



London Met Lab

A toolkit for Wild Ways:
influencing rewilding behaviour in
London's gardens

*London Met CARES - Centre for Applied
Research in Empowering Society*



London Met Lab

CARES
Centre for
Applied Research in
Empowering Society

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CARES Participatory Research Toolkit

Wild Ways: engaging with London residents

Contents

London Met Lab

- 4 About London Met Lab
- 5 Six London Challenges

CARES

- 6 About CARES
- 6 CARES Values and Ethos
- 6 Participatory Research Toolkits

Rewild My Street

- 8 About Rewild My Street
- 9 Vision
- 9 Resources

Wild Ways

- 10 About Wild Ways
- 11 Stages
- 12 Theory of Change
- 14 Framework

Stage 1 Literature Review: Methods

- 16 Summary: scoping review

Stage 1 Literature Review: Findings

- 17 What does the literature tell us about understanding urban-rewilding behaviour?
- 18 What does the literature tell us about influencing urban-rewilding behaviour?

Stage 2 Survey: Methods

- 20 Summary: quantitative research

Stage 2 Survey: Findings

- 21 Which demographic factors affect rewilding behaviour among London residents?
- 21 What rewilding activity do London residents do in their gardens?

Stage 2 Interviews: Methods

- 22 Summary: qualitative research

Stage 2 Interviews: Findings

- 23 What would help London residents do more rewilding in their gardens?

Stage 3 Intervention Strategy: Methods

- 24 Summary: intervention development

Stage 3 Intervention Strategy: Findings

- 25 How do Londoners define 'urban rewilding'?
- 26 What interventions would increase rewilding behaviour by London residents?

Stage 4 Intervention Testing: Methods

- 28 Summary: intervention testing

Stage 4 Intervention Testing: Findings

- 29 What was the impact of the marketing and advice intervention?
- 30 What was the impact of the schools intervention?

Credits

- 31

This toolkit presents participatory research conducted for the Wild Ways study and implemented through the Rewild My Street urban-rewilding campaign, with support from London Met Lab's CARES research centre. The toolkit introduces London Met Lab, CARES, Rewild My Street and Wild Ways, before summarising methods and findings from each of the study's four stages.

London Met Lab

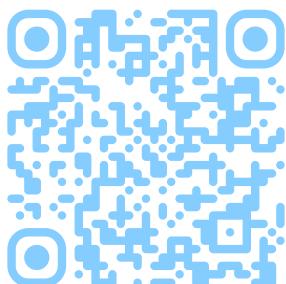
About London Met Lab

London Met Lab is London Metropolitan University's civic and community engagement initiative, with goals:

- To embrace the strategic priorities of our London partners and concerns of our local communities to support the city's economy and address the social issues it faces
- To provide the capital with values-driven graduates who will support London's transformation in line with our mission
- To provide opportunities for our staff and students to give back to our city and contribute to its success

The Lab addresses six challenges facing London, of which this research focuses on Environment.

[London Met Lab](#)



London Met Lab CARES team at launch event (London Metropolitan University)

Six London Challenges

Crime

Our researchers have spent years exploring the drivers and impacts of crime, in areas as diverse as knife crime and gang culture, to cyber crime and fraud.



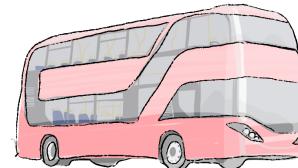
Discrimination

We want to support communities where people of all backgrounds can thrive, where difference is respected and celebrated.



Environment

We want to work with you on innovative design and research projects to ensure that London becomes carbon neutral, has clean air and is at the forefront of urban greening.



Health Improvement

We want to support the community to help ensure all Londoners get a fair opportunity to live a long, healthy life.



Poverty and Deprivation

We want to work with our communities to support people into employment, reduce within-work poverty and improve London's chronic problems around housing and homelessness.



Social Wealth

We want to support organisations of all sizes through holistic organisational support to ensure everyone is treated fairly.



CARES

About CARES

Centre for Applied Research in Empowering Society (CARES) is a multi-disciplinary group of academics joined by our dedication to applied research and knowledge exchange with public institutions, community groups, third sector organisations and socially responsible businesses. We support London Metropolitan University's commitment to the sustainable development agenda by taking a multidisciplinary approach to tackling social problems.

The aim of CARES is to challenge social injustices by using empowering models of engagement to address systems that produce inequalities.

Our mission is to critically develop interdisciplinary and system wide solutions to institutional reform, policy change and delivery issues, and to creatively enhance the economic potential to deliver social and planetary justice to service users and stakeholders.

CARES Values and Ethos

- Empowering: We design solutions and practices that are based in relational ethics of care, contemporary relational and collaborative management models. In our applied research, we work with our local communities.

- Inter-disciplinary: We actively seek to attract colleagues and students from all disciplinary backgrounds and recognise the importance of tackling society's challenges from multiple perspectives to yield sustainable solutions.
- Collaborative: We support collaboration internally and externally and develop a community of practice where researchers at all stages in their careers can thrive.
- Social Justice Focused: We focus on addressing systemic problems through empowerment and social justice.

CARES aims to develop effective methodologies that empower citizens to be part of these systemic changes. We are impact driven and seek to elevate the lived experience of individuals and communities into actionable policy recommendations, at the same time as translating complex policy and frameworks into usable knowledge for community groups and networks.

CARES, as an integral part of London Met Lab, will drive impact delivery of the Giving Back to the City strand of the University's strategy.

Participatory Research Toolkits

- The development of our Participatory Toolkits is part of our overall mission to produce effective methodologies that empower citizens to be part of these systemic changes.
- We received funding from London Metropolitan University to help develop a culture of collaborative research and community engagement.
- The toolkits are meant to build an evidence base, compile resources and methodologies meant to enhance participatory approaches and co-production across diverse disciplinary research practice.



Wild Ways participatory research toolkit at London Met Art, Architecture & Design research exhibition

ISLINGTON GREENER TOGETHER



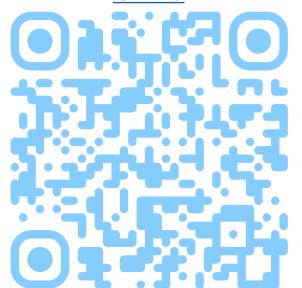
Concept collage for London Met Lab & Islington Council
rewilding project (Siân Moxon/Rewild My Street)

Environment Challenge

London Met Lab and CARES support innovative research and knowledge-exchange projects that address the Environment Challenge. These include the Wild Ways research study and the associated Rewild My Street campaign, which aim to help the capital increase its greenspace and biodiversity through design and behaviour change to encourage urban rewilding.

The Environment Challenge is led by Wild Ways co-researcher and Rewild My Street founder Siân Moxon, Associate Professor of Sustainable Architecture at London Metropolitan University.

CARES



Rewild My Street



Concept collage for Rewild My Street (Siân & Jon Moxon/Rewild My Street)

About Rewild My Street

Rewild My Street provides design-led guidance for people wishing to adapt their homes, gardens and streets to encourage wildlife. Inspiring images show how to integrate wildlife features into a typical urban setting. Links to stylish products and step-by-step activities show how to achieve this, while species and habitat information highlight the value of making these changes. Rewild My Street seeks to reverse the trend of city streets going grey. It started in London, where 2.5 Hyde parks of green space are lost each year through changes to private gardens.

Rewild My Street is a design-research project based at London Metropolitan University's Centre for Urban and Built Ecologies. The project enables practice-centred action research, exploring 'urban rewilding'* as a means to address biodiversity and greenspace decline, while promoting sustainable redevelopment of cities. The project has generated academic papers on themes including city representation, generosity in architectural practice, the benefits of living with nature, perceptions of wildness and environmental behaviour change.

*urban rewilding = increasing green and blue space in towns and cities to enhance biodiversity, and create an urban ecosystem for climate-change resilience and human wellbeing.

Vision

Take a typical urban residential street. Adapt its terraces, gardens and streetscape to transform it into a haven for wildlife. The street will come back to life: the bees will be buzzing, the birds will be singing, the frogs will be hopping and the owls will be hooting. The changing seasons and the pattern of day and night will be seen from every living room - while children growing up on the street will have nature on their doorsteps.

No more paved over front gardens, no more felled street trees, no more synthetic lawns. Bring back real greenery and real life. Every small change will add up to make a big difference.

Just add wildflower meadows, patio ponds, bird boxes and feeders, and insect hotels. Puncture the fences to link up back gardens, forming mammal corridors. And watch the wildlife return in droves.

While addressing the alarming decline in biodiversity, the newly green streets will improve air quality, and lessen urban overheating and flood risk associated with climate change. Londoners will benefit from improved health and wellbeing through better access to nature.

Gardens cover a quarter of many cities and existing buildings will remain with us for years to come. For a lasting legacy, we must enable these spaces to accommodate nature, turning whole cities into urban national parks to make future generations proud. Rewild My Street will do exactly this.

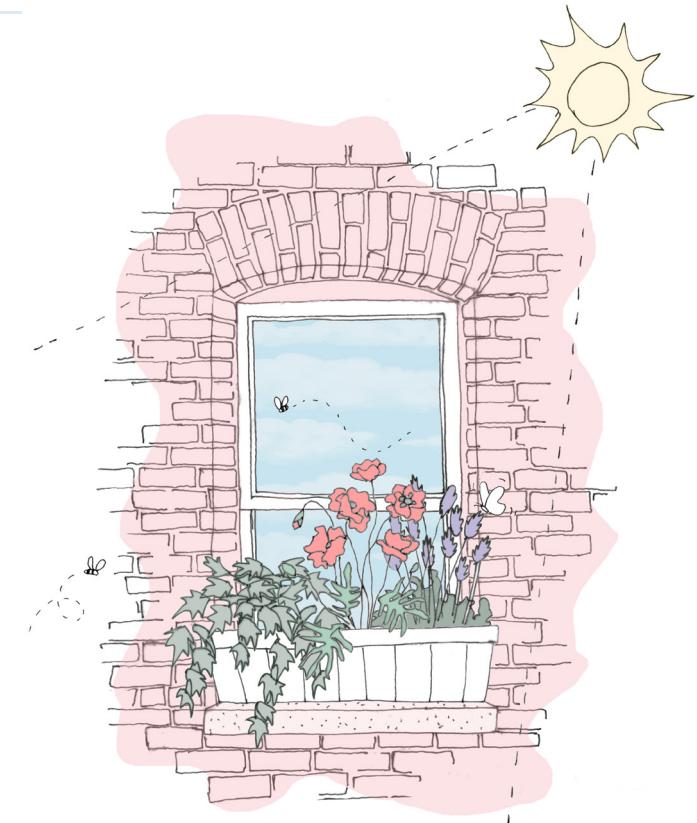
Resources

The www.rewildmystreet.org website offers guidance on species you could encourage and habitats you could create in your street, home and garden, alongside suggestions for products to attract wildlife and activities for you and your family to help wildlife in your street, home and garden.

You can sign up for seasonal 'Wild Makeover Tips' in a monthly newsletter.

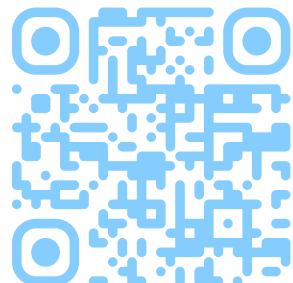
The @rewildmystreet social media accounts offer weekly inspiration on urban rewilding, and daily posts for The Wildlife Trusts' '30 Days Wild' event every June. These include short activity videos on Youtube.

The project's 'London, Let's Get Rewild' campaign has specific advice to help Londoners to rewild their gardens.



Window box pattern (Siân Moxon & Viktoria Fenyes/
Rewild My Street)

rewildmystreet.org



Wild Ways

About Wild Ways

The Wild Ways study combines design research with behaviour-change methodologies and emerged from the award-winning Rewild My Street urban-rewilding campaign. It is based at the Centre for Urban and Built Ecologies (CUBE) research centre.

Wild Ways aims to understand and influence urban-rewilding behaviour in London's private residential gardens. This addresses the issue of declining vegetation and biodiversity in urban gardens. Small adaptations to gardens can create significant wildlife habitat, which is vital in a time of increasing urbanisation and ecological crisis.

This interdisciplinary study is providing new insights for influencing urban-rewilding behaviour, supporting London Met Lab's Environment Challenge and the capital's status as the world's first National Park City, and developing a model for cities worldwide.

Ethics approval - covering informed participant consent, anonymity, data minimisation and storage - has been obtained from the university.

Street elevation (Siân & Jon Moxon & Viktoria Fenyes/
Rewild My Street)



Stages

The research follows four stages:

1. A scoping review of the existing literature on understanding and influencing urban-rewilding behaviour;
2. Mixed-methods research with London residents to understand the factors influencing urban-rewilding behaviour;

3. Co-creation of an intervention strategy with London residents to promote urban-rewilding behaviour;
4. Testing of the intervention strategy through Rewild My Street.

These stages align with a Theory of Change. Every stage is underpinned by the Capability Opportunity and Motivation (COM-B) behaviour model, which sits

at the centre of the Behaviour Change Wheel (BCW) framework.

The following pages introduce the Theory of Change, COM-B and BCW, before presenting aims, methods and findings from each stage.



Wild Ways

Theory of Change

Discover (Stage 1)

Review the existing literature to understand the capability, opportunity and motivation to rewild, with a focus on private and communal urban gardens.

Review the existing literature to understand the intervention and policy areas that influence rewilding, with a focus on private and communal urban gardens.

Define (Stage 2)

Talk to Londoners to understand their capability, opportunity and motivation to rewild, with a focus on private and communal gardens.

Survey Londoners to understand their current rewilding activity, with a focus on private and communal gardens, and related demographic factors.

Develop (Stage 3)

Hold workshops with Londoners to develop potential solutions to influence Londoners' capability, opportunity, and motivation to rewild, guided by the Behaviour Change Wheel.

Hold steering groups with London policymakers, designers and conservation organisations to develop an intervention strategy to influence Londoners' capability, opportunity and motivation to rewild.

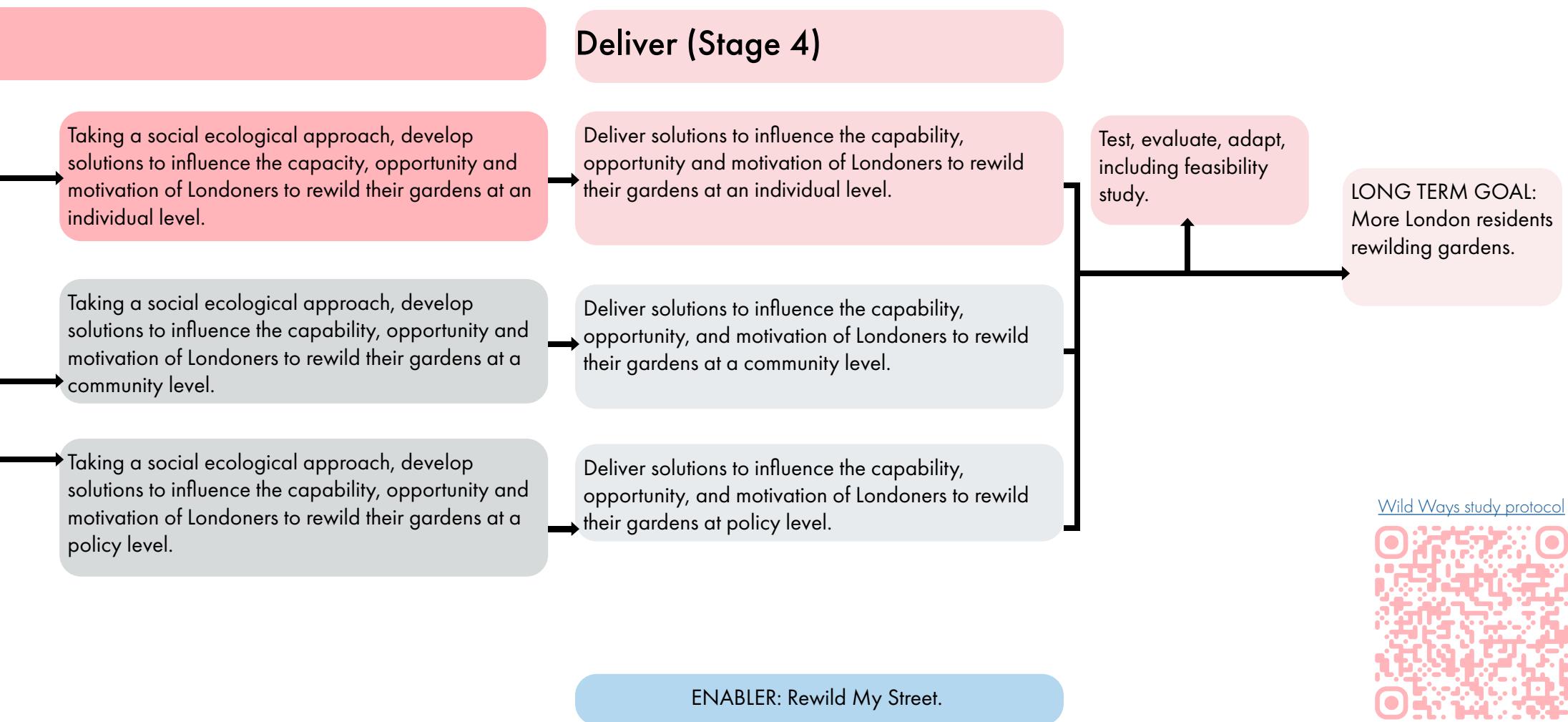
Notes: The Theory of change has been influenced by the Design Council's Double Diamond guidance.

The Wild Ways study's four project stages follow the Double Diamond's four phases: Stage 1 is the Discover phase, Stage 2 is the Define stage, Stage 3 is the Develop phase and Stage 4 is the Deliver phase.

The study's scope has thus far explored behaviour change at the individual level in the Develop and Deliver phases. There is potential for future project stages to explore behaviour change at community and policy levels.

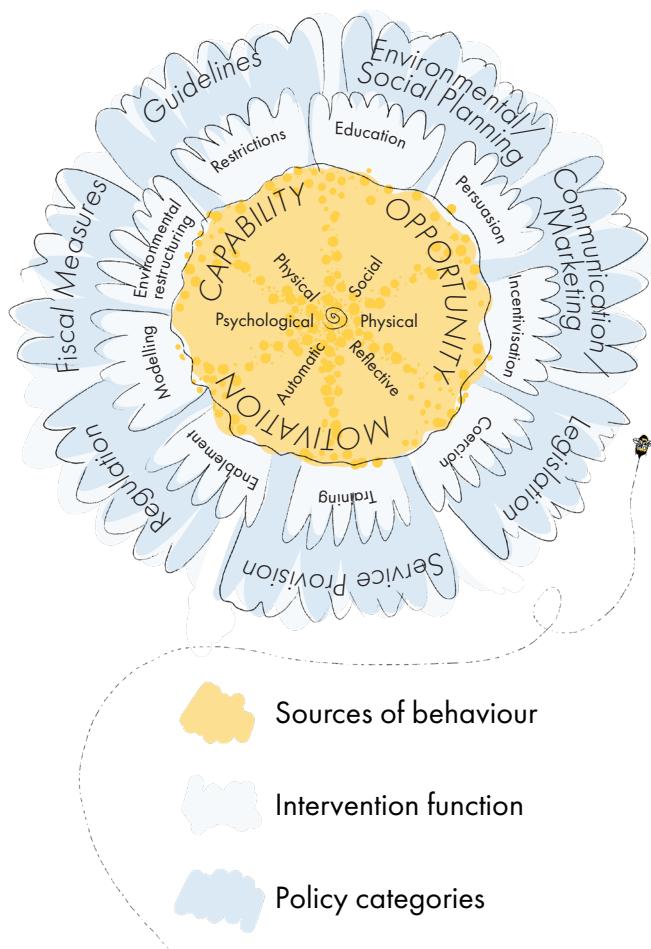
ENABLER: National, regional, and local strategies/policies in the areas of climate change, biodiversity, and health.

Wild Ways' project stages align with a theory of change



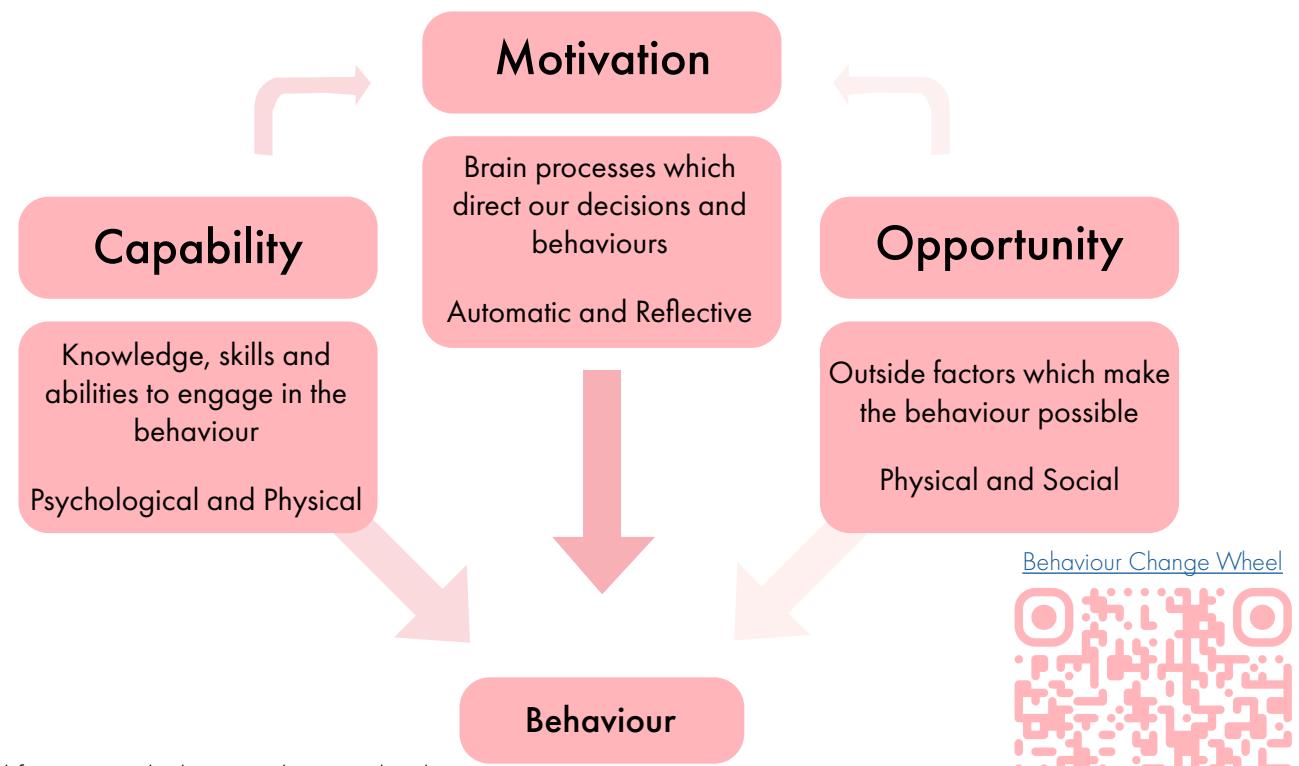
Wild Ways

Framework

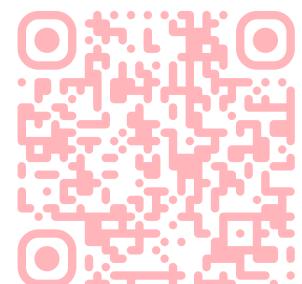


The 'COM-B' model states that behaviour arises from an interaction between one's capability, opportunity and motivation to carry out that behaviour.

The 'COM-B' model was chosen as it sits at the centre of a comprehensive intervention-development framework, the BCW, enabling progression to intervention design to support behaviour change.

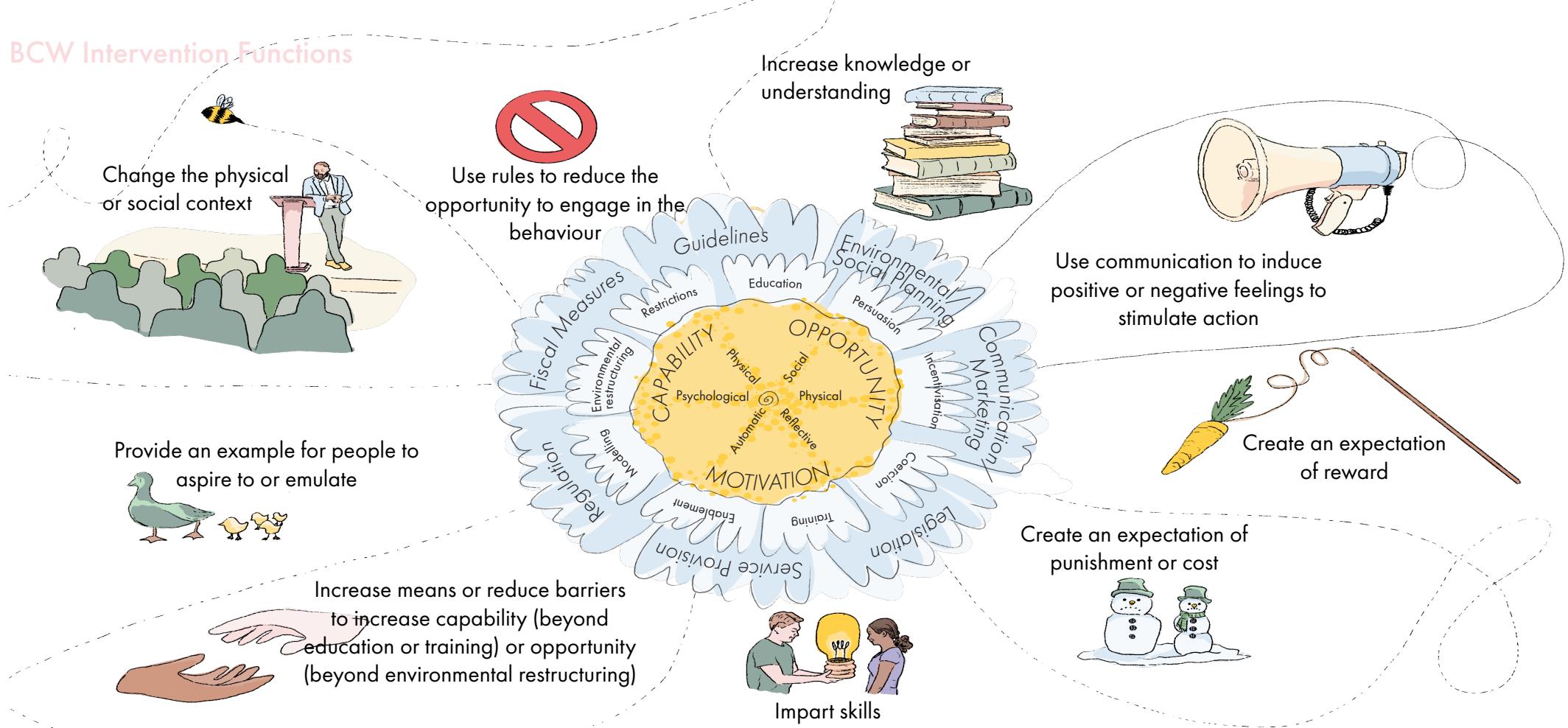


Adapted from www.behaviourchangewheel.com
(Michie et. al., 2025)



Wild Ways' project stages are underpinned by the Behaviour Change Wheel Framework, which includes the 'COM-B' model

BCW Intervention Functions



Adapted from www.behaviourchangewheel.com
(Michie et. al., 2025)

Stage 1 - Literature Review: Methods

Summary: scoping review on understanding and influencing urban-rewilding behaviour in private gardens



Aim: scope current knowledge on understanding and influencing urban-rewilding behaviour in gardens



Method: review of existing literature on urban-rewilding behaviour in gardens, coded to COM-B model to identify understanding aspects and BCW to identify influencing aspects



Results: capability, opportunity and motivation all drive rewilding behaviour in gardens. All aspects of practice and policy have the potential to influence rewilding behaviour in gardens

Stage 1 graphical abstract (Siân Moxon & Freya Snelling)

Stage 1 - Literature Review: Findings

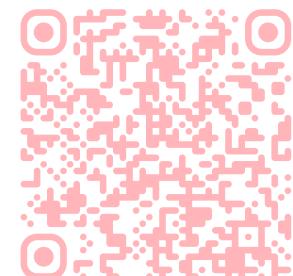
What does the existing literature tell us about understanding urban-rewilding behaviour in private residential gardens?

COM-B Factor	Rewilding Barrier	Rewilding Facilitator
Psychological Capability	/	/
Physical Capability	/	/
Physical Opportunity	//	//
Social Opportunity	//	//
Reflective Motivation	///	///
Automatic Motivation	//	//
Demographic Factors	/	/

Table showing coding of COM-B factors in existing literature

- The literature on understanding rewilding behaviour is in its infancy (25 papers)
- All COM-B factors were found in the literature, suggesting they all inform rewilding behaviour in gardens, alongside demographic factors
- Opportunity and motivation factors are most cited; physical capability is least cited in the literature
- Facilitators are cited more than barriers, suggesting a positive stance from the literature

[Stage 1 understanding paper](#)



Stage 1 - Literature Review: Findings

What does the existing literature tell us about influencing urban-rewilding behaviour in private residential gardens?

Intervention Functions	
Education	///
Training	///
Persuasion	//
Incentivisation	//
Coercion	/
Enablement	///
Modelling	//
Environmental Restructuring	//
Restriction	/

Policy Categories	
Environmental/ Social Planning	///
Communications/ Marketing	///
Legislation	//
Service Provision	//
Regulation	/
Fiscal Measures	//
Guidelines	//

- The literature on influencing rewilding behaviour is in its infancy (26 papers)

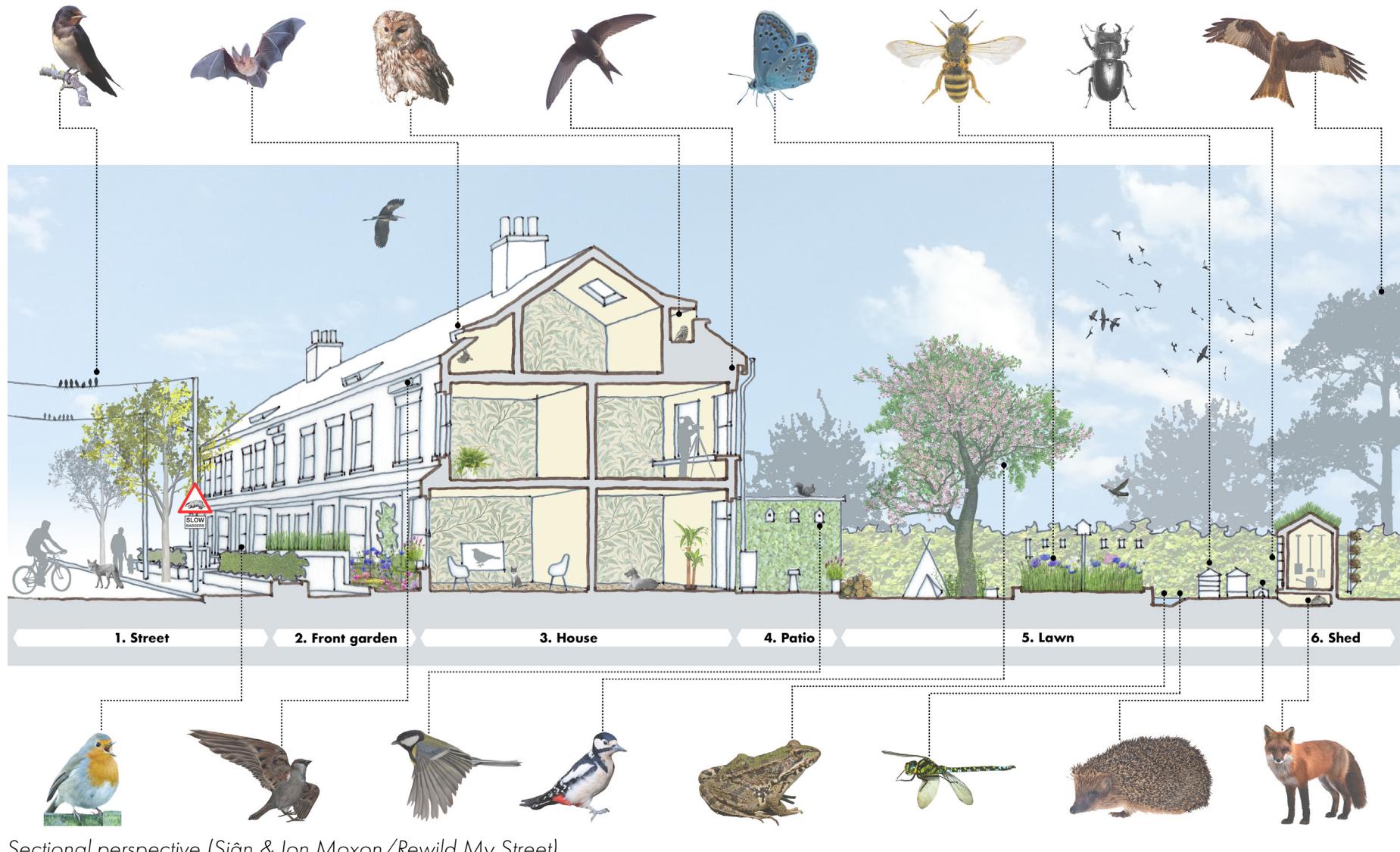
Intervention Functions

- All intervention functions were found in the literature, suggesting they all have the potential to influence rewilding behaviour in gardens
- Education, training and enablement are most cited; coercion and restriction are least cited in the literature
- The findings imply a need for action across multiple areas

Policy Categories

- All policy categories were found in the literature, suggesting they all have the potential to influence rewilding behaviour in gardens
- Environmental/social planning and communication/marketing are most cited; regulation is least cited in the literature
- The findings imply a need for action by multiple stakeholders

Tables showing coding of BCW intervention functions & policy categories in existing literature



Sectional perspective (Siân & Jon Moxon/Rewild My Street)

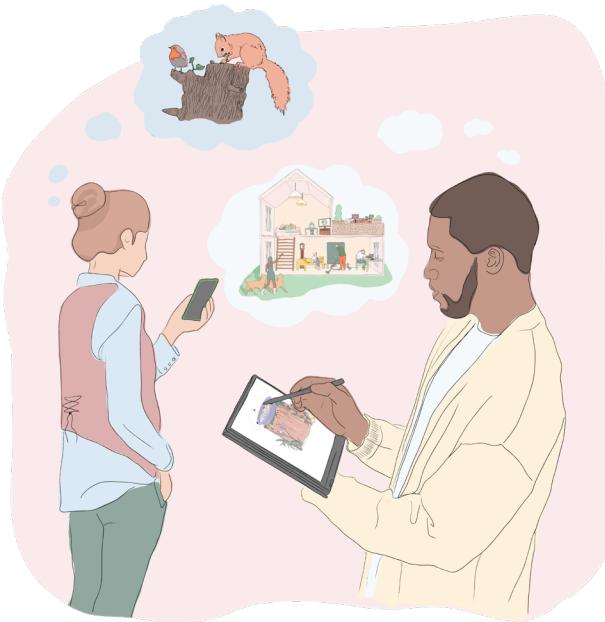
Stage 2 - Surveys: Methods

Summary: quantitative research on understanding urban-rewilding behaviour in London's private gardens

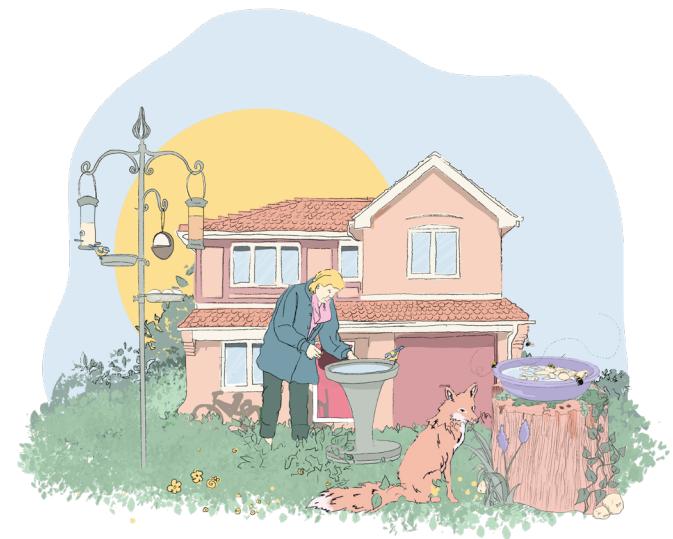


Aim: understanding rewilding behaviour in London gardens

Stage 2 quantitative graphical abstract (Siân Moxon & Freya Snelling)



Method: digital, cross-sectional survey of 660 London residents (snowball sampling) to understand their current engagement in various types of rewilding activity and any demographic influences



Results: Londoners are highly engaged in rewilding activity, especially providing food, water and homes for wildlife. Conservation-organisation membership, larger garden size and older age increase the likelihood of carrying out rewilding behaviour

Stage 2 - Surveys: Findings

Which demographic factors affect rewilding behaviour among London residents?

A model including age, conservation-organisation membership, household income, accommodation type, home-ownership status, dependants and garden type predicts urban-rewilding behaviour with 98.1% accuracy.

Being a member of a conservation organisation and having a larger garden are significant predictors of rewilding behaviour.

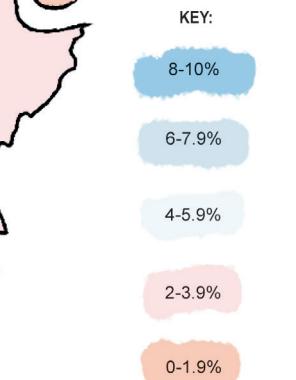
What rewilding activity do London residents do in their gardens?

82% of respondents engaged in rewilding activity.

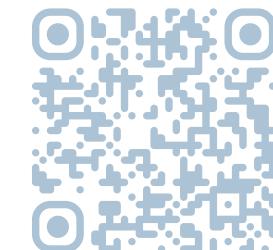
- 53% provided food for wildlife
- 50% provided water for wildlife
- 47% provided homes for wildlife
- 29% created habitat corridors to adjacent gardens
- 37% practised nature-friendly gardening



Heat map showing survey respondents by London borough



[Stage 2 quantitative paper](#)



Stage 2 - Interviews: Methods

Summary: qualitative research on understanding urban-rewilding behaviour in London's private gardens



Aim: understanding London residents' current rewilding behaviour in their gardens

Stage 2 qualitative graphical abstract (Siân Moxon & Freya Snelling)

Method: video interviews with 20 London residents (open invitation), coded to COM-B model, to understand the capability, opportunity and motivation influences on their rewilding behaviour in their gardens

Results: all COM-B factors were found in the interview transcripts. Themes identified within these that impact on Londoners' rewilding behaviour include thirst for knowledge; space, time, cost; and thoughts and feelings about nature

Stage 2 - Interviews: Findings

What would help London residents do more rewilding in their gardens?

COM-B Factor	Theme	Sub-themes
Physical Capability	Heavy lifting	
Psychological Capability	Thirst for knowledge	What I would like to know; learning by experience; sources of inspiration
	The bigger picture	
Physical Opportunity	Local conditions	Biodiversity; climate
	Amount of space	
	Time to garden	
Social Opportunity	Community engagement	Teamwork; raising awareness
	Local/national government involvement	Communicating a wider strategy; supporting rewilding; encouraging rewilding
Reflective Motivation	Appreciating wider benefits	
	Thinking about nature	Helping the environment; enhancing growing
	Creating a haven	
	Competing priorities	Aesthetic; functional; safety
Automatic Motivation	Feeling about nature	Species; the environment; connection with nature
	Maintenance habits	
Demographic Factors	Age	Age of children

Thematic analysis of interviews by COM-B factor

Stage 3 - Intervention Strategy: Methods

Summary: developing an intervention strategy to influence urban-rewilding behaviour in London's private gardens



Aim: develop an intervention strategy to encourage rewilding behaviour in London gardens

Stage 3 graphical abstract (Siân Moxon & Freya Snelling)



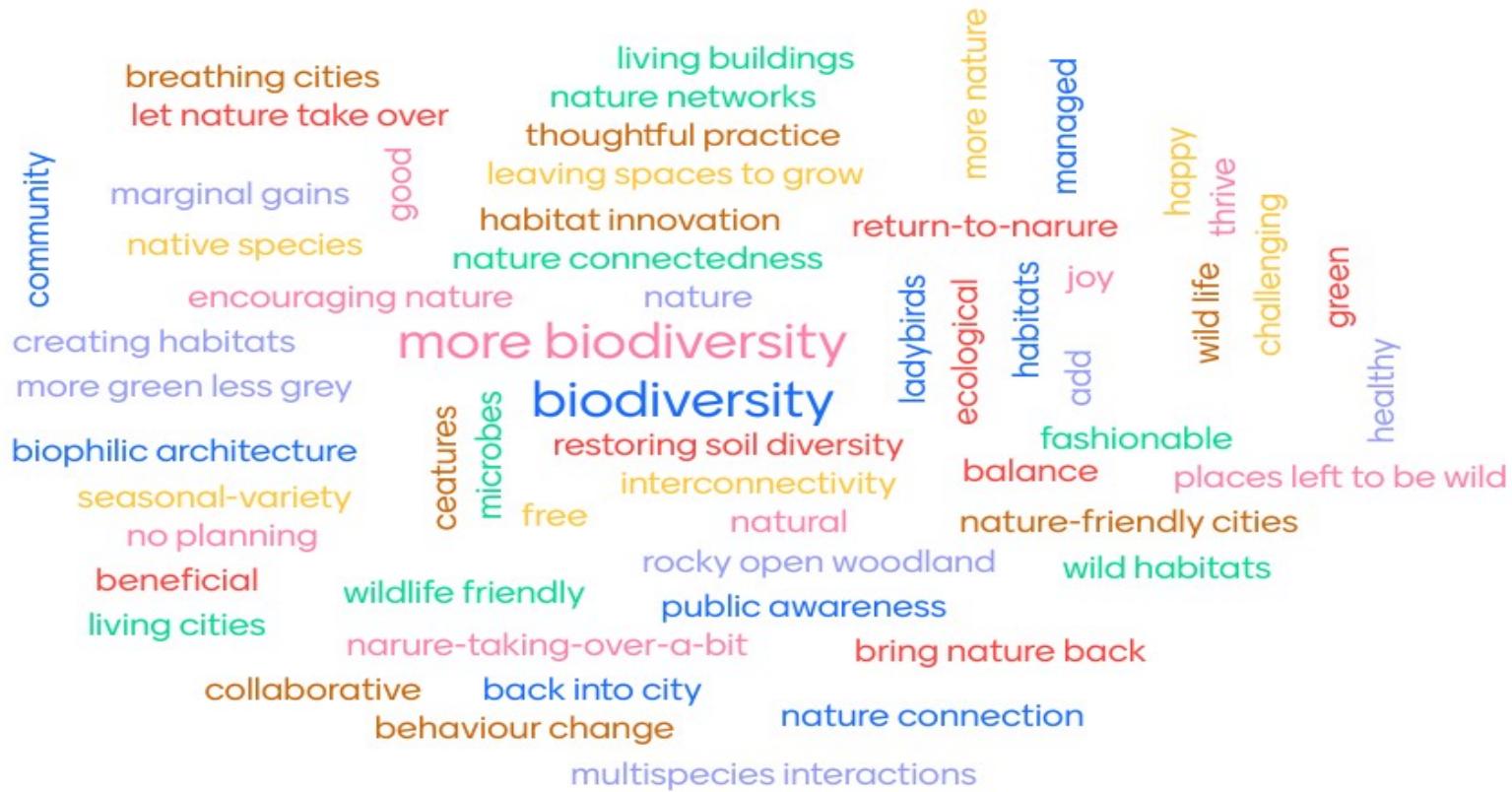
Method: workshops with 20 London residents to brainstorm practice interventions, coded to BCW intervention functions and analysed to APEASE criteria



Results: 3 key intervention areas were identified as having high potential for pilot testing through Rewild My Street: education; marketing and communications; and bespoke advice

Stage 3 - Intervention Strategy: Findings

How do Londoners define 'urban rewilding'?



Word cloud showing responses from resident workshop participants to 'What is "urban rewilding" to you?' (Mentimeter)

Stage 3 - Intervention Strategy: Findings

What interventions would increase rewilding behaviour by London residents?

Intervention Function	Education	Training	Enablement
Strategy	<p>Local knowledge; nature walks;</p> <p>Increased understanding of what rewilding is (agreed definition for London) and how to do it (starting small);</p> <p>Knowing what to grow, where and when; and maintenance requirements;</p> <p>Myth busters (pet and pest advice, drawbacks of/alternatives to paving and artificial grass, problem-solving, FAQs);</p> <p>Directory of knowledge sources.</p>	<p>How-to guides (from window boxes to green roofs; something is better than nothing; how to begin; how to grow);</p> <p>Guidance for tenants on how to discuss rewilding with landlords;</p> <p>Guidance on how to use containers;</p> <p>Simple activities;</p> <p>Workshops (eg with schools).</p>	<p>Tools to count/monitor species (link to what is already available);</p> <p>Rewilding garden-design service/toolkit;</p> <p>Connect people to groups that already exist; build a rewilding community;</p> <p>Link to other campaigns eg Hedgehog Street;</p> <p>Link to local events - signpost;</p> <p>Help people visualise rewilding;</p> <p>Provide advice service (listen to real issues and influence change; live(ish) chat);</p> <p>Run photography competition.</p>

Summary of intervention ideas from resident workshop by BCW intervention function (Coercion and Restrictions were not suggested)

Modelling

Case studies eg images for high-rise balconies;

Model easy-to-implement changes;

Show whole house as wildlife habitat;

Role models.

Persuasion

Target people's emotions;

Change perceptions of rewilding;

Focus messages (targeted messaging) on what people want, eg somewhere to sit, rather than the environment; consider messages carefully - link to health, cost of living (grow your own food), property value; keep messages positive;

Specifically target car owners to not pave over their front garden - suggest alternative approaches;

Show aerial-photo of connected gardens;

Use stories and relatable images.

Environmental restructuring

Highlight value of interconnected gardens.

APEASE Analysis

Analysis of Acceptability, Practicability, Effectiveness, Affordability, Spill-over effects and Equity identified the following interventions for testing:

- Digital marketing campaign
- Schools' engagement
- Bespoke gardening advice

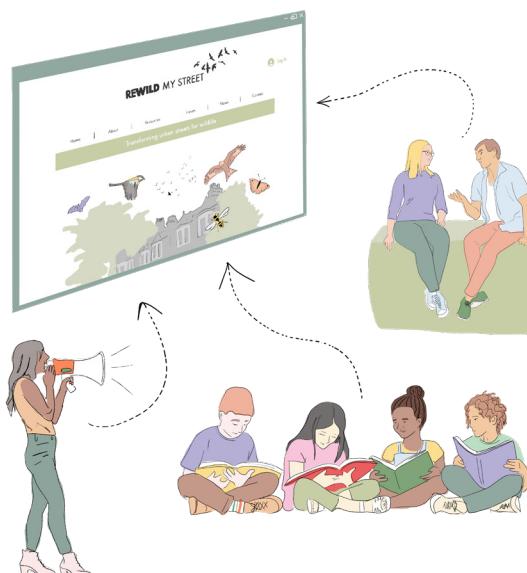
Stage 4 - Intervention Testing: Methods

Summary: testing an intervention strategy to influence rewilding behaviour in London's private gardens



Aim: measure the impact of an intervention to encourage rewilding behaviour in London's gardens

Stage 4 graphical abstract (Siân Moxon & Freya Snelling)



Method: pilot test of schools' engagement, digital marketing campaign and advice service through Rewild My Street



Results: impact on rewilding behaviour in London's private gardens TBC. Preliminary findings suggest marketing messages on the environmental, personal and problem-solving benefits of rewilding promote engagement; community advice service uptake is modest; there is demand for teacher-training resources

Stage 4 - Intervention Testing: Findings

What was the impact of the marketing and advice interventions?

Environmental concerns



London, Let's Get Rewild social media post highlighting environmental benefits for 'No Mow May' theme (Siân Moxon, Leo Gamberini & Freya Snelling)

The 'London, Let's Get Rewild' campaign ran for 3 months over the summer, testing messaging around 3 motivations for rewilding gardens - environmental concerns, personal benefits and problem solving - through weekly themes. It included carousel posts on Instagram, X, Facebook and LinkedIn, and video reels on Instagram and YouTube. It was endorsed by partners, including ZSL Institute of Zoology and the Design Museum, and promoted on London media,

Personal benefits

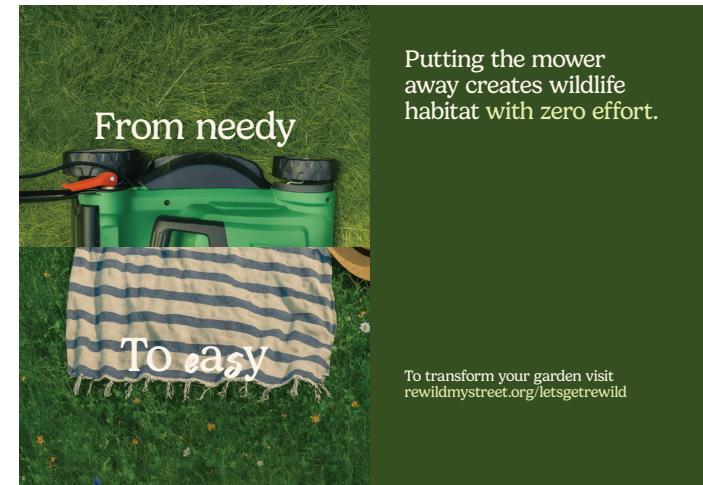


including ITV London News.

The campaign prompted over 100 sign ups to Rewild My Street and substantially boosted engagement with its social media. Case study interviews with 6 Rewild My Street subscribers are establishing whether being part of this conservation organisation translates into sustained rewilding activity in residents' gardens.

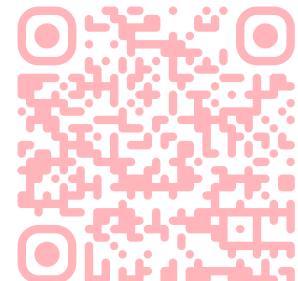
The 'Rewild Line' community advice service ran for 3 months over the autumn. Only 10 residents joined following announcements in Rewild My Street's newsletters with limited engagement to date. A

Problem solving



questionnaire survey of participants will establish its usefulness.

[London, Let's Get Rewild](#)



Stage 4 - Intervention Testing: Findings

What was the impact of the schools intervention?



Teacher training toolkit (Justin Webb)

'Rewilding Ready: A teacher's toolkit for KS2' is being tested with focus groups of education experts for feedback on lesson plans on urban rewilding for use with Key Stage 2 primary school pupils.

Credits

Core Research Team

Siân Moxon (Co-Investigator)
Justin Webb (Co-Investigator)
Alexandros Semertzis (Research Assistant)
Mina Samangoie

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Magdalena Olchawska (Marketing)
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Diana Stirbu

Partners

Design Museum Future Observatory
Oxford Brookes University
ZSL Institute of Zoology

Funders

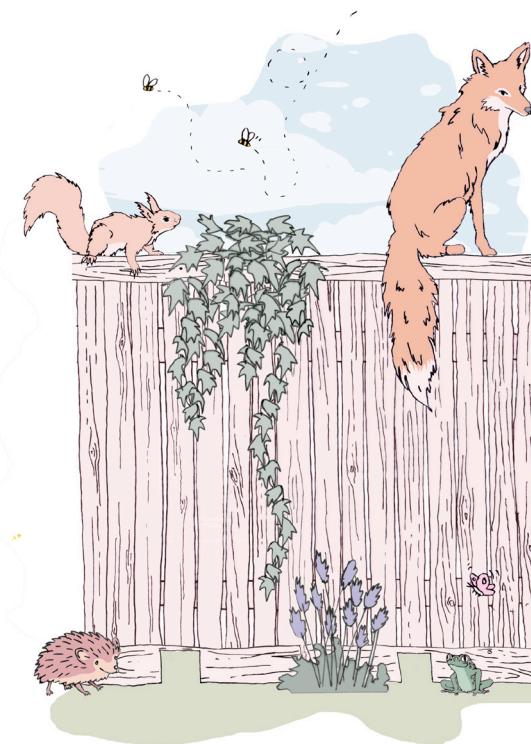
Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
Kusuma Trust
London Metropolitan University
MIT

Toolkit

Editing: Siân Moxon
Graphic design & illustration: Freya Snelling
Text: Siân Moxon & Diana Stirbu
Cover image: Viktoria Fenyes/Rewild My Street
Other images: see captions
Funding: London Met Lab CARES, AHRC & Kusuma Trust

Further Information

For the latest project updates see
www.rewildmystreet.org & follow @rewildmystreet on social media.



Wildlife gap pattern (Siân Moxon & Viktoria Fenyes/
Rewild My Street)

