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**NEW
TO
NATURE**

PROGRAMME EVALUATION
GROWING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE FOR NATURE



AGENDA

CONTEXT – WHY NEW TO NATURE?

IMPACT – WHAT IT DELIVERED

MODEL – HOW IT WORKED

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?

WHAT'S NEXT?



WHY NEW TO NATURE?



The nature and climate emergencies require a new green work force

Despite rising employment, young people still face disadvantage when seeking work

Environmental sector not always seen as a sector of choice for young people

The sector lacks diversity and is seen as inaccessible

Encourage new, diverse talent into the sector

Create brilliant career opportunities for young people

Help to create a more accessible natural environment sector

ABOUT NEW TO NATURE

New to Nature offers full-time, temporary work placements in nature and landscape organisations across the UK, aiming to increase diversity and enrich the sector.

Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of the celebrations to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the programme provided 96 paid work placements, targeting young people from diverse backgrounds to undertake a range of roles in the natural environment sector.

New to Nature is delivered through a partnership of Groundwork, The King's Trust, Disability Rights UK, and Mission Diverse. We will be working closely with the Youth Environmental Service to ensure the programme acts as a stepping stone for a longer-term journey of change in the sector: www.groundwork.org.uk/projects/new-to-nature



APPROACH

£3m grant from National Lottery Heritage Fund

96 placements

80+ Placement Hosts

Encouraging applications from young people:

- ✓ from ethnically diverse backgrounds
- ✓ with a disability
- ✓ from low-income households



REACH OF NEW TO NATURE



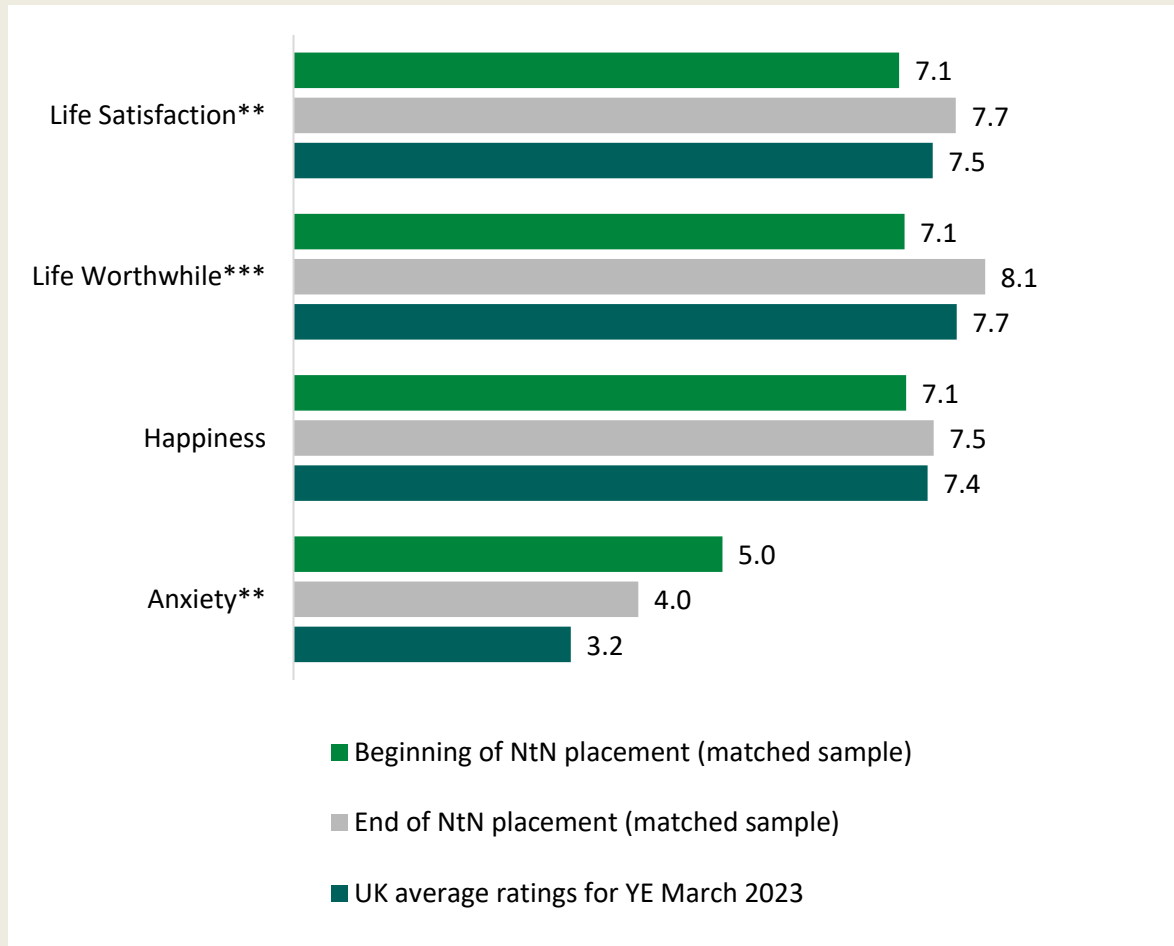
- **Over half** of all surveyed Trainees felt that careers in the environmental sector were not accessible to people from ethnically diverse backgrounds and/or working-class backgrounds
- **Two thirds** felt the sector as inaccessible for individuals with disabilities and long-term health conditions.
- Trainees reported that it was ‘hard to find’ appropriate entry-level roles within the sector.
- Barriers to work included a lack of experience, competition and qualifications.

IMPACT ON TRAINEES

- Feedback about the New to Nature recruitment process was overwhelmingly positive – many Trainees described it as inclusive and accessible.
- **98 Trainees** were recruited to New to Nature 96 roles.
- **86%** of Trainees were recruited are from priority groups, with:
 - **29%** from an ethnically diverse background
 - **42%** being disabled
 - **63%** being from a low-income background
- **66%** of Trainees progressed directly into further employment.



IMPACT ON TRAINEES



- **88%** of Trainees are 'very' interested in working in the sector.
- **94%** of Trainees felt well informed on the sector and the opportunities it holds.
- **88%** of Trainees felt confident that they can find a job in the field they want to be in.

IMPACT ON TRAINEES

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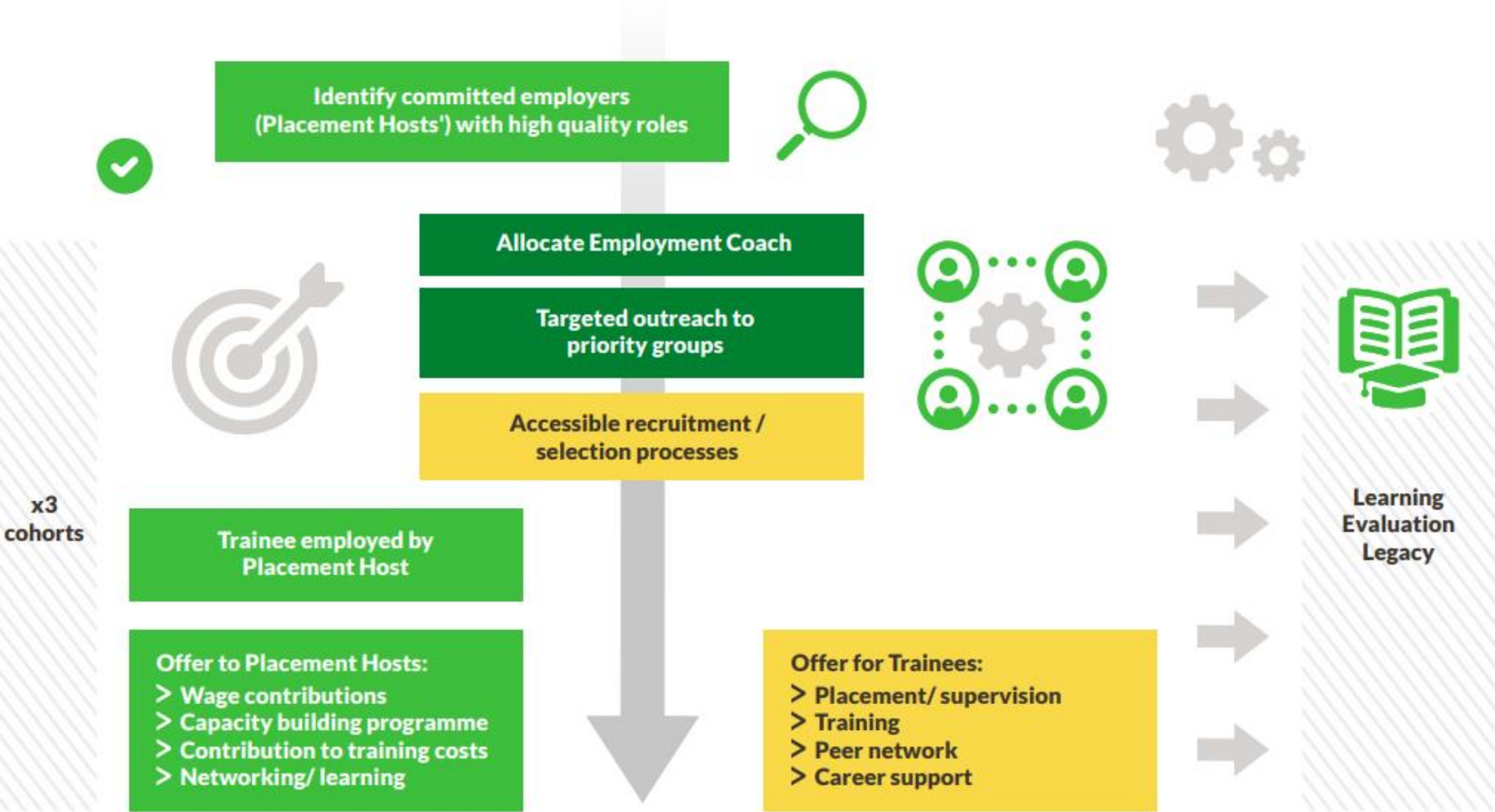


IMPACT ON HOST ORGANISATIONS

- **98%** of Hosts confirmed that the New to Nature recruitment process was different to their organisation's typical approach.
- New to Nature has changed Host Organisations' staff attitudes because of the positive impact trainees have had on project work.
- **92%** of Host organisations confirmed that being involved in New to Nature has improved their organisations practices around diversity and inclusion.
- Four in five Host Organisations (**80%**) of Hosts report that they will or have already made recommendations for change within their organisation based on their New to Nature experience



New to Nature Delivery Model



MODEL: HOW IT WORKED



IDENTIFYING HOSTS AND PLACEMENTS

- Land and nature
- Not for profit organisations
- Entry-level roles (no experience or quals required)
- Quality and commitment:
 - Learning and development
 - Supervision and support
- Diverse portfolio:
 - Geographically (4 nations)
 - Role type (field and desk-based)

TRAINEE RECRUITMENT

- Outreach and promotion
- Mobilising partnerships (e.g. DWP)
- Simplified job packs and application processes
- Shortlisting and selection guidance:
 - [Inclusive Recruitment Guide](#)
- Positive action (avoiding positive discrimination)

IN-WORK SUPPORT

- Gwk Employment Coach:
 - Goal setting
 - Trouble shooting
 - Career support. transition
- Training budget
- Grow your career programme:
 - Green careers
 - Job search workshops
 - Peer networks

MODEL: HOW IT WORKED

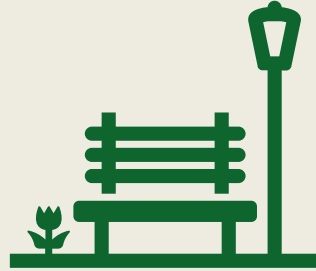


BIODIVERSITY & NATURE RECOVERY



E.g. cleaning rivers, creating woodlands, safeguarding nature reserves.

URBAN GREENSPACES



E.g. parks, community gardens, city farms, nature reserves and green community hubs.

EDUCATION AND NATURE CONNECTION



E.g. communications and PR, outdoor pursuits, working with schools or wellbeing initiatives

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?



In recruitment:

- **Refining role descriptions** for entry-level positions (reducing/removing required qualifications).
- **A national and centralised New to Nature** recruitment campaign.
- **Encouraging collaboration** with local community organisations to engage a more diverse pool of applicants.
- **Adjusting interview formats** to meet individual needs e.g. providing questions ahead of the interview.

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?



In support:

- **Wraparound support** for Trainees from Host Organisations and their Employment coach.
- Encouraging trainee **peer networks** support within their cohort.
- **Flexible and responsive assistance** from the central Groundwork UK team.
- **Community of practice** sessions to share Host Organisations' knowledge and experience.

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?



In design:

- **Targeted support** which retained a core aim; to support people from underrepresented groups into employment within the nature sector.
- **12-month placement duration**, allowing Trainees to build skills and experience.
- **Financial support** through the wage subsidy for Hosts and training budgets for trainees.
- Scale and diversity of the network, illustrating the **strength of the sector's commitment**.

WHAT MADE THE DIFFERENCE?

NEW
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I would have really struggled to find a similar role without this placement. Similar roles are nearly always unpaid. I wouldn't have had the money to support myself or the energy to work another job at the same time. I'm getting a lot of experience and increasing my knowledge around conservation. I'm also meeting a lot of people in the profession who have given me a lot of advice and pointers on how to get into the industry.



WHAT NEXT?

Alumni

12-month programme of activities
5-year 'destination' tracking

Sharing lessons and resources:

Resources on New to Nature web pages
Evaluation reports published December 2024

Influencing:

Westminster event(s)
National Nature Service/ Youth Environmental Service
models

Succession:

Working up 3-year programme model
Funding TBC



CALL TO ACTION



Advocacy document signed by c.40 nature sector leaders, calling for follow-on action from:

The nature sector

- Create more entry level pathways
- Change recruitment practices (e.g. insistence of degree-level quals, unpaid work experience)
- Continue to collaborate and share learning – with larger organisations sharing power and resources

Funders and supporters

- Charitable funders should create an expectation that environmental organisations create entry-level roles or traineeships when delivering funded programmes

Funders and supporters (cont.)

- Recognise that Trainee wages are a legitimate and important project cost
- Businesses to collaborate with each other and the nature sector to support wages of Trainees as part of ESG commitments
- Funding is required to support a coordinated programme, ensuring Trainees are effectively recruited, supported and progress in their careers

Governments and mayors

- Green Jobs Delivery Plan – publish and progress
- A National Nature Service – paid environmental work for all young people
- Nature jobs to be a priority for employment programmes and plans for skills/ growth

FIND OUT MORE



**NEW
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www.groundwork.org.uk/new-to-nature-legacy

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