

Urban greenspace with trees

In this woodland type:

- Older people particularly valued paths and seating in urban greenspace
- Women and parents valued play areas in this environment
- Sports facilities were valued by middle-aged people and families with children



Preferences for infrastructure and natural features* in woodland

*other than trees.

The UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments have set ambitious targets to plant trees; this will create new woodlands and forests and expand existing ones. Where woodland managers are focusing on promoting greater public use of woodlands for a range of activities and benefits, it is important to understand the infrastructure, facilities, and natural features that the public may want in these areas. This will help encourage more people to use woods and forests, and so maximise the benefits associated with spending time there.

Here we outline the key findings from a review of UK and international literature on public preferences for the physical infrastructure (e.g. paths and signage), natural features other than trees (e.g. flowers and grassy areas), and social infrastructure (e.g. the presence of others, organised activities and spaces for interaction) in woods and forests. The findings are presented according to three different types of wooded environment: urban greenspaces with trees, peri-urban woodlands, and large visitor destination

forests in more rural locations. The findings presented are those where most evidence exists in the literature reviewed, that is, the preferences and user groups most commonly reported.

Across the three location types, preferences for a wide range of infrastructure, facilities and natural features were identified. There is ample evidence about preferences for seating and paths, and artificial infrastructure in general seems to dominate the literature. There is much less evidence about preferences for natural features and social infrastructure.

There is a larger body of evidence on preferences in large visitor destination forests and urban greenspaces with trees (typically urban parks), while less evidence exists for peri-urban woodlands.

The full review is available [here](#) and includes preferences relating to a broader range of user groups and additional infrastructure and features.

Labels like this indicate how many studies found evidence that members of the public have a preference for this feature in this environment



Peri-urban woodland

In this woodland type:

- Older people, women and people from deprived communities showed preferences for paths
- Wheelchair users expressed need for accessible trails
- Visitors, older people and those concerned about safety showed preferences for maps, information and signage
- Seating was preferred by older people in this woodland type



In this woodland type:

- Active users, women and older people particularly valued paths
- Seating and BBQ and cooking areas were found to be particularly important to older people
- Older people and parents of young children valued maps, information and signage
- Older people and women showed a preference for car parking
- Provision of play areas was most likely to be preferred by younger visitors and women
 - Social infrastructure was particularly preferred by women, ethnic minority visitors and those with disabilities



Large visitor forests in rural areas