



# Wellbeing and Nature Connectedness Retreats

## Who We Are

Since 2020, Out in the Field has been dedicated to providing nature connectedness retreats tailored towards supporting the wellbeing of NHS staff for the benefit of themselves, their teams and the health and care system. To date, we have hosted over 800 participants through our unique one-day offer designed to facilitate rest, relaxation, and restoration. Our approach emphasises 'whole person' wellbeing and embraces the concept of 'creative health', innovative strategies that, despite their efficacy, have yet to be widely embraced as mainstream methods for supporting health and care professionals.

We aim to expand our efforts in response to a recognised need for supporting the wellbeing of NHS and health and care staff. There is a considerable demand for increased opportunities to participate in the retreat, and we have gathered evidence supporting its effectiveness. Despite the sector's commitment, interest and need to invest in staff wellbeing, we've observed difficulties in sourcing funds for this work. As a result, we have prepared this document to provide an overview of our impact evaluation findings which demonstrates the impressive benefits for staff and the organisations that support them.

## About The Retreat

Each retreat is facilitated by experienced teachers and guides and designed around the specific needs of a team or group. The core practices of the programme are nature connection, mind-body practices, nutrition, and group reflection.

## Current Partners

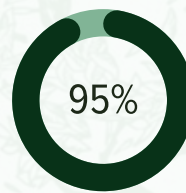
- Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust
- King's College Hospital NHS Trust
- Kent Community Health NHS Foundation Trust
- Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
- Frome Medical Practice
- Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and Farming in Protected Landscapes
- Kent Downs National Landscape
- The Sophrology Academy
- The Quadrangle
- 42 Acres



## Evidence From Our Impact Evaluation

### After one day:

In 2023, we conducted an impact evaluation of Out in the Field involving over 450 participants. It revealed a need to support staff wellbeing and demonstrated short and long-term positive benefits for both staff and the health and care system. Following the one-day retreat, participants commonly used words such as "relaxed," "positive," and "grateful" to describe their feelings about the experience.[3]



FELT CLEARER ABOUT HOW TO SUPPORT THEIR WELLBEING FOLLOWING THE RETREAT



WOULD RECOMMEND TO A COLLEAGUE

### After three months:

A survey completed three months following the retreat demonstrates that many participants continued to use techniques learnt at the retreat both at home and at work and reported finding them beneficial.

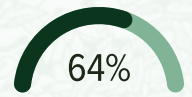
Feedback suggested that impact also extended further to improvements in relationships with colleagues, team connection and the work environment generally.[3]



SPENT MORE TIME IN NATURE



PRACTISED MIND-BODY EXERCISES SINCE THE RETREAT



POSITIVELY CHANGED THEIR EATING HABITS



FELT THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES WERE MORE POSITIVE



FELT MORE POSITIVE ABOUT THEIR WORK IN GENERAL



FELT MORE EMPOWERED TO SHAPE THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT

## Why Get Involved?

There is strong evidence indicating that prioritising staff wellbeing leads to enhanced patient experience.[1] At the same time, there is a recognised need to improve wellbeing support for NHS staff to ensure their continued ability to care for patients. The 2023 NHS Providers survey revealed that 84% of trust leaders expressed concerns about the current level of burnout, and 83% were worried about morale within the workforce.[2] Given that the repercussions of burnout and low morale extend to workforce retention and decreased patient satisfaction, action must be taken to find new and different ways to support staff and their wellbeing.

The Out in the Field retreat days not only provide immediate relief and restoration but also teach tools that can be applied both at home and in the workplace. Furthermore, our impact evaluation has demonstrated evidence of improved staff satisfaction, an outcome which remained even three months following the retreat day.

**Investing  
in staff creates  
better healthcare  
outcomes for  
patients.**

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## Creative Health and Health and Care Systems

Enhance care for individuals and communities by joining forces with us as part of your health and care system. Out in the Field applies proven Creative Health techniques to boost the health and wellbeing of participants. Partnering with us could support your health and care system by:

- Advancing workforce wellbeing through affordable and accessible channels.
- Affiliation with the growing Creative Health movement associated with integrated care systems.
- Connecting with the community by providing NHS staff and others a chance for restoration and engagement with their surrounding natural environment.

“People are happy to share and open up and seem happier and more committed at work, that their voices are heard and that how they feel actually matters”  
**Participant**

“You have to learn how to look after yourself to look after others. So the retreat embodied mental health, nutrition, learning how to sleep better, learning how to recognise stress and the needs of our colleagues. We are in jobs in which it is our role to look after other people and you can't do that unless you feel well in yourself”

**Maria Crawley, ITU Matron Darent Valley Hospital**

## Are you interested in this for your teams or staff?

Find out more at: <https://outinthefield.org/>  
or email: [jessie@outinthefield.org](mailto:jessie@outinthefield.org).

### Footnotes

[1] West M, Coia D (2019) Caring for doctors, Caring for patients. How to transform healthcare environments to support doctors and medical students to care for patients. London: GMC.

[2] NHSProviders (2023). State of the Provider Sector 2023. [online] nhsproviders.org. [Accessed 23 Nov. 2023]. NHS Providers conducts an annual inquiry to assess the status of the NHS provider sector. The 2023 inquiry gathered responses from 185 trust leaders representing 118 trusts during September and October. This comprehensive report offers a detailed overview of trust leaders' perspectives on the present condition of the provider sector.

[3] Hall, E (2023) An Impact Evaluation of 'Out in the Field': A Retreat for NHS Staff. MASc Thesis. University College London.

Ellana Hall conducted the impact evaluation for 'Out in the Field' as part of her dissertation thesis for the Creative Health MASc program at UCL. The evaluation, undertaken between April and August 2023, employed a mixed-methods approach, combining action research and secondary survey data. The study involved over 450 participants.

