



Outdoor Education: the views of providers from different contexts in Scotland

Final Report *Outdoor Connections* Research Programme

**Robbie Nicol
Peter Higgins
Hamish Ross**

**Outdoor & Environmental Education
School of Education
University of Edinburgh**

31 May 2006

FOREWORD

This report explores the 'views of providers from different contexts of outdoor education'. This brief was made explicit in the 'Invitation to tender' and the study was also intended to address a range of 'provider-related' issues in the Outdoor Connections Research Programme 2005-2006 (details available from Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS)).

In conducting the study we attempted to engage as many providers as possible; from across different types of outdoor learning from young people aged 3 to 18; from different settings; across the full range of sectors; and across a range of needs and outcomes.

Because of the scale of the task this brief was reinterpreted and included as Appendix 1, though in light of progress and other developments aspects of this were further modified (with LTS agreement) during the course of the study. The initial task set was ambitious and to satisfactorily address all the demands stated or implicit would have been a major undertaking. Consequently considerable effort was invested in developing an appropriate approach to the research, the relevant research instruments and comprehensive database of appropriate providers. All stages of this approach were conducted through discussion with and assistance from Learning and Teaching Scotland.

Whilst a study of opinions is not in our view best approached through a questionnaire-based approach this was the only realistic way of conducting the study within the timescale and budget available. Nonetheless the responses were valuable and gave clear indications of the views of several different sub-sets of providers.

From an initial comprehensive database of providers of a wide range of outdoor learning experiences in Scotland, careful selection led to a total of 240 questionnaires being sent out to providers specifically chosen to reflect the intentions in the brief. Considering the tight timescale and the unavoidable complexity of the questionnaire a high response rate of 26% of the questionnaires were returned. In light of the nature of these responses we decided to integrate discussion of relevant literature with the research findings within the analysis. This was particularly pertinent given the extensive reviews we have recently presented as part of the Outdoor Connections programme through our recent study (for Scottish Natural Heritage) of *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum* (Higgins, Nicol and Ross, 2005). In that study the approach, and the questions put to teachers proved effective in generating valuable and reliable data which demonstrate close parallels with the results of the present study.

The questionnaire responses were analysed to provide the review presented in the report. Our findings have been used to make a number of recommendations and these are drawn from the analysis of empirical study.

The authors would like to thank all those who took part in this research.

Robbie Nicol
Peter Higgins
Hamish Ross

Outdoor and Environmental Education
School of Education
University of Edinburgh

31 May 2006

CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS	1
LIST OF TABLES	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
OUTDOOR EDUCATION: THE VIEWS OF PROVIDERS FROM DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN SCOTLAND	
1 LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2 METHODS	8
3 ANALYSIS	9
3.1 The sectoral provision of outdoor learning	10
3.2 The current level of outdoor learning provision	11
3.2.1 The quantity of provision	11
3.2.2 What is current maximum capacity and demand?	13
3.3 Can outdoor learning contribute to and enhance the future 3-18 curriculum in Scotland?	15
3.3.1 What do young people learn on programmes?	15
3.3.2 What is the current quality of outdoor learning provision?	15
3.3.3 What do young people achieve on outdoor learning programmes?	20
3.3.4 Policy and strategy	21
3.3.5 Outdoor learning and the school curriculum	22
3.4 What are the factors influencing provision; challenges / opportunities of development?	23
3.4.1 What is special about outdoor learning?	24
3.4.2 Experience of barriers	26
3.4.2.1 Resources	27
3.4.2.2 Health and safety	28
3.4.2.3 Curricular issues	28
3.4.2.4 Sites, facilities and transport to them	28
3.4.2.5 Philosophical and political Issues	29
3.4.2.6 Attitudes	29
3.4.3 More about outdoor learning and the school curriculum	29
3.4.4 Changes within the education sector	30
3.4.4.1 Curricular issues	30
3.4.4.2 Health education	31
3.4.4.3 Community learning	31
3.4.4.4 Miscellaneous	31
3.4.5 Funding and provision	32

3.4.6	Public perception of risk	35
3.4.7	Legislation relating to the provision of outdoor learning	38
3.4.7.1	Health and safety – an issue for providers	38
3.4.7.2	European Working Time Directive – an issue for providers	39
3.4.7.3	Other legislative effects – an issue for providers	39
3.4.7.4	Health and safety – not an issue for providers	40
3.4.7.5	European Working Time Directive – not an issue for providers	40
3.4.8	The future of outdoor learning	41
3.4.8.1	Strategic leadership	41
3.4.8.2	Strategic support (general)	42
3.4.8.3	Strategic leadership in relation to curriculum	43
3.4.8.4	Health and safety	43
3.4.8.5	Cost	44
3.4.8.6	Academic institutions	44
3.4.8.7	Outdoor sector issues	44
3.4.8.8	Other issues	45
4	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	46
	REFERENCES	49
	APPENDICES	51

ABBREVIATIONS

AALA	Adventure Activities Licensing Authority
ACfE	<i>A Curriculum for Excellence</i>
ASDAN	Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network
ATQ	Additional Teaching Qualification
CoPE	Certificate of Personal Effectiveness
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DVLA	Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
EUWTD	European Union Working Time Directive
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
LEA	Local Education Authority
LTS	Learning and Teaching Scotland
NASUWT	National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers
NGB	National Governing Body
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education
PPI	Public Private Initiative
PSD	Personal and Social Development
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SEED	Scottish Executive Education Department
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SQA	Scottish Qualifications Authority

LIST OF TABLES

Number	Title	Page No.
Table 1	Providers operating in the public, charitable and private sectors	10
Table 2a	Number of days actually delivered in a year by providers	11
Table 2b	Number of days actually delivered in a year by providers	12
Table 2c	Number of days actually delivered in a year by providers	12
Table 3	Number of providers identifying demand for services greater than ability to supply	13
Table 4	How demand was expressed	14
Table 5	Number of instances recorded fitting the 'three-circles' model	16
Table 6	Providers with a written policy or strategy	21
Table 7	Special strengths in outdoor learning as identified by providers	24-25
Table 8	Number of providers which experience barriers affecting their provision	26
Table 9	Comments referring to resources as a barrier	27
Table 10	Specific comments referring to health and safety	28
Table 11	Comments in regards to curriculum	28
Table 12	Comments on sites, facilities and transport	28
Table 13	Individual comments on philosophical and political issues	29
Table 14	More about outdoor learning and school curriculum	29
Table 15	Are changes within the education sector influencing provision?	30
Table 16	Curricular issues	30
Table 17	Health Education	31
Table 18	Community Learning	31
Table 19	Miscellaneous changes in the education sector	31
Table 20a	Indication if funding is affecting level of provision ('NO' responses)	32
Table 20b	Indication if funding is affecting level of provision ('YES' responses)	32
Table 20c	Indication if funding is affecting level of provision ('YES and NO' responses)	33
Table 21a	Respondents' views on public perception of risk (YES)	35
Table 21b	Respondents' views on public perception of risk (NO)	35
Table 22a	Legislative issues influencing current provision (Health and Safety) (YES)	38
Table 22b	Impact of European Union working Time Directive (YES)	39
Table 22c	Other legislative effects (YES)	39
Table 23a	Legislative issues influencing current provision (Health and Safety) (NO)	40
Table 23b	Impact of European Union Working Time Directive (NO)	40
Table 24	Key issues to be addressed to promote sustainable provision for outdoor learning	41
Table 25	Suggestions for other forms of strategic support	42
Table 26	Suggestions for strategic leadership in relation to health and safety issues	43
Table 27	Suggestions for strategic leadership in relation to curriculum	43
Table 28	Providers' concerns about costs	44
Table 29	Academic institutions and support for provision	44
Table 30	Providers' views on outdoor sector issues	44
Table 31	Other general issues raised by providers	45

OUTDOOR EDUCATION: THE VIEWS OF PROVIDERS FROM DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN SCOTLAND

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research base

- Providers of outdoor learning were asked to give their views on the range of learning outcomes they looked for when working with young people. The current structure of provision was then reviewed to establish the sector's readiness and ability to respond to the opportunities the Outdoor Connections programme envisages emerging from *A Curriculum for Excellence (ACfE)*.
- The Outdoor Connections research programme is based on six key questions which were adapted to form the questionnaire. This was sent to providers working with the 3 - 18 age-group across a range of needs and outcomes using different settings and providing different types of outdoor learning.
- Of 240 questionnaires there were 63 returns (26.25%) which represents a fairly good return rate for this type of study. Of these 28 considered themselves to be 'public' sector, 13 'charitable', 10 'private' and 11 a mix of two or more of these.
- Fifty-two returns provided details of the days provided and from these the charitable sector (12 providers supply 86,860 days per year) is larger than the public sector (26 providers supply 74,036 days). The private sector ranks third in terms of quantity of provision where 10 providers supply 12,186 day per year. The total days reported by the 63 respondents is 182,194 days, indicating that total annual provision in Scotland is of the same order as the higher estimate from a previous desk-study (around 300,000 days per year (Higgins, 2000)).

What do young people learn on programmes?

- The responses from providers suggest that outdoor learning contributes to and enhances the 3-18 curriculum in Scotland. However it is not clear what aspects of such learning are specific to outdoor learning. For example all of the data items that refer to personal and social education could easily refer to classroom learning. This was not the case for other areas of study where there is a pedagogical need to go outdoors (eg for geography or biology field-work). There is no evidence of outdoor learning being centrally located within the curriculum; rather the study indicates that outdoor learning is currently a form of 'curricular enhancement'.

What is the current quality of outdoor learning provision?

- Ninety-three percent of respondents did not or could not provide robust evidence of the learning outcomes of their programmes. There has never been a national requirement to assess learning outcomes. Perhaps as a consequence evaluation of learning is not conducted systematically, not triangulated with other evidence and not evaluated or assessed externally. The fact that such monitoring and evaluation in support of its key claims has neither come from within the sector nor been imposed by external agents (e.g. funders or educational policy-makers) places the sector in an un-necessarily vulnerable and potentially weak position (especially if the claims are as robust as providers suggest).
- Seven providers used schemes such as 'Natural Connections', 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award' and the 'John Muir Award' and cited these as a monitor of quality. Care must be taken in using such schemes as a quality indicator of learning because providers are not themselves monitoring quality, but rather devolving the responsibility to do so to others.

Policy and strategy

- Whilst the existence of a written policy does not necessarily equate with quality, the more clearly a provider can specify its aims (teaching objectives) the easier it is to externally assess quality of learning. Whilst providers may have excellent internal means of ensuring quality they lack a means of communicating this. In the present study at least 72% of respondents did not have a written policy to communicate the outdoor learning they provide.

Outdoor learning and the school curriculum

- Whilst 71% of providers said the curriculum influences provision only a few (n=8) cited examples (eg citizenship, personal and social education and environmental studies).
- Some providers (n=11) said they could follow curricular guidelines if asked by their 'clients' and others (n=7) were compelled to follow the curriculum through statutory guidelines or organisational policy. Finally there were providers who simply made a choice to follow the curricular guidelines (n=5). These responses also provide an insight into the flexibility of outdoor learning to locate itself both within and out-with the formal curriculum.
- For 16 providers the curriculum was not a priority. Responses ranged from indifference to mild opposition, though it is not clear to what degree these opinions were based on knowledge of what the curriculum is or may be in the future.
- If ACfE is to represent an opportunity for providers the barriers to be overcome include getting young people 'released' to allow them to participate (n=7), getting secondary schools involved (n=3), examination/assessment pressures and lack of interest amongst some teachers.
- In general responses 'problematised' the curriculum and this represents another type of barrier. So barriers are both 'physical' (e.g. lack of qualified staff) and perceptual. These findings replicate those from Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005) report *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum*. This gives some indication that the removal of such barriers lies not just in the barriers themselves but also in the ways that some providers think of their role in relation to the curriculum.

The supply and demand for outdoor learning

- Whilst it was difficult for providers to assess demand 43 (68%) reported that they had excess demand for their services. In contrast some providers do have spare capacity. Seasonality affects residential providers more than non-residential providers.
- Overall it would appear that aside from seasonal variations there is demand in excess of supply and there are many for whom their outdoor learning needs are not being met.

What is special about outdoor learning?

- All 63 providers said there were special strengths in outdoor learning and supplied 65 categories of response. As the attempt to code these categories (eg 'enhanced opportunities for PSD' (n=18), 'new experiences' (n=8)) established that many are context-specific it is difficult, and perhaps meaningless, to generalise.
- Providers seem to define the special character of outdoor learning not as complimentary to school education but as distinct from it, raising the issue of 'to what extent does the outdoor experience provide added value over and above classroom-based learning?'. The same arguments appear to be deployed to associate outdoor learning with the curriculum as to distance it, laying the sector open to claims that providers take a utilitarian approach to the use of such justifications. The learning

experiences may indeed be 'special' but the lack of systematic data collection and analysis mitigates against claims being made with confidence.

Experience of barriers

- Seven providers reported that they did not experience barriers and 56 reported that they did. Lack of resources is the main barrier reported by providers (n=50). It is notable that cost (n=26) is the highest ranking and this corresponds with the Higgins et al (2005) report on teachers engagement with the natural heritage, where cost was identified by both primary and secondary school teachers as their main barrier. For 27 (43%) providers 'cost' was not mentioned as a barrier,. Of the 26 who said it was a barrier this included cost to the young people for the service as well as the cost to the provider. Some private sector respondents felt disadvantaged because of subsidy attached to public sector provision. Other barriers included health and safety (n=15), curricular issues (n=9), site facilities and transport (n=9), philosophical and political issues (n=8).

Changes within the education sector

- Of the 40 (63%) who talked about the importance of curricular issues 12 mentioned ACfE. It is significant that the majority of respondents have failed to acknowledge the imminent arrival of ACfE representing as it does the greatest change to the curriculum since the introduction of the 5-14 curriculum guidelines in 1993, especially as it might offer considerable opportunities for outdoor learning.
- Health education (n=7) was mentioned but citizenship (n=1) and sustainability (n=1) were only briefly acknowledged.

Funding and provision

- Whilst 48 providers stated that funding affected their level of provision 14 said it did not (about 3:1). The ratio is even more obvious in the public sector (4:1). In the charitable sector the ratio is more than 2:1.
- There were 54 statements about funding with the top three cited being 'staff shortage' (n=7), 'schools need to fundraise' (n=6) and 'more money equals more provision' (n=5).
- It is notable that public funded providers seem to experience even more difficulty than others.
- Any attempt to increase funding would need to take account of the context-specific needs of each provider and directed at increasing individual providers' capacity and/or creating new providers within the infrastructure of providers.

Public perception of risk

- Twenty-eight providers said public perception of risk was a barrier and 35 said it was not. The most frequently cited items were 'perception of risk and/or liability amongst some schools/teachers' (n=8) and 'parental concern' (n=2). The findings mirror those for school-teachers Higgins et al (2005). These data suggest that the issue is not just with risk itself but *perception* of it and that the problem of perception does not rest solely with the media and the way it reports on outdoor incidents. Preventing this being a barrier to new provision will require awareness-raising amongst of the benefits of outdoor education amongst the general public for the benefit of new providers.

Legislation relating to the provision of outdoor learning

- Nine providers noted that *Activities Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act* was having an affect, raising a number of concerns. Some also noted similar general health and safety concerns.
- Of the 63 providers only two experienced the *European Union Working Time Directive* as unworkable though others noted its potential to impact on residential outdoor education.
- Other legislation effects included the *Child Protection Act* (n=6) which respondents claim is 'getting in the way of common sense'. There is also a concern that both health and safety and the European Union Working Time Directive 'drive up costs' (n=2). There was mention that 'minibus driving and trailer towing for younger staff (n= 2) was an issue.
- Notwithstanding these issues no clear pattern emerges to suggest the sector as a whole is experiencing significant problems regarding legislative issues.

The future of outdoor learning

- Respondents (39 of 45 responses) called for strategic leadership from senior managers, civil servants and politicians at all levels of governance. These are precisely the points made by the House of Commons Committee which saw the value of education outside the classroom in both its broadest sense and in regard to academic learning, but that neither the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) nor Local Authorities have provided strategic leadership (House of Commons, 2005a, p. 3).
- Though the most cited barrier was 'funding' (n= 24) this was not just about asking for money. Rather that public funding of projects was short term (3-5 years) and created insecurity in terms of sustainable provision. Providers also argued that funding should be ring-fenced, regular, sustained and targeted.
- Other forms of support were requested too, notably in terms of training for staff (primarily accredited by universities etc) where some providers suggested better links between the academic world, the outdoor sector and schools, and also in initial teacher training and qualifications (both general and specific) and in-service provision. This is consistent with the findings amongst teachers (Higgins et al, 2005).
- The call for leadership begs questions about the sector's ability to define and manage its own affairs. If responsibility for leadership is left to local and central government it becomes externalised and the responsibility of someone else. These data begin to question whether the sector is actually 'a sector' or a 'community of interests'. This raises questions as to whether energy and resources should be directed towards individual organisations, the development of sectors (e.g. private, public, charitable) or the development of the infrastructure as a whole.
- There is a lack of evidence relating to young peoples' outdoor learning experiences. Again this places provision in an un-necessarily weak position. Consequently it is imperative that research into young people's experiences is conducted in order to assist the planning and future of outdoor learning provision in Scotland.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Whilst there is some previously published literature pertinent to the present study, the study itself provides a meaningful context for presentation and discussion of these findings. Consequently we have included discussion of literature where appropriate in both the analysis and conclusions sections of this report.

2 METHODS

Background

The research set out to provide a clear understanding of young peoples' achievements as a result of engaging in outdoor learning activities. The task was to ask providers of outdoor learning activities to give their views on the range of learning outcomes that they looked for when working with young people. With this information the intention is to review the current structure of provision to identify its readiness and ability to respond to the opportunities that the Outdoor Connections programme envisages emerging from *A Curriculum for Excellence* (ACFE). Consequently a further aspect was to question providers about resource development implications in preparation for the implementation of ACFE.

Focus for this task was provided by six key questions identified by Outdoor Connections. These six questions are the 'General Objectives' (GOs) referred to above and are as follows.

GO 1: Can outdoor learning contribute to and enhance the future 3-18 curriculum in Scotland?

GO 2: What is the current level of outdoor learning provision?

GO 3: What is the current quality of outdoor learning provision?

GO 4: What is current maximum capacity and demand?

GO 5: What are factors influencing provision: challenges / opportunities for development?

GO 6: What are factors influencing learning: programme, participant, place?

Further discussion with LTS led to an agreement that the question relating to GO6 was too broad to deal with in the present study. It is also not possible to identify factors that influence learning by researching those who provide learning opportunities (only providers perceptions of factors influencing learning). Nevertheless there were data returned which did give some indication of these factors from a provider's perspective, and these are included and discussed where appropriate. However in terms of the detailed analysis which follows GO 6 is not analysed separately.

A set of questions was devised specifically to address these objectives. These questions can be viewed at Appendix 2 showing in bold text the general objectives that each question is designed to answer.

The research sought to engage as many providers as possible; from across different types of outdoor learning; from different settings; across the full range of sectors; working with the 3 - 18 (age group) across a range of needs and outcomes. This is a fairly complex endeavour because of the blurring of the edges around the sectors that providers of outdoor learning are engaged. For example a provider may be thought of as a commercial provider because all of their funding comes from its clients¹. Yet all their clients may be schools whose funding comes from the public sector. Equally a local authority outdoor education centre may be in receipt of public funding yet still be required by their local authority to meet certain financial targets through for example self-generated income. Similarly a provider whose core funding comes from its charitable status may have income generation targets set by the trust to meet from fee-paying clients. Furthermore it is possible that providers are in receipt of funds from a range of sources and work with a range of young people from various sectors.

¹ The term 'client' was in common usage amongst respondents and we have therefore adopted it here. In light of the pressures on providers which will be discussed later this comes as no surprise. However we have adopted this terminology with considerable misgivings as it does indicate a 'market approach' to provision of what we consider to be an educational service.

At the outset of the study Learning and Teaching Scotland agreed to provide a list of relevant contacts for the study. Initially the contractors were provided with ten lists of providers which were then entered into a single spreadsheet which had two headings. One was called 'Early Years' and had 249 entries including nursery and playgroups. The second heading called 'Outdoor Education Providers' comprised 463 entries. Whilst this is indicative of a scale of potential provision of which we were unaware, this total of 712 entries was far larger than expected by LTS or the contractors. Furthermore it was not a ready-to-use database from which to begin an immediate mailing of the questionnaires. To mail all of these contacts would have been a 'blunt instrument' and was also beyond the scope of the agreed budget. Therefore a range of means was employed to make the data set more manageable. All decisions were made through discussion with LTS.

1. The 'Early Years' entries were not used as they were considered not to be a priority for the present study.
2. From the 'Outdoor Education Providers' dataset of 463, all of the entries without addresses were removed which reduced the dataset to 390.
3. All double entries were removed
4. All LTS staff were removed
5. All climbing-wall entries were removed
6. All grants officers were removed
7. Sportscotland staff were removed
8. All local authority contacts who are not direct providers were removed (e.g. the individual responsible for oversight of outdoor education in the City of Edinburgh Council is not a direct provider whereas the council's outdoor centres 'Lagganlia' and 'Benmore' are).
9. Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) inspectors were removed.
10. Sports development managers were removed.
11. Sports centres were removed.
12. University of Edinburgh Outdoor Education Department are the contractors and were removed.
13. Individuals whose position was not recorded and whose organisation did not indicate that they were a direct provider were removed.
14. Garelochhead Outdoor Centre (in the process of being closed down) was removed.
15. After all of the above have been removed this gave a figure of 272 which was then finally reviewed by LTS for duplication etc, reducing the total to **240**.

A total of 240 questionnaires (Appendix 3) were sent out with stamped addressed envelopes along with a cover letter (Appendix 4). There were 63 returns (26.25%). There were actually 67 returns but four of these were not included in the analyses - one dealt only with adults and not the 3-18 target group, and three others arrived four weeks after the deadline. As Robson (2002) suggests a low response rate is a common problem with postal questionnaires. It is significant to note therefore that the returns included the 5 largest providers of outdoor learning in Scotland. This is quite understandable given May's (1997) point that those with a vested interest in the outcome of the study are more likely to respond.

A pilot of the questionnaire was conducted and the pre-pilot questionnaire is included as Appendix 5. The responses to the pilot questionnaire, our narrative on these and the explanation of the changes made prior to distribution is included as Appendix 6.

3 ANALYSIS

3.1 The sectoral provision of outdoor learning

The issue of identifying a provider tidily within a particular sector whether it be public, commercial or charitable has two important characteristics. The first is to do with where the provider's funding comes from and the second is the sector from which the provider's participants come from. Given these issues it was beyond the scope of this research to identify these characteristics for each provider. Instead the providers were asked to determine themselves what sector they operated in (Question 1). If for the above reasons providers had the same issues in defining their sector the questionnaire provided an opportunity for them to explain any difficulties (Question 2).

Table 1 Providers operating in the public, charitable and private sectors

Of the 63 returns there were:

Public	28
Charitable	13
Private	10
Charitable and public	3
Public, private and charitable	3
Voluntary	2
Private and charitable	1
Voluntary and charitable	1
Voluntary and public	1
Public and private	1

Despite the issues raised above about the potential difficulty of providers locating themselves in this way there were remarkably few that commented on Question 2 (which asked if providers had difficulty in defining their sector). There were only four providers who answered this question. One LEA residential centre reported themselves as being in the public sector but with some commercial work to offset costs. One provider said they were a 'not for profit trust'. One charity stated we are 'charitable, although we are primarily SEED / public funded as a school committed to Learning and Teaching Scotland guidelines, inspections etc'. One provider said 'not sure, voluntary group with some public funding'.

It was not the purpose of this study to set out to explore the range of sector provision and the implications for the quality of learning. However we had anticipated some problems in dealing with the complexity of the range of provision because it encompasses such a wide spectrum of providers. It is therefore of interest to note that providers generally have little difficulty in locating themselves fairly easily within this complexity. We would conclude therefore that this issue needs further research because at the moment there is no research that distinguishes between the quality of provision across the range of sectors. Clearly any development of infrastructure needs some idea of this in order to target funds appropriately. These issues arise frequently within this research, and further analysis is provided in due course. However, for the purpose of the present study the responses to the first two questions are sufficient to show that we have a broad range of providers from a range of sectors; as we had intended in order to address the research questions outlined above.

The structure of the research report will now follow the 'General Objectives' one at a time providing each objective (GO 1 through to GO 5)² followed by data display and data analysis. The question to be answered appears in italics.

² Please note that to assist the structure of this research report the numbering of the General Objectives is not the same as that indicated in the document 'Research Programme 2005-06'. This numbering was changed as the flow of the text suited a re-ordering of the chronology. In summary the headings are the same but the numbering is different.

3.2 The current level of outdoor learning provision

3.2.1 The quantity of provision

This task was undertaken by asking providers how many days they actually delivered in a year (Question 5). Sectors and the number of providers are identified in bold at the head of the column and the number of days are given for each provider within the sector followed by a total figure at the end of each sector. Some comments appear in brackets and need to be taken into consideration when interpreting the figures. These figures have not been excluded as they are the figures supplied by the provider and appropriate allowance should be made in any analysis in keeping with the comments in the brackets. The initials 'nr' indicates a nil return where providers did not supply a figure.

Table 2a Number of days actually delivered in a year by providers

Public: A total of 26 responses	Charitable: A total of 12 responses	Private: A total of 10 responses
16,500	62,573 (across several	6,000
14,017	centres)	4,584
7,800	16,380 (across 4 centres)	1,000
5,500 (but some are school ranger visits)	3,000	200
5,000	2,000	150
4,800	1,801	122
4,000	413	80
3,200	347	40
2,270	200	10
2,250	146	nr
1,875	nr	
1,680 (not all day visits)	nr	
1,218	nr	
1,199		
800		
600		
378		
200		
197		
195		
100		
100		
80		
50		
27		
nr		
nr (schools recorded not days)		
nr (schools recorded not days)		
Total days provided = 74,036	Total days provided = 86,860	Total days provided =12,186

Table 2b Number of days actually delivered in a year by providers

Charitable and public: Three responses	Public, private and charitable: Three responses	Voluntary: Two responses
5,420 500 105	1,122 nr nr	96 163
Total days provided = 6,025	Total days provided = 1,122	Total days provided = 1,159

Table 2c Number of days actually delivered in a year by providers

Private and charitable: One response	Voluntary and charitable: One response	Voluntary and charitable: One response	Public and private: One response
250	552	4	nr
Total days provided = 250	Total days provided = 552	Total days provided = 4	nr

The data show that from the 63 returns there are only 11 nil returns (nr) showing that in general providers are very good at keeping records of their provision. On the basis of this evidence the charitable sector where 12 providers supply 86,860 days per year is larger than the public sector where 26 providers supply 74,036 days per year. Based on these figures the charitable sector provides more days with less providers (in purely numerical terms, and not considering the scale of the centres/providers). The private sector ranks third in terms of quantity of provision where 10 providers supply 12,186 days per year.

The total provision reported by all 63 respondents is 182,194 days. Whilst a simplistic extrapolation to assess the national scale of provision would be inappropriate we can offer some observations that make it possible to have some confidence in providing an 'order of magnitude' estimate. First, our assessment of the responses in light of our knowledge of the sector leads us to conclude that we have received responses from most of the larger and most active providers. Hence a simplistic scaling on the basis that we have responses from 26% of the population so we can estimate the whole population would clearly lead to over-estimation. Nonetheless it is possible to say that the present study suggests that the scale of provision of outdoor learning in Scotland is of the same order as the higher estimate from a previous desk-study of 200,000 to 300,000 days per year (Higgins, 2000).

However, what is less clear is the reason for those who did not respond. If the converse of May's point above (that those with a vested interest in the outcome of the study are more likely to respond to the questionnaire) is true then it is possible that the smaller and less active providers have less of a vested interest in the future of outdoor learning. Whilst this is clearly speculative and no empirical data is available it is important to bear in mind that those who have not responded may face different barriers and have different opportunities than those who did. This point is particularly important if the future of outdoor learning lies in part in the development and support of smaller providers as well as large.

3.2.2 What is current maximum capacity and demand?

The Supply and Demand for Outdoor Learning

One further attempt to identify the quality of provision was made by reviewing the infrastructure of providers to establish if it was capable of responding to the demand of those seeking outdoor learning opportunities. This was based on Question 9 which asked 'is there a demand for your services that is greater than your ability to supply'? Providers were then asked to indicate who required their services and the extent to which demand exceeded supply.

Seventeen providers answered 'no' to this question and three did not respond. Forty-three responded 'yes' and indicated the following as the excess demand:

Table 3 Number of providers identifying demand for services greater than ability to supply

Schools generally	27 (of which 4 specified primary)
Community groups	6
Youth groups/agencies	5
All sectors	2
Those 'at risk'	2
Guides/Scouts	1
After school opportunities	1
Residential outdoor centres	1
Nursery schools	1
Lack of access to those unable to pay	1
Initiatives in the alternative curriculum	1
Special learning needs	1

In addition to these data six providers mentioned that seasonality affects schools that only want to visit residential centres in summer months.

Providers were then asked to find a way to express the excess of demand over supply. The left hand column shows how demand was expressed and the right hand column shows the number of respondents who expressed demand in this way.

Table 4 How demand was expressed

50%	2
40 schools on waiting list	1
100%	1
25-50%	1
20%	1
15-20%	1
4 to 1	1
3 to 1 which is the equivalent of a school attending the centre once every 2-3 years	1
half day per week	1
x8 in May and June	1
x 3	1
2 or 3 more full time staff	1
20 plus bookings per year	1
School referrals are higher than course places	1
+ 16 referrals are harder to engage and require more resource and networking to secure	1
A handful	1
Turn away bookings	1

There were 20 providers who could not or did not assess excess demand. However these data show that providers are able to express unmet demand in a variety of ways. Clearly this was a difficult task as the demand in some cases is not always known nor easily calculated whereas it is much easier to identify capacity whether it be expressed in terms of room nights, number in a group, staff resources etc. However in terms of planning for the future it would appear that there is a large and diverse group of people whose outdoor learning needs are not being met.

Yet amongst this evidence for the demand for greater supply comes a warning from one respondent who provides services for the public, private and charitable sectors who stated 'we have increased our programme each year over the three years of operation by: - year 1 to 2 – 80% (and) year 2 to 3 – 40%. We are now having to cut back as funding from NOF is no longer available'. This is an important point because despite this clamour for more capacity East Dunbartonshire Council closed in 2006 Garelochhead residential outdoor education centre.

There is also other evidence to suggest that spare capacity currently exists in the infrastructure of provision. One charitable sector residential provider stated they operate at 'just under 25% capacity (but ... aim to raise numbers from 16,000 per annum to nearer 50,000 within a few years'.

The same provider stated

several factors currently prevent increasing visitor numbers including our marketing limitations (which we are addressing). Of greater concern is that local authority providers seem to have reached their limit, and it is possible that this influences the Executive's view which is that there should be no new initiatives. Clearly we would welcome any new initiatives.

This statement corresponds with the data from the three LEA residential providers and one large charitable residential provider that took part in this research all of which claimed to have greater demand than supply (although two did say this was seasonal).

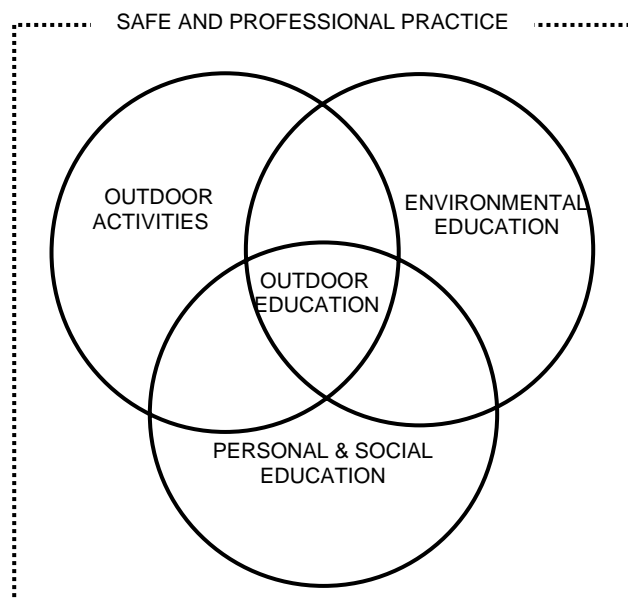
Notwithstanding the variables above it would appear that aside from seasonal variations there is demand in excess of supply. To differentiate a little further however the evidence suggests that seasonality affects residential providers more than non-residential providers. This may require further scrutiny but the basis of the claim is based on the presence of data that seasonality is an issue for residential provision and the absence of data from non-residential providers about seasonality. It may be that any future structuring of provision requires some thought in terms of the point of provision particularly if a school's programme of outdoor learning includes both school based provision and residential provision as part of an integrated package.

3.3 Can outdoor learning contribute to and enhance the future 3-18 curriculum in Scotland?

3.3.1 What do young people learn on programmes?

Question 3 asked 'what sorts of things do you think pupils learn on your programmes?' The 63 providers reported a range of responses to the question regarding what young people learnt. There were 284 instances. The full itemisation of these instances is included as Appendix 7. However in grouping these instances we have used the following model (see Higgins, 1995 for an explanation) which suggests that outdoor learning comprises three main areas including personal and social development, outdoor activities and environmental education. In this way the instances are coded under these headings.

Figure 1 The Range and Scope of Outdoor Education (Higgins, 1995)



One further heading called 'other' has been added to account for the instances that did not fit readily into the model. In summary the number of instances recorded are:

Table 5 Number of instances recorded fitting the 'three-circles' model

Personal and Social Education	121
Environmental Education	75
Outdoor Activities	48
Other	56

This summary gives a good indication of the purposes and content that providers are aiming to achieve through their outdoor learning programmes. In terms of the subject areas, providers are catering for, school subject areas such as health (n=9) environmental studies (n=3), geography (n=3), biology (n=2), and curricular topics such as 'minibeasts' (n=3), woodland studies (n=2), and pond studies (n=2). The selection of these examples reveals a paradox when locating outdoor learning experiences within subject areas. At first glance most if not all of these instances are easily identifiable with the curriculum as described in the 5-14 curricular guidelines. However, many of the items (all of the personal and social development items for example) could easily be curricular matter taught in the classroom. On the other hand the majority of the outdoor activity items (n=48) are more clearly located in the outdoors because they are more context specific (risk management (n=2) could of course be taught indoors but the data show items like this to be exceptions). The same can be said of those items in the environmental education grouping (n=75) where there is a tradition of field studies suggesting that certain subjects (for example geography and biology) need to be taught to some degree outdoors because of the need for direct first hand experience.

Consequently when addressing the question 'can outdoor learning contribute to and enhance the future 3-18 curriculum in Scotland?' it is clear from these data that the answer is 'yes' with the caveat that many could easily refer to classroom learning. These data provide a lot of evidence that outdoor learning is currently a form of 'curricular enhancement'. There is no evidence of outdoor learning being centrally located within the curriculum and this point is returned to in greater detail later.

3.3.2 What is the current quality of outdoor learning provision?

Following on from the responses provided to the previous question about what young people can learn on outdoor learning programmes, providers were then asked to comment on their knowledge of evidence relating to learning outcomes (Question 4). More specifically providers were asked how they knew that pupils learnt the things mentioned in the previous question (Question 3). The purpose of this question was to establish the extent to which providers monitor what is taught (teaching objectives) in relation to what is learnt (learning outcomes).

Providers commented on fourteen different methods of monitoring and in the analysis below each method is accompanied by the number of instances. The total number of instances is n= 86.

1. **Oral feedback** (n=22)

This was the highest recorded number of instances where the oral feedback was conducted through face-to-face group reviews but was not recorded.

2. **Secondary sources** (n=15)
This was another form of oral feedback but this time through a secondary source. Typical examples included the school teacher or group leader (who were not the provider) giving feedback to the provider based on observations of the young people made after the programme had finished. Implicit in this view is that transfer of learning occurred between the place of experience and the place of residence (school or community) although no empirical evidence that this transfer had occurred was presented.
3. **Observation of behavioural change** (n=11)
This is similar to the previous method in that providers were stating that behavioural change is both observable and lasting although again no empirical evidence for this was forthcoming.
4. **Nil return** (n=10)
These include two main categories. The first is where respondents did not enter an answer. The second is where respondents did not address the question. Examples of the latter include 'new skills are measurable' or 'by evaluation of activities'. In such cases there was an acknowledgment that learning could be measured but there was no evidence that the providers were in fact attempting any evaluation.
5. **Written feedback** (n=10)
This heading included providers who used review sheets, evaluation sheets, questionnaires and diaries. Unlike the ephemeral nature of the oral points referred to in 1-4 above here is evidence of written evaluation about the quality of outdoor learning. With this evidence it is possible for providers or external agencies to then examine their teaching objectives to see if they correlate with learning outcomes although there was no evidence to suggest that this was in fact happening. However, these data suggest that there is baseline evidence to match providers' views with participants' experiences and this is a recommendation for further research.
6. **Repeat bookings** (n=4)
Implicit in these data is the view that repeat bookings means that the provider is providing something of value to the user group. On the face of it this position does indeed have merit if for no other reason than no repeat bookings may well indicate a lack of demand for the service. However as a quality indicator care should be exercised in uncritical acceptance where outdoor learning experiences often compete with other residential and outdoor trips such as museums, theme parks and visitor attractions (Higgins, Ross and Nicol, 2005). Their study shows that there is a difference between outdoor learning on the one hand which takes place primarily outdoors and other excursions which are predominantly indoors. If qualitative distinctions are to be made between the relative merits of this distinction then repeat visits is not a necessarily a good indicator.
7. **Self assessment** (n=3)
These data show where young people themselves are asked by the provider to record their own experiences. No further data are available about this. However, it does seem to be one method of recording experience which could easily be triangulated with some of the methods above. This type of evidence if produced systematically would provide an ideal way of triangulating what providers say they achieve (which there is an abundance of) and what young people actually learn (which there is a lack of).

8. **Thank-you letters** (n=3)
Without seeing the content of these thank-you letters it is difficult to judge their merit in assessing the quality of learning. In our own experiences thank-you letters describe the pleasure of the outdoor learning experience but rarely the nature of it. It is an indicator that young people are having a good time but not what they are learning and although the two may be related they are not necessarily synonymous (Nicol, 2001). However it would appear that the very small number of responses here suggests that providers do not rely on thank-you letters as a primary means of evaluating the quality of learning taking place.
9. **Action plans** (n=2)
The analysis for these data is the same as 7 above.
10. **National Governing Body Award certificates** (n=2)
For those involved in the delivery of outdoor activities this seems an entirely justifiable way of assessing skill acquisition, leadership and group management in outdoor activities because of the tangible progression within (Levels 1 to 5) and between (developing a range of qualifications) the NGB structures.
11. **ASDAN** (Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network) (n=1)
ASDAN programmes and qualifications are approved by the DfES and the QCA and 'blend activity-based curriculum enrichment with a framework for the development, assessment and accreditation of key skills and other personal and social skills, with emphasis on negotiation, co-operation and rewarding achievement'. They offer a Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) at Levels 1, 2 and 3 and further awards (<http://www.asdan.co.uk/>). Whilst we have no experience of these awards, they do on the face of it offer a means of assessment of aspects of the intended personal and social education learning outcomes of some providers.
12. **HMIe** (n=1)
This provider commented on a report by HMIe which looked at the value of outdoor learning in school grounds. Given that HMIe are responsible for monitoring the quality of school education then it is understandable that this provider looks to this report as authoritative evidence. However HMIe attention to the inspection of outdoor learning in the past has been limited. Our enquiries prior to the present study revealed that very few inspections had been carried out in the UK and of these the majority were not available through the information service. Nonetheless it should be reported that in a recent article by an HMIe (Clay, 1999) and a significant review by the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) 2004 outdoor education was viewed very positively.
13. **School assessment** (n=1)
This single example refers to a school provider where outdoor learning experiences were assessed within the context of curricular subjects. This example has an advantage over the points made in 2 above about the transfer of learning in that this provider can observe young people before, during and after the outdoor learning experience. Because this is a strong model in terms of monitoring it is surprising that this data item was mentioned by only one provider. It is in cases like these that a lack of evidence points to something of importance. For example the lack of data here is probably due to the recent decline in provision of school based outdoor education (see for example the comparison of 1979 Lothian Region data (Cheesmond, 1979) with that for 1999 outlined by Higgins, (2002)). If school based outdoor learning teachers do not exist then they cannot respond. It would appear therefore that in considering the sustainable provision of outdoor learning this decline needs to be recognised in order to halt or reverse this trend.

14. **School referral reports** (n=1)

This single public sector provider observed transfer of learning from a residential outdoor centre to school and this was systematically recorded. No further details are available. However it does appear to be a robust monitoring system because once again there is an identifiable person responsible for helping young people to make sense of their outdoor learning experiences in relation to other aspects of their lives.

At this point it may be worth summarising the data in this section. In terms of the question that this aspect of the research seeks to address (*What is the current quality of outdoor learning provision?*) there is one significant issue that stands out and it is to do with the sphere of influence and relevance of the evaluations being conducted. There are two characteristics common to item code categories 1, 2 and 3 above. The first is that they are all in-house evaluations; and the second is that they are not recorded in any systematic way. The evaluations therefore may be useful for the individual and the organisation in which they work but because they are not recorded or systematic they cannot be communicated meaningfully to a wider audience. This might therefore be described as anecdotal evidence where its validity depends on the oral testimony of informants. This has important consequences for any attempt to look at the quality of provision across a range of sectors that are not necessarily part of an easily defined infrastructure. One of the consequences of this would appear to be that elements of good (or bad) practice remain in-house. This makes it difficult for communication across the various sectors of the infrastructure, particularly if providers are to learn from each other. This is an important point in the context of this research where all three item code categories (1, 2 and 3) in this section plus the nil returns (item code category 4 above) (n=58) amount to 67% of the data items. In other words when talking of the quality of evaluation 67% of providers either cannot provide an answer or rely on anecdotal evidence.

Further and with the exception of categories 10, 11, 13 and 14 (and possibly 12) the evidence presented by providers about '*how they knew that pupils learnt the things mentioned in Question 3*' is primarily of an anecdotal nature which is not collected systematically, not triangulated with other evidence and not evaluated or assessed externally. This means that 80 of 86 respondents (93%) did not provide robust evidence of the learning outcomes of their programmes. This observation is not intended to be critical of providers in-so-far-as there has never been a national requirement for them to do so. However, in terms of the scale of provision of outdoor learning in Scotland (Higgins, 2000 estimates this to be around 200,000 to 300,000 days per year) the fact that such monitoring and evaluation in support of the key claims of the sector has neither come from within the sector or imposed by external agents (eg funders, educational policy-makers) places the sector in a unique position. Indeed if the claims are as robust as providers suggest then the lack of such evidence places such provision in an un-necessarily vulnerable and potentially weak position.

3.3.3 What do young people achieve on outdoor learning programmes?

Providers were also asked if they kept evidence of pupils' achievement (Question 8). The purpose of this question was to give providers the opportunity to show if there were any other innovative ways that they were using to monitor quality of provision other than those cited above. Thirty-four providers said they did not keep evidence and twenty-nine providers said they did. Of the 29 'yes' responses there were little differences to those cited above. Notable amongst these were:

- **Award scheme certificates (n=7)**
The schemes referred to were 'Natural Connections', 'Duke of Edinburgh's Award' and the 'John Muir Award'. Care must be taken in using schemes as a quality indicator of learning because providers are devolving their responsibility to evaluate to the scheme. In other words the provider is not monitoring quality so much as relying on the quality of the scheme they have adopted. This research is not designed to evaluate any of the award schemes mentioned so no comment can be made on providers using them as a quality indicator.
- **Referral agent keeps records (n=1)**
This item seemed to indicate a relationship between a referral agent and the provider where it was the referral agent's responsibility to evaluate. Like the school referral reports mentioned above these data could be useful in monitoring the quality of evaluation of learning if they were made available. However, this is a point in passing as it was not the purpose of this research to include this type of data.
- **Accredited programmes (n=1)**
It was not clear from the response what this programme was and therefore no analysis is offered.

Further to the quantitative data about evaluation some providers offered qualitative data. One private sector provider stated 'I cannot say if I know they learn anything'. This appears to be an honest admission about the difficulty in evaluating the more qualitative aspects of these types of experiences. This point was mirrored by another private sector provider who said 'good question - we see them for a week and hope some of the above aspects hit home in their future development – feedback forms cannot monitor acquisition of life skills'.

One charitable sector organisation researched their quality of provision in 1992 and used this as the basis of their response to the question about quality. There was no further evidence to state whether this research had been updated. Another charitable sector provider reported that formal research involving *SportsScotland* and *Playscotland* and been conducted regarding their provision. One public body also referred to research conducted on their provision which encompassed Scotland, Wales and England. Another charitable organisation stated ...

unfortunately it is difficult to obtain funding and support for rigorous research that would provide hard evidence. It should be possible to bring together research institutions together with student/visitor groups to undertake necessary research (e.g. longitudinal studies)...We are aware of research evidence on the efficacy of outdoor learning this could be built upon. There is a widespread 'gut feeling' among group leaders of the benefits of outdoor learning to particular young people. We intend to develop partnerships with research institutions and where possible to move away from guess work, hunches and assumptions to provide clear evidence that particular activities and learning experiences deliver specific values, qualities and skills.

3.3.4 Policy and strategy

In order to establish if the quality of provision was based on written guidance providers were asked if they had a written policy or strategy and if so could it be forwarded (Question 6). The providers responded as follows:

Table 6 Number of providers with a written policy or strategy

No	40
Yes	17
nr	4

If external scrutiny of provision of outdoor learning is to be important then it is worth pointing out that 72% of providers (40 plus the four nil returns) do not have a written means of communicating their outdoor learning provision. This percentage is larger if you include those five providers below who said they had a policy but did not send one.

Of the 17 'yes' responses 12 sent a written policy or provided a reference to their website where this information could be found. The twelve documents range from one A4 page to an extensive 69 page document.

In reviewing these policies it is important to note that some are much more detailed than others. The more detailed usually included some form of mission statement followed by a series of aims that were expressed very explicitly. An example of the latter came from one provider whose mission statement was 'to provide a quality experience in residential and outdoor education in a safe and friendly manner'. The provider stated that they aim:

- To provide a critical opportunity for personal and social development at a formative age
- To provide wide ranging opportunities to participate in outdoor education
- To provide a change of personal experiences in a new setting
- To promote an awareness of environmental issues
- To provide opportunities linked to the curriculum within the outdoor environment
- To promote a healthy lifestyle
- To maintain high standards of care and safety at all times

Eight other providers provided this level of detail (one through a website referral).

In reviewing the various documentation *four distinct categories* emerge where providers have either:

1. no written aims; or,
2. described their aims in terms of a general philosophy (or referred to a website that does this; or,
3. a mission statement; or,
4. both a mission statement and set of aims such as the example above.

The purpose in asking providers about written policies was to gather data about how the quality of provision is or could be monitored. In this respect these four distinctions are important because they show a move from descriptions of service at a very general perspective (Category 1) to a very specific and detailed perspective (Category 4). This point becomes more important if the quality of provision is to be viewed not from an internal perspective but rather from an external perspective. Providers may well be doing an excellent job of ensuring quality internally and individually. However, all data in this research indicates that providers operate from a range of sectors with a diverse spread of different aims, and this point needs to be viewed against the infrastructure of provision as a whole. When this is done it becomes clear that the more specific a provider can be in terms of specifying its aims then the easier it is for any external scrutiny of quality (such as is the case in an inspection process). In this way the evaluation of learning can be monitored against the aims of the provider. Consequently the stated aims (teaching objectives) can be evaluated against the learning outcomes. This cannot be easily done where the aims are not explicit.

It is important to point out that the existence of a written policy does not necessarily equate with quality learning. However, if the quality of the infrastructure is to be viewed as a whole and if external scrutiny is to be an important aspect of determining quality, then it would seem that having written policy would be one way of evaluating the statement of intent with the provision on the ground.

One further point emerged from these data. With the growth of internet technology it is much easier to provide information about mission and aims for public consumption via websites. The use of websites not only provides useful information for external scrutiny of quality but it also has marketing benefits in attracting potential customers.

The qualitative data about mission and aims included one public sector provider who stated there are 'too many links to other documents to provide (copies)' and another public sector provider said 'no, but we do need one'.

3.3.5 Outdoor learning and the school curriculum

Question 7 sought to explore the quality of provision by identifying the different ways in which the school curriculum was thought about. Of the 63 returns 45 said 'yes' to the question 'does the school curriculum influence what you do?' Sixteen said 'no' and two said both 'yes' and 'no'.

Of the 45 'yes' responses there was a range of data. Some providers chose to name subjects such as citizenship (n=2), personal and social development (n=2) and environmental studies (n=2). Others chose to name contexts (through school grounds, n=1) or training opportunities (CPD, n=1). Timetabling was also noted with three saying that they plan their programmes to fit the school year; one said they worked with school children in the holidays and another that the curriculum gives a framework for the activities to sit within. One said that curricular outdoor education was good for the less academically able. Five said they worked in partnership with schools, and that these partnerships included rangers services and award scheme providers.

However the greatest responses in this category came from providers whose responses were coded as follows.

- Can follow the 5-14 curricular guidelines (n=11)
These were providers who can follow curricular guidelines if asked by their 'clients'.
- Have to follow the 5-14 curricular guidelines (n=7)
These were providers who through statutory guidelines or organisational policy were compelled to follow the curriculum.
- Choose to follow the 5-14 curricular guidelines (n=5)
These are providers who choose to follow the curricular guidelines not because they are asked to do so by their 'clients' but because they want to.

It is clear from these responses that the curriculum does have an important role in the way providers think about outdoor learning. The 45 who answered 'yes' means that 71% of providers see the curriculum as influencing their provision. These last three responses also provide an insight into the flexibility of outdoor learning to locate itself both within and outwith the formal curriculum.

Please note that the coded responses do not amount to the number of 'yes' responses (45) because many responses were too vague to include e.g. 'outdoor education can deliver the curriculum'.

All of the above responses take a fairly pro-curricular approach. However, one public sector provider stated 'it (the curriculum) limits outdoor education'. Another public sector provider thought the curricular influence might be 'too much' and worried about the attitude where non-examinable subjects were seen as inferior. A private sector provider said that 'schools say they don't have cash for visits or time'.

Other notable data came from a public sector provider who looked forward to the introduction of *A Curriculum for Excellence* for its effect on outdoor education. One charitable sector provider stated 'we seek to create and continually improve our educational programmes to deliver in areas related to national priorities in education and 5-14 guidelines. We will adapt as Government policy develops e.g. through Curriculum for Excellence'.

Of the 16 'no' responses four said they provided extra-curricular activities instead, three did not provide information, two said the curriculum is irrelevant, and single responses included: 'we do community work', 'the curriculum is too restrictive', 'we teach technical skills', 'don't know the curriculum'; and lastly, 'the linking of outdoor education to the curriculum is still to be established'. It is interesting to note that although these providers do not associate themselves with the curriculum the curriculum could nevertheless be of relevance if they chose. Whilst it may be the prerogative of the provider to choose whether to be associated with the curriculum (as is the case in the private sector) it may be the case that any decisions not to be associated with the curriculum are based on lack of knowledge of what the curriculum is. This point carries more weight when viewed against the aspirations of *A Curriculum for Excellence* where there may be opportunities to be less restrictive (one concern of these respondents). In such cases providers may be missing out on opportunities to expand their provision, and the infrastructure of provision as a whole may be disadvantaged because some providers who might otherwise provide a good service choose not to include themselves.

Of the two providers who stated 'yes' and 'no' one is an example of how it is possible to provide services that are sometimes curricular and sometimes non-curricular. For one of these providers some work is based in schools and other work is not. The other provider shows how it is possible for the visiting teacher working with an outdoor education provider to decide the extent of curricular activity and then the provider programmes activities accordingly. In this way a programme can have the possibility of being delivered where it is for the teacher to make curricular connections or for the provider to do this (or some combination of both).

3.4 What are the factors influencing provision; challenges / opportunities of development?

3.4.1 What is special about outdoor learning?

All 63 providers said there were special strengths in outdoor learning (Question 10), and used the following terms to express these:

Table 7 Special strengths in outdoor learning as identified by providers (n=responses)

Experiential / direct learning	19
Enhanced opportunities for PSD	18
New experiences	8
Enjoyment/fun	7
Healthy activity	7
Environmental understanding	6
Memorable	5
Real life experiences	4
Immediate consequences of action evident	4
Stimulating/inspiring	4
Meaningful situations	4
Sensory awareness	3
Novelty of location	3
All abilities of pupils can learn equally	3
Good for less academic pupils	3
Good for learning away from educational establishment/alternative curriculum	3
Good for those disaffected by the education system	2
New	2
Holistic	2
Practical observations are 3 dimensional	2
Less constraints than the classroom	2
Physical activity	2
Unfamiliar environment	2
Residential experience	2
It is not regarded as hard work by young people	2
Shared learning experiences	2
Easier concentration	2

Develops physical, emotional, mental and spiritual well-being	2
Showing education is related to life outwith school	2
Push personal barriers/expand comfort zones	2
Good for formal, informal and hidden curriculum	2
More focus on the non-academic	2
Observations are in colour	1
Increased enthusiasm because of the context	1
Powerful motivator	1
Adventurous	1
Immediate sense of achievement	1
Flexibility	1
Learning is inevitable	1
Good for differentiated learning	1
Provides focus	1
Associate learning with positive experiences	1
Lifestyle	1
Sense of achievement	1
Outdoor play	1
Not easily delivered in the classroom	1
Less abstract	1
Immediate rewards	1
Immersion in topics when residential	1
Small groups	1
Longevity of experience	1
No baggage from previous achievements or failures	1
Opportunities for success	1
Benefits kinaesthetic learning	1
New interests	1
Unique learning medium	1
Big place less racket	1
Therapeutic	1
Emotional intelligence	1
Residential centres are good for cluster school and transition work	1
It is an approach and a subject in its own right	1
Cross-curricular links	1
Reinforce class-room work	1
Power of the natural environment	1
Management of risk	1

Attempts were made to code these data by grouping and analysing them under discrete headings. However this proved to be a rather arbitrary exercise. Because the terms are in many cases context specific it is difficult, and perhaps meaningless, to group, code and generalise. For example the data item 'experiential / direct learning (n=19)' is entered as a discrete entry. Yet 'holistic (n=2)' being a key principle of experiential learning could easily mean the two being coded together. However the main problem with grouping these data is because the question that was asked was to do with the special strengths in outdoor learning? The majority of these data items could be seen as principles that affect all sorts of learning whether indoors or out. Further confusion is added when considering the finding above that 71% of respondents see the curriculum as influencing their provision. It is odd therefore that more was not made of curricular links here given that 71% of respondents view their curricular work as important.

Taking this a step further it appears that the opposite may be the case. What seems to be happening here is that providers are defining the special character of outdoor learning not as complimentary to school education but as distinct from it. Whilst this is an understandable claim given the self-interest involved it does raise several interesting questions. For example, if the majority of these data items are indeed principles of learning not just specific to outdoor learning then to what extent does the outdoor experience provide added value over and above classroom-based learning? If outdoor learning is closely associated with the curriculum then answers to this question are not forthcoming. If however providers see themselves as offering something special that cannot be easily replicated in the classroom then a stronger case needs to be made for this special character. At the moment the same data appear to be deployed to associate outdoor learning with the curriculum as to distance outdoor learning from it. This is highly significant as it lays the sector open to claims (certainly in light of the lack of empirical evidence of setting and achieving learning outcomes) that providers take a utilitarian approach to the use of justifications and the rigour with which they deploy these arguments.

On the one hand it is possible that the lack of evidence relating to young peoples' outdoor learning experiences (as noted above) contributes to these undifferentiated explanations. On the other it is possible that the providers being the experts in their own field are actually providing special learning opportunities which cannot be gained elsewhere. As this research shows these data are not available in any systematic way and providers are left to make assertions that are grounded in a personal and organisational locus but which are not easily expressed in terms of their 'special-ness'. The test of this would be to ask school-teachers to review the data items above and state any that did not refer to their teaching philosophy in school.

3.4.2 Experience of barriers

Question 11 asked 'do you experience any particular barriers that affect your provision'? Seven reported that they did not and 56 reported that they did.

Table 8 Number of providers which experience barriers affecting their provision

No	7
Yes	56

3.4.2.1 Resources

There were 50 comments referring to resources as a barrier.

Table 9 Comments referring to resources as a barrier

Cost (including transport)	26
Lack of staff including qualified staff	11
Lack of development support	5
Under-resourced	2
Poor pay and conditions of staff	2
School teachers' confidence	2
Staff recruitment for short-term provision	1
Health and fitness of adult helpers	1

Resources are the main barriers reported by providers (n=50). It is notable that cost (n=26) is the highest ranking and this corresponds with Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005) report *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum* where cost was identified by both primary and secondary school teachers as their main barrier. The cost referred to in the present research includes cost to the young people for the service as well as the cost to the provider in providing the service.

However it is notable that 27 providers (43%) did not mention cost as a barrier. This also corresponds with the research just cited where there was evidence to suggest that barriers were sometimes used to express difficulties where this led to barriers becoming a 'state of mind'. The extent to which this issue affects providers as a whole or within their sector is not known. What is different here though is that unlike the teachers consulted in the research above these are specialist providers of outdoor learning and have a vested interest in the future of outdoor learning. However the fact remains the data deals with perceptions of cost as opposed to cost itself. It may be that cost is a substantial barrier to provision, and the data here suggests this to be the case, but without consulting financial records there is no way of knowing the extent to which cost is inhibiting current provision. Perhaps some qualitative and quantitative measures need to be developed to identify cost *versus* output in order to identify the funding needs of existing providers. This would be all the more important if there was an intention to enlarge the sector through creating additional providers.

It is interesting to note that there is evidence from the private sector that they feel disadvantaged because of subsidy attached to public sector provision. The extent of this is not measurable in this research but may be worthy of further research if a whole sector provider infrastructure is to be considered. When sectors are thought of as different in this way and perhaps even competing with each other then another question arises. Is the quality of provision the same or different within and between the different sectors? Once again it will take research into young peoples' outdoor learning experiences to answer this question.

The lack of qualified staff (n=11) and lack of development support (n=5) is consistent with the Higgins, Nicol, and Ross (2005, p.51) report which found that 'increased capacity for outdoor study may also depend on some form of staff training'.

No attempt is made to analyse the single entry data items.

3.4.2.2 Health and safety

There were 15 general or more specific comments referring to health and safety:

Table 10 Specific comments referring to health and safety

Health and safety	8
Public perception of risk	3
Risk assessment	1
Parental permissions	1
Excessive bureaucracy	1
False perceptions (i.e. it is expensive, risky)	1

These responses about health and safety came from questions about barriers. However the questionnaire included specific questions about health and safety and these are dealt with later.

3.4.2.3 Curricular issues

With regard to the curriculum there were nine comments:

Table 11 Comments in regards to curriculum

Curriculum is restrictive	8
Half-day length sessions	1

It would appear that restrictions in the curriculum act as a barrier for some providers. Specific barriers that were mentioned included examination schedules, preparation time, short sessions and the shortage of time within the timetable. However these were a minority and it would appear that this issue affects a residential provider differently from a school based outdoor learning teacher.

3.4.2.4 Sites, facilities and transport to them

There were a total of nine individual comments on this issue.

Table 12 Comments on sites, facilities and transport

Poor public transport	1
Travel costs	1
Minibus driving restrictions	1
Lack of toilet facilities	1
Lack of room space	1
Inaccessibility of interesting sites	1
Equipment vandalism	1
Exclusive access to sites	1
Access when providers are island-based	1

These data items provide specific barriers to specific contexts. Given that they are single entries then any attempt to analyse the individual barrier needs some understanding of the context. In other words these data items are too context specific to offer generalisable analysis.

3.4.2.5 Philosophical and political issues

There were a total of eight individual comments on these issues.

Table 13 Individual comments on philosophical and political issues

Lack of political support for outdoor learning	1
Outdoor learning lacks vision	1
Outdoor learning is used to sanction young people	1
Lack of research	1
PPP (Public Private Partnerships) refurbishment where school grounds are not seen as a priority	1
Reluctance of the state sector to learn from the private sector	1
Uneven playing field between the state and private sectors	1
Failure to join up experiences between primary and secondary	1

Whilst these data are not quantitatively significant they do offer a qualitative insight which may provide some suggestions in terms of vision, support and research to guide the future of outdoor education.

3.4.2.6 Attitudes

There was one comment on 'Inclement weather' (n=1)

3.4.3 More about outdoor learning and the school curriculum

By offering specific prompts Question 12 (does the school curriculum or timetable influence your provision of outdoor learning?) sought to provide additional information about curricular influence to that supplied in Question 7. There was only a little new evidence which suggests that in most cases these data are at saturation point. However some new and significant data did result through a total of 14 comments:

Table 14 More about outdoor learning and school curriculum

Lack of time - young people are released	7
Difficult to get secondary schools involved	3
Not all teachers are interested	2
Pressure on staff and pupils to achieve results in subject areas	2

It is noticeable that all of these instances are expressed as problems. The question had not been asked in a negative manner which raises another possibility. Whilst recognising the barriers that providers are identifying it also appears to be the case that those providers who are problematising the curriculum are creating a perception about these barriers over and above the barriers themselves. This perception therefore represents another type of barrier and this is an important point for Outdoor Connections. Any attempt to deal with barriers must recognise that the barriers are both 'physical' (e.g. lack of qualified staff) and perceptual. These findings replicate those from Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005) report on teachers attitudes and approaches.

If these are deep-seated barriers or even prejudices it gives some indication that the removal of barriers lies not just in the barriers themselves but also in the ways that some providers think of their role in relation to the curriculum.

3.4.4 Changes within the education sector

Question 13 asked ‘are there any changes within the education sector that are influencing your provision at the moment?’

Table 15 Are changes within the education sector are influencing provision?

Yes	40
No	23

Twenty-three people said ‘no’ or did not respond to this question. This means that 36% of respondents have failed to acknowledge the imminent arrival of ACfE which represents the greatest changes to the curriculum since the introduction of the 5-14 curriculum guidelines in 1993.

Those who said ‘yes’ identified the following issues:

3.4.4.1 Curricular issues

Table 16 Curricular issues

<i>A Curriculum for Excellence</i>	12
There is more emphasis on the alternative curriculum e.g. XL clubs	3
Whole school approaches	1
Cross curricular	1
Lack of time in the curriculum	1
Primary provision easier than secondary because of whole class release	1

Of those who talked about the importance of curricular issues, 12 mentioned ACfE. Of the 12 respondents four thought this was a positive development, one said that it will put demands from schools on to community learning whilst the other seven did not offer a view for or against mentioning only that it was an important issue in the education sector. It is possible that those who mentioned ‘there is more emphasis on the alternative curriculum’ (n=3) could also be alluding to ACfE. However given that ACfE may well represent opportunities for the provision of outdoor learning it is of concern that only 12 (19%) of respondents mentioned it specifically.

No analysis is offered for single entry data items.

3.4.4.2 Health education

Table 17 Health Education

Health education	7
------------------	---

Of the seven respondents three mentioned health education specifically, two mentioned health-promoting schools and two mentioned initiatives from Scottish Executive about obesity. These findings are consistent with the growing curricular and ethos issues in relation to health, fitness and diet. Recent initiatives include Hungry for Success (<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16273/17566>), Active Schools (<http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Our+activities/TopicNavigation/Active+Schools/>), and Health Promoting Schools (<http://www.healthpromotingschools.co.uk/aboutus/index.asp>).

3.4.4.3 Community learning

Table 18 Community Learning

Reorganising of High Schools and the move to Learning Communities	1
Community learning	1

No analysis is offered for single entry data items.

3.4.4.4 Miscellaneous changes

Table 19 Miscellaneous changes in the education sector

Enterprise education opportunities	2
Restrictive legislation	2
Introduction of Natural Connections	2
Sports development	2
Forest Schools	2
Rural skills	1
Citizenship	1
Sustainable development	1
Disclosure	1
Disability Discrimination Act	1
Private money going into schools	1
Need to evidence diversion	1
End of the Better Neighbourhood Resources (BNSF) funding	1
Job evaluation	1
Local authority pay review	1
Higher number of excluded offer possibilities for alternatives to mainstream school	1
Creation of Children' and Family's Department - opportunities to work holistically	1
New push for children learning in the outdoor classroom	1

Looking at the responses to Question 13 the main changes that the providers reported were ACfE (n=12) and health education (n=7). However taking these data as a whole it is surprising that given the profile and provision of the Active Steps programme that it did not receive specific mention. Similarly the recent development of initiatives such as citizenship (n=1) and sustainability (n=1) were only briefly acknowledged. It is not clear from these data whether providers see the relevance of current issues in the wider educational sphere but it is clear that most did not report on them.

3.4.5 Funding and provision

Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005) report on teachers approaches to the natural heritage together with the data supplied above identify funding as the greatest issue. Given that this represented one of the greatest threats to provision, Question 14 asked 'is funding affecting your level of provision?' This question was sure to generate comment amongst providers, especially given the costs of running outdoor programmes which have additional associated costs compared to mainstream education which is mostly publicly funded. As one private and charitable sector provider stated 'it will always be cheaper to put 30 kids on a football pitch with one coach than eight kids on a loch with expensive kit plus the expense of transport'.

The following two data-sets show how respondents answered. There were 14 'no' and 48 'yes' responses. The number of responses is set against each sector within both 'yes' and 'no' data sets. The percentage figure is of the 63 total respondents.

Table 20a Indication if funding is affecting level of provision ('NO' responses)

Response to Question 14 'is funding affecting your level of provision?' **NO (n=14)**

Public	6 (10%)
Charitable	4 (6%)
Private	3 (5%)
Charitable and public	1 (2%)
Voluntary and public	1 (2%)

Table 20b Indication if funding is affecting level of provision ('YES' responses)

Response to Question 14 'is funding affecting your level of provision?' **YES (n=48)**

Public	25 (30%)
Charitable	9 (14%)
Private	4 (6%)
Public, private and charitable	3 (5%)
Charitable and public	2 (3%)
Voluntary	2 (3%)
Private and charitable	1 (2%)
Voluntary and charitable	1 (2%)
Public and private	1 (2%)

The overall ratio of those who said funding did affect their provision to those who did not is about 3:1 and this is even more obvious in the public sector (4:1). In the case of the charitable sector the ratio of yes:no is more than double. This is an interesting finding as in light of the fact that the public sector are funded to some extent by local authorities etc, it might have been expected that the charitable and private sectors would have more cause for complaint. It may be that for example overheads (staff-costs etc) may be higher in the public sector but without further and detailed investigation of this issue it is hazardous to speculate on the reasons for this.

Table 20c Indication if funding is affecting level of provision ('YES and NO' responses)
Some providers answered both 'Yes' and 'No' to this question and these responses are shown as pooled data.

Staff shortage	7
Schools need to fundraise	6
More money equals more provision	5
There are limits to expansion	3
For transport	3
Equipment shortage	3
To maintain provision	2
Lack of staff training	1
Cost of staff training	1
Cost to pupils	1
No government support for the charitable sector	1
No access to mainstream funding	1
Visits don't happen as frequently	1
State schools find it hard to fund	1
Duration of courses	1
Number of places available	1
Cannot afford to provide toilet facilities	1
Staff cutback that have reduced provision	1
108 funding applications in last 10 months with limited success	1
Time spent on applications	1
No access to large capital funds	1
Have to charge commercial rates	1
Seed grant funding would be helpful	1
Lack of funding from local councils	1
BLF funded but provision will be reduced by 43% if not renewed	1
Cost of using commercial providers	1
Equipment budget due to decrease	1
Short term funding	1
Service not affected	1
Have bought new equipment	1
Totally dependent on funding	1
Limits our potential	1

There were 54 statements about funding with the top three cited being 'staff shortage' (n=7), 'schools need to fundraise' (n=6) and 'more money equals more provision' (n=5). What is not clear from these data is the extent to which they represent chronic funding issues as opposed to providers feeling that 'a little more would be welcome'. In one sense the continued survival of these providers is a sign of funding success in a way that the closure of Garelohead OEC is not.

It is also important to differentiate between how any extra funding in the future might help an individual provider to improve their service, as opposed to how extra funding might help improve the infrastructure of provision as a whole and across all sectors. It is also clear from the diversity and complexity of the data items above that funding affects different providers in different ways. Any attempt therefore to increase funding would need to take account of the context-specific needs of each provider. An obvious example of this would be the mistake in providing funding ring fenced for capital expenditure to a provider who needs to employ contract or permanent staff.

It is noticeable that the majority of the data items are fairly negative in that they identify issues that relate to lack of funding. Whilst this is understandable it seemed strange that providers interpreted the question in this way. Not one provider for example mentioned the considerable public funding that has been made available through the New Opportunities Fund (£87 million over three years (2002-5) for PE, Sport and Out of School Hours Activities) (either as a direct benefit to their own organisation or the infrastructure of provision as a whole). The only positive data items regarding funding were 'service not affected' (n=1), 'have bought new equipment' (n=1). It is also possible that those who said 'more money equals more provision' (n=5) appear to be saying that their present provision is adequately catered for but an increase in provision would require an increase in funding. Perhaps the defining issue here is to do with capacity. If providers are not operating at capacity then their needs can be identified in relation to realising that capacity (e.g. more staff, new equipment etc). The figures from General Objective 4 above show that this means there are 17 providers (27%) who do not experience more demand for their services than they can supply.

If however providers are already operating at capacity then it would appear that any funding intervention would need to be directed at increasing individual providers' capacity and/or creating new providers within the infrastructure of providers. Since 43 providers have already indicated that there is far more demand than they can supply (General Objective 4 above) this means that in percentage terms at least 68% of providers are operating at maximum capacity.

Whilst this research shows that providers experience a lack of funding in many different ways our study does not show the scale of the issue. As suggested earlier funding can be thought of in an infrastructure sense (affecting all sectors) and an organisational sense (affecting each provider). The way one charitable and voluntary sector provider deals with these issues can be seen in the following statement. We 'operate successfully as a social enterprise, providing educational services for 10s of 000s of young people, providing 150 jobs, and generating £2.5m/annum to the Scottish economy. We are gradually coming to terms with the legacy of under investment...'. Whilst this demonstrates a very enterprising approach to provision, as does the data from schools that fund-raise (n=6), it raises questions about the role of the state in funding outdoor learning and the role of organisations providing educational services that are dependent on market forces. In passing it should also be noted that as this income and the jobs associated with it result from an *internal* cash flow in Scotland it is really the location of the jobs (with regard to residential provision this is mainly in rural areas) rather than these being 'new' jobs that is of significance. If this provider ceased to operate it seems reasonable to assume that the money paid for the courses would simply be transferred to some other provider in Scotland, Hence the argument should really be about retaining the money in Scotland and its significance to rural areas (see Higgins (2000) for a discussion of the economic contribution of the outdoor sector to the rural community and comment on the general contribution of outdoor education to the economy of Scotland).

3.4.6 Public perception of risk

Question 15 deals specifically with the issue of the public perception of risk. Some data on this have already been presented and discussed above under the heading of 'barriers'. What follows are data that add to that discussion. Twenty-eight providers said public perception of risk was a barrier and 35 said it was not.

The data items from the 28 who said 'yes' include the following. Please note that the right-hand columns of the following tables do not add-up as some providers did not provide additional information.

Table 21a Respondents' views on public perception of risk (YES)

Perception of risk and/or liability amongst some schools/teachers	8
Parental concern	2
Some activities are no longer done e.g. river walks	1
Using tools outdoors	1
More paperwork than AALA requires	1
Schools ask for risk assessments	1
Risk assessment destroys spontaneity	1
Some activities have greater risk level	1
Society' fear of risk	1
People's lower threshold of the perception of risk	1
Teaching unions telling teachers not to get involved	1
Overprotective attitudes	1
The few irresponsible providers are highlighted to the detriment of the professionals	1
Gives the unenthusiastic a reason not to be involved	1
Media sensationalism	1

The most frequently cited items were 'perception of risk and/or liability amongst some schools/teachers' (n=8) and 'parental concern' (n=2). This pattern of school and parental concern is mirrored in Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005, p. 45) report where secondary teachers that were interviewed said that safety concerns were on the increase and several others admitted that they were wary of excursions'. However it is interesting to note that only two providers mentioned society's perception of risk (society' fear of risk (n=1)) and peoples' lower threshold of the perception of risk (n=1)).

The data items from the 35 who said 'no' included the following.

Table 21b Respondents' views on public perception of risk (NO)

Risk assessment provided	9
SOPs/good safety procedures	9
Have AALA licence	3
NGB/qualified staff	1
Have public liability insurance	1
Not an issue for independent schools	1
Long established/good track record	1
Risk management training for teachers is provided	1
The barrier is only perceived	1
Not involved in high risk activity	1
It is not the public perception of risk but the perception of liability risk	1
Small island population - everyone knows and trusts everyone else with the children	1

One charitable and voluntary provider stated:

the perception of risk is less of a concern than the failure of the sector to guard against it. The shift of professional mentality from “we’re in the business of risky activities so accidents will happen” to “procedures (SOPs etc) will be developed to design-out the likelihood of accidents” is welcome and an undoubted success. However, we live in a world where the media is vigorous in pursuit of trauma and tears. All parts of the sector will be negatively affected by a serious incident and the sector is insufficiently robust to withstand an onslaught from the media in response to serious incidents. There needs to be a marketing strategy, led by regular positive statements by politicians and other leaders on the benefits of outdoor learning in order that in the event of an incident and prior to an incident the public are already able to weigh the benefits and disbenefits of outdoor learning.

The data items that acknowledge the public perception of risk are fairly predictable and understandable given a number of well-published accidents involving school children such as the Lyme Bay incident and a child contracting *E. Coli* during a farm visit (Higgins, Nicol and Ross, 2005). This report also notes the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) has advised its members against taking school trips for fear of accident and litigation.

Whilst this anxiety is likely to remain in some aspects of the sector the statement above seems to suggest that the problem of perception (and its solution) does not rest solely with the media but that the sector has a role to play. In other words those who externalise the problem by blaming the media at the same time place themselves in a vulnerable position because they are looking to someone else to sort-out the problem. Where this situation exists it may be characterised by inherent disempowerment which is exacerbated because any potential solutions are also externalised or outwith the realm of providers’ control.

This is more evidently seen when reviewing the ‘no’ responses, which exude self-confidence. This confidence comes from an approach to safety that includes risk assessment (n=9), good safety procedures (n=9) and AALA certification (n=3). These providers are not saying that accidents will not happen but they are saying most strongly that as a result of a history of good practice together with rigorous procedures and staff training the provision of outdoor learning is safe and robust.

It is important at this point to distinguish between those who offer adventurous activities (e.g. canoeing, climbing and sailing) and teachers / leaders who want to take young people to a nearby wood or park for outdoor learning. The former is highly regulated through legislation, standard operating procedures and training in the specific activities and is highly stylised because of the dependence on specialist equipment. The latter is none of these and shows how outdoor learning can be thought of in ways other than adventurous activities. If these different forms of outdoor learning are seen as something singular then there is a danger that the same legislation, procedures, training and stylised ‘commodification’ (or public and providers’ perception of these) will influence risk-assessments for both a walk in the woods or park and climbing a cliff face. Yet as research shows, teachers are concerned about going outdoors and having to do risk assessment and this reinforces the belief that going outdoors is risky as well as being a time-consuming exercise. Higgins, Nicol, and Ross’ (2005, p. 39) report stated ‘there is a possibility that primary schools may be doing too much risk assessing and this warrants further study’. These issues compound to create another barrier to provision.

Despite these concerns the data itself suggests where a way forward might lie. On the one hand there are a range of providers who are very confident of the safety of their own practice. On the other there are a range of providers who are less confident (as well as those who refrain from going outdoors). The existence of the former suggests that risk is indeed a perception and that it need not stop existing providers from doing what they do confidently nor the development of new provision.

The expertise that exists could be harnessed and directed into forms of training for existing and potential providers. Once harnessed the expertise could be used to show the relationship between *perceptions* of risk and risk itself. This would help the teacher / leader who wants to take young people in the woods to operate safely yet not feel unnecessarily threatened. The idea of risk assessment could be made more manageable and less time consuming by providing authoritative advice on whether they are necessary in the first place and if so for what activities and why. The Scottish Executive recently published guidance on *Health and Safety on Educational Excursions* (Scottish Executive, 2004a,b; 2005) which is intended to provide schools and local authorities in Scotland with safety guidelines to reassure staff regarding the health and safety of their charges. This is a comprehensive document offering advice on responsibilities, planning, supervision, preparing participants, communicating with parents, planning transport, insurance, types of visit, visits abroad, emergency procedures as well as providing a range of sample forms. Given this publication and the existing expertise in this area, the idea of risk assessment could be turned into a more positive experience and may go some way to reassure those who do not make use of the outdoors because of the concerns associated with risk and liability. Indeed there is further high-level support for this view which was reported in Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005, p. 2) report.

The NASUWT have been asked to review their statement by a House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2005a). Accepting that education is a devolved issue there remain social consequences, such as advice from unions, which affect the whole of the UK. The report says that the views expressed by this union are "entirely out of proportion to the real risks" (p6) and considers the NASWUT position to be "a needlessly obstructive attitude" (p7).

The House of Commons report does not present empirical findings, but it summarises evidence from a wide range of experienced professionals. The enquiry takes a broad view of outdoor education including field studies, personal and social development and physical activities. The report considered the value and the decline of education outside the classroom and the barriers (real and perceived) to maintaining or developing provision.

These data show that there is potential for not only the enhancement of existing provision but the development of more if the perception of risk and liability is dealt with specifically. For this to happen there needs to be a shift of focus from safety (although this may be the prime goal) to the development and improvement of confidence. This would help those who feel vulnerable to be more confident about going outdoors. In addition it is important to consider those teachers / leaders who do not do 'adventurous activities' and who do not need to be AALA registered. Any risk assessment carried out come under the general Health and Safety legislation that all employers are required to review and therefore constitute straightforward 'good practice'. If this process were used to enhance confidence then there are clear benefits in terms of the development of provision. Where the providers are schools the head-teacher is normally responsible for ensuring that all Health and Safety legislation is adhered to, though in the case of outdoor excursions and activities this may be delegated to the teacher directly responsible for the activity.

Whilst the data from the present study suggest that provision has been limited because of perceptions associated with safety and risk assessment what is not clear is how much potential is not being realised because of this issue (i.e. those who want to go outdoors but don't, or those who do so but less often).

3.4.7 Legislation relating to the provision of outdoor learning

Question 16 asked providers to comment on the legislation that affected their provision and were asked to respond to the following headings.

- Health and Safety
- European Union Working Time Directive
- Other

Some providers said 'yes' to one of the items but 'no' to another which means that the relationship between 'yes' and 'no' in this case was not one or the other. For example, some providers said 'yes' and then provided an answer to only to one issue (e.g. commenting on Health and Safety but not the European Union Working Time Directive). In other words those who circled 'yes' were not necessarily saying 'yes' to all three. However, those who said 'no' did not provide further data which means that the 'no' count is accurate (n=28). This also meant that the individual data items did not code only into the three headings above. In order to distinguish between these data and for ease of analysis they have been displayed as two separate groupings.

The first grouping shows the legislative issues that *are* influencing providers (i.e. those who said 'yes').

Response to Question 16 'Are there any legislative issues influencing your provision at the moment?' **YES (n=48 items)**

3.4.7.1 Health and safety – an issue for providers

Table 22a Legislative issues influencing current provision (Health and Safety) (YES)

AAALA	9
Very time consuming	3
Risk assessment	3
Working at heights	2
Use of tools	2
Too restrictive	2
Lifting of heavy equipment	1
Health and safety at work	1
From 1/4/06 all excursions require management approval	1
Use of ponds	1
Charitable sector gets no assistance to implement DDA in the way public sector does	1
Provision of catering facilities	1
Restrictions on school grounds development	1
Risk assessment and who carries them out	1
Workload and teaching unions	1
Restricts number of children to adults	1
Off site excursion policy just been launched – a bureaucratic process	1

Nine providers noted that AALA was having an affect. The responses included the need for some providers to have two licences, that the licence was unnecessary, that the level of training required to meet standards is unrealistic, that it is a limited and expensive scheme and that it is a problem keeping up with changes to the scheme. As well as identifying issues associated with AALA providers also noted similar health and safety concerns but in a general way. These indicated that health and safety was 'very time consuming' (n=3) because of issues such as 'risk assessment' (n=3) and is generally 'too restrictive' (n=2).

No attempt is made to analyse the single entry data items.

3.4.7.2 European Union Working Time Directive – an issue for providers

Table 22b Impact of European Union Working Time Directive (YES)

Not yet resolved – still consulting with EUWTD	1
Seems not to have affected youth workers i.e. they are expected to work residential hours	1
Will impact on numbers of staff required to maintain current provision	1
Impossible to work within	1
Disastrous	1

In answering this question of the 63 providers only two (impossible to work within (n=1) and disastrous (n=1)) experience the Directive as unworkable. Another provider said that it 'will impact on numbers of staff required to maintain current provision' (n=1) but the provider uses the future tense which suggests that they have not yet experienced the problem they expect to happen. It would appear therefore that the effect of the Directive is limited to very few specified providers.

3.4.7.3 Other legislative effects – an issue for providers

Table 22c Other Legislative effects (YES)

Child Protection Act	6
All of the above drive up costs	2
Increasing regulatory framework	1
Minibus driving and trailer towing (D1) for younger staff	1
Insurance - rates have rocketed in the last few years	1

Other legislation effects included the Child Protection Act (n=6) which is 'getting in the way of common sense', 'creating an overprotective approach to children', that 'all staff need advanced disclosure' and the 'whole idea being a time consuming process'. There is also a concern that both health and safety and the European Union Working Time Directive 'drive up costs' (n=2). There was mention that 'minibus driving and trailer towing for younger staff (n= 2) was an issue. However this situation should be eased with the recent announcement that these restrictions were to be relaxed.

Now, anyone holding only a category B license may drive a minibus if they are over 21 years old and have held a car driver license for at least two years. Furthermore, the vehicle must be being used by a non-commercial body for purposes other than for hire or reward. Specifically, the driver must not receive any remuneration for driving, other than for out-of-pocket expenses (See the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) website <http://www.dvla.gov.uk/drivers/drvmbs.htm> for details).

Notwithstanding issues to do with AALA (n=9) (14%) and the Child Protection Act (n=6) (10%) there appears to be only a number of single issue problems but no clear pattern emerges to suggest the sector as a whole is experiencing significant problems regarding legislative issues. This is summed up by one voluntary sector provider who stated ‘these all have clear influences but our systems are set up to work with them’.

Response to Question 16 ‘Are there any legislative issues influencing your provision at the moment?’ **NO (n=28)**

These responses suggest that Health and Safety, the European Union Working Time Directive nor any other legislative issue affect their provision. Those who said ‘no’ provided additional comments as noted below:

3.4.7.4 Health and Safety – not an issue for providers

Table 23a Legislative issues influencing current provision (Health and Safety) (NO)

Always complied	5
The industry is well regulated and monitored	2
Take it for granted now	2
Positive influence which ensures good practice	1

The biggest response came from providers who said they ‘always complied’ (n=5) including comments like, ‘it doesn’t affect us more than usual’, ‘we just accept it and get on with it’ and ‘there is no change to what we have always done’. It seems that these views represent a spectrum ranging from those who tolerate health and safety to those who see it as a positive influence i.e. ‘the industry is well regulated and monitored’ (n=2) and ‘positive influence which ensures good practice’ (n=1).

3.4.7.5 European Union Working Time Directive – not an issue for providers

Table 23b Impact of European Union Working Time Directive (NO)

No response	14
No influence	11
Limited influence	4

Some providers did not answer this question and so the figures in the right add column do not equal 63. There were 14 providers who responded ‘no’ but did not provide any other data. Of those who provided additional comment the highest response came from those who said the Directive had ‘no influence’ (n=11). Those who said it had limited influence (n=4) said that their adult staff are mainly volunteers and that staff were in charge of their own programmes.

Although the Directive does not appear to have a significant effect on the sector as a whole several providers did mention that the reason it did not affect them was because they did not offer residential education. It would appear therefore that any influence that the Directive has is felt by residential providers and not non-residential providers.

No provider too the opportunity to comment on any other legislation that affected their provision.

3.4.8 The future of outdoor learning

Question 17 asked ‘what do you believe are the key issues that need to be addressed to promote the sustainable provision for outdoor learning?’ The intention was to offer at the end of the questionnaire an opportunity for providers to summarise and state categorically what it was that they believed would help or hinder the development of outdoor learning. This was an important question for providers as only two did not comment.

3.4.8.1 Strategic leadership

Table 24 Key issues to be addressed to promote sustainable provision for outdoor learning

Funding	24
Commitment, resources, policy initiatives and promotion from the Scottish Executive	7
Commitment, resources, policy initiatives and promotion from local authority managers	6
ACFE input sooner rather than later	2
Visible and integral on all policy and strategy documents (not just the odd one)	1
Challenging the view that schools are the most appropriate way to promote learning	1
Cultural shift to learning out of doors	1
More joined up thinking between public agencies	1
Stop road building through country parks	1
Best value – there is need for an objective analysis for outdoor learning	1

The data in this category are calling for leadership from senior managers, civil servants and politicians at all levels of governance. These are precisely the points made by the House of Commons Committee who stated they had “become convinced of the value of education outside the classroom in its broadest sense”, that “outdoor learning supports academic achievement” and that neither the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) nor Local Authorities have provided strategic leadership (House of Commons, 2005a, p. 3). Common to these data is that the sector is looking out-with its own domain to those who have power and influence for different types of support. For these reasons this heading was titled ‘strategic leadership’.

The most cited data item is ‘funding’ (n= 24) and funding that comes from the public purse. However the call for funding is not just about asking for money. The problems that providers identified about previous publicly funded opportunities was that they were short term (3-5 years) and created insecurity in terms of sustainable provision. Providers also argued that short term funding was wasteful because a lot of effort was spent on management and restructuring. The solution the providers offered was that funding should not only come from the public purse but it should be ring-fenced, regular, sustained and targeted.

In addition to increased funding providers argued very clearly that they saw a role for central and local government. This included ‘commitment, resources, policy initiatives and promotion from the Scottish Executive’ (n= 7) and ‘commitment, resources, policy initiatives and promotion from local authority managers’ (n=6).

One charitable and voluntary sector provider stated that

under local authority leadership outdoor learning continues to decline. Perhaps it is time for a change of outdoor learning leadership in Scotland...If the government wants a mixed-economy of provision in outdoor learning, it must recognise the need for a 'level playing field' and its role in providing it. It is important that some providers are not continually disadvantaged by unfair trading practices, and it should see benefits arising from encouraging different parts of the sector to learn from others... There is a view that Scotland is less positive than other parts of the UK about organisations other than local authorities providing high quality educational services. However, if the sector (continues) to leave outdoor learning provision (to) local authorities alone, on the present trend, it will disappear altogether. We have to address the issues of leadership, and mythical economics. If we are to have a mixed economy of outdoor learning providers, we have to address the implications of that. We have to have this debate... The issue of vision must be addressed. Policy initiatives are lacking in vision and in a world where the message from government is that there will be less money available on the next 5-year spending round, it will be difficult (impossible?) to generate enthusiasm for outdoor learning based purely on good practice.

These comments come from an organisation which last year provided 62,573 days of outdoor learning making it by far the largest provider to respond to this research (the second highest number of days being 16,500 from a public sector provider). These points should not just be viewed from a quantitative perspective (because the comments come from the provider quoting the highest number of days) because the same provider was also the most strident in calling for rigorous research to replace the 'gut feeling' amongst outdoor educators which tends to suggest also a qualitative dimension to the statement.

The remaining data from this section indicate further areas in which senior managers, civil servants and politicians can become involved through input to ACFE, by including outdoor learning in policy and strategy documents, by promoting wider contexts than schools, by influencing public opinion about outdoor learning, by promoting joined up thinking between public agencies, by protecting green spaces and by providing an objective analysis for outdoor learning. These data are consistent with report of Higgins, Nicol and Ross (2005, p. 51) on *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum* which recognised the need for 'the development of an appreciation or legitimisation of the wider benefits of outdoor study'.

3.4.8.2 Strategic support (general)

Table 25 Suggestions for other forms of strategic support

Training for instructors	5
Help from outdoor specialists	2
Proper contracts	2

As well as strategic leadership providers are also looking for other forms of support. The biggest number of responses identified the need for the 'training for instructors' (n=5). The training does not refer to NGB awards but was more about accredited training such as that supplied by universities and colleges. There was also some recognition of a need for staff and equipment 'help from outdoor specialists' (n=2) for school staff.

3.4.8.3 Health and safety

Table 26 Suggestions for strategic leadership in relation to health and safety issues

Educate the public that outdoor learning is not dangerous	4
Risk taking is beneficial and even necessary	4
Health and safety as a barrier	2
Provide comparative accident figures between outdoor learning and e.g. road accidents	1
More flexibility	1
Risk assessment	1
Cut red tape	1

These data confirm earlier findings about health and safety in that although it may be a highly influential factor in the provision of outdoor learning it does not appear to be reducing the capacity of existing providers (only two said it was a barrier). This is perhaps understandable given that all sectors are highly regulated and have an excellent safety record (see AALA <http://www.aala.org.uk> website for general comment). This explains why some providers have asked for a public awareness campaign to ‘educate the public that outdoor learning is not dangerous’ (n=4) and ‘risk taking is beneficial and even necessary’ (n=4). One further provider states there should be research conducted to provide comparative accident figures between outdoor learning and statistics from for example road accidents. Such figures are extremely difficult to compare on the basis of relative exposure to risk. However the basic statistics of a range of causes of death (ranked by annual frequency) has been drawn together by Bailie for the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and is available on their website (http://www.aala.org.uk/guidance_details.php/pArticleHeadingID=144).

Whilst these data suggest security and confidence within existing providers the influence that the perception of risk and liability has in acting as a barrier to the nurturing new provision must not be underestimated. This was something clearly identified in Higgins, Nicol, and Ross’ (2005) report.

3.4.8.4 Strategic leadership in relation to curriculum

Table 27 Suggestions for strategic leadership in relation to curriculum

Closer links between outdoor learning and the curriculum	9
Time allocation / timetabling within the curriculum	2
Better playground environment e.g. gardens	2
More support to help teachers’ confidence to deliver	2
Lack of awareness from head teachers	1
Sufficient guidelines – this from a teacher	1
Training and support for head teachers about the benefits	1
More commitment from teachers to deliver	1
Use it to promote PSD in schools	1
More school visits to specialist providers	1
It’s not about lack of resources but attitudes	1

There were a lot of data provided in this area with 11 providers saying there should be closer links between, and timetabling for outdoor learning and the curriculum. A further two wanted to see these curricular links develop by improving (greening) the playground environment.

One trainer of providers stated

there seems to be a kind of lip-service to curriculum links – a feeling that maybe it is more professional to tick off lots of links, but also a feeling that this may de-energise things and make the experience too school like. I think it is a great shame that there is a perceived conflict here – because it should not be beyond providers and clients to have all these strands working together in the same direction...There must be sound and agreed strategies about linking. I think the worst examples of attempted linking are where providers and visitors make assumptions about what each other want and what children want and about what linking is. If everyone involved thinks about what we can learn from each other that would create a much better platform for helping children to learn – especially if they are to learn about learning.

3.4.8.5 Cost

Table 28 Providers' concerns about costs

Transport	2
Affordability	2

These two data items reflect earlier concerns about cost to the young people (n=2) and the nature of it (transport (n=2)).

3.4.8.6 Academic institutions

Table 29 Academic institutions and support for provision

Better links between academia	8
Evaluation – proper	1

Eight providers suggested better links between academia, the outdoor sector and schools. The suggestions included outdoor learning in ITE (Initial Teacher Education) courses, providing an ATQ (Additional Teaching Qualification) and PGCE (Postgraduate Certificate in Education) in outdoor education and more staff in-service courses for teachers. This is consistent with the findings in Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005, p. iv) report which found that 'appropriate training would include Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)'.

There was also a call for good evaluation of learning from young peoples' perspectives a point made earlier.

3.4.8.7 Outdoor sector issues

Table 30 Providers' views on outdoor sector issues

Raising awareness of philosophy and benefits	6
Raise awareness that provision is not cheap	1
Accept that outdoor learning cannot be measured by attainment targets	1
Increased credibility as a profession	1
Dispel the notion that 'environment' is a 'soft' non-macho subject	1

These data have been grouped together because they all deal with perceptions that require some form of ‘awareness-raising’. However the question remains as to who is responsible for this awareness raising. For example the data item about ‘raising awareness of philosophy and benefits (n=6) could equally be coded within the ‘strategy leadership’ heading above. However, if leadership responsibility is left to local and central government (which has been challenged in some quarters as being ineffective) the issue of leadership becomes externalised and the responsibility of someone else. These data and the data above begin to question whether the sector is actually a sector. If a sector existed in terms of structure, definition and function would providers not be asking this body to act? If a sector is to claim this status then should it regulate itself or is it regulated? Does it dictate or is it dictated to? Is it a community of members or a community of interests? The reason these questions are posed here is if providers are asking for funding and leadership then it is not clear if resources and energy should be directed towards individual organisations, the development of sectors (e.g. private, public, charitable) or the development of the infrastructure as a whole. Given the data already provided it is not clear from the tensions within this multi-sector, mixed economy model of provision if there exists a collection of individual organisations, a set of sub-sectors or something which unifies the sub-sectors.

3.4.8.8 Other general issues

Table 31 Other general issues raised by providers

Health	4
Made available to the wider community	4
Minibus legislation	1
Using green spaces	1
More forest classrooms	1
Get children away from books and explore the real world	1
Stop wasting time on surveys	1

Of the remaining issues health (n=4) again gets a mention. Given these are unsolicited responses it would appear that health education is an important aspect of providers’ work.

Another concern from some providers was that outdoor learning provision should be widened to other communities (n=2) and not restricted to rewarding bad behaviour (n=2).

4 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In terms of the quantity of provision these data suggest that the charitable sector provides just over 25,000 more days with less providers than the public. The private sector is much smaller by comparison providing around a fifth of the days the public sector does and around a seventh of the days of the charitable sector. Care should be taken in interpreting these figures as this research has not surveyed the full population of providers, nor those who were sent the questionnaire but did not respond. However given the excellent record-keeping in monitoring days provided it would be a straightforward task to obtain figures from the full population if such figures were required and providers agreed.

The provision that exists is well used and in most cases (notwithstanding seasonality) is operating at capacity. This leaves three possibilities for increasing the capacity of existing providers and creating new providers. Both of these options are technically straightforward and this research shows how both can be achieved.

In terms of increasing the capacity of existing provision the barriers have been identified as better funding arrangements, more staff and more (and appropriate) staff training. There is a supply and demand issue here in that the cost of transport and other services act as a barrier to providers employing and training new staff. So the solution to staffing cannot be addressed until the cost of provision has been addressed, and until the costs are addressed it is less likely that staffing issues will be resolved. This market-based approach to the provision of outdoor learning has placed outdoor learning managers in a position of stalemate. Herein lies the central problem. Providers have made it very clear throughout this research that the biggest barrier to provision is cost. This message is very clear and is repeated throughout this research in both solicited and unsolicited data. Furthermore failure to deal with cost is a failure to deal with the problem, and providers are looking for support with this. This is also a major finding in Higgins, Nicol, and Ross' (2005) report on teachers' attitudes to engaging with the natural heritage.

The second approach to increase capacity is to increase the size of the infrastructure. One category of potential providers who could be targeted are those (particularly school teachers) who are keen to go outdoors but for various reasons (e.g. perceptions of risk and liability, time consuming risk assessments) choose not to. This is the category of people identified by Higgins, Nicol and Ross (2005) whose potential is both untapped and very considerable in scale. The fascinating and highly significant thing about this group of people is that the barriers they experience do not require a large investment of resource to overcome. These are the people who for example, want to go to the woods with their class but need a little more support to do so. What this research shows is that specialist providers of outdoor learning have the self-confidence that potential providers lack. There is a clear opportunity for a meeting of minds here and some considerable scope for collaborative ventures or staff-development opportunities. Indeed in the 1970s provision in the former Lothian Region was a model of such complementary provision with virtually every secondary school (45) having at least one teacher of outdoor education with their efforts being supported by around 500 other teachers in the region who helped them provide such experiences, and also three outdoor centres providing a range of opportunities (see Cheesmond, 1979 and Higgins, 2002 for reviews). The attraction of the first two options, which should be viewed as complimentary and not mutually exclusive are that they are relatively inexpensive and can begin immediately. It would however require the identification of staff, probably new appointees who would be responsible for increasing the infrastructure of provision.

The third possibility is to look at major investment which would include identifying a core place for outdoor learning in ACfE and other key policy agendas (e.g citizenship, sustainability, enterprise, health). This would need to be supported by a significant increase in the infrastructure of outdoor learning provision. Examples of this might include the reopening of closed residential outdoor centres, support for the development of existing and new field study centres (which have clear links with the curriculum in terms of environmental studies, personal and social education and experiential learning) support for schools (as identified above) and support for other forms of provision such as community-based outdoor learning. An increase of the infrastructure in these terms would provide coherent provision to link schools, communities and residential facilities within an educational context and has the flexibility to be both curricular and non-curricular. In order for this to happen local authorities would need to be provided with the means to do this (resources and strategic guidance). Any efforts in this respect would clearly mean a long-term commitment and would require some form of steering group to create the vision, management plan and means of implementation. This would clearly require a high level of political support building on the support already shown in Scotland for outdoor learning.

When the responses from providers about how they can contribute to the curriculum are coded it is clear that they prioritise their work in terms of first, personal and social development; second, environmental education; and third, outdoor activities. However it was less clear the extent to which PSD was specific to outdoor learning as all data provided under this heading (e.g. self esteem, self awareness, interpersonal relationships) could easily refer to the goals of classroom learning. This finding about personal and social development was different to those who talked about environmental education (e.g. environmental studies, geography, biology, and curricular topics such as 'minibeasts', woodland and pond studies). It is important to note that both PSD and Environmental Studies are major features of the 5-14 curricular guidelines. However, providers were able to express more clearly the need to be outdoors for curricular purposes when studying environmental education (where there is a tradition of field studies such as geography and biology - some aspects of which need to be taught outdoors) in order to obtain direct first-hand experience.

Providers tend not to keep written evidence of learning on their programmes. More than 90% of this monitoring is undertaken orally. This means that the quality of provision is monitored internally and there are no external quality indicators. This makes it difficult to take an overview of the learning which is taking place within the sector as a whole as it *cannot be easily done where the aims are not explicit*. If increased funding were to be considered then research that reviews young peoples' learning achievements across the sector would help to correlate the quality of learning with the quality of provision. At the moment this information does not exist.

What might help this process is if providers were able to provide clear statements of how their work relates to the curriculum. At the moment only 28% of providers do this (and they saw clear relationships with the 5-14 guidelines) yet 71% state that the curriculum is an important influence in their work. This means that there is a recognition by the majority of providers that the curriculum is an important influence to their work but only a minority articulate this in written form. Of those who said they were not influenced by the curriculum (29%) there was some confusion as to what the curriculum actually is. If ACfE becomes a significant factor in the provision of outdoor educational experiences and a number of respondents thought it would (19%) interest in curricular matters amongst providers is sure to increase. In what has become a market-led sector such a development could easily stimulate programme developments which address ACfE requirements and this in turn would stimulate demand for training in educational curricular issues. Similar points should be made about specific curricular developments in Scotland, notably health, citizenship and sustainability, though these were not a significant feature of the responses.

Taking the issue of the lack of confidence to educate outdoors amongst school-teachers (reported by Higgins, Nicol and Ross (2005)) and the lack of curricular knowledge and expertise amongst some outdoor education providers in this study there seems to be considerable potential for a 'meeting of minds' and sharing of expertise. As many outdoor providers already have close relationships with the schools they work with, arranging such learning experiences remains a distinct possibility. Encouragement to do so from policy makers and the provision of modest resources in support would also satisfy (at least in part) the call by the great majority of providers (86%) for leadership, policy and funding. In light of the existing considerable commitment (in terms of subsidy, parental contribution, school-staff time and general effort applied across most of the sector) a requirement to do so would not seem unreasonable to many policy-makers, not to mention parents and guardians.

However we are offering a commentary as if there were an identifiable and discrete 'sector'. This is worthy of at least a caution. For example some providers argue that leadership is required from local and central government. In doing so control becomes externalised and hence someone else's responsibility. In terms of structure, definition and function there appears to be no specific 'body' for the providers to turn for guidance or action. In essence it is not clear if we are researching a community of members or a community of interests. This issue is not of esoteric interest because as we appear to have a multi-sector, mixed economy model of provision, it is not clear if resources and energy should in the future be directed towards individual organisations, the development of sectors (e.g. private, public, charitable) or the development of the infrastructure as a whole. This leaves even those policy-makers with a commitment to outdoor learning considerable problems to negotiate before they even start on the key issues of funding and policy support.

Nonetheless, the confidence in the value of outdoor learning experiences noted by the providers, the scale of provision and the obvious educational potential are not insignificant features in 'sector' that has for many decades offered a creative approach to education and proven itself to be (by and large) robust and adaptable in the face of almost constant political change. Whilst it has historically been more or less impotent to act to secure its own future, the recent support from the Westminster Parliament (House of Commons Education and Skills Committee 2005a,b), recent research reports on the value of outdoor learning³ (eg Christie, 2004; Amos and Reiss, 2004; Dillon et al, 2005; Rickinson et al, 2004), the manifesto for outdoor learning in England (Department for Education and Skills, 2005) and the considerable support of the Scottish Executive and Learning and Teaching Scotland, provide an unprecedented basis for development. This is clearly opportune in light of what are two of the most significant findings of this research, firstly, the extent of the unexploited potential; and second, that the existing infrastructure of national provision could increase capacity provided it were properly resourced in terms of finance, staff, educational training, and other factors.

³ It should be noted that most, but not all of these studies focus on environmental education outdoors.

REFERENCES

- Amos, R. and Reiss, M. 2004. *Field Studies Council London Challenge Residentials*. April - July 2004. Pilot Evaluation. Unpublished Report. London: Institute of Education. 17p.
- Cheesmond, J. 1979. *Outdoor Education Research Project*. Edinburgh: Lothian Region and Dunfermline College of Education.
- Christie, E. 2004. *Raising achievement in secondary schools: A study of outdoor experiential learning*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Edinburgh.
- Clay, G., 1999. Outdoor and adventurous activities: An OFSTED Survey. *Horizons*, **5**, 17-18.
- Department for Education and Skills. 2005. Education Outside the Classroom Manifesto. <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/consultations/conDocument.cfm?consultationId=1370> (Accessed 14 November 2005).
- Dillon, J., Morris, M., O'Donnell, L. Reid, A., Rickinson, M. and Scott, W. 2005. *Engaging and Learning with the Outdoors – The Final Report of the Outdoor Classroom in a Rural Context Action Research Project*. National Foundation for Educational Research.
- Higgins, P. 1995. Outdoor education provision at Moray House Institute of Education. *Scottish Journal of Physical Education*, **23** (3), 4-11.
- Higgins, P. 2000. The contribution of outdoor education and outdoor recreation to the economy of Scotland. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, **1** (1), 69-82.
- Higgins, P. 2002. Outdoor education in Scotland. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*, **2** (2), 149-168.
- Higgins, P., Nicol, R. and Ross, H. 2005. *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum. A Report for Scottish Natural Heritage*. Perth: Scottish Natural Heritage.
- Higgins, P. and Loynes, C. 1997. On the nature of outdoor education. In Higgins, P., Loynes, C. and Crowther, N. Eds., *A guide for outdoor educators in Scotland*, Penrith: Adventure Education and Perth: Scottish Natural Heritage. pp. 6-14.
- House of Commons Education and Skills Committee. 2005a. *Education Outside the Classroom*. Second Report of Session 2004–05, UK: The House of Commons. www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_committees/education_and_skills_committee.cfm, (Accessed June 7th, 2005).
- House of Commons Education and Skills Committee. 2005b. *Government's responses to the committee's second report Education Outside the Classroom sixth report National Skills Strategy: 14-19 Education and eighth report Teaching Children to Read of session 2004-5*. London: Stationery Office. 32p.
- May, T. 1997. *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process* (second edition). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Nicol, R. 2001. *Outdoor education for sustainable living?: an investigation into the potential of Scottish Local authority residential outdoor education centres to deliver programmes relating to sustainable living*. Unpublished PhD thesis: University of Edinburgh.

Rickinson, M., Dillon, J., Teamey, K., Morris, M., Choi, M., Sanders, D. and Benefield, P. 2004. *A review of research on outdoor learning*. London: National Foundation for Educational Research. 68p.

Robson, C. 2002. *Real World Research*. Blackwell: Oxford.

Scottish Executive. 2004a. *Health and Safety on Educational Excursions*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Scottish Executive. 2004b. *Health and Safety on Educational Excursions.. Supplement 1: Standards for Local Authorities in Overseeing Educational Excursions*. Edinburgh: Scottish Executive.

Office for Standards in Education. 2004. *Outdoor education: Aspects of good practice HMI 2151*. London: Ofsted. Available at: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/publications/index.cfm?fuseaction=pubs.summary&id=371> (9 Accessed 14 November 2005).

WEBSITES

Active Schools Network
<http://www.sportscotland.org.uk/ChannelNavigation/Our+activities/TopicNavigation/Active+Schools>
Accessed 24 May 2006.

Adventure Activities Licensing Authority <http://www.aala.org.uk>
Accessed 24 May 2006.

Bailie, M. 2005 ... and by comparison.
http://www.aala.org.uk/guidance_details.php/pArticleHeadingID=144
Accessed 24 May 2006.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) <http://www.dvla.gov.uk/drivers/drmbus.htm>

Health Promoting Schools <http://www.healthpromotingschools.co.uk/aboutus/index.asp>
Accessed 24 May 2006.

Hungry for Success <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16273/17566>
Accessed 24 May 2006.

Scottish Executive. 2005. *Health and safety on educational excursions: A good practice guide*. <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/education/hsee-00.asp>
Accessed 24 May 2006.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

INVITATION TO TENDER

Brief stated by LTS

1.1. Aim of Project

This research will provide a clear understanding of how providers from different contexts view outdoor education.

1.2. Objectives

This research will answer questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 of Outdoor Connections Research Programme 2005-06 from a provider's perspective.

It should attempt to engage as many providers as possible; from across different types of outdoor learning; from different settings; across the full range of sectors; working with 3 - 18 across a range of needs and outcomes.

Our interpretation of the brief

This is an ambitious brief and to satisfactorily address all the demands stated or implicit would be a major undertaking. In order to limit the scale of this, decisions need to be made concerning both the scale and the depth of the study.

It is clear that to seek opinions and information from the comprehensive range of providers stated above requires both clear decisions on who is to be contacted, and also dictates the research approach. In order to satisfy LTS expectations and to allow input based on our own experience and contacts, careful thought should be given to the development of an appropriate database, and we would expect to do so in collaboration with LTS and also with input from the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority inspectors for Scotland. As part of this process and in order to keep the scale of the project manageable we would seek to agree with LTS the numbers of providers from within each sector to be approached.

A study of this scale is best approached through a questionnaire which would be sent to the selected respondents. This would, in broad terms, be based on the areas noted in Questions 1 to 6 as outlined in the brief, though clearly not all aspects of these are manageable within the scope of this study. We would provide LTS with a draft questionnaire for comment and the revised version would then be trialled with a limited number of respondents before the main study takes place. The responses would then be collated and an analysis of the key points undertaken before a synthesis developed.

A study of views or opinions does not sit comfortably within a questionnaire-based approach and ideally a limited number of semi-structured interviews would be conducted to supplement the questionnaire responses. However this would also make the study significantly larger and therefore very costly. We have therefore decided to limit our proposal to questionnaire-based enquiry.

We have recently completed a study (for Scottish Natural Heritage) of teachers' approaches and attitudes to the natural heritage, part of which was based on the above strategy. This approach, and the questions put to teachers proved effective in generating valuable and reliable data. We therefore have confidence in our approach, our questionnaire structure and techniques for analysis.

Dr Peter Higgins, Dr Robbie Nicol and Dr Hamish Ross, January 2006

APPENDIX TWO

Questionnaire for Providers' Views of Outdoor Education

Some questions below lead to a yes/no (Y / N) answer. Please circle as appropriate.

Name of respondent and job title

Name of organisation..... Your Email address.....

1. Please state the sector you work in (e.g. public, private, charitable)
.....
2. If you have difficulty defining your work in the way Q1 asks please say why.
.....
3. What sorts of things do you think pupils learn on your programmes? **GO 1**
.....
.....
4. *How do you know* that pupils learn the things you mentioned in Q3? **GO 3**
.....
.....
5. In the last financial or academic year (your choice) how many actual pupil days did you deliver? **GO 2**.....
 - a. can you give an indication of how you calculated this?.....
.....
.....
6. Do you (individual, school or centre) have a written policy/strategy specifically for outdoor learning? Y / N **GO 3**
 - a. If 'yes', could you please return a copy with this questionnaire?
7. Does the school curriculum influence what you do? Y / N **GO 3**
 - a. If 'yes' in what ways?
.....
.....
 - b. If 'no', why not?
.....
.....
8. Do you keep evidence of pupil achievement? Y / N **GO 3**
 - a. If 'yes' what is the nature of this evidence?
.....
.....
9. Is there a demand for your services that is greater than your ability to supply? Y / N.
 - a. If 'yes' who is it that requires these services? **GO 4**
.....
.....
 - b. If 'yes' again can you explain how much demand exceeds supply?
.....
.....

10. Do you think there are special strengths in outdoor learning (in relation to other school activities)? Y / N **GO 5**
- a. If 'yes' what are these opportunities?
-
-
11. Do you experience any particular barriers that affect your provision? Y / N. **GO 5**
- a. If 'yes' what are these barriers?.....
-
-
12. Does the school curriculum or timetable influence your provision of outdoor learning? Y / N **GO 5**
- a. If 'yes', in what ways? (e.g. time, resources, support, curricular development initiatives).....
-
-
13. Are there any changes within the education sector that are influencing your provision at the moment? Y / N **GO 5**
- a. If 'yes' what are these changes?.....
-
-
14. Is funding affecting your level of provision? Y / N **GO 5**
- a. If 'yes' what are these effects?.....
-
-
15. In recent research entitled *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum* data showed that public perception of risk had in some cases acted as a barrier to teachers providing outdoor learning opportunities. Is this the case for you and your organisation? Y / N **GO 5**
- Please explain
-
-
16. Are there any legislative issues influencing your provision at the moment? Y/N **GO 5**
- Please comment specifically on:
- a. Health and Safety.....
-
- b. European Union Working Time Directive.....
-
- c. Other.....
-
17. What do you believe are the key issues that need to be addressed to promote the sustainable provision for outdoor learning? **GO 5**
-
-

Please return the completed questionnaire by **20th April 2006** to:
 Dr Robbie Nicol (Outdoor Education Providers' Survey)
 School of Education, University of Edinburgh
 Edinburgh, EH8 8QA

APPENDIX THREE

Questionnaire for Providers' Views of Outdoor Education

Some questions below lead to a yes/no (Y / N) answer. Please circle as appropriate.

Name of respondent and job title

Name of organisation..... Your Email address.....

1. Please state the sector you work in (e.g. public, private, charitable)
.....
2. If you have difficulty defining your work in the way Q1 asks please say why.
.....
3. What sorts of things do you think pupils learn on your programmes?
.....
.....
4. *How do you know* that pupils learn the things you mentioned in Q3?
.....
.....
5. In the last financial or academic year (your choice) how many actual pupil days did you deliver?
 - can you give an indication of how you calculated this?.....
.....
.....
6. Do you (individual, school or centre) have a written policy/strategy specifically for outdoor learning? Y / N
 - If 'yes', could you please return a copy with this questionnaire?
7. Does the school curriculum influence what you do? Y / N
 - If 'yes' in what ways?
.....
.....
 - If 'no', why not?
.....
.....
8. Do you keep evidence of pupil achievement? Y / N
 - If 'yes' what is the nature of this evidence?
.....
.....
9. Is there a demand for your services that is greater than your ability to supply? Y / N.
 - If 'yes' who is it that requires these services?
.....
.....
 - If 'yes' again can you explain how much demand exceeds supply?
.....
.....
.....

10. Do you think there are special strengths in outdoor learning (in relation to other school activities)? Y / N
- If 'yes' what are these opportunities?
 -
 -
11. Do you experience any particular barriers that affect your provision? Y / N.
- If 'yes' what are these barriers?.....
 -
 -
12. Does the school curriculum or timetable influence your provision of outdoor learning? Y / N
- If 'yes', in what ways? (e.g. time, resources, support, curricular development initiatives).....
 -
 -
13. Are there any changes within the education sector that are influencing your provision at the moment? Y / N
- If 'yes' what are these changes?.....
 -
 -
14. Is funding affecting your level of provision? Y / N
- If 'yes' what are these effects?.....
 -
 -
15. In recent research entitled *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum* data showed that public perception of risk had in some cases acted as a barrier to teachers providing outdoor learning opportunities. Is this the case for you and your organisation? Y / N
Please explain
-
-
16. Are there any legislative issues influencing your provision at the moment? Y / N
Please comment specifically on:
- Health and Safety.....
 -
 - European Union Working Time Directive.....
 -
 - Other.....
 -
17. What do you believe are the key issues that need to be addressed to promote the sustainable provision for outdoor learning?
-
-

Please return the completed questionnaire by **20th April 2006** to:
Dr Robbie Nicol (Outdoor Education Providers' Survey)

School of Education, University of Edinburgh,
Edinburgh, EH8 8QA

APPENDIX FOUR

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (LZW) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.



Outdoor and Environmental Education Section
The Moray House School of Education
The University of Edinburgh
St Leonard's Land
Holyrood Road
Edinburgh EH8 8AQ
Telephone 0131 651 6520
Facsimile 0131 651 6521
Email Robbie.Nicol@ed.ac.uk

30 March 2006

Dear Colleague

Providers' Views of Outdoor Education

The Outdoor and Environmental Education Section of the University of Edinburgh is conducting research on behalf of Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS) about how providers from different contexts view outdoor education. This research is supported by the Scottish Executive Education Department through its 'Outdoor Connections' programme.

We are particularly interested in finding out about outdoor 'curricular opportunities' for 3-18 year olds, which for the purposes of the study and in line with the interests of LTS are defined in a broad and holistic way. For the purposes of this questionnaire the curriculum is deemed to include the full range of purposes of a school, outdoor centre or other outdoor learning contexts and includes, for example, citizenship, sustainable development, enterprise and health education as well as academic subjects and out of school hours learning.

The questionnaire will take around 15 minutes to complete. If you would like your response to be treated as anonymous please write 'anonymous' where you are asked to provide your name.

A stamped, addressed envelope is provided for the questionnaire's return. Please return the questionnaire by 20 April 2006. Further enquires may be addressed to Dr Peter Higgins or Dr Robbie Nicol at the address above.

Websites

We intend to publish the results of this and other current outdoor learning studies on the following websites. Please check periodically for updates:

- Outdoor & Environmental Education at the University of Edinburgh:
www.education.ed.ac.uk/outdoored
- A website for the Outdoor Connections Programme will be developed in the near future but until then you can access an electronic newsletter by registering at:
outdoorconnections@LTScotland.org.uk

With very best wishes

Dr Peter Higgins / Dr Robbie Nicol

APPENDIX FIVE

Pilot questionnaire for Providers' Views of Outdoor Education and the codes in black will help to code, categorise and set out the data when it needs ordered

Name of respondent.....

Name of organisation.....

1. Please state the sector you work in (e.g. public, private, charitable)
.....
2. If you have difficulty defining your work in the way Q1 asks please say why.
.....
3. What sorts of things do you think pupils learn on your programmes?.....
.....
4. How do you know what pupils learn on your programmes?.....
.....
5. How many pupil days per annum do you deliver?.....
 - Can you give an indication of how you calculate this).....
6. Do you (individual, school or centre) have a written policy/strategy specifically for outdoor learning? Y/N
 - If yes, could you please return a copy with this questionnaire?
7. Thinking about the full range of purposes of a school or centre as mentioned in the cover letter do you integrate pupils' learning with the school curriculum? Y/N
 - If yes in what ways?.....
8. Do you keep evidence of pupil achievement? Y/N.
9. If yes to Question 8 what is the nature of this evidence?
.....
10. Is there a demand for your services that is greater than your ability to supply? Y/N.
 - If yes who is it that requires these services?
.....
 - If yes again can you explain how much demand exceeds supply?.....
11. Are there any special opportunities available to you as a provider of outdoor education? Y/N.

- If yes what are these opportunities?.....
12. Do you experience any particular barriers that affect your provision? Y/N.
- If yes what are these barriers?
13. Does the school curriculum or timetable influence your provision of outdoor learning? Y/N.
- If yes, in what ways ? (prompts - time resources, support, curricular development initiatives)
14. Are there any changes within the education sector that are influencing your provision at the moment ? Y/N.
- If yes what are these changes?
15. Is funding affecting your level of provision? Y/N.
- If yes what are these changes?
16. Are there any issues regarding Health and Safety that are influencing your provision at the moment? Y/N.
- If yes in what are these issues?
17. In recent research entitled *Teachers' Approaches and Attitudes to Engaging with the Natural Heritage Through the Curriculum* data showed that public perception of risk had in some cases acted as a barrier to teachers providing outdoor learning opportunities. Is this the case for you and your organisation? Please explain.....
18. Are there any changes regarding legislation other than Health and Safety that are influencing your provision at the moment? Y/N.
- If yes what are these changes?

APPENDIX SIX

Responses to the Pilot Questionnaire and Narrative on Changes to the Final Version of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was piloted by the principal of a residential outdoor education centre and teacher of outdoor education in a secondary school.

Q1 Please state the sector you work in (e.g. public, private, charitable) was challenged because the residential pilot felt that there were two different sources of funding available (primary and secondary) and that would differ both within and between sectors. However the contractor did not alter the question as the questionnaire was about views of outdoor education and not just its funding. Also although this is an important area there would need to be several additional questions added to access this level of detail.

Q4 originally asked 'How do you know what pupils learn on your programmes'? This was changed to '*How do you know* that pupils learn the things mentioned in Q3?' (note the italics for emphasis). This was because the piloting indicated that we were likely to end up with buzz words as opposed to any detail. The change therefore was an attempt to get beyond the superficial. We were keen though to leave in the 'How do you know'?

For Q5 'How many pupil days per annum do you deliver?' The pilot showed the ambiguity of this question where variables included (actual, potential, average or year end summaries. We therefore changed the question to 'In the last financial or academic year (your choice) how many actual pupil days did you deliver'?

Q7 ('thinking about the full range of purposes of a school or centre as mentioned in the cover letter do you integrate pupils' learning with the school curriculum? Y / N') was identified as a key question. However, it became clear that the integration we sought to uncover could be thought about in an operational sense (where the provider liaised with other educationalists to discuss a programme) or in a strategic sense (where the curriculum had a significant influence on the nature of the programme itself). We felt that the strategic issue was more important to the research questions and so rephrased the question to 'does the school curriculum influence what you do? Y / N

Q11 ('are there any special opportunities available to you as a provider of outdoor education? Y / N') was also identified as a key question but neither respondent was sure what the question was asking. When we explained that we were trying to identify if there was anything that an external audience (an audience unconnected or with no vested interest in outdoor learning) would note as something special over education in the classroom, particularly when a direct comparison was being asked, we arrived at the following question. 'Do you think there are special strengths in outdoor learning (in relation to other school activities)? Y / N'

Q16 ('are there any issues regarding Health and Safety that are influencing your provision at the moment?') was reworded. One of the pilots suggested that because the working hours directive was such a big potential threat to their provision that it should be named specifically. The question then became 'Are there any legislative issues influencing your provision at the moment? Please comment specifically on:

- Health and Safety
- European Union Working Time Directive
- Other

Q18 was incorporated into Q 17

APPENDIX SEVEN

Coding details arising from analysis of questionnaires

Personal and Social Education (showing personal development as a subset)

Self-confidence 8
Self-awareness 5
Self esteem 5
Personal development 5
Personal challenge 3
Self-reliance 3
Understanding rules 2
Achievement 2
Independence 2
Self-respect 1
Self discipline 1
Value and respect others 1
Tolerance 1
Empathy 1
Team ethos 1
Humour 1
Judgement 1
Rights and responsibilities 1
Personal responsibility 1
Motivation 1
Trust 1
Independent living 1
Effort and focus 1
Determination 1
n=50

Personal and Social Education (showing social development as a subset)

Team work 23
Communication skills 11
Personal and social development 10
Social skills 8
Problem solving 3
Social responsibility 3
Co-operation 2
Respect for others 2
Leadership 2
Social development 1
Interpersonal skills 1
Trust 1
Working with others 1
Social and emotional behaviour 1
Living and working within a community 1
Presentation skills 1
n=71

Outdoor Activities

Skill development in outdoor activities 22
Map reading 3
Physical development 2
Kayaking 2
Canoeing 2
Navigation 2
Risk management 2
Motor skills 2
Climbing 2
Health and safety 2
Risk assessment 1
National Governing bodies 1
Sailing 1
Mountain biking 1
Riding 1
Walking 1
Abseiling 1
n=48

Environmental Education

Environmental 12
Environmental awareness 7
Environmental studies related to 5-14 guidelines 3
Geography 3
Minibeasts 3
Biodiversity 2
Biology 2
Woodland studies 2
Forestry 2
Pond studies 2
Respect and care for the environment 2
Life cycles 2
Knowledge of environment 2
Circle of life 2
Conservation issues 2
Learn about the environment 1
Nature 1
Mammal and bird studies 1
Sustainability 1
Natural history 1
Recycling 1
Using alternative energy 1
Energy use 1
Resource use 1
Sense of place 1
Practical physics 1
Agriculture 1
Sustainable living 1
Waste 1
Knowledge of flora and fauna 1
Tropical rain forests 1

Honey bees 1
Wildlife 1
Wildlife management 1
Habitat 1
Reptiles 1
Landuse and recreation 1
Nature studies 1
Sensory perception 1
River studies 1
Field observation 1
Environmental appreciation 1
n=75

Other

Healthy living 10
Life skills 9
Fun and enjoyment 6
Leisure skills 3
Values 2
Listening skills 2
Local history 2
Responsible citizenship 2
New experiences and opportunities 2
Reflectiveness 1
Experiential 1
Fitness 1
Tourism 1
Budgeting skills 1
Critical thinking 1
Issue based info diversion - petty crime and substance misuses 1
Vocational programmes 1
Science and technology 1
Literacy 1
Numeracy 1
Creativity 1
Reasoning 1
Negotiating 1
Decision making 1
Full curriculum 1
Cognitive learning 1
Archaeology 1
n=56