

# Nature-based interventions to support mental health and well-being of young women in pregnancy: exploratory work for future feasibility RCT

Gina Sands,<sup>1\*</sup> Holly Blake,<sup>1,2</sup> Tim Carter<sup>1</sup> and Helen Spiby<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>School of Health Sciences, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK

<sup>2</sup>NIHR Nottingham Biomedical Research Centre, Nottingham, UK

\*Corresponding author [gina.sands@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:gina.sands@nottingham.ac.uk)

## Disclosure of interests

**Full disclosure of interests:** Completed ICMJE forms for all authors, including all related interests, are available in the toolkit on the NIHR Journals Library report publication page at <https://doi.org/10.3310/NPGR3411>.

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## Plain language summary

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# Plain language summary

## What is the project about and why is it important?

The mental health and well-being of young women has been getting worse since the 1990s. In particular, young women are more likely to experience depression or anxiety when pregnant or after giving birth. This can have long-term effects for them and their children. This also results in high costs for the National Health Service and social services. We know that social support can help to protect people against poor mental health and well-being. Research has also shown that access to nature may be linked to better mental health and well-being.

This project aimed to find out what types of group nature activities were offered in the community and whether young women (aged 16–24) felt doing these activities might help their mental health during and after pregnancy.

## What have we done?

Our first step was to map the nature-based activities that are available in the East Midlands region of the United Kingdom by sending a short survey to organisations to find out more. These may include activities such as walking, music or dance, or arts and crafts sessions held in natural settings such as forests or community gardens.

We also held focus groups with young women to discuss the idea of nature activities to promote mental health and well-being. We invited some women to work with us as part of our 'Research Influencer Group'. They were involved in co-designing the future research, including choosing the nature activity to be tested. We have also linked up with the right people to support this and future projects.

## What did we find out?

In this small preparatory study, young women we spoke to were very enthusiastic about spending time in nature and they felt it could benefit young pregnant women and their babies in many ways. There are currently a wide range of nature activities available in the East Midlands. Providers of these activities have recommended ways to make sure a future study works well. An outline research plan has been co-developed with the Research Influencer Group to move forward with the next stages of this research.