

Curriculum for funded non-maintained nursery settings

Consultation response form

Your name: Sue Williams

Organisation: Natural Resources Wales

e-mail/telephone number:

sue.williams@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

0300 065 5075

Your address:

Natural Resources Wales

Clawddnewydd,

Ruthin

Denbighshire

LL15 2NL

Responses should be returned by **16 July 2021** to

Curriculum Realisation Unit
Curriculum and Assessment Division
The Education Directorate
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

or completed electronically and sent to:

e-mail: curriculumforwales@gov.wales



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales**

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the largest public sector organisation in Wales. Its purpose is to ensure that the natural resources of Wales are sustainably maintained, enhanced, and used, now and in the future. This means looking after air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil to improve Wales' well-being, and provide a better future for everyone.

The [Environment \(Wales\) Act](#) and the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) together provide modern legislation for managing Wales' natural resources and improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales (it's sustainable development). In light of the recent climate change and environment emergency declaration by Welsh Government and other public bodies, an understanding and appreciation of the need for the [sustainable management of our natural resources](#) (SMNR) is essential now and in the future, as our environment comes under increasing pressure from a growing population. This will directly impact and be impacted by climate change and will drive the need for increased energy production adding pressure to our use of natural resources, their resilience and biodiversity. In line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act this will require work across the environment and education sectors to ensure an understanding and positive connection with the role that natural resources and the environment play in our lives socially, economically and culturally, is established from a young age and built on throughout our learning journeys.

Natural Resources Wales is pleased to work with the Curriculum Realisation Unit and support the on-going implementation of the Curriculum for Wales. NRW can provide advice and guidance to highlight the multiple health benefits of learning in learning about and learning for the natural environment - increased physical activity, improved mental health & well-being and attainment, access to subject specialists, national and local support networks, outdoor learning advice and guidance, resources, data and training for teachers and education professionals.

For further clarification or information please contact:

education@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

www.naturalresources.wales/learning

Question 1 – Do you work in or support the delivery of education in a funded non-maintained nursery setting?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	---	-----------	--------------------------

i) If yes, in which type of setting/organisation do you work? (If no continue to iii below.)

Private day nursery	<input type="checkbox"/>	Umbrella organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playgroup	<input type="checkbox"/>	Third sector	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-school	<input type="checkbox"/>	Training provider	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cylch Meithrin	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local authority	<input type="checkbox"/>	Regulatory body (includes inspectorate)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regional consortium	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) Public Sector	✓

ii) What is your primary role?

Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	Development officer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practitioner	<input type="checkbox"/>	Policy development	<input type="checkbox"/>
Early years advisory teacher (or equivalent)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Member of management committee	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inspector	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consultant	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify) Principal Advisor to Welsh Government on the sustainable management of natural resources	✓

iii) If you do not work in or support the delivery of education in a funded non-maintained setting, in what capacity would you like to provide feedback?

Childminder	<input type="checkbox"/>	Child or young person (under 18)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practitioner in a	<input type="checkbox"/>	Student/academic	<input type="checkbox"/>

non-funded non-maintained setting			
Parent/carer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please specify):	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adult 18-plus (not a parent or carer)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

iv) Are you providing feedback on behalf of an organisation or group?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	---	-----------	--------------------------

If 'yes', please specify.

Natural Resources Wales – see information above

[Natural Resources Wales](#)

[Natural Resources Wales / Education, learning and skills](#)

Question 2 – To what extent will this curriculum support effective planning in funded non-maintained settings?

Very unsupportive	Slightly unsupportive	Neither supportive nor unsupportive	Slightly supportive	Very supportive
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

This draft guidance supports practitioners to plan a curriculum that makes the best use of a setting's environment and available resources, provisioning development towards realising the Four Purposes. NRW is pleased to see the indoor and outdoor environments described in equal measure.

Question 3 – Is it clear how the four purposes underpin the delivery of this curriculum?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Yes, as above it is clear how the four purposes underpin the delivery of this curriculum. The guidance provides regular references and highlights how different aspects are linked

Question 4 – Are the statements of what matters reflected appropriately in the developmental pathways?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	---	-----------	--------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------

Please explain your answer.

NRW welcomes this draft guidance and views it as well formed, clearly and appropriately reflecting the statements of what matters in the developmental pathways. It strives to empower practitioners to provide holistic support to the learner. In the context of the declared nature and climate emergencies NRW welcomes the inclusion of use of the outdoors and the learning about the natural world, both vital to forming an early connection to nature.

Question 5 – Can you see how delivery of this curriculum will ensure children’s progression from the developmental pathways through to the descriptions of learning at progression step 1?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	---	-----------	--------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------

Please explain your answer.

Progression is clear from developmental pathways to progression step 1.

Question 6 – Is the purpose of the developmental pathways clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Yes, the purpose of the developmental pathways is clearly explained. We welcome inclusion of the need to “take care of things in my environment, living and non-living” in the Belonging section and use of the natural environment as a space for learning and play in the Exploration section. Use of the natural environment to enhance Physical Development and Well-being are also clear in the last two sections.

Question 7 – Is anything missing from the statements in the developmental pathways?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	---	-----------	--------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------

If ‘yes’, please specify.

We would like to see reference in the Communication section to early description and identification of items within the natural environment. This is an important element of establishing an early connection with nature and realising the multiple benefits this connection can bring.

In the Belonging section there also needs to be a clear reference to the natural world under 'My sense of belonging is enhanced by adults who'.... This can be achieved by adding:

- promote care for my natural environment.

Question 8 – Are the developmental pathways inclusive for all children?

Yes	✓	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>
------------	---	-----------	--------------------------	-----------------	--------------------------

Please explain your answer.

The developmental pathways provide enough flexibility and range to be inclusive regardless of age or ability.

Question 9 – Are the roles of the practitioner, environment and experiences clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales have declared climate change and nature emergencies. The current state of the natural environment will have impacts on children's health, well-being and hopes for their future. The climate and nature emergencies are the most significant threat to life on Earth. Enabling educators and learners to embed normalised pro-environmental behaviours must be a principal driver for all Curriculum for Wales guidance. While NRW welcomes the parity given to use of the outdoors alongside indoors as opportunities for holistic child development and learning, with explicit references to the natural environment, there is insufficient guidance on the multiple benefits of learning in, learning about and learning for the natural environment.

If our learners are to enjoy positive well-being while meeting the Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales, experiences must include significant amounts of learning in, learning about and learning for the natural environment to ensure an early connection with nature and an understanding of local action and global consequence. Research shows that there are important positive correlations between human health, well-being intelligence and nature. Various studies have shown children are healthier, happier, smarter and more creative when they have

a connection to nature. The connection has positive effects on issues which can affect well-being including:

- children with attention deficit disorder
- children with asthma
- helping to prevent Vitamin D deficiency
- guarding against obesity and type 2 diabetes
- minimising childhood short sightedness
- promoting academic attainment
- reducing the symptoms of stress
- developing employability skills
- opportunities to increase physical activity
- opportunities to lay down a blueprint of pro environmental behaviour

Currently, staff working within non-maintained settings do not have sufficient access to high calibre, professional learning opportunities focussing on outdoor learning pedagogy. Few non-maintained settings have sufficient, suitably skilled and knowledgeable staff to enable a whole setting approach to embedding normalised pro-environmental behaviours and protecting and enhancing the setting's grounds or utilising natural outdoor spaces. NRW would like to see every setting with at least one appropriately trained and qualified member of staff, who fully understands the sustainable management of natural resources and can facilitate environmental learning via high quality outdoor learning pedagogy, implementing interventions in order to gain the multiple benefits to health, wellbeing and attainment for learners that the natural environment can realise. This is a cost-effective method of ensuring both pupil development and local environmental gains to support mitigation of the climate and nature emergencies, building an early understanding to build up to a recognition of responsibility in later years.

NRW strongly recommend that outdoor learning pedagogy has an overarching position within the guidance, i.e., placed into a standalone section within this guidance, rather than worked in separately into the AoLE sections, or section 8.2 "being outdoors", as per other Curriculum for Wales guidance for maintained schools and settings. This will provide clarity that learning in, about and for the natural environment is a highly valued pedagogy alongside inside classroom learning. It is not sufficient to just "be outdoors". At a minimum, the bullet pointed list in Section 8 should be retitled to outdoor learning as opposed to being outdoors and 8.2 adapted accordingly. NRW suggests adapting existing outdoor learning pedagogy sections within guidance for schools and settings, to suit the audience, thus providing improved support for teaching and learning in non-maintained settings.

This is backed up by recently published WG research - [Research Study 6](#) part of [Research studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Welsh education system](#) recommends "greater support for outdoor learning".

The content and experiences within childcare courses and Initial Teacher Education are going to be critical if this guidance is to serve our learners well.

Question 10 – Is the link between the pathways and the roles of the practitioner, environment and experiences clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

See answer to question 9

Question 11 – Does this curriculum clearly explain how the developmental pathways will support development of the mandatory cross-curricular skills?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

See answer to question 9

Question 12 – Is it clear that development of the mandatory cross-curricular skills should be embedded within holistic practice across the whole curriculum?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

See answer to question 9

Question 13 – To what extent are the incremental statements for the mandatory cross-curricular skills helpful in supporting practitioners to understand how children develop these skills?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Although the incremental statement is clear, supportive training for practitioners will help build confidence and help bring practice alive.

--

Question 14 – What, if any, additional information would be helpful?

Outdoor learning should be portrayed as a fundamental pedagogy, a way of teaching and learning, a unique space in which to promote learner well-being through connection to nature and the social aspects of playing and learning outdoors.

Experiences such as residential stays, adventure education, recognised accredited methods like forest school and coastal school, field work, environmental education and the use of setting grounds, local parks, woodlands and beaches - all the places which can “provide rich experiences” for learners - is fundamental to holistic child development.

Evidence from around the world demonstrates the benefits to physical and mental well-being of a connection with and learning in the natural environment. NRW has developed a [Natural Progression Steps](#) model to help explain that everyone has the potential to move, step by step, from being in and connecting with the natural environment to establishing lifelong positive behaviours that will encourage all of us to look after our world.

See the [NRW education and learning webpages](#) for information on:

- physical activity
- mental well-being
- attainment

Welsh Government has referenced the [High Quality Outdoor Learning in Wales](#) framework to maintained schools and settings to support good practice. NRW recommends signposting to this document to support non-maintained settings.

NRW would be happy to support the development of further resources as required and can facilitate co-production of any such resource via its facilitation of the Wales Council for Outdoor Learning.

Question 15 – To what extent are the separate functions of observation and assessment, as well as the link between them, clearly explained?

Very unclear	Slightly unclear	Neither clear nor unclear	Slightly clear	Very clear
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

No comment

Question 16 – To what extent is the section on enhancing practice helpful?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

This section contains useful information covering a range of topic areas. Although there is mention throughout to use of the outdoors, this section would benefit from more detailed guidance and links to organisations who can support in the same way that Public Health Wales is linked on page 53. We would recommend links to [Natural Resources Wales](#) and [Wales Council for Outdoor Learning](#) as the main enablers and facilitators of learning, in, about and for the natural environment.

Question 17 – What, if any, additional information would be helpful in this section?

See answer to question 14

Question 18 – To what extent are the reflective questions included throughout this curriculum helpful in:

i) supporting planning?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

NRW recommends the inclusion of reflective questions that focus on outdoor learning pedagogy. For example:

For practitioners – How well do I support learners in connecting to nature through playing and learning outdoors?

For leaders - How well do I support and maintain high quality outdoor learning pedagogy to maximise the multiple health and attainment benefits of learning in, about and for the natural environment?

ii) prompting practitioners to consider their knowledge and skills?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	✓	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

Currently, staff working within non-maintained settings do not have sufficient access to high calibre, professional learning opportunities focussing on outdoor learning pedagogy.

Few non-maintained settings have sufficient, suitably skilled and knowledgeable staff to enable a whole setting approach to embedding normalised pro-environmental behaviours and protecting and enhancing the setting's grounds or utilised natural outdoor spaces.

NRW would like to see every setting with at least one appropriately trained and qualified member of staff, who fully understands the sustainable management of natural resources and can facilitate environmental learning via high quality outdoor learning pedagogy, implementing interventions in order to gain the multiple benefits to health, wellbeing and attainment for learners that the natural environment can realise. This is a cost-effective method of ensuring both pupil development and local environmental gains.

This is backed up by recently published WG research - [Research Study 6](#) part of [Research studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Welsh education system](#) recommends "greater support for outdoor learning".

iii) supporting continual improvement in practice?

Not helpful at all	Slightly helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain your answer.

No comment

Question 19 – We would like to know your views on the effects that this curriculum would have on the Welsh language, specifically on:

- i) opportunities for people to use Welsh
- ii) treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Supporting comments

Natural Resources Wales are subject to Welsh Language Standards under Section 47 of the Measure and is happy that the Curriculum for Wales offers equal opportunity for both languages treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Question 20 – Please also explain how you believe this curriculum could be formulated or changed so as to have:

- i) positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language

- ii) no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Supporting comments

As all Curriculum for Wales guidance and documents are available in both languages it is difficult to see how this guidance could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects, increased positive effects or no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

Question 21– We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Natural Resources Wales offer their services and on-going support to Welsh Government to support the non-maintained sector in developing high quality outdoor learning pedagogy and would be pleased to support any further guidance development on learning in, about and for the natural environment.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: