



YORKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

TOMORROW'S NATURAL LEADERS

YEAR 3 REPORT – 2019



Summary

Tomorrow's Natural Leaders (TNLs) started in 2016 and is a five year project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund under Our Bright Future. It aims to train 96 young people over the five years to upskill and empower them to take action on environmental projects and campaigns throughout Yorkshire. For some this will mean entering employment in the green economy, for others it is equipping them with the skills and knowledge to inspire and stimulate action on the environment in their local communities.

Tomorrow's Natural Leaders does not have a traditional recruitment process. For most entry level jobs in the green sector the priorities for recruitment are: "How much experience do you have?" and "How well will you fit within the existing team?".

For TNL recruitment the questions are different. Each area looks to build a team. This means they are looking for a balance of extroverts and introverts and people who will learn from each other. The key difference though, is recruitment is based on who will gain the most from the experience, rather than who has the most experience to begin with.

This approach to recruitment means there are a diverse range of young people at each of the sites, from a diverse range of backgrounds. Most, but not all, come to the TNL programme because they have some sort of interest in the environment and green sector. But it also attracts those who are just looking for a job.

During Year 3 the TNL programme offered both 12 month and three month placements. The three month placements provided a short, sharp opportunity to gain experience in the green sector. The 12 month placements provided longer for the TNLs to develop personally.

TNLs develop considerably over the time they are on the placement. They gain confidence, develop leadership and team building skills and gain enough experience to be considered for employment.

Each young person enjoys a different aspect of the programme. This is a real strength of the delivery. The TNL programme is hugely diverse. It exposes young people to the practicalities of reserve management but also gives them opportunities to get involved in campaigning, marketing and fundraising.

Young people have access to training organised by the YWT but they also have their own training budget. They use this to broaden the training they have on their CV.

The TNL groups are diverse and have young people with different levels of skill and need. The support function provided by the TNL leads is critical to helping the young people develop. They also help young people if they are experiencing challenges or have made mistakes during the course of their delivery.



'What keeps me coming back? It being more than my expectation, I thought it would be really good but the people I met, seeing the work, seeing the change you have made'



'My highlight has been the personal growth aspect of it. I think it has really benefited me, when I could lead sessions confidently I realised, oh I can do this'



'I know I can do this, this and this now and I feel I have improved and I am more eligible to get a job'



'The support it has been really good, there has not been one point where I have felt there is someone I couldn't talk to, not even just Joe but everyone in the office has been really supportive of us, you feel like you can just talk to them'



Introduction

Tomorrow's Natural Leaders (TNLs) started in 2016 and is a five year project funded by the National Lottery Community Fund under Our Bright Future. It aims to train 96 young people over the five years to upskill and empower them to take action on environmental projects and campaigns throughout Yorkshire. For some this will mean entering employment in the green economy, for others it is equipping them with the skills and knowledge to inspire and stimulate action around the environment in their local communities.

Tomorrow's Natural Leaders has four core aims:

- ✿ Enable young people to gain new skills relevant to finding jobs, training or volunteering opportunities that contribute to the green economy
- ✿ Engage young people with their environment, inspiring and enabling action
- ✿ Inspire communities about the environment and stimulate action and community cohesion
- ✿ Achieve a net gain in the built and natural environment across rural and urban settings

The TNL placement has the following elements to it:

- ✿ Exposure to a diverse range of jobs and activities undertaken by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- ✿ The opportunity to support, shadow and lead on activities on reserves and play a key role in habitat management
- ✿ Developing and leading a project that is identified, designed and delivered by the TNLs
- ✿ Getting involved in campaigns led by the TNLs, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and national movements
- ✿ A structure of wrap around support, including a TNL Lead in each area and mentoring from elsewhere in the trust to support their personal development

During the third year, the TNL programme operated at four sites: Pearson Park; Stirley Farm; Potteric Carr; and Appleton Mill.

This report covers the third year of delivery.



About the delivery

The TNL placement has been running for three years. Although the fundamentals of the placement have remained the same, delivery has evolved each year to meet the needs of young people.

During this delivery year the TNL programme has offered two types of placement. The first is a year long placement. This mirrored the original plan of the TNL programme to provide year long placements to young people to help with their personal development and to get a substantial amount of training and experience around the green sector. The second is a three month placement. These were designed to offer a truncated TNL experience. The aim of these placements were to open up the opportunity to a broader range of young people who could not commit to a full year.

Each of the sites offers a different experience for the TNLs. At Potteric Carr they are on a busy nature reserve with a substantial amount of visitor engagement. At Appleton Mill the focus is on farming. At Stirley Farm, although it is a community farm, there is a shift in planned management so it becomes more of a managed landscape. At Pearson Park, there is less visitor engagement and more urban based experiences.

“ Pearson Park offers something very different to the others as it is so urban based. If it is someone who wants to go into working on farms it isn't for them but if you want to tick the box about education it is really useful. For our project it is really handy to have so many groups to engage already there' TNL

Who it reaches

The year long and three month placements were appealing to young people for different reasons and reached different groups of young people.

Long term placement

The long term placement recruitment is now a well established process. The TNL leads in each region are more selective of the young people invited onto the long term placement as the cohesion of the team is critical to an effective programme in each region.

Unlike many other recruitment processes, the focus is not on identifying the 'best' person for the role. Instead recruitment is based on those young people who will benefit most from the opportunity. This means young people who are unemployed, shy, lacking confidence and struggle to communicate are equally as likely to get a post, as those young people with relevant degrees and the good leadership skills.

Over the three years of the TNL programme most young people fall into one of the following categories:

- ✿ Young people with a relevant undergraduate or postgraduate degree but lacking experience or the skills needed to gain an entry level post
- ✿ Young people without a relevant degree and are using the placement to support a transition into a new area of work
- ✿ Young people on a placement year while at University or a planned or unplanned gap year before they begin University
- ✿ Young people looking for experience before deciding which college, employment or university path they wish to take

The recruitment process looks for those young people who are likely to stay for the full 12 months and gain the most from the experience. This can range from young people who recognise the value of gaining the full year of experience to young people who are in need of support as they consider the next steps in their career.

“ I was at a loose end. I was so set on that [being a veterinary nurse] and then I did my work experience and thought it is not for me at the last minute. I didn't know what to do, the uni application deadline was coming up I thought I would leave it for a year get some work doing something and figuring it out' TNL

“ I did a degree in geology at Cardiff university and realised I didn't want to do that as a career so I did a masters in wildlife and conservation which is what led me into this kind of stuff' TNL

“ After looking at job adverts and that kind of thing a lot of them kept on asking for one year of practical experience outside of university and I thought what better way of doing it than this' TNL

The mix of young people on the placement can at first be challenging for both the staff and the young people.

“ My lowlight was probably towards the start about the degree thing, maybe this isn't for me, I don't have the knowledge everyone else has got' TNL

The staff run team building sessions and provide one to one support. This means these concerns at the start of the placement are quickly addressed. During Year 3 many of the TNLs commented how they had made great friends and had enjoyed meeting other young people from different backgrounds but with a common interest in the environment.

“ The range of opportunities there were within the programme [keep me at the placement] and meeting new people with like minds. In college everyone was just like on a one way track of wanting to be a zoo keeper or dog groomer. There was nobody who was really passionate about wildlife' TNL

What was common about all the young people who took part in the 12 month placement during Year 3 is they had a passion for the environment and conservation and in particular the connection with the local wildlife and local conservation.

“ It has been pretty obvious I was going to go into conservation of some sort since I was about 1 or something' TNL

“ I have always been interested in the environment and outdoors, growing up in the countryside' TNL

“ For me being in education for a while, you get well attuned to global issues and macro issues but you don't get involved in the smaller things at a local level. It is alright saying the environment is being impacted like this and this from flood management, it is only when you get onto the field and see all the little impacts the different side to it' TNL

Short term placement

The three month placement also attracted a range of young people. With the exception of one young person, all the young people recruited to the three month placement were undertaking, or had just completed a relevant degree. The three month placement was being used to gain some summer experience or a small amount of experience following completion of their degree.

The one young person who fell outside of these categories had completed their GCSEs. Their school did not offer work experience and the three month placement was an opportunity to gain some experience.

“ My school doesn't do work experience so this is sort of getting experience for me and getting my foot in the door with conservation' TNL

Finding out about the placement

The TNL programme has a well established network for recruitment to the project. Young people find out about the placement through leaflets and websites. But as the programme has become more established young people are now actively signposted to it by careers advisors and tutors in local colleges.

“ I found about it through my tutor. I had left college but she emailed me about the opportunity' TNL

“ My tutor recommended it to me as an opportunity to get some experience' TNL

“ My mum found a leaflet in the local library and she was like, oh this is something you might like to do, as I have done so many volunteering, conservation type things overseas in all these exotic places and I have never done anything in my own country and I was like I should probably do that' TNL

The Delivery

The 12 month placements have a clear rhythm to them, that mirrors the cycles of reserve management. When the TNLs first start in September they take part in reserve management. This often involves substantial outdoor, physical work. At the turn of the year and as spring arrives the focus shifts to survey work, before moving onto a greater focus on the self-led project.

Running throughout this programme of work, TNLs get involved in training (both their own and that on offer through the TNL programme), campaigning and job shadowing. They also take part and lead on task days, working with volunteers and running education sessions for visitors, young and old.

“ I've enjoyed the most working with school children, working with other people, it doesn't even matter what age, it is having other people to chat to' TNL

“ I've definitely enjoyed all the surveying stuff that has been really interesting, but then also getting the chance to push myself to do things I wouldn't normally do like working with school groups, which I found a bit scary but after doing a few it has helped my confidence so I know I could do that in the future' TNL

The variety on offer in the placement is a key draw for the TNLs and also a reason why they continue attending across both the six and 12 month placements.

“ [the appeal] was just the variety it was advertised as. It wasn't just farming although that is the main thing, you got to go out and obviously with me I am quite shy, but this was an opportunity to build up my confidence and leading things that why I thought it would be good' TNL

“ There has been such a large variety throughout the project, I have learned so many different skills of working outdoors. So I have kept coming along for the different variety as I try to work out what my next steps are.' TNL

“ What keeps me coming back? It being more than my expectation, I thought it would be really good but the people I met, seeing the work, seeing doing the work and seeing the change you have made' TNL

“ I think just the broadness of the whole project [was the appeal] it sounded like you could choose the path you wanted to take which sounded quite good and being able to work for different staff – but also doing the self-led project as that is quite a good opportunity to have a go and make mistakes if you have to' TNL

Throughout the placement TNLs are contributing to the work of the Trust. They make an active contribution to the operation of the Trust. But this is within a supportive environment where TNLs have the opportunity to develop and learn from any mistakes.

“ I have enjoyed the fact they really make you feel like a staff member and an individual within the trust, you are not made to feel like a volunteer. I do feel like I have worked for the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust’ TNL

“ I’ve really enjoyed travelling to different areas to do the practical work and seeing the different role in the trust and that team spirit. If you make a mistake you are not going to get punished you can learn from it which is really good’ TNL

Self-directed and directed work

The TNL placement combines directed work, where activities and task days are organised by the TNL lead with self-directed work. This includes the self-led project but TNLs also have the opportunity to identify their own areas of work.

“ I found [the balance between directed and self-directed] really good, I have been surprised at the amount of stuff Joe has let us organise, it has been really good, it has been great’ TNL

“ Our team leader took a massive step back for the project and we appoint a team leader from our group – that has been a really good learning curve in self-direction’ TNL

“ I think it has been a good balance as well as the habitat management and species surveys which is largely directed we also have the opportunity to plan and carry out a project that is self-directed’ TNL

Connecting to the wider Trust

For the TNLs, the opportunity to shadow and work with people from across the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust is a real draw for them.

“ The fact it has been different every single day, YWT is one of the biggest so by meeting everyone throughout the trust, Joe gets us to do a lot of days with people who do fundraising, people who are good at GIS, people who are good at campaigning, school education – we know how their jobs work’ TNL

“ I have definitely enjoyed meeting different parts of the trust – experiencing the communications and the media, that was quite interesting seeing how much they actually do and the product and what it takes to make such a beautiful magazine. But then also being able to see a working farm, but working with the wildlife trust as that is probably something I want to go into – conservation farming rather than intense farming’ TNL

“ Every day you don’t know what you will be doing – it is very varied and different, getting to work with everyone as well – there are so many people with so many different specialisation’ TNL

However, there is some tension with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust around expectations of the TNLs, particularly at the start of the placement. As already set out, the recruitment process for the TNL programme focuses on the young people who will benefit most from the opportunity. This does not always mean they are fully work ready. Some staff in the Trust have high standards that TNLs can not always reach.

Although we recognise there are some challenges for individuals in the Trust the TNLs benefit hugely from the exposure to the different parts of the Trust and different job roles. We are aware for the final year of the TNLs there will an enhanced code of conduct that can be used as a tool to address any issues early on in the placement.

The Challenges

TNLs receive a small bursary to attend the placement. Most of the TNLs taking part in the year long placement rely on part time work to fund their time with the Trust. This can be a challenge for TNLs as they balance effectively two jobs.

“ You will have another job or two and if you feel you are burning out don't be afraid to take a day for yourself because it is important for yourself to be healthy' TNL

There is an interesting dilemma around this aspect of the TNL programme. The fact the placement is effectively unpaid allows the programme to reach those young people who will benefit most from it. This means it can recruit young people who are not quite work ready or who are at different points in their career. This means it opens up the placement to a greater range of young people. However, at the same time, it is clearly financially challenging to undertake the placement without some form of parental support (although some young people do). This support may be financial or TNLs attend the placement while living at home. This lack of finance is a barrier to taking part for some young people.

The introduction of the three month placement is providing an option for some young people who want to gain the experience but can't commit to a full year.

“ I don't think I could have done it for a year with no money. It has been the right amount of time really' TNL

Mentoring

A new addition to the TNL programme in Year 3 was an opportunity for other staff at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust to act as mentors to the TNLs. This was an entirely voluntary process but the mentor motivations for taking part included the opportunity to develop their own skills and to support other people on a similar journey to their own to employment in the green sector.

“ I wanted experience in mentoring which I could take forward to be involved in managing people and teams in the future. I was recently trying to push into the sector myself and wanted to share that knowledge with others' Mentor

“ I wanted to develop my skills and experience coaching someone, but I also came through the TNL programme so I knew what it felt like starting at Yorkshire Wildlife Trust so felt I could contribute to mentoring' Mentor

“ I was lucky enough to have excellent similar advice and guidance early in my career, so it has been nice to mentor to give something back' Mentor

There have been some mixed experiences of both the Mentors and TNLs around the mentoring opportunity. However, overall for the TNLs it has been a positive experience. They have benefited from having someone else they could talk to in the Trust about their own personal and professional development.

“ I have a mentor session tomorrow – it has been great. It has been nice to talk to someone who is out of the TNL project and talk to them outside of the project' TNL

“ He has given me a few pointers about stuff like confidence and a few tips about feeling nervous in situations like doing presentations with breathing and stuff like that, giving me advice on training and career direction which was quite good. If I want to get my other great crested newt references he will take me to do that' TNL

“ She got me to do a lot more leadership stuff and that was really helpful because I wouldn't have ordinarily signed up for that' TNL

Case Study – Ellie

Ellie is 23 and took part in one of the short term placements on offer at Pearson Park over the summer of 2019 following completion of her degree. She has always been interested in the outdoors and looking after nature, which led her to the degree in Zoology. Over her time on the degree her interests in UK conservation developed.

“ My interests have developed in different ways throughout the degree and I am now much more interested in local conservation issues and land management’

As her degree came to an end she reached out to the careers advisors at the University who recommend the TNL placement to her.

“ It was one of the careers advisors at Uni who recommended the TNL placement because I was saying I didn’t know what route I wanted to go into to get into the environment sector’

The appeal of the placement was the opportunity to try lots of different activities and to:



“ Actually see the jobs in the flesh and to see how much people actually enjoy their jobs’

The placement covered a wide range of different opportunities from putting up fencing to preventing the public going near nesting birds, to travelling down to London and Parliament to be part of the mass lobby for climate, nature and people. But it was the opportunities to visit the reserves that had the greatest impact.

“ [the reserve visit] was an integral day for me as it made me think this is what I want to do 10 years down the line, going round the sites and talking to the site managers. That has inspired me the most career wise’

The placement retained enough flexibility to allow young people to try different activities and to take a path that would add most to their career development.

“ That was one of the things I said was really good, the way it was structured, you do have a plan for the week, but if you are not interested you can always change it if you want to, that works really well’

As well as helping Ellie with her focus for what she would like to do next in her career, the placement also helped Ellie with her personal development.

“ I am more confident, definitely able to go up to people and have a chat more about the issues to do with conservation....I understand now you have to reach out to people if you want a job in the sector...My transferable skills have developed, confidence, leadership, ability to work in a group has definitely developed’

Ellie is currently looking for a job as an assistant role that will help her in the future. Her tips for other young people doing a placement are:

“ Volunteer as much as you can, network as much as you can and enjoy it’

Engaging young people in the environment

The TNL programme provides multiple opportunities to engage young people in the environment and on environmental issues. Most of the TNLs engaged during year 3 had an existing passion for wildlife and conservation and were keen to share this passion with a wider group of young people.

“ I was always out and about and aware of how important the environment is but I was also quite negative about how you really can't do anything about it. We are destroying the rainforests, global warming there is too much to do anything about but I was really interested in the outdoor world' TNL

“ I would like to try and inspire the next generation' TNL

Self led projects

During year 3, each of the regions undertook at least one self-led project. A significant change for the TNLs this year is they were encouraged to work together on one larger scale project. This was a successful approach as it helped the young people develop their team building skills. The five projects that were developed were:

- ✿ Supporting the development of a pond and wildlife garden at Ampleforth College and engaging with young people with Autism who work with Easy Works
- ✿ Running a Wild Club over four days during the summer holidays to engage young people around animal tracking, pollinators, birds and camera traps
- ✿ Developing the wildlife garden at Pearson Park and reaching out to a wide range of youth groups in the local area for talks
- ✿ Developing an outdoor wildlife garden at Vale Academy and running engagement sessions with the eco-group at the school
- ✿ Developing an outdoor play area at Idle Valley

The TNLs put a considerable amount of time and effort into their self-led projects and take the process very seriously. The self-led projects expose the TNLs to some of the practical challenges involved in delivering projects in the community and voluntary sector including connecting with partners. They have also exposed to some of the practical challenges when trying to deliver a time limited project.

“ It has been a bit mad – we were working steady but then we lost some of the TNLs and we had a bit of a mix up about the planning permission to dig the ponds out – so everything stopped and then we realised we were running out of time so it was a mad rush the last couple of weeks' TNL

But through these projects the TNLs have engaged a broad range of young people from a variety of different backgrounds.

“ We kept on a focus of trying to get people who are different to us out into nature' TNL

“ We had a really good connection with Kingston Youth Group and they have got involved several times. We went to the first session on their territory. The youth worker thought people wouldn't turn up when we held it here but Callum and Zara [TNLs] made it really easy and relaxed and had a joke with them. They have been to site three times since and it was only meant to be a one off, one of the lads wants to come and do some volunteering' TNL Lead

Taking part in campaigns

The TNLs have connected to a variety of campaigns. These include national campaigns including the Mass Lobby as part of The Time is Now and Wilder Future.

For the TNLs this campaigning work involved meeting their MPs and helping them realise how they can influence and connect to local MPs.

“ I really enjoyed meeting the MPs and talking to them and hearing what they had to say’ TNL

“ We went to Leeds for school strikes for climate and joined a lot of other people lobbying Westminster’ TNL

“ I think for a start – meeting MPs is not as scary as it sounds and they absolutely owe it to you. You are still a constituent, regardless of whether you vote, and they owe it to listen to you and they should – they are people who are working for you’ TNL

Supporting and leading other sessions

TNLs also delivered sessions with a wide variety of young people through their day to day work at the Trust. This involved one off events including being part of Countyfile Live.

“ We were in the wildlife retreat section – we were doing mindfulness getting them to smell the ground pointing out all the different colours and I really enjoyed it’ TNL

The TNLs also ran a speed debating session for a local school. This helped the TNLs recognise the need to inform young people and to talk them through issues as often they hold pre-conceived ideas that can be challenged.

“ We did the speed debating session. A school group came to YWT and said we want to get something going. So we came up with the idea of speed debating and we gave them a list of topics to think about. Each of us planned a topic – mine was different types of fuel and got them to think about that’ TNL

The TNLs also undertook a wide range of engagement activities at the reserves and their base locations. This included engaging with Brownie groups, presenting at schools and colleges, working with school groups and running engagement days.

“ Working with kids you can see they are enjoying it and you can see they are taking something from it and that just makes you feel a bit good doesn't it’ TNL



Case Study – Emily

Emily is a student at the University of Cumbria and is studying Wildlife Conservation. During this year Emily is on her placement year. She had initially started a placement on the Isle of Skye but sadly when travelling to a friend's wedding she was involved in a car accident.

“ I was coming back down for my friend's wedding and I was involved in a big car crash, that put everything on hold while I recovered for a month. I didn't think I was going to do another placement, I thought I would just get into more volunteering and just get outside but when I rang them up and asked if they had any work days available she asked my age and directed me to this' ”

The TNL placement has been a positive experience for Emily with the placement offering a wide range of opportunities for her.

“ It was nice on Skye but I wouldn't have had the opportunities I had here. The amount of different things I am learning. I speak to my other friends who are on their placement and they are just doing the same things, I'm doing different things every day....Uni gives you the skills to use but it doesn't get you using them. This gets you working with the skills you've already got, especially because I am dyslexic so I am quite a hands on learner, I've been able to use the stuff I have learned at uni' ”

Emily worked alongside her placement, initially working 5 nights a week at a bar but then got a job with a bushcraft company running bushcraft camps before putting all her energy into running a project that helped engage more young people in the local community.

“ Being self-directed has provided the opportunity to focus on what we want and what we want to get out of it, which has been really really useful and valuable. I have loved working with the kids, I did not expect to enjoy working with the kids so much ”

For her self-led project Emily developed a Wild Club to take place over the holidays at Stirley Community Farm. The project involved running four days of different wildlife activities for young people aged 9 to 14. Emily took the role of coordinating the other TNLs to deliver the sessions and ensuring the sessions ran as plan. The Wild Club attracted 20 young people over the four days, despite a relatively short lead in period. Emily and the other TNLs ran sessions on Camera Traps, Tracking, Pollinators and Birds.

The combination of supported and self-directed work on offer through the TNL project has supported Emily in her personal development as well as in her career path.

“ I have changed loads, it's has been mad. My confidence, definitely, 100%. I have understood what I want and how to achieve it. It's not people management as such, usually I would be quite a bit of a sheep, a bit of a follower, but now I feel able to lead and support other people to work as a team...my skills, everything practical. After the car crash I wasn't in a good state physically. Getting outdoors it has slowly built up my strength as well, that has been good' ”

Once she has finished University Emily intends to pursue her career in conservation.

“ My dream is just to work outdoors really, getting young people involved in conservation. It is not something I have looked at before but it is definitely something I would look at now” ”

Personal Development

Becoming a TNL leads to substantial personal development opportunities. All of the TNLs make both personal and professional progression during their time on the project. They are able to do this because of the bespoke package of support each young person receives. This includes one to one meetings and a training budget they can use to support both their personal and professional development.

Training

The way TNLs use their training budget has evolved over the three years of the TNL programme. During the first year, most TNLs used the training budget to get 'tickets' that would help them if they entered reserve management. This included Brushcutter and Pesticide training. Over the years TNLs have been encouraged to use their training budget in a more tailored way to help with their own professional development. Although, for some of the TNLs keen on a career in reserve management, the focus has continued to be on tickets. For others, they have engaged in a wide range of training opportunities.

“ I spent a bit more time [deciding on what to do with my training budget] as I wanted to make sure I used it on something useful – a lot of practical jobs need you to have the tickets and the more tickets you have the better so I concentrated on that’ TNL

The types of training undertaken by the TNLs during this year include

- ✿ Grasses, sedges and rushes course in Wales
- ✿ Animal tracking course in Staffordshire
- ✿ A Great Crested Newt course in Scotland
- ✿ A wildlife rehab rescue and rehabilitation course
- ✿ Birds of Prey monitoring course
- ✿ Cetacean (Whales and Dolphins) observation course

There were also a wide range of local courses including surveying of Pine Martins, Damson Fly, Dragon Fly and Bats. TNLs also used the training budget to purchase guides around species identification and detectors. The loosening of the requirements around the training budget have allowed this broader range of training to be considered and is appreciated and valued by the TNLs.

Alongside the training that TNLs organise themselves, they have a wide range of training provided to them to help them with their professional development. This includes leadership training, project management, monitoring and evaluation, CV writing and interview techniques. They are also provided with detained information about the potential careers in the green sector and how different people in the Trust arrived at their position.

“ There was the training at the start of the year around Leadership that I found really helpful and I still look at that’ TNL

Skills Development

The combination of practical, on the job experience, the tailored support for each TNL and the training leads to a wide range of skills developing in the TNLs. The TNLs are constantly encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and to take on roles they would normally shy away from, this includes public speaking and taking on leadership roles as part of task day.

TNLs develop a wide range of softer skills that will help them across their career. This includes public speaking, leading groups and working as a team.

“ I hated with a passion doing public speaking but now I really enjoy that’ TNL

“ I do feel like I have matured a lot, I have always been confident but in public speaking that was something I found really difficult but I have grown into that’ TNL

“ I have gained confidence in doing presentations. That has been a big thing. I don't like doing presentations – nobody likes standing up in front of people and they are all staring at you' TNL

“ The leadership thing, I have always been nervous standing up in front of people and getting over that, not fully over that but being able to actually do it with a group of people' TNL

“ I've really enjoyed the talking, even though I thought I would hate doing it I didn't TNL

“ With the team playing bit – it has taught me a lot more, I was always like yeah I am a team player but working with the TNL team working on the project has helped me realise how to work with different teams, unlike at uni where you just work with your friends' TNL

“ Definitely gained more people skills 100%. I am not a people person unfortunately, I don't really like people, but when you are forced to work around with people you have to like them otherwise you are not going to enjoy yourself'

TNLs have also developed their practical skills including around reserve management and surveying work.

“ I developed a lot of skills I learned for uni, putting them into practice like surveying and stuff' TNL

“ Practical stuff definitely, cutting tress down and then like leadership, run a task day, leadership and how to plan it out' TNL

“ Big big long list, working as part of team, lone working, punctual, reliable, lot of practical skills an absolute bucket load of practical skills, volunteering, working with other people' TNL

Personal Development

A key part of the 12 month TNL programme is the opportunity for personal development. We found when speaking to the TNLs that those on the longer placement were more clearly able to articulate what had changed in them as a result of being part of the programme. Those on the shorter placement experienced more professional and skills based development.

As in previous years, a key element of the TNLs development is around their confidence. This includes confidence in their skills and abilities as well as their personal confidence

“ What have I personally gained? Confidence throughout the year, finishing uni and not knowing quite what to do your confidence falls' TNL

“ My highlight has been the personal growth aspect of it, I think it really has benefited me, when I could lead sessions confidently, oh I can do this' TNL

“ I feel a bit more confident in terms of working with people, especially getting put into a situation where you have to network and knowing some people won't have the same interests as you, some people have different opinions to you and you just have to integrate' TNL

“ Confidence wise – when I first started I was really quiet and wouldn't talk to anyone and the other guys were like we couldn't get a word out of you and now I am just don't shut up' TNL

“ I have definitely gathered a lot more confidence, I wasn't very good at public speaking when I first started, this was outside my comfort zone. I feel like my comfort zone has increased a lot more, I have learned how to be more reliable and punctual as I have learned how to be a staff member' TNL

“ My confidence increased. meeting a lot more people from a lot more walks of life, working with younger people, people who have disabilities’ TNL

“ Confidence, leadership I would be quite happy to stand up in front of a group and tell them what to do which I probably wouldn’t have been able to do before’ TNL

The personal development has led to the TNLs feel able and confident to gain employment.

“ I know I can do this, this and this now and I feel I have improved and I am more eligible to get a job’ TNL

“ I am a lot more out there, when I came for my interview I was a bit....they asked me a question about enthusiasm and I probably gave the least enthusiastic person ever and I was like why did I do that. Now I feel if I did it again I would know what to say – more just excitable’ TNL

“ I’ve got a lot more knowledge of being in the environment sector, of jobs of how we manage the reserves and the countryside which is a great insight. My confidence has gone up a lot being around different people’ TNL

“ Lots of things really, I am more proactive and a bit more confident, I have been able to actually apply for jobs and that is a bit more different, leadership was the main thing missing from my CV at the start – you don’t get a lot of that in academia’ TNL

“ Mainly just the confidence thing, more ways than one, just being able to walk up to someone and chat to them, especially when I first came everyone had a degree but its made me realise that doesn’t matter at all. Experience is worth more than anything – I don’t have a degree but I can do this and this and I can lead people’ TNL

Support

The TNL programme is able to support young people with a wider variety of different starting points because of the wrap around support provided by the TNL lead in each region. The TNL lead plays an important role coordinating the diary to ensure there is a full range of opportunities available, but the key added value element of the role is the support. The support can be personal, helping a TNL when they are struggling but it can also be professional. They can help a TNL with their professional development by helping identify training opportunities. The support also means the TNLs have a buffer from the wider Trust if mistakes or issues arise.

The TNLs value the support that has been available to them. They feel it has been at the right level and they have never felt they didn’t have someone to help them at any time in the placement.

“ [the support] it has been good actually not over bearing but you know if you have a problem or want to talk about anything either with Joe or Paul or anyone’ TNL

“ The support has been really good, we have mentor things with him, we also had a swop where west supervisor would talk to the East, we have had our mentors it has worked well for me’ TNL

“ The support – it has been really good, there has not been one point where I have felt there is someone I couldn’t talk to not even just Joe but everyone in the office has been really supportive of us, you feel like you can just talk to them’ TNL

“ It has been brilliant I can’t fault that, I was off for 3 weeks a month back but Joe sent me emails, he was sending me stuff to do because I was bored and from other staff as well’ TNL

Case Study – Eddie

Eddie did not have an interest in conservation before he became a TNL.

“ I had no interest in conservation, it sounds a bit harsh. I was aware of environmental issues but I wouldn't have said I wanted to work in conservation’

Eddie had been unemployed for three years after leaving college with a BTEC in business studies. Eddie saw a poster for the TNL programme and was encouraged by his employment coach from the Council to apply.

Through his year as a TNL, Eddie was exposed to a wide variety of work including reserve management, lots of different types of training (including tractor training), habitat surveying and reserve monitoring. He also worked with a partner on a self-led project to take down and restore a sheep pen fold. This involves dry stone walling and they will work with a team of young people from the National Citizenship Scheme (NCS) to show them how to do it.

Being a TNL has ensured Eddie's skills and qualities were seen and promoted by a wide range of people.



“ Eddie – what a brilliant guy, lacking in confidence but so brilliant and intelligent, he knows so much more than me, I am trying to encourage him to apply for the traineeship here at Appleton’ TNL Project Lead

Eddie was not quite ready to chose what he wanted to do when he first left the TNL project but he continued to stay connected to the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

“ All last year I was getting the farm experience and leaving has made me realise that is where I want to head’

Eddie lacks confidence but the time with the TNLs has helped his confidence build and help him think about what he wants to do for a career.

“ I am a lot more confident than I was last year...without this I wouldn't have been anywhere near as clear in my direction into a job that I am now.’

Eddie is now progressing onto a Foundation year in Agriculture at college.

“ If it weren't for this then it would have been a lot longer to decide what to do and I still might have had that question in my mind and not the confidence to go and try it’

The TNL project has supported Eddie. The wrap around support provided by the team meant Eddie could be supported to make decisions but also to believe in his own skills and capabilities.

“ I think the support has been good. I've been questioning about getting my chainsaw ticket and Paul supported me in looking at the chainsaw work and supported me and pushed me to make a decision. Paul has supported me to say I am good enough, he has always been there, it is not overburdening but it is there when you need it’.

Progressions

A core aim of the TNL programme is to result in young people who are employed or are volunteering in the green economy.

The green economy and the conservation sector in particular can be difficult to access without experience. It is a sector that often values experience above qualifications and even young people with relevant Masters and Degrees can find it difficult to gain an entry level position.

“ They all want experience, even now they say they want 3 years experience which is hard when you have just left education’ TNL

“ If you want to be in environmental management you have to get the practical experience that you don’t get in education’ TNL

The TNLs identified how even relevant degrees often do not provide the practical experience needed to gain the first entry level post.

“ Once you’ve got your degree, it doesn’t provide you with the relevant practical experience which is what a lot of jobs need, so then without a programme like TNL you get trapped in this cycle of a need a job to get experience but I can’t get experience without a job’ TNL

“ After graduating from university at Reading in a degree in ecology and conservation I felt I needed to learn the practical skills because the degree was largely theory based’ TNL

On a very practical level, the TNL programme provides young people with the practical skills needed to take the first steps into employment. It also provides the TNLs with the opportunity to understand what the routes to gaining specific jobs are.

“ It was always you get a degree but the actual routes to getting a job were more uncertain’ TNL

“ I was in animal management, they said you needed experience but not about what you needed for the green sector. I was aware you needed but not quite the level of depth, I didn’t realise volunteering was a big part of the experience you need’ TNL

Supporting the transition

The TNL programme exposes young people to a wide variety of experience and job roles. This is where it differs from other traineeship or internships. Its aim is to give a huge breadth of experience for young people. However, it also provides opportunities for young people to tailor their experience if there is a particular path they want to enter.

“ I think at the start and half way through, Joe showed us a PowerPoint. People sent us their background and that was really insightful and the amount of people who didn’t stay in one thing for 10 to 15 years, the amount of people who did 1 year of that or 3 years of that’ TNL

“ I wouldn’t have known how to get into a job or how to sell myself at all’ TNL

“ We did a careers talk about working in conservation which was really good, it gave you an idea of the types of jobs you can get into and I wouldn’t have known that if I hadn’t done this’ TNL

The TNLs have also had access to a range of employability support. This includes careers talks, help with their CVs and help with interview techniques, including mock interviews.

“ We had a careers talk that was really helpful – I feel my CV was quite good as it was but it was interesting to know what to take out of the CV and what not to’ TNL

“ Because I am not very good at asking questions in interviews – that helped me understand there was stuff you could still ask’ TNL

“ We had workshops on CVs and had line management where we have been told about different career paths’ TNL

“ We have had quite a lot of support and Joe always says if we have any applications we want him to look at – or look at CVs he is always there to help’ TNL

The support and the work experience helps TNLs identify what they want their next step to be.

“ I think I want to try out as an assistant grazing officer – I know a couple of people who have started off like that – it seems difficult but I am dedicated and I will try and get there’ TNL

“ Over the period of the summer I have realised that is what I want to do. I want to do education and it has been massively helpful in guiding me towards that path really’ TNL

“ There was a period of time when I was really stressed and I wondered if I was ever going to get a job and if I was doing the right thing, where do I go after this. But I got over that. At the start of summer I guess, people around me, especially from Uni they are moving on in life and have good jobs and going on good holidays – then I realised that I was doing this for a reason’ TNL

“ It gives a huge range of insight into how different jobs work. It has been really really helpful imagining I could do that or I could

definitely not do that. Even the fundraising thing, I never would have thought to do that but it was genuinely really useful that sort of insight into how you actually get money’ TNL

“ The leadership skills I developed over the last year have made me think maybe I can become that kind of teacher for people – so I am possibly thinking of that kind of route now’ TNL

What happens next

10 of the 21 people who completed the TNL programme in year 2 were working in the green economy after 6 months. The 11 who were not working in the green economy had gone on to a wide variety of different exit routes. This includes:

- ✿ Returning to University
- ✿ Working as a fitness instructor
- ✿ Ski instructor
- ✿ Working in retail
- ✿ Part of a social arts collective
- ✿ Editor and content producer
- ✿ Language teacher

It is interesting to note, for most of these young people, their destination 6 months after the TNL programme mirrored either their plans or lack of plans following the placement. A relatively small number of young people didn't achieve their stated goal of working in the green economy.

The types of roles young people enter are also varied with some entering consultancy, others taking on further trainee or volunteer roles to help them progress.

Case Study – Callum

Callum took part in the TNL placement at Pearson Park. Callum has a degree in Music, this was a snap decision because the year he left school was the final year before the fees tripled.

“ I felt a bit pressurised to make a decision and to go to uni, when actually what I really wanted to do was to take a gap year and mull over what I wanted to do and take it more slowly, but because of the tuition fees rising I felt more pressure. I enjoyed the degree but in hindsight it would have been more useful to have something relevant under my belt’

Prior to joining the placement Callum had been trying to get a job in the environmental conservation field. He was doing lots of volunteering work both in the UK and abroad but was drawn to the TNL placement because of the opportunity it offered him

“ I think because I knew I was going in the right direction but I wasn’t yet qualified for the kind of job I wanted to go into so I knew I needed to make that investment in order to be able to get more out...I was prepared to make the investment in order to get into the industry’

The variety present in the TNL opportunity has been important for Callum.

“ I have really enjoyed it, I enjoy the variety, it is not like I am working in the same spot every day and it is monotonous. I am not stagnating because I am doing different things week on week’

Being part of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has also been an important part of the experience.

“ I really enjoy making the connections with staff and other TNLs, feeling part of the organisation..everyone at the trust is really helpful and welcoming. Getting out on site into the fresh air across a range of sites in

Yorkshire has been really enjoyable’

As well as developing key skills and knowledge Callum has also developed personally.

“ Confidence is always a thing, that is something I have been building on for a while, I was quite shy as a child...confidence in myself and my own abilities and confidence in that I am going in the right direction, then all of the skills and knowledge as well’

Callum was also able to take on a role supporting the summer placements as they joined the team at Pearson Park

“ With the summer cohort coming on board that has been really useful for me because naturally you end up teaching and training and leading them up to a point, almost being an intermediary between the TNL and supervisor, that has been useful’

Callum’s highlight has been the progression towards employment.

“ My highlight was getting an interview for one of the roles going at the Trust, whilst I didn’t get the job I felt that was a step – if you are getting an interview based on your qualifications you are on the right lines, on paper you are employable...at that point you realise how much progress you have made’

His advice to other TNLs in his position.

“ Really really make an effort, however nervous you are to talk to people, make connections with staff, volunteers, other trainees and TNLs as you have a lot to learn from them, especially volunteers who are under-rated as a source of learning. A lot of the time they are older and a lot of time they have a lot of experience, just because they are out there doing it for free in their own time, doesn’t mean anything’

Key findings

In its third year of delivery the TNL programme has continued to refine and develop its approach. During this year, the three month placements were added. This allowed a greater number of young people to access the TNL experience.

The importance of diversity and support

The TNL programme is supporting two distinct groups of young people:

- ✿ Supporting young people to enter employment in the green sector
- ✿ Using the opportunities presented by the green sector to support the personal development of young people

It is therefore important to remember the success of the TNL programme should not be judged on whether a young person progresses into employment in the conservation sector. Instead it should be judged on the development of young people.

The TNLs we have worked with over the last three years have all personally and professionally developed. The support from the TNL Lead has allowed a more diverse range of young people, some with higher needs, to be offered the opportunity. It has allowed those lacking confidence, employment skills and experience to be part of the programme.

This is an important feature of the programme. Emerging research from behavioural science shows that while the message people receive is important, who tells you that message is even more important. Paul Dolan identifies 'ideally good messengers have three attributes: they can be trusted, they are experts; and they are like you'.

Having a diverse range of people involved in the TNL programme brings greater diversity to the sector. This in turn allows more people to

champion the message of the environment and conservation to a more diverse community.

Over the coming months we recommend the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust looks at ways it can increase the diversity of people connected to the Trust and how future programmes can help to build the diverse range of young people. This means working with young people from a wide range of backgrounds and particularly those with relatively little interest in the environment or conservation or who feel paralysed and unable to take action.

Tailoring the opportunities

The TNLs value the opportunity to be part of a group as they build confidence. But they also value the opportunity to shape the placement to their individual goals and aspirations. This is more challenging for some young people than others. This is particularly the case for young people who are unclear on their future direction or what career might be possible. The support function provides an opportunity to support this tailoring more directly.

We recommend the structure of one to one support is maintained throughout the final year and the delivery of this is monitored. The one to ones provide an opportunity to tailor the placement to the needs of each young person. They also play a critical role in helping each young person push at the boundaries of their own comfort zone. If needed this could be supported by the TNL leads undertaking Active Listening Training to help them unpick and understand the needs of each young person.

Developing Opportunities

The three month placements have supported a different group of young people to the TNL programme. It was clear during the evaluation that this group have benefitted more around employability skills, than the personal growth seen in the 12 month placements. However, they fill a valuable gap for those young people unable to access a 12 month placement for financial or time reasons.

Throughout the TNL programme we have identified a clear tension at the heart of the green sector – a requirement for experience but a lack of willingness to fund it themselves. The TNL programme has allowed a more diverse range of young people to access the green sector, but it has also supported some young people who were already highly capable and well trained gain employment. It is important for the green sector in general and Yorkshire Wildlife Trust in particular to consider the consequences of this. Not all young people are in a position where they can work for free. By creating the ‘experience barrier’ the green sector is closing off a huge variety of young of people who would be enormously beneficial to the Trust in the long term.

We recommend the Trust continues to look at ways of increasing the number of entry level positions for a diverse range of young people who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences and perspectives into the organisation. We also recognise some young people need additional support and we would also recommend looking at ways the Trust can also provide this.