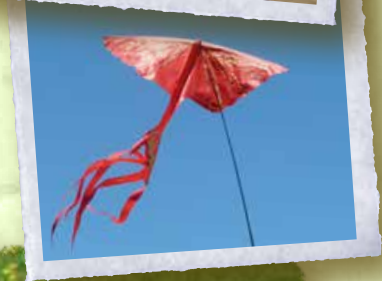


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BUILDING A  
LEGACY FROM  
ACCESS TO NATURE



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## Building a legacy from Access to Nature



### ABOUT THIS PAPER

Welcome to this paper, the final of a series of Learning Papers related to the Access to Nature programme. Here we look at the work undertaken to ensure that the programme has created a meaningful and sustainable legacy for local people and for the natural environment. We do this by studying the actions of four Access to Nature projects that received additional Big Lottery Supporting Change and Impact (SCI) funding to consider and explore ways of sustaining the impact of their work.

These papers have been produced across the lifetime of Access to Nature and demonstrate what is being learnt about encouraging people who have little or no experience of the natural environment to go out into the outdoors. This includes messages to inform the continuing work of Natural England and the work of other organisations interested in or committed to this kind of work.

### THE CURRENT CONTEXT

The current political agenda parallels the goals of many of the Access to Nature projects. The vision for a Big Society focuses on a belief that people should be empowered to improve their communities and shape the services they receive. The three core strands of the current Localism agenda – promoting social action in communities; empowering communities; and opening up public services – all reflect the kinds of ambitions of many of the funded projects. Within Natural England, the commitments to reconnect people with nature; protect natural assets; and maximise the opportunities offered by a greener economy are all priorities that have underpinned and complemented Access to Nature.



The funding climate in which Access to Nature has operated changed significantly over the life of the programme, creating new and shifting challenges for the projects, for Natural England, and for the Big Lottery Fund. The SCI initiative was launched in 2011 in response to concerns from the voluntary and community sector about the effects of public funding cuts and the future sustainability of existing projects and services. The goal was to give existing Big Lottery Fund projects in the last 18 months of their funding some vital time to review the way they work and explore ways of ensuring that the benefits of their work would be sustained in the longer term. As part of the national SCI initiative, £1.37 million was routed through Natural England as a Changing Spaces grants programme award partner to support Access to Nature projects.

## **BUILDING A LEGACY FROM ACCESS TO NATURE**

Access to Nature was an ambitious demonstration of how to bring about lasting change in the relationship between the natural environment and people across England who have little or no previous contact with nature. The programme evaluation evidenced substantial impact in three areas; wellbeing, learning and ownership, while simultaneously improving the quality of, and access to, local natural places.

The longevity of the impact of the programme, and its individual projects, will vary from setting to setting. Many of the Access to Nature projects, including those that did not receive SCI funds, have worked hard with local people and partner organisations to sustain the spirit of care, ownership and adventure discovered through their work. This paper has focused on four examples to illustrate these achievements, although the evaluation has evidenced a wide range of legacies across England, as illustrated below.

- There are physical legacy resources on the ground in communities and green spaces, and on the internet. These include interpretation boards, trail maps, outdoor classrooms, downloadable walk guides, 'how to' guides, handbooks, films, social media sites and streams, printed resources, posters, booklets and teaching resources.
- Learning about Access to Nature and ways of working has been disseminated by projects through websites, social media streams, conferences, training, promotional materials, networks and films.
- Project learning and practice has been embedded within organisations through training, co-working and partnership development.
- Projects are continuing through ongoing funding, new business models, successor programmes and new grants.
- There are new structures in place such as Friends groups, partnerships, and other volunteer groups carrying on the work initiated within Access to Nature.



## PROJECT EXAMPLE 1:

### Telford Access to Nature

A Countryside Trust and its partners build a new network of people and community organisations to carry their work forward.

**Lead organisation:** Severn Gorge Countryside Trust

**Location:** Telford, Shropshire

**Who the project worked with:** People within priority communities or groups in the district, in particular people with disabilities or poor health, young people and primary school children.

**What the project did:** Telford Access to Nature provided a strong blend of activities and events designed to introduce and engage local people within their local green spaces. These were coupled with a structured programme of volunteer development and support, and work to develop new Friends groups.

There were a number of core elements to the project's work.

- Family environmental education events.
- Forest School activities with primary school children.
- Accredited learning in woodland management with young people excluded from school.
- Accredited training for volunteers.
- A programme of habitat management and infrastructure changes at local greenspaces, informed by Access Audits and delivered with teams of volunteers.
- The development of community based groups to continue and extend the work initiated by the project.

### How the project created a legacy:

Over the life of Access to Nature, the Trust and partners had supported or developed a total of 13 Friends groups linked to a range of greenspaces in the district. In the latter part of the project, the partners and the Friends groups came together to form Telford Green Spaces Partnership (TGSP) as a vehicle for shared work and engagement with the partners to the project, including the Local Authority. A further three Friends groups were developed during the SCI period and joined the partnership.

The network became a key mechanism for taking forward the work initiated by Access to Nature, and the ambitions of the various Friends groups and the volunteers who ran them. The project partners drew up a plan for their sustainability work, to be carried





out alongside their ongoing engagement activities. A priority was to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of individuals, and members of the Friends groups and Partnership through a series of training opportunities and practical work at local sites.

The results of the training and support programme were impressive.

- 11 TGSP member groups ran family events independently on their sites for the first time, attracting new people into contact with nature.
- 12 TGSP members gained a qualification in Outdoor First Aid.
- 12 TGSP members were trained in species monitoring and survey techniques, and their groups were supplied with monitoring equipment, protective equipment and tools.
- Each Friends group was trained in the recruitment and retention of volunteers.
- 16 TGSP members gained skills in raising funds.
- 16 TGSP members gained OCN qualifications in greenspace management.
- 10 TGSP members were trained as Volunteer Leaders.
- 30 TGSP members were trained as Walk Leaders.
- A training matrix was developed across the TGSP membership, supported by a volunteer forum which has been used to help match learning opportunities across the 16 sites, meaning that members are learning together with peers on each others' sites.
- A 'Champions' group was formed of volunteers who felt confident that they could help to support other Friends groups in their development.
- The publication of an online handbook focused on how to develop Friends groups. The handbook has been printed for each member organisation, and will go to new groups to help them develop.

A second legacy organisation was established as a constituted user group to support the project's Green Gym activities. This enabled people with learning disabilities and mental health difficulties, who were a particular focus for the project, to join able-bodied Green Gym users in other parts of the borough to work together.





Individual members and groups have become more confident in their roles and are taking an active part in ongoing delivery, a key goal of the sustainability plan for the project. One example of this has been a volunteer-led Outdoor Learning Programme in 2014 that has replaced the programme run by staff with volunteers in 2013.

**"We're seeing people growing and bringing others in. People are building and developing. There is a growth in capacity both in volume of volunteers and their progression."**

Shropshire Wildlife Trust - partner organisation



The time invested in partnership working has also brought about shifts in the way organisations and local people work together, and in the way they regard and value each others' contributions. A Local Authority manager noted that the process had *"brought us all together"*, and a member of the Steering Group noted changes in attitudes from local people, saying *"the groups are really seeing the wider picture, and are appreciating the position of others, such as the council – rather than just lobbying, they are now working better with others"*.

These new working relationships have led to shared initiatives, and new opportunities for local people to be involved in shaping greenspace development and management in the district. Examples include the development of four site management plans by local Friends groups and discussions with the Local Authority and others concerning green infrastructure planning in the district.

The success of the sustainability work has led the Countryside Trust to extend the employment of the Partnership Officer (engaged initially through Access to Nature) in a role to support community development around natural spaces across the district, meaning ongoing support for the TGSP.

**"In 2008 Telford had many greenspaces with poor access and few people wanting to look after them. Now, in 2013, 16 of these greenspaces have improved access, sensory interpretation, Friends groups who love and care for them and many more local people who are aware of the nature on their doorstep."**

Project Officer, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust



**The added value of the Supporting Change and Impact funding:**

The clear focus on sustainability provided the opportunity, resource and, crucially, the time, for Severn Gorge Countryside Trust and their partners to think, plan and put into practice the steps they believed would create a strong legacy. The SCl investment supported the training element that has been crucial to the building of skills and confidence among the various Friends groups, and provided the time to continue to develop the partnership working which was seen as pivotal in creating a working infrastructure within which local people could realise their ambitions for their local greenspaces.





## PROJECT EXAMPLE 2:

### Early Learning in Nature

A charity promoting creative and reflective practice in early childhood education embeds outdoor learning in nature as part of the culture of schools and Early Years settings.

**Lead organisation:** Sightlines Initiative

**Location:** Newcastle and the North East

**Who the project worked with:** Children aged 3-5 in areas of high need who had limited opportunities to spend time in woodland environments, plus their parents and Early Years educators.

**What the project did:** Early Learning in Nature worked in partnership with schools and Early Years settings (nurseries, playgroups, Parent and Toddler groups and Children's Centres) to provide young children with a programme of visits to a woodland site. At the woods, children learnt on their own and from each other, and educators and children worked together to discover and make sense of their discoveries.

A team of arts practitioners and environmental educationalists worked alongside the children's own Early Years educators, helping the children to explore and discover the natural woodland world. The work is based on a belief in children's natural curiosity and desire for learning. The relationship developed between the children and the natural environment of the woods is achieved through supporting children's enquiries in a way that helped Early Years educators to learn more about the children in their care, and learn new ways to support children's learning back at home. This, in turn, provided benefits in school, including improved engagement with learning and the development of language and social skills.

There were three core elements to the project's work:

- **A programme of woodland visits**  
Each Early Years group of up to 30 children had one visit per week for two terms to a wild place (usually a woodland) within reach of their home. The project overcame practical barriers by providing transport, equipment and outdoor clothing.
- **Follow-up visits**  
On alternate weeks the project team worked with the children and staff back at their nursery or Children's Centre to develop the learning from their outdoor experiences.
- **Continuing Professional Development**  
Termly development opportunities were made available to the Early Years educators by way of exchange visits, conferences, regular training, a web forum and a resource book.





**How the project created a legacy:** Many Access to Nature projects engaged schools as part of their work. Often the experience of delivering learning outdoors was a new one for schools, and one which brought about many benefits for children and for teaching staff<sup>1</sup>. Sustaining the practice initiated through Access to Nature has however been an ongoing challenge for many projects. Early Learning in Nature used their SCI funding phase to expand, extend and embed the core approaches to their work. The project sought to enable schools and Early Years settings to move to a point where they were skilled and confident enough to deliver work independently and willing to adopt (and fund) the practice themselves.

Sightlines used bespoke packages of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) that were negotiated and developed with individual schools and nurseries. In this way, the Early Years educators were partners in developing their own practice, alongside Sightlines staff and the children. Sightlines aimed to create 'a classroom culture where natural learning was central to the educational offer'.

The efficacy of this approach was borne out by the project successes.

- Four schools / Early Years settings identified funds or chose to adopt outdoor learning within their practice as a result of being involved in the programme.
- Five schools / Early Years settings undertook physical work to develop their own grounds to provide outdoor learning environments. Work included a new wooded area, a new wild area and employment of a landscape architect to develop school grounds. This is a significant outcome, as the Early Learning in Nature model involved transporting children to natural places. Creating an on-site natural place, or finding one close to a school or nursery, will make it easier to sustain the outcomes of the project and avoid the difficulties involved in accessing sites further away.
- 100% of teacher feedback reported increased understanding of the central place of imagination and engagement within outdoor learning.
- 100% of teaching participants also reported the intent to continue to offer outdoor learning after completion of the project.
- An online 'Group Hub' proved to be an excellent and important means of communication and exchange between teaching and project staff across the different settings.





“The project has been very successful at increasing my knowledge and understanding of working in the woods with children through practical experience, and through CPD and the support from the project staff. The CPD sessions have been thought provoking and have helped me understand how to move the children’s learning on and to document it, which helps inform future projects.”

Early Years teacher



A second strand to the project’s work to create a legacy has been to disseminate learning from the programme. Part of the approach adopted by Sightlines was to develop skills in recording, documenting and telling the stories of discovery and development for children, and for Early Years staff. Building on this practice, and that of bringing practitioners together to hear and learn from those stories, Sightlines hosted a conference, ‘Environments of Enquiry’, and created a publication ‘Early Learning in Nature.’

The conference drew together educators from within the Early Years and Primary Education sector. The aim was to promote the ethos of the Early Learning in Nature project by sharing the experience of children and how the educators involved in the project had developed an understanding of how to encourage learning.

The Early Learning in Nature publication is aimed at practitioners, Head Teachers, strategists and policy makers and offers what the project describes as “a compass and the tools to find a way forward”. It encourages the reader to discover and apply the ways of working which have been effective by telling the story of those involved, describing the children’s journeys in the woods, and the thinking of the educators who worked with them.

#### **The added value of the Supporting Change and Impact funding:**

Sightlines identified time, persistence and the commitment of the participants as the critical factors in developing their legacy. Equally, the project’s approach, based on engagement, training, learning, encouragement and discovery, required time to be effective. Allied to this, the project noted that the SCI investment gave them chance to continue to bring practitioners together, to share learning and build confidence among Early Years staff through the telling of stories about the children they worked with. The SCI funds also allowed bespoke Continuing Professional Development packages to be developed for each setting (rather than a generic training programme), essential for developing a sense of ownership for the work.





### PROJECT EXAMPLE 3:

#### Natural Wight

A social housing provider embraces youth and community engagement in the outdoors, becomes a recognised provider and transfers the approach to other settings.

**Lead organisation:** Spectrum Housing Group

**Location:** Isle of Wight

**Who the project worked with:** Vulnerable young people and adults from disadvantaged communities, plus the wider public.

**What the project did:** Natural Wight grew out of direct consultation with residents at Spectrum's Foyer, a supported housing scheme for 45 young people living on the Isle of Wight. Feedback from the young people showed they were aware of the benefits of accessing the natural environment, but simply lacked the means or motivation to take advantage of them. Natural Wight was developed to overcome these perceived barriers and offer a 'pick 'n' mix' of outdoor activities and learning opportunities. These included practical conservation work along with local community engagement for 16-25 year olds, and adults / families from hard to reach communities.

Amongst the many organisations involved in Natural Wight were the Footprint Trust, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, Arc, Isle of Wight Council, Tree Council and The Wildlife Trust. Close collaboration enabled the successful delivery of two key strands of work: a structured volunteering programme for young people (The Green Army) and a programme of community activities.

#### The Green Army

The Green Army's target group was young people aged 16-25, in particular NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and vulnerable young adults from supported accommodation. Over 200 young people volunteered on the Green Army over the three-year life of the project joining the Natural Wight team on walks, 'Green Skills' courses and regular conservation volunteering days.

Out in all weathers and undeterred by mud, brambles or even mosquitoes, Natural Wight's Green Army has made a huge difference to the Island and to people's lives. They've planted new trees to help create the new country park at Pan, made a habitat for bees in Newchurch, and transformed the woodlands at Fort Vic and Mill Copse. Around 20 key conservation sites on the Island and many Biodiversity Action Plan species have benefited from the Green Army's efforts. Not only have young people gained valuable experience and qualifications from this work, but they have also been recognised by the local community in the Isle of Wight Community Action Awards.





### Community activities

The project organised a widely-promoted seasonal programme of activities encouraging people of all ages and abilities to get out and about in nature, giving them opportunities to explore, learn, get fit and simply enjoy nature in as many ways as possible. The broad spectrum of activities included conservation days such as Green Gym, healthy Wild Food Walks, rock pooling and beach art days; kite-flying, tree trails, pond-dipping, leaf and river art walks and workshops; engagement in environmental projects from Himalayan balsam pulling to tree-planting; outdoor craft and wild play days.

### How the project created a legacy:

**The Green Army Lives on:** Convinced of the benefits of a structured volunteer programme for young people, Spectrum Housing has taken the decision to continue to support and manage The Green Army. New partners, such as SMART Training and the Council's Strengthening Families unit, now see Spectrum Housing as a provider of youth engagement activity.

**Nature activities will continue:** Spectrum Housing is developing a programme 'making space for nature', under the banner of 'Birds, Bees, Bats and Bugs'. This new project will deliver a range of nature-related activities and resource packs to encourage residents to support urban wildlife. A habitat survey will launch the project and feed into the local record centre, and provide a 'before and after' snapshot of the island's wildlife. Many of the activities developed under Natural Wight will be included in this programme and will continue to help promote access to nature on our doorstep.

**Natural Wight activities have also been transferred to Spectrum's other communities:** Wildlife Clubs and regular scheduled Nature Events will be established at Lordshill, Southampton, Ryde and possibly other Spectrum estates.

**Spectrum's Natural Wight project will migrate into another project:** Partnerships have been established with other groups who make up the East Wight Landscape Partnership (EWLP), and Spectrum Housing will take the key role of Landscape Outreach to help each project maximise opportunities for community engagement, particularly with hard to reach communities. As part of EWLP, Spectrum have secured funding for a project called Wild about Woods which will see Natural Wight style activities with a woodland focus.





“The AONB partnership understand now that we don’t have the expertise to engage everyone and different approaches are needed which Spectrum Housing are far better placed to lead. They have a broad understanding of many issues that affect young people and communities so they can appeal sensitively and appropriately to a wider diversity of people. We now understand the value of what they do and we are so excited by this. Natural Wight has confirmed and clarified the benefits of a collaborative approach.”

Isle of Wight AONB Partnership

**The added value of the Supporting Change and Impact funding:**

The SCI funding has been instrumental in helping the Natural Wight project continue. Winning SCI helped to embed the project in the Island’s nature offering and ethos. It provided the time and additional resources needed to demonstrate, through evaluation, that hard-to-reach communities derive enormous benefit from access to nature and helped to cement the links with the project’s partners further. Two mass engagement events, Pan Park Safari and Big Bug Day, both supported by SCI, have had a long-term impact. Not only did these events raise awareness of the parks but, along with the Green Army’s work on site, they have prompted the Isle of Wight Council to consider how to manage a rather overlooked park and protect it in the future. The extra year has also helped to position Spectrum as a community engagement provider, which will not only benefit the communities they work with but also help to support the many organisations who traditionally struggle to engage the hard to reach.







## PROJECT EXAMPLE 4:

### Getting Out There

A Community Interest Company providing inspiration and opportunities for young people and families who had little or no experience of the natural world. An inclusive approach, mixing people from different cultural backgrounds and those with multiple and complex needs with other, more confident, participants.

**Lead organisation:** Imayla

**Location:** Bristol and the South West

**Who the project works with:** Children, young people and families from among those most in need in terms of economic disadvantage, emotional and social development, community engagement, and engagement with education and training. The project volunteers were also recruited from among the target communities.

**What the project did:** Getting Out There (GOT) provided a wide range of events for children, young people and families, both within Bristol and further afield to the countryside for day trips, weekends and five-day long residential.

A small team based at Imayla co-ordinated the events and contracted sessional workers appropriate to the needs of each event – these included youth and play workers, workshop leaders, art workers, facilitators and trainers. Some events were openly advertised to both participants and volunteers in the target communities; others were developed in partnership with community or statutory organisations for existing groups, and were tailor-made to meet those groups' needs. Being embedded in the target communities was key for Imayla in ensuring they were a known face to potential participants.





The underlying philosophy of GOT was not just about improving access to and understanding of nature for beneficiaries; it was also looking at the impact of this engagement on improving their physical, mental, emotional, social, professional, organisational or community health and wellbeing through the use of creative arts.

The approach took into account 'comfort zones' and 'stepping stones'.

- **Comfort zones** - trying to keep participants within their comfort zones, at least initially.
- **Stepping stones** - starting with activities that would be familiar to participants, but placing them in the new setting of the outdoors.

**How the project created a legacy:** Imayla's Access to Nature project generated a body of evidence about the impact of their work for vulnerable young people and their families. Sustaining the organisation's capacity to continue delivering such benefits was a key priority and required two parallel strands of work.

#### **Designing and marketing specific packages of support**

Imayla could see that its work had a currency in terms of other organisations' work with children and young people in need, particularly in terms of addressing the Government's 'Troubled Families' agenda. This meant refining its current offer to match the outcomes and outputs required by other organisations, as well as further developing its links with such organisations and seeking sources of future funding streams. For example, this included building on existing relationships with the Child and Adult Mental Health Service, and developing new links to organisations such as Social Services, foster care agencies and the Children and Young People's Service Area Prevention Team.

#### **Delivering demonstration projects**

Resources were invested in delivering tailor-made events, based on the GOT philosophy as well as matching the organisational goals of key partner agencies from the community and statutory sectors. The intention was to plan collaboratively with those organisations; to demonstrate the powerful benefits of the Imayla offer in terms of the health and wellbeing of its beneficiary participants through their experiences in the natural environment; and further building the evidence base about the impact of this kind of work.

Imayla achieved a considerable amount from these two strands of work, and created a significant legacy for Access to Nature. The following examples illustrate the breadth of what has been achieved.

- £300,000 funding secured from the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities programme to deliver a successor project, working with Looked After Children and children and young people on the edge of care, in programmes of one-year duration.





- Support workers from the Children and Adult Mental Health Service included as part of the engagement team for the 'Families in the Wild' project, ensuring future sustainability of such work.
- Passing Bristol City Council's requirements to become an eligible sub-contractor within the commissioning process for young people and health and social care services.
- Developed links with the Princes' Trust to deliver accredited Forest School training.
- Working with Community Resolve and other organisations to use the natural environment for community cohesion and conflict resolution work.
- Developed the capacity of other organisations (e.g. Bristol Drugs Project and Barton Hill Settlement) to run their own residentials and work in the natural environment.

**"It's exactly what we need on our menu for locality-based work with vulnerable children, young people and their families."**

Area Prevention Commissioning Manager, Bristol City Council

#### **The added value of the Supporting Change and Impact funding:**

Imayla used the time and resources of the SCI funding as 'a breathing space to reflect and build' on the experience and learning from Access to Nature. The space afforded by SCI enabled the project to research, explore and trial new ways in which their key approach of combining environmental, creative arts and intercultural work could become more sustainable. The project undertook a number of tasks that focused on creating a sustainable future for its work.

- They aligned the evidence of the impact of their work with established research.
- They participated in a number of practice and development forums.
- They re-shaped practice to become more 'consciously therapeutic' for those most in need, building longer term relationships with participants focused on change and progression (and assessed the resources, skills and structures needed to work in this way).
- They strengthened partnership support and training to other organisations.
- They researched new models of working with organisations, parents and carers, and raised the profile of Imayla through conferencing and networking.





- They undertook further evaluation work, using the findings to develop a film to demonstrate their work with foster families, and provide high quality information and examples of their work on their website.

This focus on research and development enabled Imayla to understand and value the potential of its work, and to develop a clear vision of where the organisation will be able to make a strong contribution in the future.



*“Imayla is on a continuous and organic developmental journey with participants, communities, organisations and agencies and within the wider context facing children, young people and families. We are seeing the emerging economic context as an opportunity rather than just a threat and believe we might be part of the solution to a more socially and economically cost effective range of services through the work, opportunities and vision we have been able to develop through Access to Nature.”*

Imayla Programme Manager





## THE KEY LEARNING

Grant programmes can often struggle with generating lasting change, as the transition from resources and support to new ways of working is often a challenging one for funded projects. The evaluation of Access to Nature demonstrated that the programme achieved substantial impact for people's wellbeing, learning and sense of ownership of natural spaces. This, in turn, sparked many projects to develop a strong strand of practice focused on the future, leading to a wide range of innovative steps that are ensuring the benefits of the programme are ongoing in many places and for many people. These steps include physical legacy resources, the dissemination of learning, the embedding of practice, the development of new structures and new funding streams.

The additional resources provided by the Big Lottery Fund through Supporting Change and Impact has, for many projects, amplified this commitment. The key learning from the SCI experience within the Access to Nature programme is that the investment provided projects with two crucial assets that have strengthened the longevity of their work.

- A clear **focus on sustainability**. The SCI awards effectively gave the projects the encouragement to specifically consider sustainability and how it could be brought about. The four examples in this paper illustrate how valuable this encouragement was, enabling the projects to find the routes forward which would work for them.
- **Time**. SCI investments offered additional security to projects and the space to reflect on how best to sustain the benefits of their work and, critically, to put the results of those reflections into practice.

By using these assets well, Access to Nature projects **have been able to think, plan and action their ideas and strategies for the future**. This paper offers clear examples of how sustainability has been secured, through the building of skills; the development of infrastructure in communities; the strengthening of partnerships; and the boosting of confidence. Providing a focus on the future, and the time, space and resources to plan for the future, has ensured that the practice and impacts of Access to Nature will be here to stay for many of the people and places involved in the programme.





## ABOUT ACCESS TO NATURE

Access to Nature was a £28.75 million grant scheme to encourage more people to enjoy the outdoors, particularly those with little or no previous contact with the natural environment. Funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Changing Spaces programme and by Natural England, Access to Nature was run by Natural England on behalf of a consortium of major environmental organisations. Funded projects include very local schemes run by small community based groups, through to national initiatives from large organisations. Diversity in scale was mirrored by a diversity and richness of projects including for example equipment to allow people with disabilities to access the natural environment across the South West; supporting black and minority ethnic (BME) communities to visit the countryside; as well as many projects which have provided a range of volunteering and educational opportunities for local communities and young people.

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## FOOTNOTE

1 Icarus (2013) *Learning Together - schools and the natural environment*. UK: Natural England.

Icarus (2011) *A Natural Curiosity – good quality outdoor experiences as a valuable part of children's development*. UK: Natural England.

See <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/>

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## ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

Our documents are available as pdf downloads from our website, suitable for text reader technology. We may be able to provide other formats (e.g. Braille, a minority language, or large print) for specific documents where there is a proven communication need.

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## PHOTO CREDITS

The pictures used in this publication have been kindly provided by Imayla (Getting Out There), Bristol, Severn Gorge Countryside Trust, Telford, Sightlines Initiative, Newcastle and Spectrum Housing Group (Natural Wight), Isle of Wight.

ISBN: 978-1-78354-117-1

