

COME OUTSIDE! Programme Update



The Cardiff West Community Mothers group – some were on a bike for the first time

Welcome to the launch of the COME OUTSIDE! Updates

As you're involved in one of our Come Outside! Networks, we'll be sending you a regular update to keep you informed on how the programme is progressing, what has been achieved, and where we're going next.

In this, our first update, you'll be able to see some of what's been developed by local network partners acting together over the past few months.

Working together...

The Come Outside! Programme brings organisations together to deliver outdoor activities through cross-sector working. Over the last year we've set up networks in nine areas across Wales and seen many new partners working together.

Our initial network events bring together people who work in community development, outdoor activity, youth and health, to find out what resources we can share to offer new opportunities to community groups.

Many providers are now involved in engaging local people, who are now in the process of deciding what activities they would like to try – leading to the delivery of 'taster sessions'.



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Outdoor Activity Taster Sessions

Despite a lot of wet weather, we've had the excitement of seeing some groups of people getting outdoors and enjoying their natural environment, as a result of our networking events. Here are a few examples:

Southeast



Josh from Newport said "I thought it was quite good to be honest" about cycling at Fourteen Locks.

Young people from **Newport** have been cycling several times at Fourteen Locks Canal Centre with Kyle Williams of Newport City Cycles, learning about bike maintenance, cycling etiquette, and the upkeep of bike paths.

Also in **Newport**: The Maindee Detached Youth Work Group have been out cycling and are looking to do environmentally based volunteering, and we're working to get some beekeeping and walking activities for a group of women from the Ashianna Women's Association in Newport.



The Sparks Alternative Curriculum group in **Caerphilly** have been out learning about the environment, and they built this bench which now sits at Aberbargoed Grasslands:

North

In **Gwynedd** we've been working with the Caernarfon Garden Gang who have been developing their plot of land with new partners to help them with their gardening skills.

The Plas Madoc Wild Rangers (right) in **Wrexham** have been trying out fishing and a few other outdoor activities through the support of the Ty Mawr park rangers.



Southwest

The Community Mothers group from Ely in **Cardiff** West travelled to Aberdare to try out new activities at Valleys Discovery Festival. Those experiences encouraged them to involve their neighbours in outdoor exercise. They got on their bikes in January with members from the Healthy Families group at Pedal Power, and later got to find out what wild edible foods were around their community, and took part in a Dark Skies event to learn about the night sky.



The Healthy Families group from Ely who watched the Zombie Run at Dare Valley in November. Now they plan to set up their own zombie chase!

More tasters in the wind...

In **Caerphilly** colleagues from the Youth Offending Service, Natural Resources Wales, and Caerphilly Countryside Service (who taught us how to bake bread over a campfire at our second workshop) are meeting to arrange tasters for young people based around environmental volunteering.



Caerphilly's Ysgol Cwm Rhymni is discussing how to extend their provision for the alternative curriculum group with outdoor options, and taster sessions have been set up for those young people to attend in the next few weeks.

In **Barry** (where participants made their own kites at our second workshop) we've had some very positive meetings with Communities First and Youth Services. We've been talking to groups about what they would like to have a go at and there are several groups who will be getting a taste for activities in the coming weeks.



In **Swansea** we're linking existing volunteer groups with the right people in Natural Resources Wales to help them out with some specialist knowledge. Network members are talking to community groups about what activities they want to try. Available offers include woodland exploring, kayaking, seed swapping, bug hunts, and many more. Two groups are also linking up with each other to maximise opportunities.

The Maesgeirchen Youth Centre in **Bangor** is due to get a face lift with an edible garden project, on the suggestion of the young people in the local Job Club. They've already cleared the site and completed a large mural for the garden. Now Come Outside! is working with Bangor University to secure funding, and will support taster sessions to get the group equipped and skilled, with the aim of increased employment opportunities.

New Networks on the horizon...

Merthyr is our newest Network and engagement with groups has begun.

A group from the mental health charity Hafal will be going out on taster sessions soon!

March saw the launch of our network in **Rhondda Fach**, and our follow up event was held on the 29th April...

...and this month we're starting a network in **Torfaen** and **Bridgend**.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We believe that evaluating our work and its impact is essential to enable us all to capture and celebrate our achievements and understand which approaches are working and which aren't. We have contracted consultants Trelein and Shephard & Moyes to help us with this.

Our consultants held workshops with Come Outside! Network members in Wrexham, Newport, and Cardiff which demonstrated the benefits of monitoring and evaluation, as well as various techniques that can be employed to ensure collecting data is simple, as well as useful. We will soon be holding similar workshops with other networks in the upcoming months.

Quotes we like...

From Ely's Community Mothers

I didn't know this place was here. I'm coming back in the week to practice.

I rode a bike today for the first time. I can't do corners yet but I'm determined to get there.

I love cycling. I don't see it as exercise.



What's coming up next...

Networking

We are exploring IT options to bring Networks together so our stakeholders can all easily communicate, share, inform, and connect with each other, thereby opening the doors for further cross-sector working. This email update is part of this process.



Expanding

We'll be establishing a new Come Outside! network in Rhyl in the next few months, completing our scope of 12 networks in Communities First areas across Wales.

Lastly...

We are always on the lookout for new opportunities so get in touch if you think you'd like to get involved—perhaps by giving your time and expertise, getting us in touch with a community group, or any thing else that will help people overcome barriers to using their local greenspaces, increasing physical activity, or improving skills, confidence, and overall well-being.