

*Draft June 2018 v1.4*

# Describing a childhood progression in outdoor learning

**Mapping the range of** outdoor learning interventions designed to enable children and young people to form a healthy, developmental and sustainable self-led relationship with the natural environment



# A progression of OPPORTUNITIES

Challenge 1: to enable a progression of outdoor learning OPPORTUNITIES

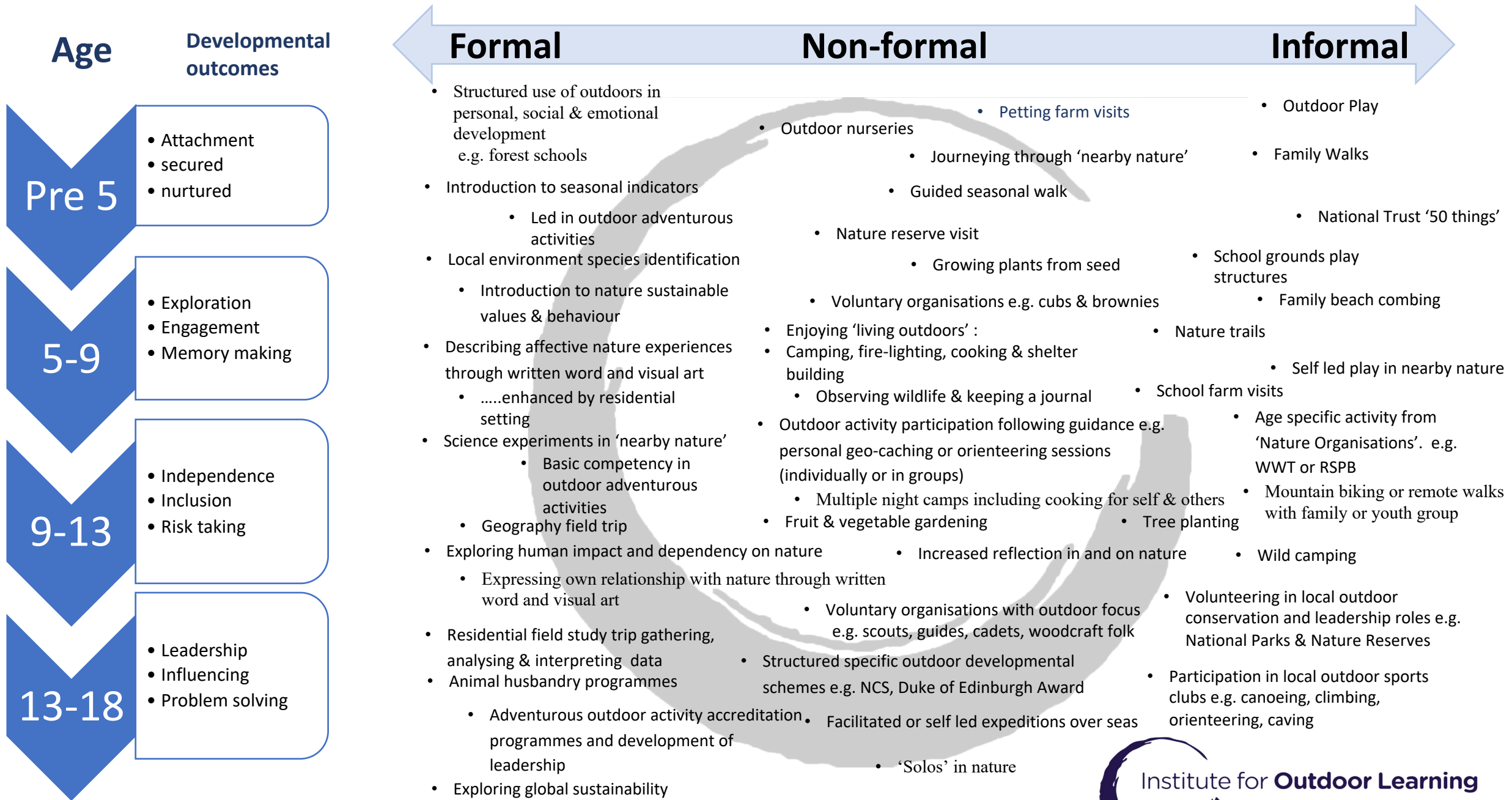
- Bridging the boundaries between different outdoor contexts and settings (e.g. between health, learning, play, recreation or environmental sectors or between formal or informal settings.)
- Signposting the opportunities across and between these settings, enabling progressions of opportunities to be mapped and promoted.
- Developing our insight on the ways to build confidence and motivation for spending time outdoors in these settings, especially among communities experiencing disadvantage.

# A progression of OUTCOMES

Challenge 2: to use a new progression of opportunities to enable a progression of outdoor learning OUTCOMES

- Developing innovative blended pedagogies and health care strategies across the different delivery contexts
- Planning for delivery and evaluation of progressive learning, health, social and environmental outcomes
- Building our insight on the role of outdoor learning in delivering outcomes, and in engaging children as active agents in creating healthier communities and healthier environments.\*

(\* we recognise that cognitive, cultural and social processes affect how young people engage and learn in outdoor spaces; and that there are complex temporal, spatial, and value-driven dimensions to outdoor learning. )



Some but not all formal experiences are facilitated by schools/colleges. Many other organisations offer structured and accredited services ( e.g. youth and community organisations)

# Some things to consider about enabling a progression of outdoor learning experiences

- Experiences will build on each other (actual age is less important)
- Outdoor learning can help build social, cultural and nature connection. Modelling, mentoring and local champions are all helpful with this, especially where families lack confidence in how to enable outdoor play and learning.
- People's connection to nature is related to their wellbeing and to their pro-environmental attitudes and behaviours. However, nature connection requires enabling an emotional response to nature (including enjoyment, awe and wonder) rather than simply building understanding of nature. This challenges the traditional 'understand it, value it, and then act to protect it' model. Instead the evidence suggests that it is emotional rather than cognitive experiences of nature in childhood that are really important.
- Identity, self-awareness and character may all be supported by defining 'self' in the context of the natural environment and in relation to others. However, creating opportunities for this to happen cannot be prescriptive due to varying pace of personal development and social and physical and cultural contexts.
- Supporting a young person to achieve a sustainable, healthy (physical & mental) and self-led relationship with nature also needs to pay attention to experiential learning and reflective capability, not just variety of activity and location.

## Spectrum of OL opportunities

<b>Formal outdoor learning</b>	<b>Non-formal outdoor learning</b>	<b>Informal outdoor learning</b>
Activities or programmes which have a defined structure or curriculum, and which are evaluated and recognised through accreditation.	Activities or programmes that tend to be facilitated and that can be evaluated or accredited.	Activities or programmes that are part of daily work, family or leisure time and that tend to be self-facilitated. daily work, family or leisure
Characterised by school based curricular programmes, youth development programmes, HE/FE courses, CPD and accredited professional training or placement volunteering and therapeutic natural health programmes etc.	Characterised by activities such as: organised park runs, guided walks, special interest gardening or sports groups, environmental volunteering, school success trips and public health interventions etc .	Characterised by everyday activities such as: a walk in the park at lunchtime, walking to school or work, a picnic in the park etc

# On-going dialogue...

Some questions to date from MAT's engaged in Outdoor Learning

1. Will this lead to a series of benchmarks that would highlight excellent practice at the various levels and across the three primary types of intervention ?
2. Does the importance of the aim need to be made more explicit? e.g. why a relationship with the natural environment is important and relevant in schools.
3. Should the main aim (relationship with the natural environment) be broader and more ambitious? E.g. developing a series of learning habits and attitudes that are transferable to many areas of life.
4. Should we share insight into the barriers to progression through the various interventions and how ?
5. How do we pick up the different types of natural environment e.g. the sea, with the current focus on plastics?
6. What are the best ways of disseminating the evidence supporting increased participation ?
7. How do we provide more insight into good practice for reaching ?
8. How do outcomes differ if the outdoor experience is with friends, family, scouts, school etc.?
9. What are the wider impacts of young people achieving the aim?