

Making the change

Changing a mess to a meadow or an eyesore to an allotment is not going to happen overnight. It takes a lot of hard graft, commitment and patience. The work requires a broad range of skills, which will be new to many young people. That's why the Community Space Challenge is working with a variety of different organisations that can help give young people the knowledge and guidance they will need to make rundown places fabulous green spaces.



The Community Space Challenge is organised and managed by:

Crime Concern, a national charity working for safer communities by reducing crime and anti-social behaviour throughout England and Wales. The organisation works in over seventy disadvantaged neighbourhoods to give people positive routes away from crime and anti-social behaviour, and to increase their life chances.

The Community Space Challenge is funded by:

The Big Lottery Fund rolls out close to £2 million in Lottery good cause money every 24 hours which together with other Lottery distributors means that across the UK most people are within a few miles of a Lottery-funded project.

The Community Space Challenge is supported by:

Encams, the independent charity behind the Keep Britain Tidy campaign, the Blue Flag awards for clean beaches, the Quality Coast Awards and Eco-Schools.

The Prince's Trust, who help change the lives of young people aged between 14 and 30 who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law.

Changemakers an independent charity and social enterprise, which enables young people, aged 4-25 to make a positive and continuing contribution to society.

The Youth Justice Board for England and Wales (YJB) is an executive non-departmental public body. It works to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people under the age of 18, and to ensure that custody for them is safe, secure, and addresses the causes of their offending behaviour.

Locations

North West

Blackburn
Bolton
Burnley
Chester
Crewe
Halton
Manchester (4)
Oldham
Rochdale (2)
Tameside
Trafford
Wirral

North East

Ashington
Durham
Easington

Middlesbrough
Newcastle
North Shields
North Washington
Redcar & Cleveland
South Tyneside

Yorkshire & The Humber

Bradford (5)
Castleford
Doncaster
Goole
Grimsby
Hemsworth
Leeds

London

Barking (2)
Barnet
Ealing
Greenwich
Hackney
Hainault
Islington
Roehampton Southwark (3)
Wandsworth (2)

West Midlands

Birmingham (2)
Wolverhampton

East Midlands

Derby (4)
Nottingham (2)

East

Luton
Peterborough

South West

Boscombe
Bristol (2)
Torbay

South East

Hove
Portsmouth
Southampton



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I am not in a good
place. Nobody looks
after me. I am rundown,
neglected and sometimes
dangerous. People abuse
me and it makes me
worse. But all this is
about to change...

Watch this space

Seventy mistreated and ignored spaces in communities from Devon to Newcastle are about to undergo a massive transformation. This is no one day makeover. This is not a quick fix. This is the start of a five year commitment to making communities the best they can be.

The Community Space Challenge is here! The challenge is for young people to change forgotten and neglected neighbourhood spaces into fresh green spaces for the whole community to enjoy.

In 2006, groups working with young people were invited to submit their ideas for an environmental project. The seventy best initiatives were then picked to receive funding for five years to bring the ideas to life.

Working in neighbourhoods all over England, the Community Space Challenge encompasses a wide range of different initiatives from sensory gardens to orienteering trails.

For example:

Barnet, in London, is planning to make improvements to several community spaces on the Grahame Park estate. All the ideas have been put forward by the young people and include a mosaic mural, designing and planting areas, pond clearing and painting giant board games.

Bradford, in Yorkshire, is hosting several different initiatives one of which is a rolling programme of improvements to Judy's Wood, starting with an orienteering trail, with picnic areas along the route. There will also be an ongoing cleaning programme to prevent rubbish being dumped.

Burnley, in Lancashire, is working on developing an allotment on the unused ground of a local primary school. Plants and flowers from the allotment will be distributed to local residents. There will also be a backyard in bloom competition.

Although the initiatives are all specific to each area, there are common themes. They all look to increase the quality and use of community spaces whilst promoting young people as leaders to the wider community.



Back in 2005 Crime Concern commissioned a piece of work with young people across the country to discover what concerned them about their lives and what their hopes and dreams were for the future. One of the most common themes to come out of the interviews and subsequent workshops was the demoralizing effects that a rundown neighbourhood has on young people, their friends and their family.

"You see council flats and houses burned out, broke into, smashed up, smack heads alcoholics. We used to have a lovely park but now its wrecked... on my estate it's very dirty but it didn't used to be. They go around smashing windows in our flats. It's dead scruffy."
young person

Many of the young people interviewed admitted that they had vandalized areas of their neighbourhood because they were bored and because it was already so neglected. Improving the community and making public spaces more welcoming was something that they all wanted to be part of.

The Community Space Challenge puts young people at the forefront of planning and developing relevant regeneration projects in their area. We already know that initiatives which break down barriers between generations and cultures are very successful in improving the chances for young people to be the best they can be.

"I feel I have done a good deed for the community... I can now talk to the elderly more confidently. Just by helping the community it makes us feel good to see them happy... the staff have faith in me, which makes me feel good. I am well known in my area where I live because of the work I have done. I want to do this for my future."
young person involved in a community project

As the plants, trees and ideas planted at the start of the Community Space Challenge grow, so of course, will the young people involved. The ultimate aim of the initiative is that the visible changes and improvement in the community will be reflected in the lives of the young people, their families, friends and neighbours.

Young people taking over rundown spaces to improve their community...

