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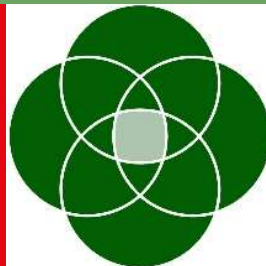
**Cycling and  
Society**

9<sup>th</sup> September 2024

# Cycling in the West of England: Nature, Sustainability and Wellbeing

**UWE  
Bristol**

University  
of the  
West of  
England



Centre for  
Transport &  
Society



# Background

Cycling and nature (connection) both offer benefits

What role does nature play in cycling experiences & practices?



Image: © Lisa Muller



# Nature connectedness

The extent to which one feels part of nature.

Linked with:

- Five pathways to increase nature connectedness (Lumber *et al.*, 2017)
- Pro-environmental and pro-nature behaviour (PEB/PNB) (e.g., Martin *et al.*, 2020)

[findingnature.org.uk/resources](https://findingnature.org.uk/resources)

Pathway	This pathway is about...
Contact 	Tuning in to nature through the senses.
Emotion 	Feeling alive through the emotions nature brings.
Beauty 	Noticing nature's beauty.
Meaning 	Nature bringing meaning to our lives.
Compassion 	Caring and taking action for nature.

Image: © University of Derby (Nature Connectedness Research Group, 2022)

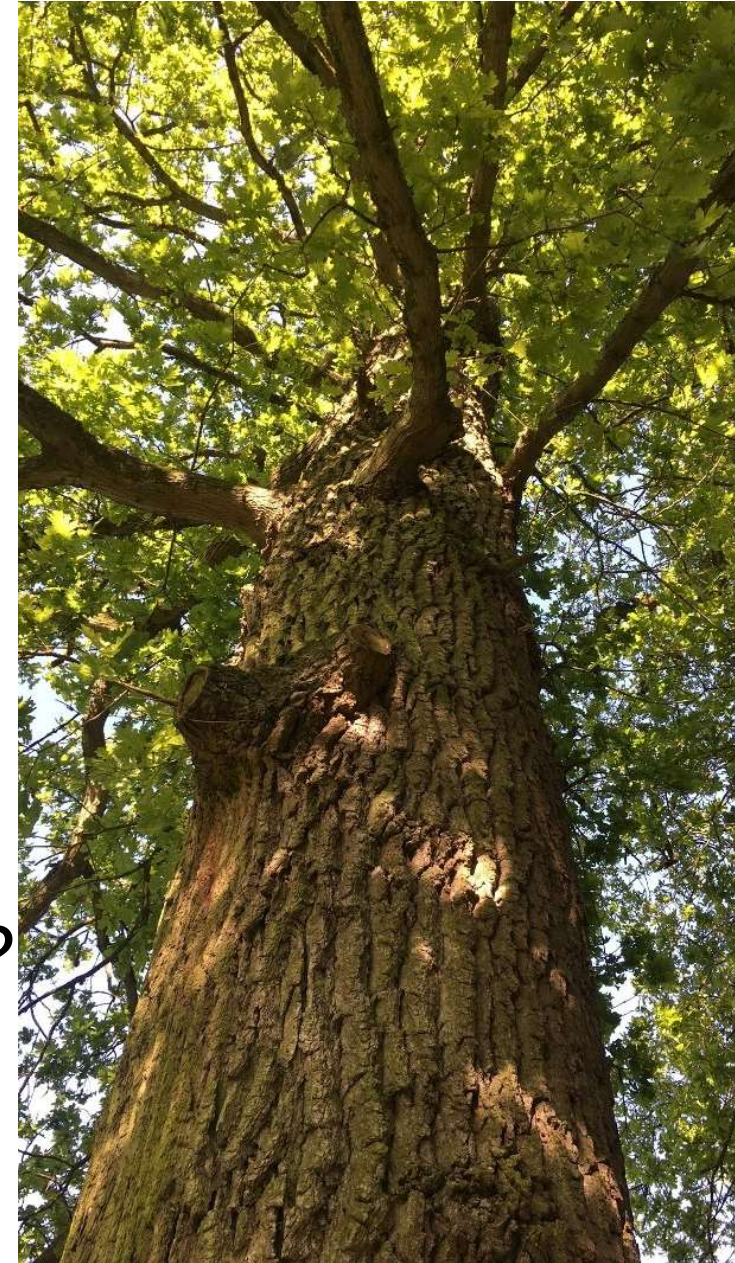
# Literature review

'Cycling with nature' appears to:

- Facilitate five pathways
- Enhance experiences/wellbeing
- Influence route choices/preferences
- Motivate cycling

Research gaps:

- How common are these experiences?
- For which types of ride?



# Methods and area

Online survey targeting adult cyclists ( $n = 260$ ) in the West of England area:

Cities, countryside and coast with cycle routes linking them

Relatively strong cycling rates, investment, cultures

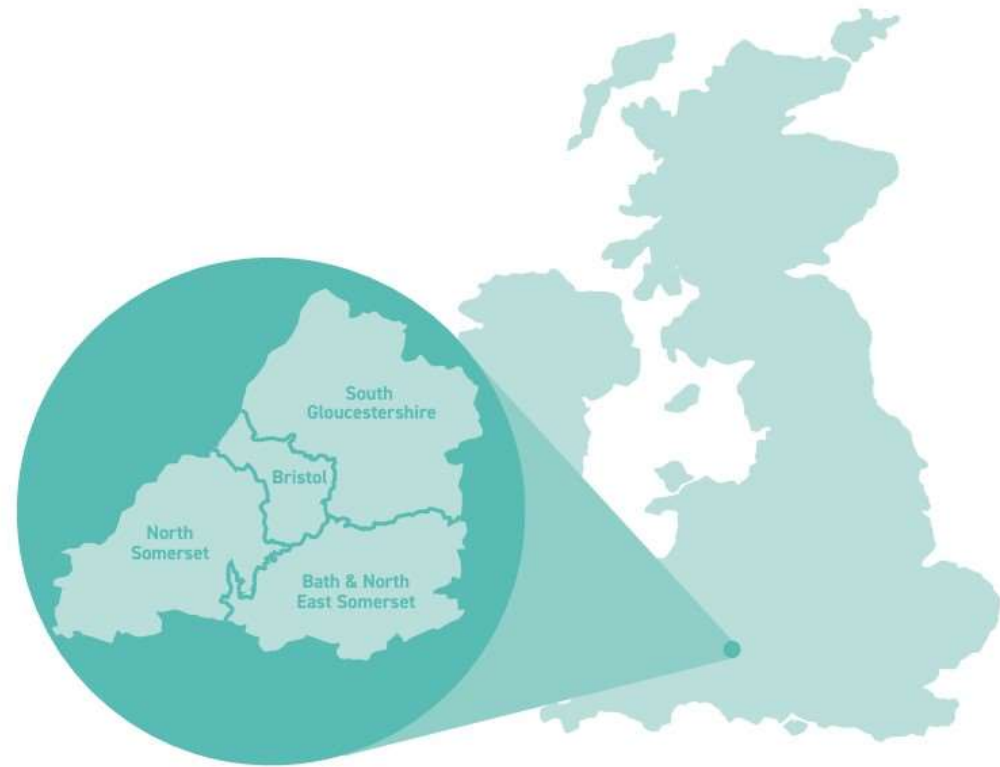


Image: © West of England Combined Authority (2020, p.9)

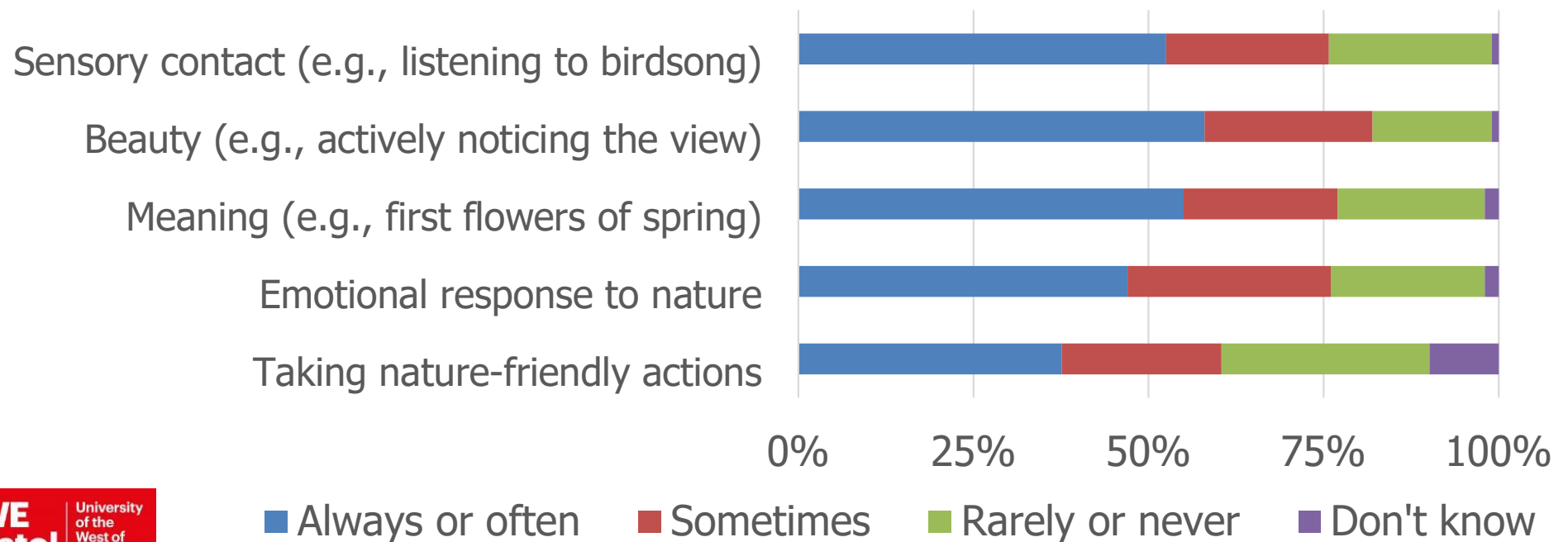
# How important is nature to cyclists?

- 60% of leisure cyclists chose 'fresh air, scenery and nature' as one of their top 3 reasons for leisure cycling ( $n = 174$ )
- Compared to 41% for sport cycling ( $n = 73$ ) and 15% for cycling for transport ( $n = 213$ )
- "How frequently did nature contribute prominently and/or memorably and positively to your experience?"

	<b>Leisure</b>	<b>Sport</b>	<b>Transport</b>
Always or often	85%	84%	54%
At least sometimes	99%	94%	82%

# How often do cyclists experience nature connectedness pathways?

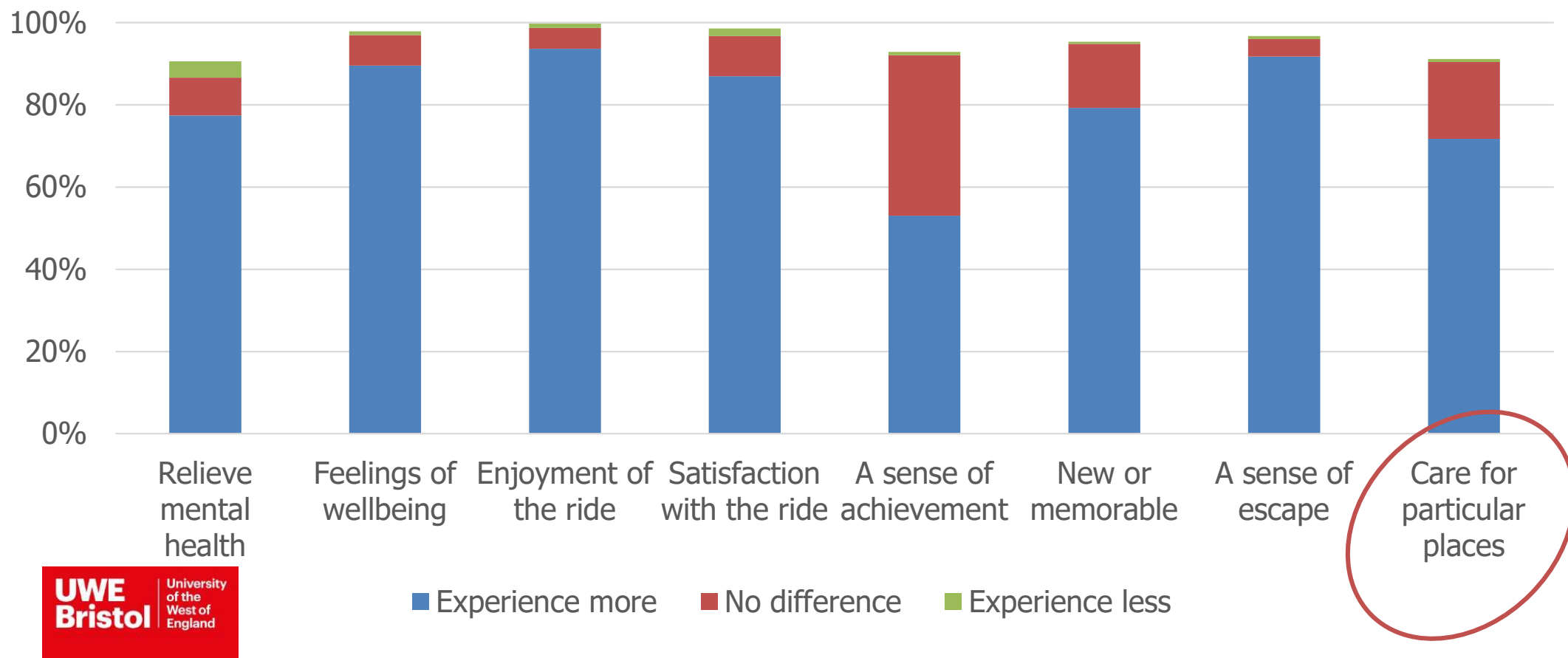
Cycling for transport ( $n = 213$ )





# Wellbeing & other outcomes

## Effect of nature on cycling experiences





# Conclusions

- Nature is an important part of many cycling experiences in the study area, positively enhancing cycling outcomes
- Cyclists report experiencing nature connectedness pathways → PEB/PNB
- Nature tends to play a smaller role in transport cycling experiences than leisure and sport







Thank you

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