



Outdoor learning campaign Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Our Bright Future?

Our Bright Future is an ambitious and innovative partnership, led by The Wildlife Trusts and funded by The National Lottery Community Fund. It is the only current programme of its size that brings together the environmental and youth sectors.

Across the UK, young people gain vital skills and experience through 31 distinct projects while delivering positive change for their local environment.

Our Bright Future has three policy asks co-designed with young people, for young people:

1. more time spent learning in and about nature
2. support for young people to get into environmental jobs
3. young people's voices to be heard and included in the issues and decisions that affect them.

What's happening?

Our Bright Future, the largest UK-wide environment-focused youth empowerment programme, is asking the public to support young people's call for more learning in, and about, nature. This means we want to see more opportunities for formal learning delivered outdoors within nature, as well as more learning provision about nature too. We believe that this will foster an increased nature-connectedness for learners beyond their formal education years, and will instill a lifelong habit of valuing nature and spending time in natural spaces, enabling both people and nature to thrive.

How can I get involved?

Everyone can show support by adding their name to our e-action, [here](#). Please also ask your friends and family to sign in support too!

If you've had a great experience of learning in or about nature, either as a learner or teacher, let us know! We're really keen to hear your stories; email ourbrightfuture@wildlifetrusts.org

What age range does the outdoor learning campaign apply to?

This matters across the curriculum, for all ages and throughout all subjects.

Of course, different age groups will be better suited to differing provision.

For example, younger pupils in their first few years of education will gain real benefits from much more time outside, engaging in natural play and nature-based learning. Learners at secondary school right up to university can benefit from as little as an hour of lesson time per day spent outdoors – which can feasibly fit around structured timetables and exam-focused studies.

When does the campaign close?

This campaign action will remain open to the end of 2022.



How will the results of this e-action be shared with decision-makers?

Working with young people we will share the breadth of support for outdoor learning gathered through this e-action, via direct communication at identified points, with decision-makers at both local and national level.

For example, with young people's input we will be writing to the Minister for Education to highlight the importance of outdoor learning; how young people themselves are asking for more opportunities to learn in and about nature; and the support this has from the general public.

Does this mean you expect every school to be teaching classes outdoors in all weather?

Being outside is ideal, but we understand that it's not always possible to take a class outside in all seasons, especially in the UK. Bringing learning *about* nature into the classroom is something that is also vitally important and brings wide benefits – and this is an equal element of the campaign.

Outdoor learning can be done with small activities within school grounds, even if you don't have huge amounts of space or immediate access to nature. Trips to nature reserves and even residential for older pupils can be a brilliant way to introduce learners to nature, but can be just one of a range of routes used.

We understand that a lack of suitable outdoor clothing can be a barrier to getting learners outside, especially in rainy weather. As programmes such as [Nature Friendly Schools](#) have proven, having funding for kit like wellies and waterproof coats can make all the difference to schools' ability to take lessons outdoors.

“Wellies and coats have allowed children to go outside in all weathers as many children are sent to school without and if they didn't have this, they would have to miss out on the opportunity. This equipment has allowed children to participate in outdoor learning where they otherwise would have been excluded from the activities.” – Primary school in Birmingham, Nature Friendly Schools participant

Does 'learning outdoors' mean you can learn about e.g. economics or cooking outside, or does it always have to be nature-based learning?

Outdoor learning can and should absolutely be used for all subjects. Taking lessons outside of the traditional classroom setting can help learners to be more active and focused, stimulating new ideas and helping them to apply their learning to real situations.

Youth Advocates at Ulster Wildlife have produced a series of videos with ideas for outdoor lessons in various subjects as part of their #LearnMoreOutdoors campaign, including:

- [Maths](#): calculate the height of a tree; identify different angles in the environment
- [Art](#): incorporate natural items like leaves into artwork
- [English and drama](#): use nature as inspiration for poetry and other pieces
- [Science](#): learn about plant growth and ecosystems; use outdoor space to conduct experiments like stomp-rockets or baking soda volcanoes

Watch the complete #LearnMoreOutdoors video series [here](#).

Do you have great examples of lessons taken outside? [If so, let us know!](#)



Don't schools/education providers already give learners the opportunity to be outdoors?

Some do – which is partly why there is such a wealth of evidence on the positive impacts of outdoor learning! But unfortunately, it's not yet embedded fully across the education system, or evenly across the UK. This means that lots of children and young people simply aren't benefitting from learning in and about nature.

Some are spending less time outdoors than maximum security prisoners, something which young people in Our Bright Future want to see changed.

How is this different to recent commitments from UK Government regarding learning about climate change?

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi recently announced the UK Government's intention to support teachers to deliver climate change education and involve young people in increasing biodiversity in school grounds. While this is a positive step, learners can't learn everything about nature and climate from the classroom – they need, and want, to experience it too.

Additionally, there's lots of evidence of the positive impact that time spent in nature has on both our mental and physical health. Many of us realised during lockdown just how important it was for our wellbeing, to get outdoors each day.

Through the Our Bright Future programme, thousands of young people have been calling for a step-change in our schools and education settings, so that learning in and about nature and climate change is the norm. In short, young people want to see more ambition from all Governments across the UK on embedding learning outdoors, across all subjects.

Show your support for learning in and about nature, [here](#).