



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

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Policy position in support  
of Woodlands for Wales,  
the Welsh Assembly Government's  
strategy for woodlands and trees

**Education, learning and skills benefits  
from Welsh woodlands and trees**



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print



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previous page



The previous page button will take users back to the previous page accessed.

contents



The contents button will return users to the contents page from where they can access the initial/start page of any section of this policy document.

next page



The next page button will take users forward by one consecutive page.

endnotes<sup>1</sup>

If you 'click' on an endnote within this document you will be transferred to the appropriate reference.

glossary



Glossary of Terms and Acronyms.

print



previous page



contents



next page



glossary



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
Purpose and Audience	4
1.1 Aims and objectives	4
1.2 Equality and Diversity	4
1.3 Background	5
1.4 Policy drivers	7
1.4.1 Education, learning and skills in Wales	7-8
1.4.2 Welsh Assembly Government strategies on education, learning and skills	9
1.4.3 Woodlands for Wales strategy	10
<b>2: SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</b>	<b>11-12</b>
<b>3: AGENDA FOR ACTION</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1 High quality woodlands	13
3.2 Meeting local needs	13
3.3 Effective partnerships	14
3.4 Children and young people	15
3.5 Young people and adults	16
<b>4: METHODS OF DELIVERY</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5: MONITORING AND EVALUATION</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1: POLICY FIT</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IN RELATION TO EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>21-22</b>

# 1: Introduction

## Purpose and Audience

This Policy Position is one of a suite designed to provide further background and evidence for the outcomes sought in Woodlands for Wales and the actions required to achieve these outcomes (see **Appendix 1** for full Policy Position list). Each Policy Position proposes an 'Agenda for Action' which collectively provide the implementation framework for the whole strategy. The 5-year Action Plan for Woodlands for Wales takes its lead from the combined 'Agendas' from each of the Policy Positions and sets out the short-term priorities for all the organisations responsible for helping to implement the strategy.

The primary purpose of these Policy Positions is therefore to support the implementation of the strategy through the relevant corporate processes of each organisation identified with a responsibility in the Action Plan. Forestry Commission Wales is already aligning its corporate programme development in this way and we hope that all the other lead and supporting organisations will act similarly.

Therefore the main intended audience for these Policy Positions are those responsible for policy development and policy implementation through corporate planning. However we hope that because of the way the Policy Positions are presented, they will be of wider relevance to those with an interest in the particular subject matter or Woodlands for Wales as a whole.

## 1.1 Aims and objectives

Our position on education, learning and skills has three key elements:

- To facilitate access to well-managed woodlands across Wales which are suitable settings to support education, learning and skills delivery and development
- To ensure that more people enjoy the life long learning benefits of woodlands and trees and their products
- To facilitate a thriving, skilled workforce in the forestry and woodland sector

The aims of this Policy Position are:

- To support the development of programmes to achieve these objectives by both Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) and a range of other organisations, under the Woodlands for People theme of the Welsh Assembly Government's Woodlands for Wales strategy<sup>1</sup>
- To support the use of trees and woodlands in the delivery of the Welsh Assembly Government's education, learning and skills agendas

The diagram in **Appendix 1** shows where this Policy Position fits into the policy hierarchy from both WAG and FC Wales perspectives.

## 1.2 Equality and Diversity

The Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) is committed to developing a fair and equal society. We will promote that all users of woodland are treated fairly, with dignity and respect, regardless of race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation and religion and belief.

A summary of equality and diversity evidence in relation to education, learning and skills in Wales is included at **Appendix 2**.

## 1.3 Background

### What we mean by 'education, learning and skills'

A useful definition utilised by the recent Forestry for People<sup>2</sup> research in Scotland (Edwards, D et al 2008) described education and learning as:

Learning is the cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge. Education is the imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching especially in schools and similar institutions (p19)

Education is about development and growth and is future orientated: it involves activities that are intended to stimulate thinking and to foster learning. Education can therefore be described as an input where the overarching aim is to impart information that will increase knowledge, skills and understanding. Conversely, learning can be described as an outcome. That is, an increase in skills, knowledge and understanding as a result not only of education, but of informal, often self-led, activities.

Learning includes academic studies and occupational training through school and beyond. It also encompasses the physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of children in the earliest years of their lives. It includes the capacity of geographic communities and communities of common interest to respond with understanding and initiative to broad changes that represent threats or opportunities, such as climate change. Learning can be an outcome of such activities as volunteering, involvement in community projects, guided walks, play and enterprise development, amongst others.

Skills are acquired techniques that give someone the capacity to do something well. Skills are usually acquired or learned, as opposed to abilities, which are often thought of as innate.

### How is woodland used for education, learning and skills?

Woodland is used in a variety of ways for educational, learning and skills development purposes, both formally and informally. Woodland as a setting, or woodland as a resource. Whilst not aspiring to be exhaustive, **Table 1**, presents current examples of education, learning and skills practices using woodland as either a setting or a resource.



print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary



**Table 1: Types of woodland use for education, learning and skills**

Use Type	Opportunity Type	
	Formal Learning	Informal Learning
<b>Woodland as a setting</b> (i.e. the woodland and/or wood and timber is not necessarily integral to the activity)	Forest School*	Natural play
	Key skills provision (e.g. numeracy)	Self-guided walks
	Work experience / work placements	Interpretation/information
	Environmental education	Fungi forays
	Skills/training (e.g. dry stone walling, use of hand tools)	Bird watching
	Volunteering (e.g. for RSPB)	
	Professional development	
	National curriculum activity (e.g. Personal, Social & Education; learning pathways; foundation phase)	
	School trips	
	Guided walks	
	Woodland events	
Community/social enterprise		
<b>Woodland as a resource</b> (i.e. the woodland and/or wood and timber is integral to the activity)	Modern apprenticeships (e.g. forest sector skills)	
	Training/skills (e.g. woodland management, planning and people management)	
	Work experience / work placements	
	Visits to schools	
	Volunteering (e.g. woodland management) and community woodland projects	
	OCN/NVQ accredited courses, HNC/HND and higher degrees (e.g. woodland management)	
	Offenders in Nature schemes	
	Community/ social enterprise	

\* Forest School is an innovative educational approach to outdoor play and learning, involving regular and repeated visits to a woodland with the same forest school leader.

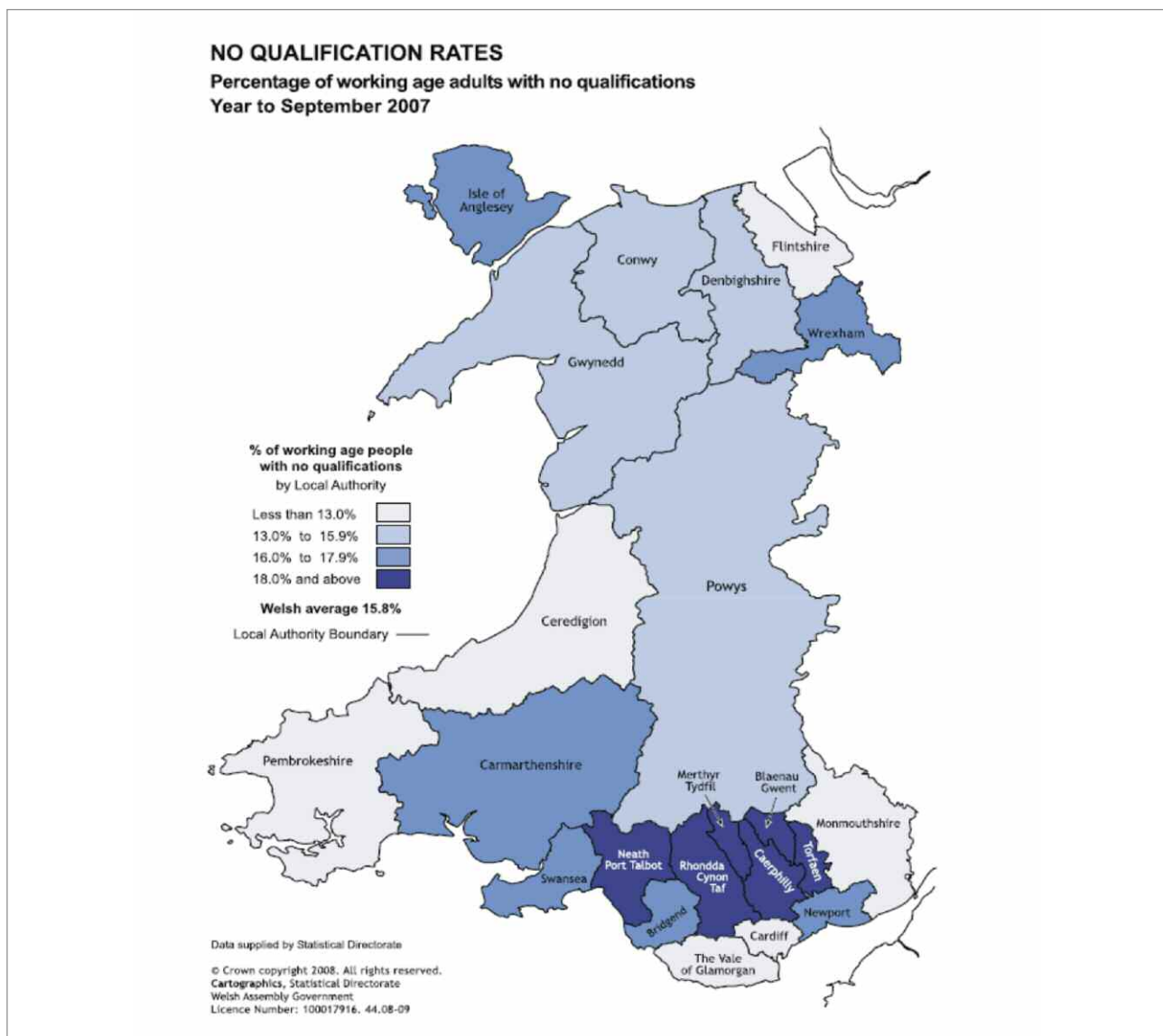
## 1.4 Policy drivers

### 1.4.1 Education, learning and skills in Wales

A survey carried out for the Welsh Assembly Government in 2007 indicates that 18% of adults in Wales are currently learning, with 43% having participated in some learning activity during the last three years. However, the same survey also shows that adults in the highest socio-economic groups (AB) are more than twice as likely to be learning as those in the lowest groups (DE). In addition 50% of those in groups DE have not participated in learning since leaving full time education (Welsh Assembly Government: 2007:10)<sup>3</sup>.

Workforce skills vary across Wales. Working-age adults in the South Wales Valleys are generally more likely not to have any qualifications than people in other parts of the country (map 1). More than a quarter of people in Blaenau Gwent, and more than a fifth in Caerphilly and Merthyr Tydfil, have no qualifications; in comparison, only 9% of people in Ceredigion, The Vale of Glamorgan and Monmouthshire are unqualified.

**Figure 1: Percentage of working age adults in Wales with no qualifications<sup>4</sup>.**



print

previous page

contents

next page

glossary



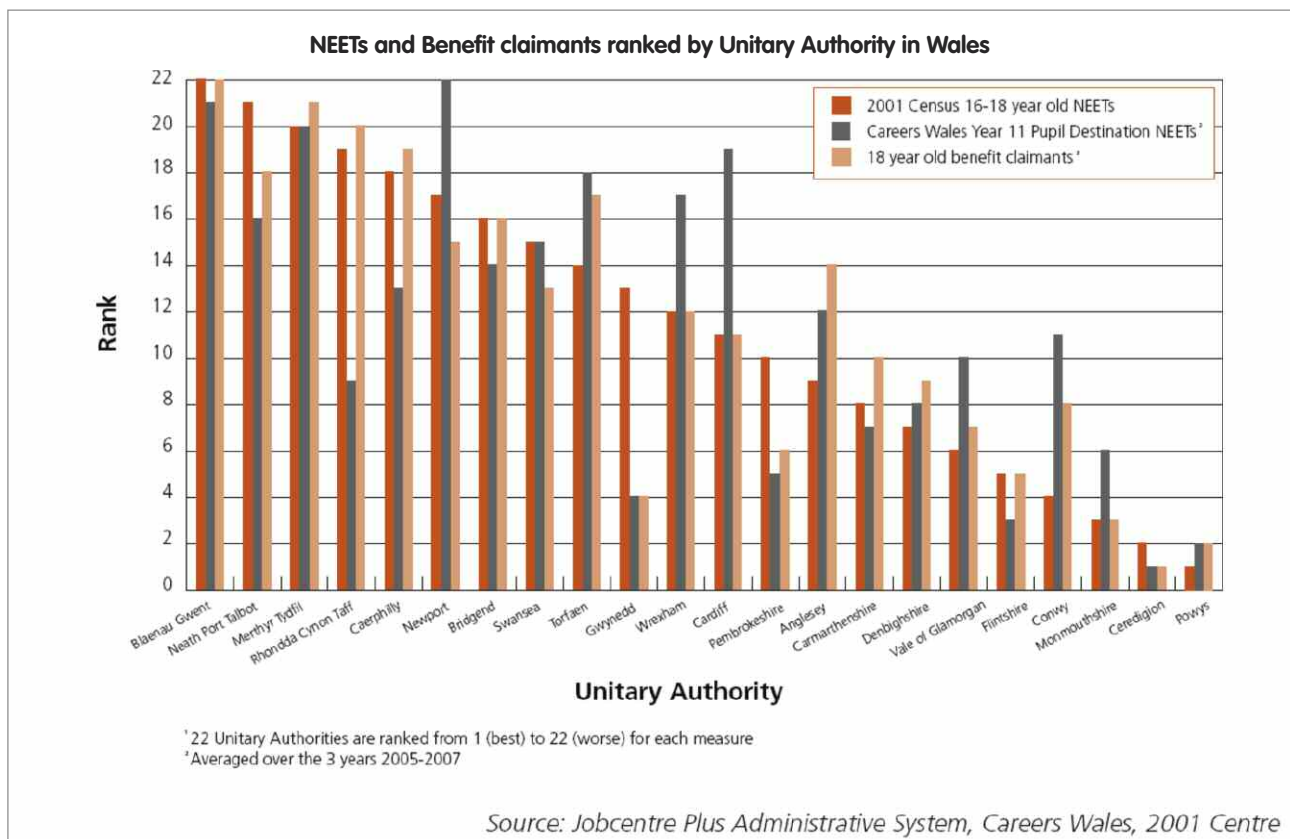
Wales is committed to having a single credit-based qualification framework. The purpose of such a credit-based framework is to encourage more young people and adults in Wales to participate in learning. All accredited learning for post 14 year olds in Wales is being brought into a single structure - the Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales (CQFW). The CQFW underpins five key goals:

- Enabling everyone to develop and maintain essential skills
- Encouraging people to become lifelong learners
- Exploiting the knowledge in businesses and educational institutions
- Encouraging businesses and workers to gain new skills, and
- Helping people within their communities to develop new skills

The Welsh Assembly Government estimates that there are approximately 6,500 young people who are classed as not in employment, education or training (NEET) who require additional support in order to engage with the labour market and to sustain that engagement once there. There is a significant regional correlation between the percentage of young people who are NEET and the performance of the wider labour market: Local Authorities with the highest proportion of 16-18 year old NEET's also have the highest levels of unemployment and economic inactivity among the adult population<sup>5</sup> (figure 2).

Evidence from the evaluation of Cydcoed<sup>6</sup> showed that over a quarter of people involved in community woodland projects felt they had learnt skills that could help them either in their current job or that could help them gain employment<sup>6</sup>. Research shows that the benefit to individuals and communities through participation in woodland related education, learning and skills development, though hard to put an economic value on, should not be underestimated.

**Figure 2: NEET's and Benefit claimants in Wales<sup>1</sup>**



## 1.4.2 Welsh Assembly Government related to education, learning and skills

The WAG has recognised the need for a more inclusive, vocational approach to education in Wales. This approach not only appreciates the importance of outdoor learning, but incorporates an approach to skills development that concentrates on the needs of the individual and the potential contribution to local community and economy.

The overarching policy document for Wales, One Wales - a progressive agenda for Government in Wales<sup>8</sup> makes the connection between learning, empowerment, social justice and economic productivity and states:

Our vision is of a society in which learning throughout life is the norm, where the people of Wales are actively engaged in acquiring new knowledge and skills from childhood to old age.

This vision is carried through into other WAG policy positions, namely:

- The Learning Country: Vision into Action<sup>9</sup> represents the second stage in The Learning Country programme that began in 2001 and highlights the increased education and training opportunities available in Wales from early years through to old age. It describes in concrete terms the key objectives and action the Assembly Government will be taking to make the Learning Country a reality.
- Skills that Work for Wales: a skills and employment strategy and action plan<sup>10</sup> describes the 'One Wales' ambition for a highly-educated, highly-skilled and high-employment Wales. It draws on the recent analyses and conclusions of two major independent reviews - Lord Leitch's review of skills in the UK<sup>11</sup> and Webb's review of the mission and purpose of further education in Wales<sup>12</sup>.
- Learning Pathways 14-19<sup>13</sup> is a commitment to transforming the learning provision for all young people in Wales. It focuses on individual learning pathways encompassing the formal, informal and non-formal strands accompanied by a learning core to provide wider learning, skills and experiences to secure equality of opportunity.
- Making the Connections: Delivering Better services for Wales<sup>14</sup> promotes a citizen-centred approach, with effective services designed and delivered with the active participation of citizens, communities and businesses. This approach was supported by the recommendations of the Beecham Review 2006<sup>♦</sup>.
- The Third Dimension: A Strategic Action Plan for the Voluntary Sector Scheme<sup>15</sup> defines the third sector as a wide ranging set of voluntary, non-governmental, value-driven organisations. The strategy identifies as a priority, the need for Government to provide support to strengthen the third sector so that it in turn can support communities.

The Welsh Assembly Government has also produced specific guidance for:

- Out of Classroom Learning: making the most of first hand experiences of the natural environment<sup>16</sup>
- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship<sup>17</sup>
- Educational Visits: a safety guide for learning outside the classroom<sup>18</sup>
- Reducing the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training in Wales<sup>19</sup>

The documents listed above are taken into consideration in formulating this policy position in relation to the principles set out in the WAG Strategy for woodlands and trees - Woodlands for Wales (reviewed 2009).

<sup>♦</sup> Although 'Welsh' did not feature in the cited report, it is of particular relevance in this context.

### 1.4.3 Woodlands for Wales strategy

Education, learning and skills are encompassed under the 'Woodlands for people' theme of the Woodlands for Wales strategy. The stated objective is that:

More people of all ages benefit from the use of woodland as a setting for learning and play, leading to an improved understanding of woodlands and trees and the wider benefits which they provide in terms of our economy, society, environment and employment opportunities (p31).

Additionally, forest sector skills are highlighted under the 'competitive and integrated forest sector' theme, where the stated objectives are that:

People recognise that a job in the forest sector makes a valuable contribution to the sustainability agenda in Wales; more people with the right skills enter all levels of the supply chain; there are more robust and reliable career paths and more opportunities are created for local people to be involved in woodlands (p41).

The strategy retains a commitment to developing and delivering Forest School and continued involvement in the Forest Education Initiative. Additionally there is recognition of:

- The need to work in partnership with others including local authorities, the third sector and community groups
- The need to encourage a culture of sustainable development and global citizenship and an appreciation and understanding of the woodland environment
- The need for a spatially focussed approach, particularly looking at areas of Wales where there is high educational deprivation and a record of low qualification and skills attainment

Forestry Commission Wales is an advisor to the [Real World Learning Cymru Partnership \(RWLCP\)](#), whose stated aims are to:

- Foster greater understanding and appreciation of the value of outdoor learning and its vital contribution to sustainable development and global citizenship
- Assist stakeholders in the promotion and delivery of out of classroom learning



print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary



## 2: Supporting evidence

Trees, forests and woodlands can provide a tremendous resource for education and learning for all ages and levels. Using woodlands for education promotes an understanding of both woodlands themselves, and the countryside as a living, working environment, and can provide learning arenas for biological, environmental and historical studies alongside key subjects such as maths, Welsh and English<sup>20</sup>. Learning and education has a particularly wide focus and includes learning about society, nature, about oneself and others, learning new skills or volunteering. The benefits of both formal and informal learning opportunities provided by woodlands are therefore multifunctional: gaining knowledge and understanding leading to academic benefits; affirmation of cultural values; improved interpersonal skills such as communication and trust leading to the accumulation of social capital; physical benefits including increased fitness and improved motor skills and; health and wellbeing benefits in improved mental and psychological wellbeing.

Evidence suggests that improving the quality of the space within which learning takes place will bring about changes in behaviour including reducing accidents, bullying and easing tensions (Woodland for Life)<sup>21</sup>. Further, research undertaken by O'Brien (2004:46)<sup>22</sup> indicates widespread acknowledgement of the role of environmental education in limiting anti-social behaviour. Pyle (2002:32)<sup>23</sup> goes further and suggests that where contact with nature is lacking the negative impacts affect both the social and cultural aspects of an individual, potentially resulting in emotional damage, lack of environmental awareness, lessening of moral and ethical dimensions of human and nature interactions and physical damage through a lack of outdoor exercise.

Research for the Welsh Assembly Government (Owens, J.)<sup>24</sup> discusses the potential non-market benefits of education and learning, usefully separating the individual (or personal) and community non-market effects of education and learning - presented in **Table 2**, below:

**Table 2: individual and community non market effects of education and learning**

Individual non-market effects:	Community non-market effects
Positive impact on personal health	Improved social equity
Increased capacity to enjoy leisure	Strengthened cohesiveness
Increased efficiency in making personal choices	Reduced environmental stress (lowered crime rates; reduced population growth)
Increased propensity to proceed up the education ladder	Positive contribution to community wealth

print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary



Whilst Owens' research is more general in discussing the attributes of education and learning per se, a recent report for the National Foundation for Education Research<sup>25</sup> specifically attributes a range of positive impacts to learning outdoors:

- Cognitive impacts - gaining knowledge and understanding, academic outcomes
- Affective impacts - related to attitudes, values and beliefs e.g. gaining a sense of wonder or respect for nature
- Interpersonal/social impacts - improving communication skills, improving leadership expertise
- Physical/behavioural impacts - improving physical fitness, improving fine and gross motor skills, personal behaviour and social actions

It is important to recognise the links between learning opportunities in woodlands being available for all from a young age and the development and recruitment of a highly skilled work force for the forest and timber sector. The more children use and enjoy woodlands, the more they are likely to understand and appreciate the purpose and value of woodlands and both the timber and non-timber related employment opportunities it provides.

Woodlands can provide employment for people with a wide range of skills: from coppicers to contractors; from recreation and education rangers to woodland managers; and from tourism businesses to tree surgeons. Developing pathways to progress people through the spectrum of woodland learning and skills and into employment will be key to developing and maintaining a thriving, skilled workforce.

The introduction of the Foundation Phase, the highlighting of the importance of out of the classroom learning, the shift toward more vocational pathways for young people and the need to ensure that skills programmes develop employability and help people into jobs, serve to push the agenda for woodland related education, learning and skills to the fore. This policy will enable public, private and third sector organisations in Wales to work coherently toward the strategic objectives of the Welsh Assembly Government with regard education, learning and skills development in Wales.



print



previous page



contents



next page



glossary



# 3: Agenda for Action

The following agenda for action emerges from identified priorities in the Welsh Assembly Government Woodlands for Wales strategy.

It is anticipated that organisations responsible for the delivery of Government policy in Wales will develop corporate responses to help collectively deliver this Agenda for Action:

## 3.1 High quality woodlands

We will encourage the continued improvement of management across Welsh woodlands to create suitable settings for education, learning and skills delivery and development. We need to continually improve our understanding of what aspects of quality have an impact on learning and skills attainment and develop good practice for optimal use of resources to deliver these qualities. This is particularly relevant to more informal learning experiences such as self-guided walks, play and interpretation provision. Key aspects include:

- Quality of signage and information provision - especially in terms of access for less able people, children and traditionally inactive groups
- Quality of infrastructure and interpretation - we need to find low maintenance, cost-effective, appropriate solutions that support targeted improvements in learning in, and about, woodlands
- Variety and local character of woodland; which supports local involvement and pride leading to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and an improvement in pro-environmental behaviours
- Quality woodlands with appropriate and cost-effective management interventions to create the quality of visitor experience which encourages regular visits to woodlands

## 3.2 Meeting local needs

We will encourage a culture of working with local communities and of recognising the educational, learning and skills development benefits of community-based initiatives. Community involvement in planning, decision-making and infrastructure development provides learning and skills development opportunities for the volunteers involved in its own right, but also ensures that local character and distinctiveness is enhanced. It also ensures that appropriate facilities and infrastructure are provided, such as trails and signage, and increases the likelihood that facilities will be used regularly and responsibly.

We will encourage a culture of working with local networks and partnerships to encourage people of all ages to participate in existing and new learning activities in woodland. We will ensure that relevant activities integrate into the new CQFW framework for Wales.

We will encourage the development of skills-based training that meets local needs whilst contributing to the maintenance of a skilled workforce through woodlands in Wales.

### 3.3 Effective partnerships

Through working with partners we will provide opportunities for more formal learning opportunities in the woodlands of Wales. We need to extend partnership working around the use of trees and woodlands for education, learning and skills and we will do this at several levels.

- At a national level we need to promote a shared understanding of the benefits of the natural environment for education, learning and skills. Through dissemination of case studies and joint working with FCW, Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), with Non Governmental Organisation (NGOs), such as Coed Cadw and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action, and with existing partnerships such as Forest Education Initiative and RWLCP, wider institutional understanding and support for natural environments for education, learning and skills will be established. At a national level we also need to work with others, such as the Wales Forest Business Partnership to ensure that learning and skills development meets the current and future needs of the industry, and that the right opportunities are available at the right time in the right place
- At a Local Authority level we need to work with education and learning providers in order to facilitate programmes, which support priority groups to access woodlands for improved learning and skills opportunities, including vocational pathways. We also need to work with Local Authority departments with responsibility for trees and woodlands, including urban trees, in order those potential skills gaps are addressed
- At a community level we need to build on the lessons learned from Cydcoed\* to identify effective ways of working with community groups and other support structures such as Communities First. We will encourage the creation of more opportunities to involve people in woodlands
- At the business level we need to establish the skills required by the forestry and wider woodland and countryside sector in order that their future employee requirements are met. We need to work with others to establish appropriate methods to fill potential gaps and ensure that these integrate with the wider WAG focus on transferable credits and qualifications and on vocational pathways for young people. We need to ensure that woodland skills development leads to employability both within and outside the forest sector



♦ Cydcoed was a £16million project funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and the European Union, through Objective One, engaging communities in local woodland in order to increase social , economic and environmental benefits locally.

print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary



### 3.4 Children and young people

We will continue to support, facilitate and deliver education, learning and skills experiences to children and young people. We need to concentrate our resources, time and skills in the following key areas:

- We need to continue to work with the foundation phase, both with the children themselves through direct delivery and facilitating others to deliver, and through cascading our knowledge and expertise through teacher training and familiarisation visits to the outdoors
- We need to continue to develop Forest School as a methodology in order that it develops into a high quality out of classroom delivery mechanism for learning and skills development.
- We need to continue to develop Forest School leader training, through the Open College Network, to ensure consistent high standards across Wales. We need to ensure that all ages of young people benefit from Forest School
- We need to ensure that appropriate progression paths are developed for young people into woodland based learning and skills activities. We need to support the 14-19 Pathways programme at a national and local level ensuring an understanding of the benefits of woodland based learning. We need to raise awareness of the potential of woodlands in helping to deliver the 14-19 Pathways.
- We need to ensure that relevant progression paths are available for young people into woodland - and wider land-based - sector employment. We need to work with the Sector Skills Council and other stakeholders to ensure the right skills are delivered, in the right place at the right time.
- We need to continue to facilitate and deliver an outreach service to engage children and young people in communities. We need to focus on encouraging and facilitating a wider understanding of woods and wood products and skills and career opportunities.
- We need to ensure that opportunities for volunteering are available for young people. The benefits of volunteering to learning and skills development are well documented (see O'Brien<sup>26</sup>).



print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary



### 3.5 Young people and adults

We will continue to support, facilitate and deliver education, learning and skills experiences to young people and adults. We need to concentrate our resources, time and skills in the following key areas, in addition to those relevant to young people above:

- We need to continue to facilitate and deliver an outreach service to engage young people and adults in communities. We need to focus on encouraging and facilitating a wider understanding of woods and wood products and skills and career opportunities. We need to work with others at a national and local level to ensure the right life long learning opportunities are available in the right places
- We need to support and develop the opportunities available within higher education to facilitate progression into the forest, timber and wider land based sectors
- We need to assess and understand the opportunities and benefits for young people in work placement schemes. We need to ensure the right opportunities are available in the right places, for the right people
- We need to engage with the relevant Sector Skills Councils to influence and understand relevant vocational training and Modern Apprenticeship opportunities for young people and adults interested in woodland and timber based careers. We need to work with others at a national and local level to ensure the right opportunities are available in the right place
- We need to ensure that our skills programmes can develop employability and help people into jobs, including those who are NEET or at risk of becoming so
- We need to ensure that opportunities for volunteering are available for young people and adults. The benefits of volunteering to learning and skills development are well documented. We need to work with others to ensure the right opportunities are available in the right places



print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary



## 4: Methods of delivery

This Policy Position supports the Woodlands for Wales Strategy (2009) and is therefore within the portfolio of the Department for Rural Affairs (DRA). However, this policy is cross-cutting and is particularly pertinent in the work of the Departments of Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS), Department of Environment, Sustainability and Housing (DESH) and Department of Economy and Transport (DE&T). FCW and a range of other organisations will aim to deliver this Policy Position on behalf of the WAG via the following mechanisms:

- Accessible and well managed woodland on and off the Assembly Government Woodland Estate (AGWE), suitable for education, learning and skills opportunities
- Co-ordinated promotion of the opportunities available through using woodlands for education, learning and skills development
- Supporting and enabling others to deliver programmes which encourage increased use of woodlands - especially in areas of higher education, learning and skills deprivation
- Providing expert advice to partners and other stakeholders on the development and management of trees and woodlands for education and learning benefits
- Through developing and delivering programmes and projects, and facilitating others to do so
- Through facilitating others to deliver on and off the Assembly Government Woodland Estate (AGWE) and/or through influencing others at national, regional and local levels



print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary



# 5: Monitoring and evaluation

A number of key work areas need to be developed or refined in order to effectively support programmes for education, learning and skills for woodlands in Wales. In order that we are able to measure our progress towards meeting the indicators developed for Woodlands for Wales strategy, we need to use the following framework:

- **Identify best practice.** We need to learn to utilise our current reporting and data storage mechanisms to their best advantage - we need to maximise the potential of our current monitoring procedures and ensure they are fit for purpose. The review of Cydcoed has identified levels of education, learning and skills impact and examples of projects in Wales which have delivered tangible benefits<sup>6</sup> - we need to learn the lessons from this. Care needs to be taken to learn lessons regarding effective ways of working between the FCW and other Government, voluntary, community and private sector partners
- **Measure public benefit.** As public funding is likely to remain limited, there will be continued pressure to demonstrate the impact of public investment in trees and woodlands for education, learning and skills. We need to work with others to establish robust methodologies to enable us to measure public benefit
- **Develop partnerships.** Through joint working at National level - particularly with FCW, DCELLS, WCVA, CCW and other public sector networks we will promote the benefits of trees and woodlands for education, learning and skills and receive feedback. We need to consider further how best to engage with partners at Local Authority level. We will continue to work with networks such as the Woodlands for Learning Forum, the Wales Forest Business Partnership and the Forest Education Initiative
- **Monitor the levels of use.** We need to maintain our data sets relating to visitors to woodlands and review their effectiveness at enabling us to quantify overall education, learning and skills impacts of trees and woodlands. We need to maximise the potential of our data-sets and ensure they are fit for purpose
- **Develop suitable indicators** for reporting on education, skills and learning. We need to manage the trade-off between the cost of data collection versus the need for differentiated data in order to report as accurately as reasonably possible against outcomes



print



previous  
page



contents



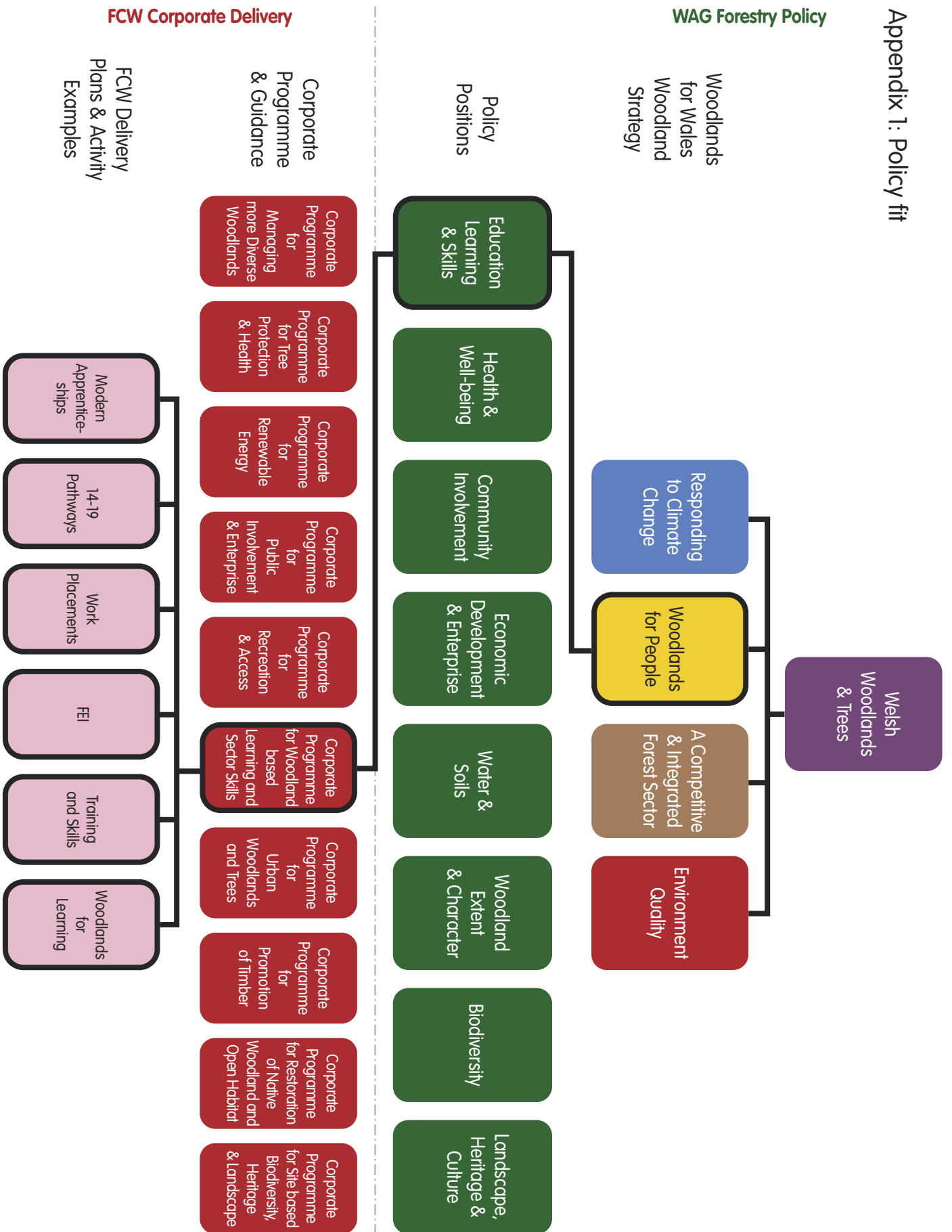
next  
page



glossary



Appendix 1: Policy fit



## Appendix 2: Equality and diversity in relation to education, learning and skills in Wales.

The following summary of information has been taken from the Equality Issues in Wales (2009) report<sup>27</sup>.

Inequalities are all too evident in education. Ethnic minority groups, boys and disabled children have lower achievements than other children and are less likely to participate in post-16 learning than other people. Evidence suggests that schools and colleges could be more responsive to the needs of ethnic minority, disabled and adult women learners. However, there is little evidence on equality in early years' education or on sexual orientation or religion.

### Early years

There is almost no evidence on early years' provision for all the equality strands.

### Primary and secondary school education

Most ethnic minority groups have lower achievement than White children do. There is some evidence that schools are not addressing the needs of ethnic minority pupils well, both in general and on issues such as physical education, and are often not tackling racism. Gypsy Traveller children face particular difficulties in education; for refugee children the issue is racism. In terms of gender, girls outperform boys but subject choices remain stereotyped. There is clear evidence of lack of engagement and lack of opportunity for disabled children, whose achievements are lower than non-disabled children. Bullying is an issue for ethnic minority, disabled and Lesbian, Gay & Bi-sexual (LGB) children or those with LGB parents or carers. Muslim children have lower achievement than other children do, and the religious needs of different faiths are often not met. Achievement by children taught in Welsh language schools is higher than in other schools.

### 16–19 school education

Fewer ethnic minority children and boys continue in education into year 12, and their achievement levels are also lower at this stage. There is little evidence on disabled children (other than they have similar A level achievements to other children), sexual orientation or religion.

### Further and higher education

Ethnic minority groups are over-represented in higher education establishments, largely because of international students studying in Wales. A higher proportion of women than men are in full-time education, and older people make up a growing proportion of learners. Disabled people are much less likely to have a degree than other people. There was no evidence on sexual orientation or religion.

### Adult education and training

Ethnic minority groups, women, disabled people and older people are all less likely to engage in adult education and training than other groups, and (with the exception of ethnic minority groups) are more likely to hold no or low level qualifications. Welsh language speakers are, in contrast, more qualified; however provision of learning in the medium of Welsh is limited.

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print

previous  
page

contents

next  
page

glossary



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print



previous  
page



contents



next  
page



glossary





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## Further information

This is one of a series of Policy Positions providing additional detail and background to the overriding themes of the Woodlands for Wales strategy. Each also contains an agenda for action which set out methods for delivering strategic aims and objectives.

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