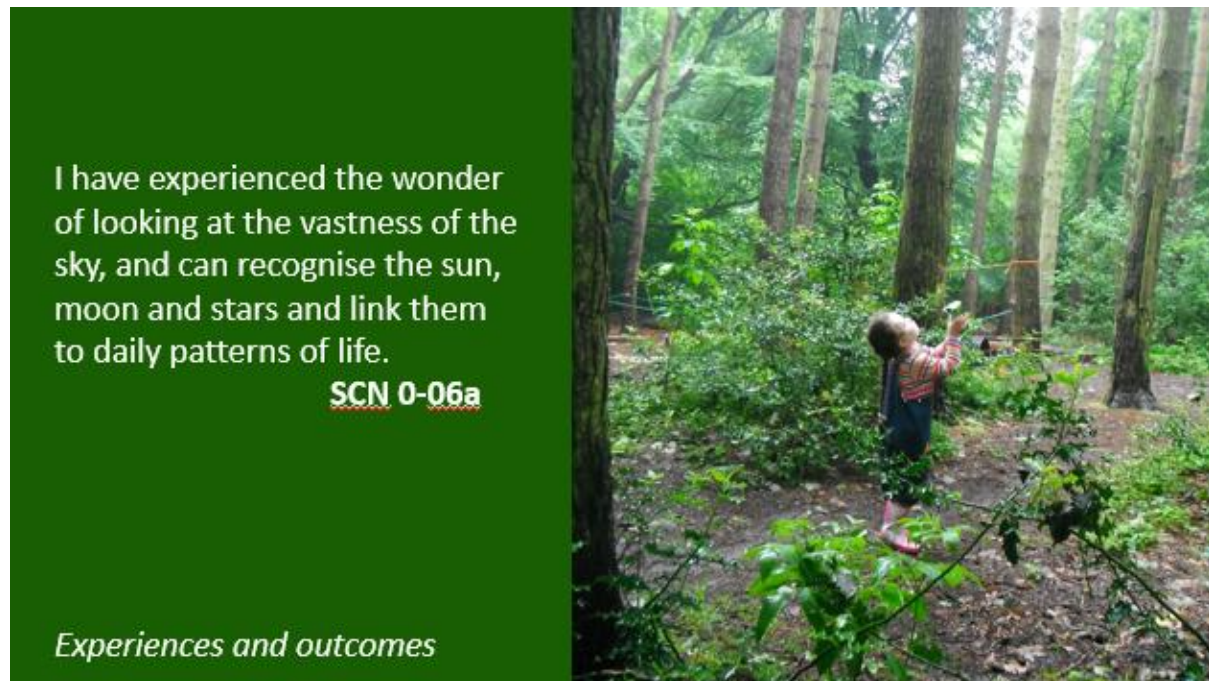


**Education Scotland  
Outdoor Learning Webinar 16 June 2020  
Summary of discussion**



A webinar for over 150 practitioners from across Scotland focused on outdoor learning through the use of three key questions:

1. **What role could outdoor learning take during recovery mode?**
2. **Sharing practice - what ideas/approaches have you taken during Covid at home, in the hub or pre-Covid?**
3. **What are your professional learning needs for outdoor learning and what format could this take?**

During the webinar interesting practice from East Ayrshire Council, East Lothian Council and Learning through Landscapes was shared together with a national overview. Participants posted comments in the chat box throughout the webinar. Post event these comments were collated and grouped according to broad themes. This paper reflects the discussion shared during the webinar.

Andy Duff from East Lothian Outdoor Council delivered a short presentation on his experiences teaching outdoors during Lockdown at a local hub. He then summarised how EL Outdoor Learning Service are supporting education recovery by providing advice, resources and training to enable teachers to make the best use of the outdoors to provide a safe, healthy and relevant learning space. One that can both complement and extend classroom based learning across the curriculum.

Slides are here ... <https://tinyurl.com/edscotjune> and the video is at <https://tinyurl.com/edscotjunevid>

For more information on the East Lothian Council Outdoor Learning Service see [www.eastlothian.gov.uk/outdoorlearning](http://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/outdoorlearning)

Natalie White, East Ayrshire Council shared the value of outdoor learning with webinar participants.

Pupils should experience outdoor learning in a variety of place contexts; school playgrounds, local greenspace, wider communities and the wider world. This progression of place offers pupils a deeper understanding of the world and their place in it. Offering children space to move around more freely will be a healthy opportunity when their time in the classroom setting may be quite restrictive. When transmission is shown to be lower in outdoor spaces and the already widely known health benefits for being outdoors, it is important that utilise this free resource. Learning outdoors can complement and enhance the indoor learning, bringing the curriculum to life and offering pupils opportunities to be creative and develop valuable skills needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are many excellent teachers, local authority officers, community projects and partner organisations who are exemplifying all curriculum areas through in outdoor spaces. Learners should have the opportunity to experience the diversity of these offers.

For more information please see <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/learningoutdoorsupportteam/>

Matt Robinson, representing [Learning through Landscapes Scotland](#) (LTL) and the [National Network for Outdoor Learning \(NNOL\)](#) highlighted that there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes from the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector. NNOL members are working together to collate effort, resources, evidence and support from across the country. There are a number of free and paid training courses available at the moment. In Scotland, we are very fortunate that the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector outdoor learning organisations work very closely, and suggested that practitioners sign up to [NNOL newsletter](#).

They have collated the guidance from the UK Gov and WHO on cleaning outdoor spaces, parks etc. There is a page on the LTL website on how to [manage hygiene outdoors](#) and one on [social distancing](#) in outdoor learning. The guidance has highlighted that the outdoors is currently seen as safer than indoors, and a growing consensus that UV, wind, and different surfaces means that the virus does not last as long outdoors. You can dunk/wipe down resources and surfaces. There will be further pages developed to share with schools.

### **Chat box comments**

#### **Key question 1 - What role could outdoor learning take during recovery phase**

- General message to make use of outside for preventing transfer of virus and increase confidence.
- Outdoor learning will be a huge focus in the recovery phase given the range of opportunities it affords. Outdoor spaces will be timetabled to accommodate

this. Staff are encouraged to use outdoor spaces for learning throughout the day.

- Build in daily outdoor learning opportunities to try and give learners a 'normal' experience, a break from the classroom, desks and not having the normal freedoms of moving around the classroom.

### **Benefits of outdoor learning**

- Big changes and improvements in behaviour once people are settled outside and doing more active, practical activities.
- A powerful element is being able to offer activities with real, but safe, consequences for decisions and choices, in a way less easy in the classroom.
- The emotional engagement that outdoor experiences in the natural world provide is powerful and memorable too, a good reinforcement to the more cerebral classroom environment.
- Outdoor learning and nature nurture helps with HWB and helps to reduce trauma and anxiety issues especially with pupils with distressed behaviour.

### **Curriculum and planning**

- We are discussing a more creative curriculum, linking IDL and specifically outdoor learning.
- We are currently matching all of our STEM Es and Os across the stages to outdoor learning experiences. Also setting up a pupil group for them to take the lead on grounds development
- Using OL to help enrich learning and putting together a John Muir Award suggestion.

### **Making it happen**

- Collecting resources for individual children to store in a bag for loose parts play in the classroom and outdoors e.g. cones, conkers, shells
- Using growing/sensory approach to help learners understand different ingredients for cooking with. I have started this during lockdown by making videos of what I have been growing in my own garden.
- Starting a walk n talk group for learners to openly talk to colleagues.
- Developing weaving spaces in our nursery garden to explore and discover.
- There is a lot of potential to partner with landowners and LA parks teams so that pupils can complete conservation work in outdoor spaces. Lots of rich, real-world learning opportunities in conservation.
- Many schools will be chunking the timetable into larger blocks to minimise pupil travel around the school. This may help with outdoor learning and getting learners outdoors.
- We're going to relax our uniform to help with ease of going outside.

## Challenges

- Organising activities and resources into a progressive whole school plan which addresses E&Os for Literacy, Numeracy and H&WB as well as STEM.
- Secondary timetable allowing Outdoor Learning to the level it should - planting, growing and harvesting crops should have continued into cookery classes.
- Third sector partners face uncertainty around whether previous work of supporting teachers to deliver the curriculum outdoors with full classes and through the use of PEF and Attainment funding.
- Recognition of the anxiety that can be felt by some towards outdoor learning with a particular focus on risk assessment making it tricky to persuade colleagues just to get out and give it a go.

## Questions arising and responses where these were shared

- What is safe to use? Tyres, mud kitchen, loose parts....
- Is there a rethink at national level on the funding of outdoor centres by local authorities, given the recent closures and threats to centres?  
*There is a very live discussion with Scottish Government, Education Scotland and outdoor residential centres, providers and networks such as SAPOE and National Network of Outdoor Learning. Securing the future of centres and providers are very much part of these discussions.*
- NNOL working on cfe linked learning ideas. We have lots already, including a year of outdoor homework at Ltl.

## Learning across the four contexts using Outdoor Learning



**Key question 2 - What ideas/approaches have you taken during Covid at home, in the hub or pre-Covid?**

'Lockdown' Outdoor Learning at North Berwick Children's Hub



- Early Years - tasks on daily walk (birdwatching, letter and number hunts), creating bug houses, wormeries, bird feeders, transient art using natural resources, using natural resources to paint with (using mud/ paint) bringing art outdoors e.g. sticks, leaves etc.
- Shared with parents how to grow your own vegetables for food waste and in kitchen roll tubes and how to plant them out so they can start their own garden.
- Set a basic photosynthesis experiment for S2 pupils they could do in their garden and got great photos back showing the oxygen produced by green leaves.
- Young people can explore the local area they live in.
- Engaging the local community as Global citizens is fantastic
- Surveying the school grounds to look at what areas might suit activities and putting together a list of potential ideas to share. Most obvious links are with STEM, ecology, arts, literacy, maths.
- Exemplifying links with community projects that young people can make connections with when not 'in school' can help build deeper understanding and also encourage citizenship.
- Taking children in small groups beyond the grounds.
- To support ASN pupil big chalks allow lots of activities. Art work - portraits, Kandinsky. Maths draw squares with numbers in, run about find the even number, one person in each box.
- Virtual Orienteering through (maprunF) (Further Education)

- Made a new orienteering map of the school for DoE navigation training and using it as a focus for other activities such as an ecological survey, arts activity as a lead-in to more science-based investigation.
- ASN - we created a bug hotel, accessible walks/routes in the area and hope to make a booklet with them. John Muir Award programmes with ASN pupils and have found it a very useful programme for its structure and flexibility.
- Used to run DofE for young people with profound disabilities it is a brilliant framework - this would depend on the age of your young people.
- Used some of DofE framework to tailor programmes for pupils e.g. the sense of community (volunteering section) litter picks/building models from recycled waste etc.

### Questions arising and responses where these were shared

- Is there funding to help with Community growing projects?  
*COSLA is in discussion with Scottish Government regarding COVID related costs and additional funding requirements. As an example, £9 million has been made available by SG to help buy 25,000 devices for learners who need them: <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/sp/?id=2020-05-26.8.0&p=13982>*
- Is there going to be funding available for personal equipment for children and staff, like waterproofs wellies etc.?  
*Some local authorities may have this. Many schools have put out requests for spares/things that children may have grown out of etc. then shared these. Also bags for life funds are great.*
- Might local authorities' opinion change of outdoor learning centres change given the benefits of such facilities?
- Community growing projects - is there still funding out there to help with this?  
*Persimmon homes community grants are given out every month up to £1000. Other building companies have similar schemes. If there building near your school you can apply to the fund. Could use to improve outdoor space.*

### Links shared by participants

- Website useful for scavenger hunts and other activities  
<http://www.treetoolsforschools.org.uk/categorymenu/?cat=activities>
- LtL audit tool <https://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/school-grounds-adit-tool/>
- <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/resources>
- TCV The Conservation Volunteers do a number of community growing projects
- [www.nnolscotland.blogspot.com](http://www.nnolscotland.blogspot.com)
- YouTube channel to keep in touch with young people and share ideas for outdoor learning and mindfulness outdoors activities during this time.  
<https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCbEKH8ZoDClu1NwxSIGVYVQ> Contact [roots.resilience@gmail.com](mailto:roots.resilience@gmail.com)
- App called Seek by inaturalist for identification of plants and animals for food chains and webs.

### **Key question 3 - What are your professional learning needs for outdoor learning and what format could this take?**

#### **Webinars and podcasts**

This was a popular suggestion with many participants indicating this would be beneficial. A sample of the comments which reflect this approach for professional learning are included below:

- Webinars throughout the year linked to the challenges people are coming across within the first few weeks back e.g. playground space, curricular links
- Would love a programme of webinars. So helpful even to watch as a staff and hearing from other schools in how they've used outdoor learning would be good.
- Webinar and specific training for different curriculum areas and IDL would be great. (Specific mention of Home Economics)
- Webinars, possibly focused around how to make links between outdoor experiences and CfE/other curricular areas to help develop practice.
- More webinars about how to focus on other curricular areas and ensure progression without lots of repetition of activities, wakelets great as definite need for resources to be organised into levels etc. as there is not a lot of time to get started. Kit list idea great!
- Webinars and podcasts on lead up to and return to school would be a wonderful resource for staff to refer to and share with each other!!
- Podcasts as well as personal professional learning
- Podcast with guests
- Podcasts and specific webinars would be ideal

#### **Specific suggestions/comments re wakelets**

- High school and primary school in different folders
- Maybe divided by curricular areas too?
- It would be great to have the links in one place
- Wakelets great as definite need for resources to be organised into levels etc. as there is not a lot of time to get started.

#### **Other formats that could support professional learning**

- Sharing activities/ experiences through twitter hashtag
- Quick good practice examples - photo with notes
- Practical and visual ideas that are easy to follow.

#### **Curricular and learning ideas**

- Supporting practitioners to follow up on the learning outcomes and opportunities that came out of outdoor residential.
- Progression pathway to keep it going after lockdown.

- Outdoor learning ideas when there's an island wide absence of trees suitable for ASN pupils would be great!
- Potential lessons that could then be tried and built upon
- Spreadsheet of activities and suggested opportunities linked to secondary school curricular key areas would be very helpful. Fairly intuitive for Biology but perhaps not so intuitive for Chemistry and Physics. These would be great!
- A programme for curricular areas and mixed stages would be great
- A block of activities built around a theme or topic.

### **Professional learning that helps to build confidence**

- Create opportunities for experiential learning professional learning for those less confident/reticent.
- Practitioner discussions for those inexperienced would be fab

### **Professional learning suggestions/asks/needs**

- Any professional developments to help find info and activities for foul weather outdoor learning. Lots of ideas out there for woodland and forests etc. but we don't have these but do have a beach, how can I best use it, links and suggestions for equipment and clothing, how to get started on mapping school grounds for orienteering, the catapult activity in the video.
- Online outdoor cooking.
- Risk assessment templates that covered everything - could these be generated?
- Perhaps build on the activities/tasks/ideas available currently on Scotland Learns? We could continue to add our links and ideas and these could be collated and shown on Scotland Learns in a central place we can access.
- Share a 'getting started' kit list, with details about where to get the stuff and some 'recipes' to make use of the kit in different ways. Outdoor learning in a box?!
- List of good resources or websites as it can be quite hard to source and find good practice
- Outdoor learning ideas when there's an island wide absence of trees suitable for ASN pupils would be great!
- Funding pot for third sector so we can support in transformation of provision towards more OL. Particularly for experiential learning for teachers but also using our experience working specifically with pupils who have experienced trauma. Pupils who have additional challenges may require different approaches in the outdoors.
- Kit list idea great!



## Professional learning questions

- How can we make the most of outdoor learning if we don't have a great deal of natural outdoor space other than paved playground?
- Does anyone have specific projects that they have done with just ASN pupils? (see response in links below)

## Links shared by participants

- These are lessons we have delivered in our ASN schools  
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/learningoutdoorssupportteam/additional-support-needs/>
- Stomp rockets <https://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/rocket-science/>
- The beyond your boundary resource on the wakelet will give you great help to get out of the school grounds.
- <https://www.edubuzz.org/eloes/2020/05/28/postbox-challenge/>
- We're building a set of activities / lessons here  
<https://www.edubuzz.org/eloes/category/e-learning/>
- Juliet Robertson's Creative Star Learning website - lots of ideas  
<https://creativestarning.co.uk/>
- STEM By Nature - ideas & info for STEM in outdoor settings. Prof Learning guidance plus padlet with links  
<https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/latest/news/1906-tayside-teachers-pilot-stem-by-nature> <https://padlet.com/kindroganfsc/4c8xbrvfsodh>
- Year of Coasts & Waters 2020 – ideas, activities  
[https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/assets/000/004/143/Year\\_of\\_Coasts\\_Waters\\_2020\\_-\\_Get\\_Involved\\_original.pdf](https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/assets/000/004/143/Year_of_Coasts_Waters_2020_-_Get_Involved_original.pdf)
- <https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/lochdown/>
- a number of lessons across all curriculum areas  
<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/learningoutdoorssupportteam/>
- <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/ea/learningoutdoorssupportteam/equipment-and-resources/>

## Further suggestions shared by participants

- A fab book I found called '50 things to do in the wild' Richard Skrein
- Scottish Orienteering do tons of great courses for Teachers!
- Joseph Cornell material is useful in supporting teacher confidence.
- 101 Brilliant Things For Kids To Do With Science - great book!

## What next?

As a result of the requests and feedback from participants participating in this outdoor learning webinar, Education Scotland and outdoor learning partners have planned a further two webinars. Details of these can be found below:

Date	Time	Platform	Focus
19 August 2020	3.15 pm for a 3.30 pm start	Google Meet	Discussion regarding resources and links to experiences and outcomes for outdoor learning
2 September 2020	3.15 pm for a 3.30 pm start	Google Meet	Outdoor learning across the 4 contexts for learning.

