

# Equality Impact Assessment Summary

<b>Name of policy, function or service</b>
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Forest Education Development Programme for Edinburgh and the Lothians
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<b>Purpose and aim(s) of the policy, function or service</b>
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The long-term aim of this educational programme is the provision of a training package for teachers and the establishment of a number of Forest Schools within Edinburgh and the Lothians (long term sustainability).

To link with the delivery of Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) WIAT agenda across Central Scotland, the Woods for Learning educational strategy as well as with National and local initiatives driven by other organisations and groups. In particular:

- To continue to raise awareness of Forest Schools and FEI amongst Education Departments of Local Authorities across the Lothians.
- To continue to support the Edinburgh and the Lothians FEI Cluster group.
- To support the delivery of 'Woods for Learning' in partnership with Local Authorities, Scottish Lowlands FD and private woodland owners in WIAT areas in East Central Scotland. To assist in the development of resources to support a programme of forest education activities for 'Woods for Learning'.
- To organise, promote and administer a series of teacher training events based on 'Woods for Learning' resources in partnership with Local Authorities and Scottish Lowlands FD. To continue to support trained teachers in the delivery of the programme.
- To deliver an education component for the Treefest events in East Central Scotland.
- To promote the 'Woodland Workout' teachers' pack- a resource to promote enterprise skills and physical health and well being.

<b>Who will benefit mainly from this policy, function or service?</b>
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Refer to the Central Scotland FCS Education Strategy (jointly prepared by Conservancy and District staff).

Teachers and other practitioners and members of the FEI cluster groups in central Scotland will have the opportunity to engage with the Forest Education Development Officer in Edinburgh and the Lothians, the Central Scotland WIAT Education Officer and District staff in order to deliver Forest Schools and other education activities in local woodlands and green spaces. These professionals will also be able to provide support when required.

Pupils from primary, secondary and special needs schools will have the opportunity to take part to Forest School programmes. It is proposed to particularly target children at risk of exclusion and the City of Edinburgh Council is proposing to look into the opportunities for pupils to move onto apprentice programmes available from FCS and others in the near future.

Schools were identified as primary targets for this programme as part of a feasibility study that was developed in 2006- these schools include primary, secondary and special needs establishments. The areas that are currently aimed at lies within the WIAT boundaries (1km from a town of 2,000 inhabitants or more), in urban areas and the urban fringe identified in the 15% of the Index of Multiple Social Deprivation.

#### Information and Data (evidence) used

The Forest School evaluation Scotland was a report commissioned by FCS <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infid-6cjdgl> Forest School Scotland: an Evaluation, (Lynette Borridale 2006). It mentions Inclusion and equality (pg 21) and states that "Forest school is adaptable to most ages and abilities. It is particularly useful in tackling learning and social inclusion issues - learning and behavioural difficulties, cultural and language differences. However, it is not so well suited for use with children who have physical and mobility difficulties, in a school context. Generally, there are too many hazards in the forest for these children, given the number of visits involved. "

No equal opportunities information has been specifically collected regarding the either the participants accessing training, participants on programmes subsequently ran by course participants or participants who attended demonstration projects. However information collected about the organisations/ establishments where Forest School Leader course participants work does allow give general information about the groups who have benefited from Forest School programmes.

As part of the **FSLT Course** registration, participants were required to fill out an equal opportunities form. It was also necessary as part of their coursework in particular 'Forest School Handbook' to detail their /their organisations equal opportunities policy. This would indicate that they are aware of equal opportunities (EO) and have systems in place to ensure EO.

No specific records kept of Ethnic minority pupils. For CEC delivered programmes and demonstration programmes particularly at primary level this tended to fit the natural demographic of the area due to the mainstreaming approach taken. Where some individual's programmes were targeted this was usually at youngsters who were 'struggling in mainstream education' and not targeted due to ethnicity. Secondary programmes were predominantly targeted towards individuals falling into these categories.

We have recently developed a Equal Opportunity Monitoring Form that we will start using in the future to monitor the background of pupils we engage with in Forest School groups and school visits.

Gender was not recorded. Gender split would be dependent on the class split if a mainstream approach. However for those who worked with youngsters with learning difficulties, 'at risk of exclusion' (which tended to be secondary programmes) then the balanced tipped to a great male:female ratio. Which would reflect the national statistics in these areas.

No specific records are kept of pupils with a disability, although the Edinburgh Forest School Feasibility Study (2006) highlighted the need to engage with special needs schools and identified key areas in Edinburgh for the delivery of Forest Schools.

Four out of the 32 FSLT course places were allocated to individuals who worked with youngsters with both learning and physical difficulties. See Lindy Furby & Verity Allan St. Crispins School – they now undertake 'Wood School' (Forest School) programmes with 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the school each week. Annette Irvine – Oaklands School and Rob Johnson, ENABLE. That is 12.5% of course places (or 1/8<sup>th</sup>).

No records collected or kept of religion, however year 1's demonstration project was undertaken as a joint project between a Foxcovert RC and Foxcovert (Non-denominational school). This programme involved ~52 youngsters from both schools. No trainees were from denominational schools / organisations.

Age not recorded. However, the trainees client groups ranged from 3+ to adult.

Organisation categories-

Nursery: 2

Special School: 3 – ranging from primary to secondary ages

Primary: 4

Secondary: 4

Special Ed. Young adults (post school): 1

Young Adults: 1

Adult: 1

Other primary: 1

Other secondary: 2

Other: 9

Total: 28

(\*4 withdrew from course)

86% completion rate (provided 6 with extensions complete).

SIMD not recorded. Year 2's primary demonstration project was targeted at Niddriemill primary due to the geographical area falling within multi-deprivation indicators. Four out of the 32 FSLT places were allocated to individuals working within this area (12.5% or 1/8<sup>th</sup>). The Countryside Ranger Service has consistently supported individuals and organisations as a priority.

### Summary of Impact

The project aimed to increase the educational use of urban woodland amongst pupils and teachers of local schools, promoting health & wellbeing of both the students and the natural environment. It is demonstrated that Forest School can help improving the

behaviour of children that do not perform well in conventional class environments.

The project is lead by the (E&L) Forest Education Development Officer that oversees the smooth running of all elements of the project including organising Forest School Leader training, providing teacher support, organising awareness raising events and ensuring links into existing initiatives e.g. Eco schools, Health Promoting Schools and Active Schools. The Officer also sits on various FEI Cluster Groups in the Lothians.

The project aims to have an impact on those involved in the Forest School Leader training (Teachers, practitioners and learning assistants) and therefore on pupils and parents that these practitioners engage with. The FEI Cluster group(s) are also involved in the process and engage with a continuously expanding membership.

### **Monitoring/Evaluation**

Future Actions:

A) FEI Edinburgh & Lothian's incorporates EO monitoring at application level /course completion. An addition to this could incorporate a description of the groups that the applicant is most likely to work with due.

B) All CEC Forest School delivered supported programmes could incorporate monitoring at the planning stage.

FDP End of Year Report – a report will be produced annually to monitor the deliverables of this programme against the SFS as well as to monitor the teachers, practitioners and pupils that get involved in the programme.

The Equality Opportunity Monitoring will become an integral part of the FS monitoring process.

### **Further Information**

Available from Central Scotland Conservancy