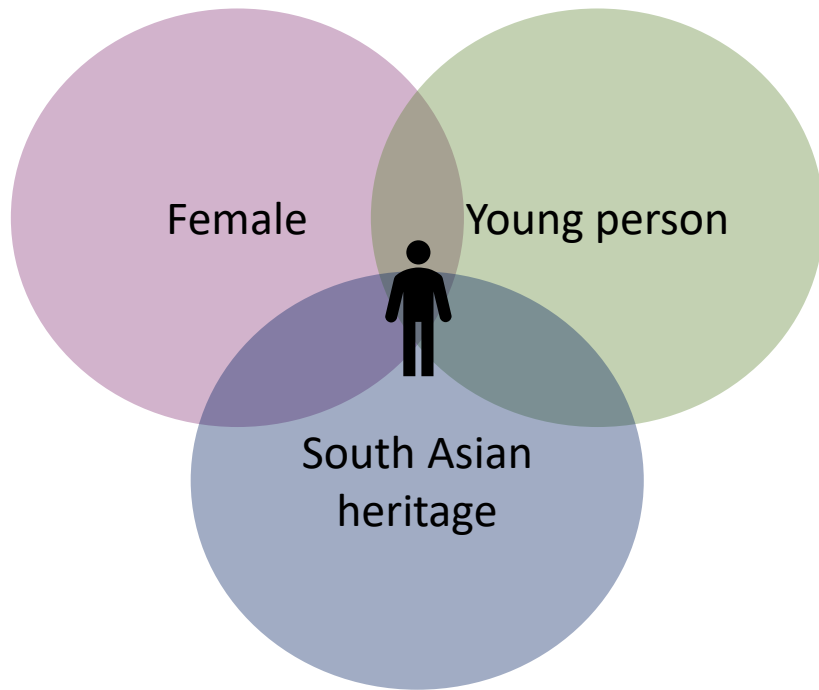
NatureScot	Natural England
Greenspace Scotland	Defra
Scottish Government	Forest Research
Scottish Forestry	
Hutton & SRUC	

- Equalities groups included in review:

Socioeconomic	Older people
Minority ethnic	Children and young people
Religious groups	Sex/gender*
Disabled people	

*Whilst we recognise sex as a biological characteristic and gender as a social one, the research does not always distinguish between sex and gender

Intersectionality



We each belong to multiple socio-demographic groups

Experiences of inequality can be compounded at the intersections

Need to look at diversity and inclusion *within* equalities groups, as well as between groups

Results

- 41 sources were included in the review
- Barriers for each group outlined separately. Please read the section that is most relevant
- References/bibliography available for each group at the end of slide pack

Key to the results



Scotland data



UK data



Quantitative data

Qualitative data




Barriers are highlighted in green boxes throughout

Intersectional issues are highlighted in purple boxes throughout

Reflections on the Scottish evidence base are highlighted in dark blue boxes

Socioeconomic

Barriers

 High quality green spaces only accessible by car   




 Poor health  

 Lack of familiarity    

 Lack of confidence    

 Low measured & perceived quality of local green spaces    

 Fear of being moved on by police or business owners  

 Aggressive behaviour of others in green spaces  

Scotland's Data

Data is almost entirely **quantitative**, and most studies are relying on SPANS* data.

Data largely **originates in Scotland**, supported by studies in England.

Observed and perceived quality of green spaces in deprived areas are identified as important barriers to use across multiple studies.

* Scottish People and Nature Survey

Socioeconomic: Intersectionality and gaps

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely than the average to report being **moved on** from green spaces, and more likely to fear **aggressive behaviour** from other people. They also note **litter** and **vandalism** as being more common.¹



Filling the gaps

Use of a **wider range of data sources**, considering **intersectionalities** between different personal characteristics.

Inclusion of **spatial data**.



Minority ethnic

Barriers

Lack of -




 Familiarity & knowledge  

 Confidence  

 Diversity within the sector  

 Cultural affinity  

 Car access  




 Experiences of racism & perceived whiteness - "otherness"  

 Safety [& parental control]  


 Time constraints  

Scotland's Data

There is **limited quantitative data** on minority ethnic people's use of the outdoors in Scotland, and of the qualitative data available, **very few have a strong focus on minority ethnic groups** and their experiences in outdoor space.

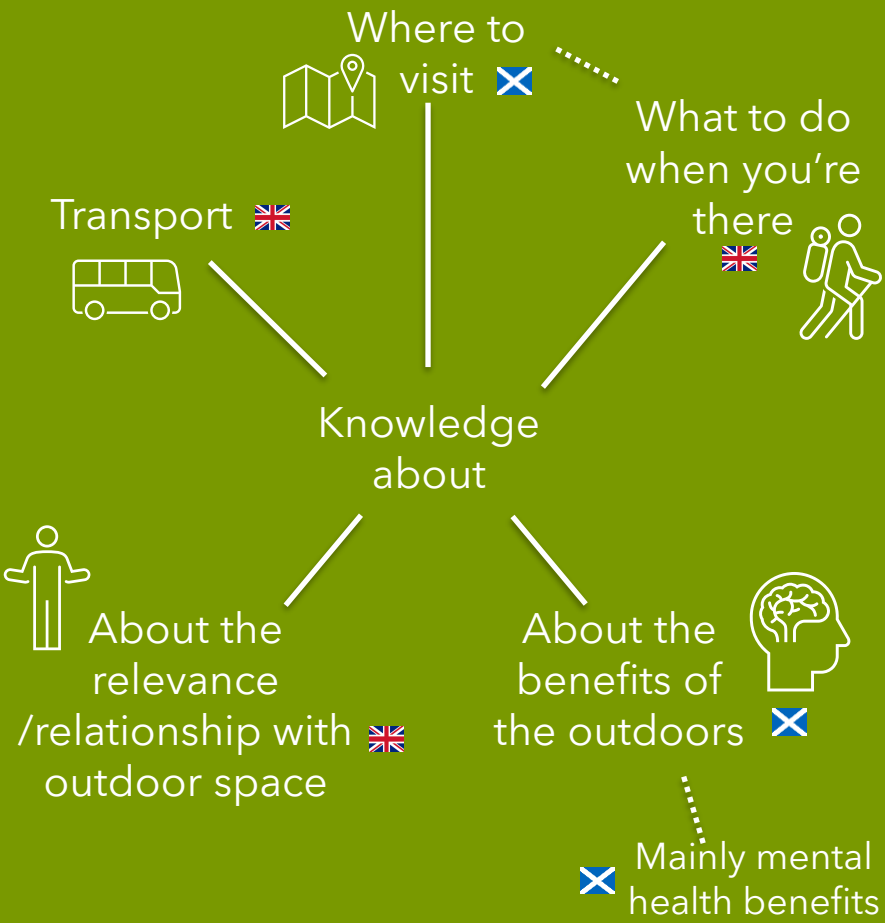
Minority ethnic groups are more likely to report being infrequent users of green space.² Barriers faced by these groups are seldom investigated and addressed by targeted programmes.³   



Intersectional issues, such as **gender, class** and **age**, can **create different barriers and experiences** for minority ethnic communities.¹  

Minority ethnic

Familiarity & knowledge



This barrier has been explored in further depth due to the amount of material concerning the different aspects of familiarity and knowledge of green space.

Young, South Asian women living near urban bluespace report **parental control as a barrier** to accessing these spaces, likely due to **safety concerns.** ⁴ 




Filling the gaps

Quantitative and **qualitative** research focusing specifically on minority ethnic people's use of and preferences for outdoor space in Scotland, with **distinction between groups.**

Religion

Barriers




Perceived 'whiteness' & previous experience of discrimination  ●



Safety  ●




Lack of familiarity  ● & knowledge about how to interact with space



Needs of the community not met  ● 



There is a lack of religious diversity within the environmental sector, i.e. Christian festivals being celebrated in these spaces but no promotion of other religious holidays, events or celebrations. 

The needs of the female, Muslim community are not met as there are little-to-no spaces where Muslim women can meet away from men.¹



Females of Muslim faith feel comfortable visiting local greenspace but are not confident travelling further.²



Scotland's Data

There is a substantial **gap in knowledge** of religious groups' use of green and outdoor space in both Scotland and the UK and available data is largely **anecdotal.**

Religion: Intersectionality and gaps

Barriers to use of Protected Areas³

Failing to consider the Muslim religion, culture and inequalities can negatively affect that communities' ability to interact with protected areas and has the potential to influence perceived inclusion.

 No areas for prayer

 Lack of halal options

 Infrastructure does not allow for large groups

 Signage only being in English

 Lack of diversity (e.g. staff and volunteers)



Filling the gaps

Further quantitative and qualitative research on all religious groups' access and use of outdoor space is needed.



Disabled people

Barriers

 Poor health	   
 Immobility	   
 Social Isolation and lack of companions	 
 Personal safety - feeling unsafe	  
 Lack of confidence	 
 Increased anxiety	 
 Poor weather	 
 No particular reason, lack of interest	   
 Accessibility and space doesn't meet needs	   
 Fatigue	 

Scotland's data

There is a strong evidence-base of qualitative, quantitative and mixed method studies.

Data on disabled children **under 16 years old is missing.**

Greenspaces are less likely to be within walking distance for disabled people.



Disability categories included general, physical and learning.

Disabled people: intersectionality & gaps



Learning disabilities in children can **reduce spontaneous visits** to greenspace amongst children. 

Disabilities are more prevalent **in** people of **older age groups** and **reduce** their **use of the outdoors**.

Filling the gaps

Consider the **intersectionalities** between disabled people and other groups (especially young people).

A more **comprehensive range of disabilities** should be included in future studies.



Older people

Barriers¹



Poor health



Immobility



Social Isolation



• Feeling unsafe



• Fear of falling



Poor weather



Psychological barriers including self-perceived fragility and motivation



Accessibility and appropriateness of space



Lifestyle barriers



Scotland's data

Mixture of **quantitative and qualitative** studies have been undertaken.

Scotland's **qualitative data is strong** with two recent in-depth qualitative studies having been undertaken in recent years.

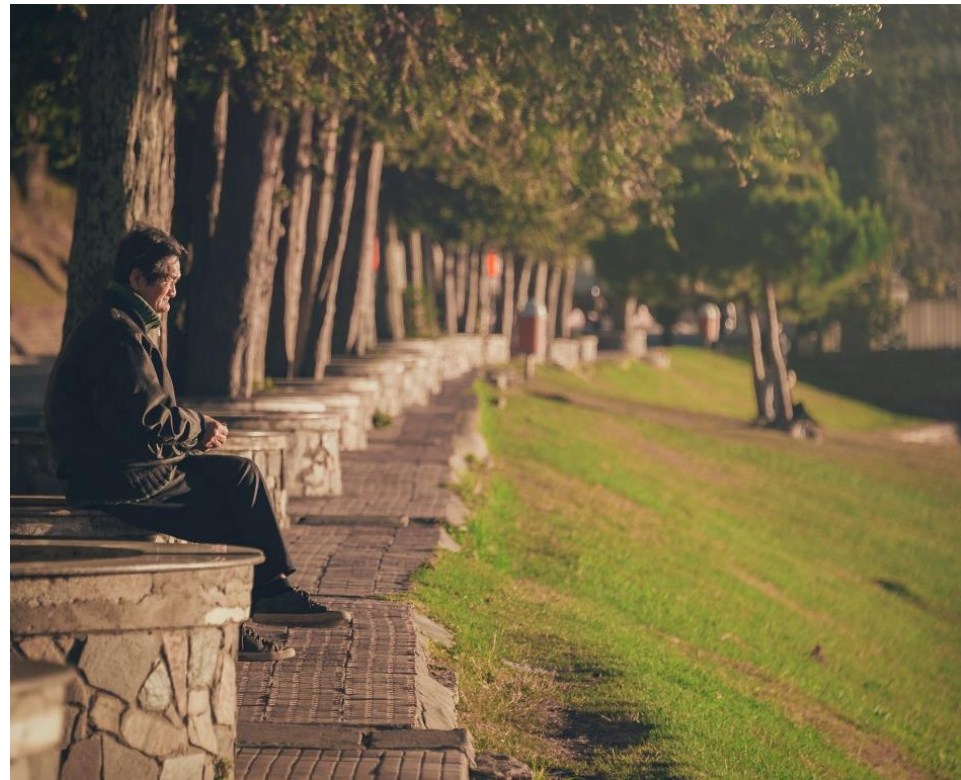


Older people: intersectionality and gaps

Older women feel less safe.

Older men feel excluded from walking groups.

Low income groups report poorer health and immobility.



Filling the gaps

More **quantitative** data with this group specifically considering those who are **not regular visitors** to green spaces.

Children / Young people

Barriers

Lack of -

 Age appropriate facilities  

 Street lighting  

 Car access  

 Time  

 Perceived & actual financial constraints    

 Poor weather  

 No particular reason  

 Being moved on by police or business owners  

 Fear of unknown  

Scotland's Data



Quantitative data is largely drawn from SPANS (2013/2014) and studies related to 1st COVID-19 lockdown, and **only of over 16s**.

Existing age categories (16-24) make **it difficult to draw insight for young adults**.

Qualitative studies draw from interviews with **young people and families with young children**.



Urban young people reported **time pressure** as a barrier to visiting bluespace, and perceive bluespace as "**boring**".¹

South Asian young women report **parental control**, likely due to safety concerns.¹  

Children / Young people: Intersectionality and gaps

Problems during/post first COVID-19 lockdown^{2,3}

Young people (16-24)

 Lack of familiarity with the place  

 Perceived quality of greenspace  

 Limited / unable to access (e.g. locked gates, restrictive signs)  

 Concerns about social distancing  

 Not being able to meet friends  

Adults with young children

 Not able to use the facilities they need

Children with **learning disabilities** make  **fewer spontaneous visits.**⁴ 

Barriers include:

- Lack of companions/friends nearby;
- Fear of the unknown;
- Adult fears around independent play.

Boys fear being **labelled as troublemakers** and being moved on.⁵  

Parent's concerns over safety is a barrier for **girls.**⁵ 



Filling the gaps

Develop **finer** breakdown of **age categories** to get more in-depth insight.

More **qualitative** studies with particular groups to **draw out intersectionalities.**

Young people (0-15 yrs old) in **deprived areas** report:⁶

More barriers and greater dislike for **vandalism and litter;**

Being **moved on** and fear of **aggressive behaviour** from others.  




Sex/gender

Differences in reasons for not visiting natural environments more^{1*}



No difference for:

Too busy at work 

Too busy at home 

Poor health 

Poor weather 



Women less likely to state:

Not interested 

No particular reason 

*Only selected common reasons were analysed

Scotland's Data



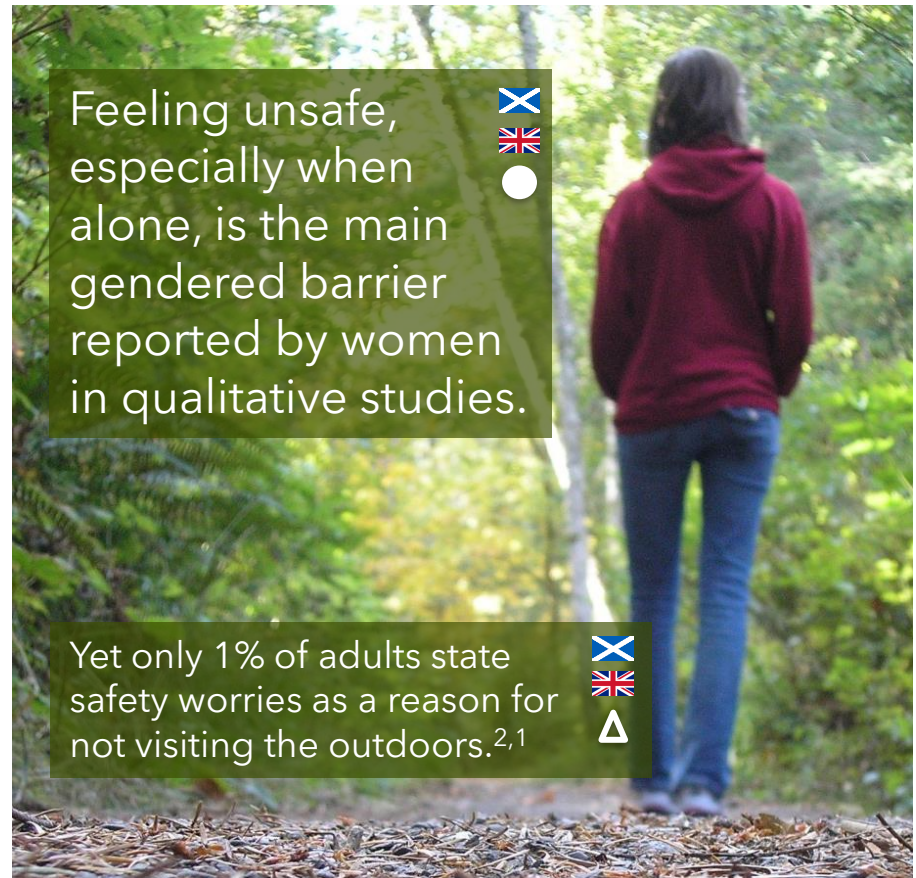
Lack of **quantitative** data comparing barriers for men and women.

Qualitative insights on experiences, particularly in different subgroups of women.

Feeling unsafe, especially when alone, is the main gendered barrier reported by women in qualitative studies.



Yet only 1% of adults state safety worries as a reason for not visiting the outdoors.^{2,1}



Sex / gender: intersectionality and gaps

Safety concerns - fear of attack, abuse or harassment - are highlighted by both **younger** women/girls and **older** women. For older women, safety concerns also include fear of falling.



Additional barriers reported by women of ethnic and/or religious minorities



Poor transport access

Lack of confidence exploring places further afield



Lack of time/caring responsibilities



Social isolation



Barriers for women visiting with young children



fears for children's safety

busy roads

lack of pavements/pushchair access

lack of facilities

Particular activities can have their own gendered barriers



Barriers to recreational walking for men include: seeing it as a feminine activity; female dominated walking groups



Women's barriers to adventure sports include: risky/extreme image; lack of family support; needing to be part of/intimidated by adventure sport community



Filling the gaps

Produce **gender-disaggregated** (quantitative) **survey data** on barriers.

Build qualitative evidence base for groups of Scottish women known to participate less³: young women/girls; older women; women living in deprived areas.

Conclusions

- There are particular data gaps for the following equalities groups: minority ethnic, religion.
- Many barriers cut across groups e.g. poor health and immobility, lack of social networks, safety concerns, knowledge and familiarity.
- There is a need for up-to-date quantitative evidence on barriers in Scotland (SPANS 2013/14 is most recent).
- Reporting of survey data should include breakdowns by equalities groups. Greater harmonisation of categories/groups used in analysis across public bodies would allow more direct comparisons (e.g. in defining age thresholds).





Conclusions

- It is important to consider experiences at the intersections of equalities groups. For example at the intersection of deprivation and different protected characteristics. Qualitative research can help build the evidence base for this.
- A balance of both intra-group analyses (studies looking at experiences within a specific group) and inter-group analyses (looking across and comparing groups) is useful to get a comprehensive view of barriers for equality groups.
- Considering use of the outdoors in terms of the barriers people face is only one way to understand inequalities. Inequalities can also reflect differences between groups in their capabilities or competencies.





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Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

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Picture references

- Socioeconomic - https://pxhere.com/en/photo/548750?utm_content=shareClip&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pxhere
- Socioeconomic intersectionality and gaps –
 - Path - https://pxhere.com/en/photo/99101?utm_content=shareClip&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pxhere – no attribution needed
 - Benches - https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1234?utm_content=shareClip&utm_medium=referral&utm_source=pxhere
- Minority ethnic - <https://www.pexels.com/photo/selective-focus-photo-of-grass-during-daytime-3012160/>
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- Religion - <https://www.pexels.com/photo/feather-and-flowers-9966294/>
- Religion intersectionality and gaps – <https://www.pexels.com/photo/back-view-of-women-walking-in-the-woods-7276778/>
- Disabled people– Kathryn Colley
- Disabled people intersectionality and gaps –
 - Person and bench - <https://www.pexels.com/photo/woman-sitting-on-a-bench-with-her-dog-8327621/>
 - Wheelchair and sign - <https://www.pexels.com/photo/city-man-couple-people-8415906/>
- Older people – The EU NPP Older People for Older People project
- Older people intersectionality and gaps –
 - Two people - <https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1334225>
 - On wall - <https://pxhere.com/en/photo/1520917>
- Children and young people – Mags Currie
- Children and young people intersectionality and gaps - <https://pxhere.com/en/photo/106793>
- Sex/gender - <https://pxhere.com/en/photo/760276>
- Sex/gender intersectionality and gaps - <File:London 1100055.jpg> - [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:London_1100055.jpg) CC BY-SA 3.0 Attrib: Nevit Dilmen



Appendix – Search protocol

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

- Scotland focus – including UK level
- Grey literature as well as Scotland-focused peer reviewed papers
- Timeframe – 2011 onwards

Search process

First stage will be targeted searches of websites of relevant agencies for grey literature:

- NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage)
- Greenspace Scotland
- Scottish Government
- Scottish Forestry (formerly Forestry Commission Scotland)
- Hutton and SRUC
- Natural England
- Defra
- Forest Research

Second stage search on Google Scholar for Scotland-focused peer-reviewed literature.

Place	Equalities groups	Barriers
Outdoor	Equality/ inequality	Access
Outdoor recreation	Demographic	Barriers
Open space	Ethnic*/ethnicity/ethnic minority	
Greenspace/ green space / blue space	Race/racial	
Parks / woodlands /forest*	BAME/BME	
Scotland / England / Wales/ Britain/ UK	Older people / elderly	
	Children/ Young people	
	Age	
	Disability	
	Illness	
	Sex / gender	
	Women/ men	
	Socio-economic / social class/ social grade	
	Deprived/ deprivation / poverty	

If required, further details on the findings of studies reviewed are available on request to kate.irvine@hutton.ac.uk

