

# What is ecotherapy and what are the benefits?

Ecotherapy improves mental and physical wellbeing by supporting people to be active outdoors: doing gardening, food growing or environmental conservation work with the support of trained professionals.

## The benefits

Ecotherapy improves mental wellbeing. It helps people who don't usually exercise be more active. It boosts people's skills and confidence to get back into work or training. It is a great way to help socially isolated people to feel more connected.

People who have received ecotherapy say they enjoy it – so having it available as a mental health treatment means offering greater choice.

Ecotherapy is simple and practical route to put the Five Ways to Wellbeing into practice:



1. People are more active



2. They connect with other people



3. They take notice of the world



4. They keep learning



5. Give something back

## Ecominds findings



69% of people experienced significant increases in mental wellbeing after attending an Ecominds project.



62% of people thought their overall health was better by the time they left an Ecominds project.



Five people with mental health problems saved the state more than £35,000 in one year through lower welfare benefits and healthcare spending.



Ecominds helped 254 people find full-time employment with potential savings to the state of £1.46 million through reductions in welfare payments and income from tax and National Insurance.



81% of people got more involved in community activities by the time they left an Ecominds project.



63% of people with mental health problems felt more positive about their lives by the time they left the Ecominds project.



60% said they felt they did not belong to their immediate community when they started at an Ecominds project; but by the end, 59% said they felt they did belong to their community.



56% of people attending Ecominds were men – ecotherapy is a great way to get men involved in wellbeing services.