

# Making the link between Socio-Economic Inequalities and Outdoor Learning

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To access the notes that accompany this presentation, please download and view as a pdf

# Who am I?

- White
- Male
- Middle class
- Educated
- Married
- Teacher? Practitioner? Student?  
Academic?
- 52 (Middle aged?)
- From North Yorkshire



# How will you judge me?

- White
- Male
- Middle class
- Educated
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- Teacher? Practitioner? Student? Academic?
- 52 (Middle aged?)
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## A position statement

'Our aim is to create a more inclusive environment that respects the equality and diversity of those participating or working in Outdoor Learning to achieve the maximum benefit, enjoyment and fulfilment from the activity.'

'Outdoor learning' is an umbrella term for facilitated approaches to individual, social and environmental learning that take place predominantly through activities and experiences in the outdoors.





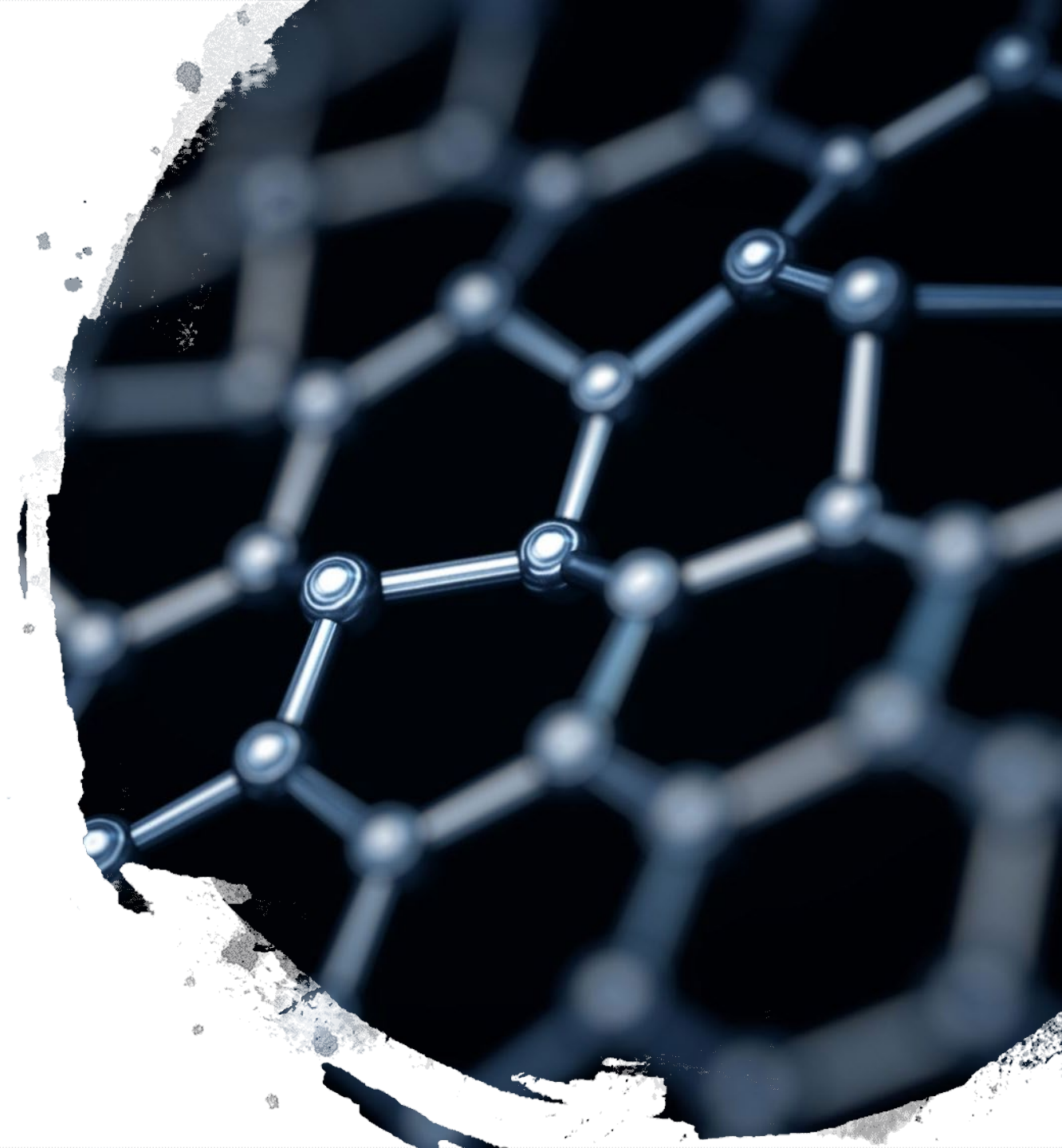
# Underlying beliefs and assumptions

Everyone has the legitimate right to benefit from the outdoors on equal terms

It should be an entitlement for all

Not everyone has the same 'bundle of powers' to achieve this

Access isn't equal





# Access to the outdoors



For recreation,  
relaxation, challenge,  
socialisation, nature  
connection



For employment,  
voluntary or paid



For health,  
mental, physical,  
emotional and  
spiritual




For wellbeing –  
feeling good and  
functioning well



**For learning, about  
self, others and the  
environment**

***Access is about being able to benefit from the outdoors***



How do people  
access the  
world of  
outdoor  
learning?

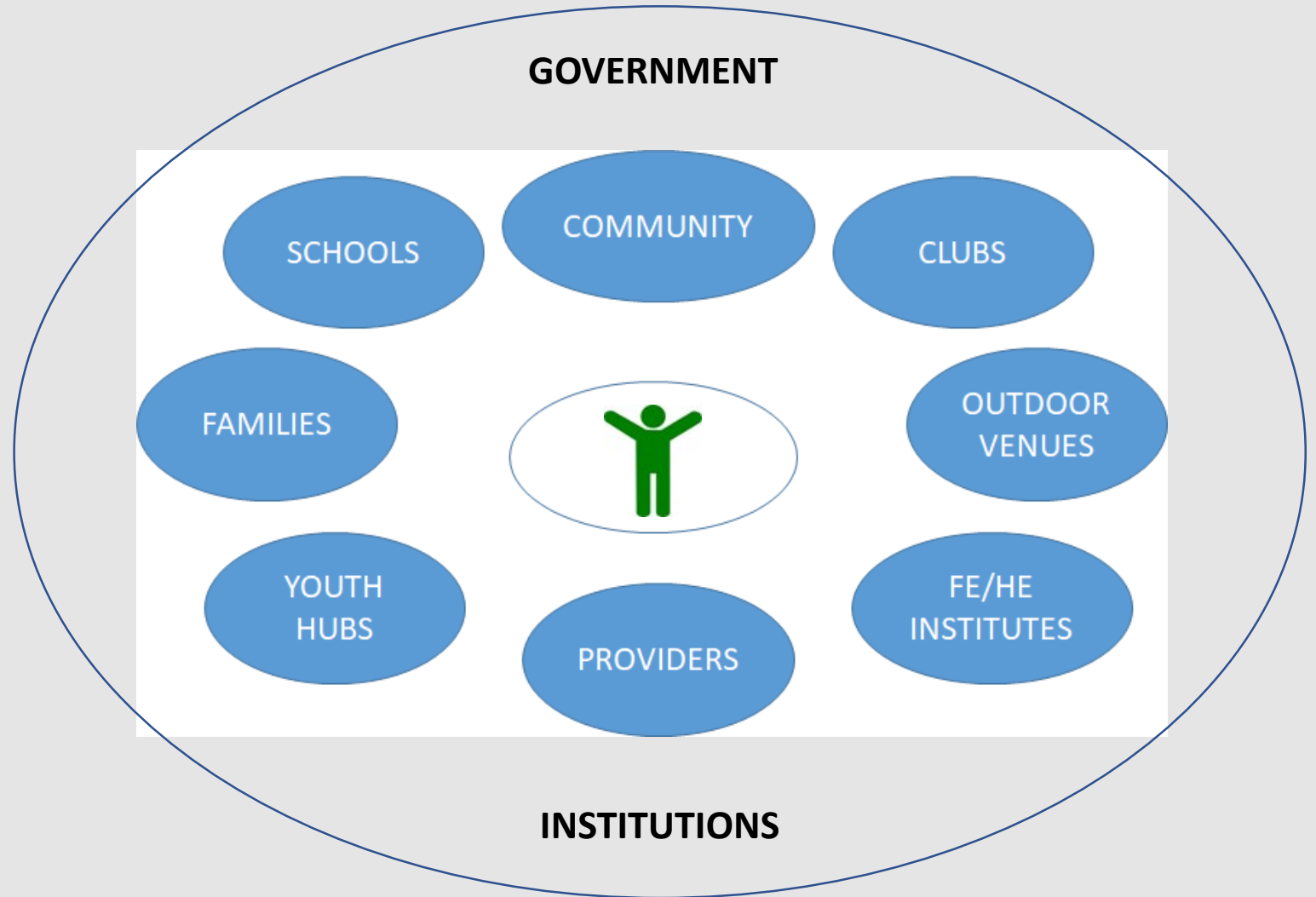
### As a participant

- *Formal* - schools, colleges and universities
- *Non-formal* -  
residential, youth groups, health initiatives,  
targeted interventions, DofE, NCS, John Muir  
Award
- *Informal* - providers and venues

### As an employee

- Trainee/apprentice
- Practitioner

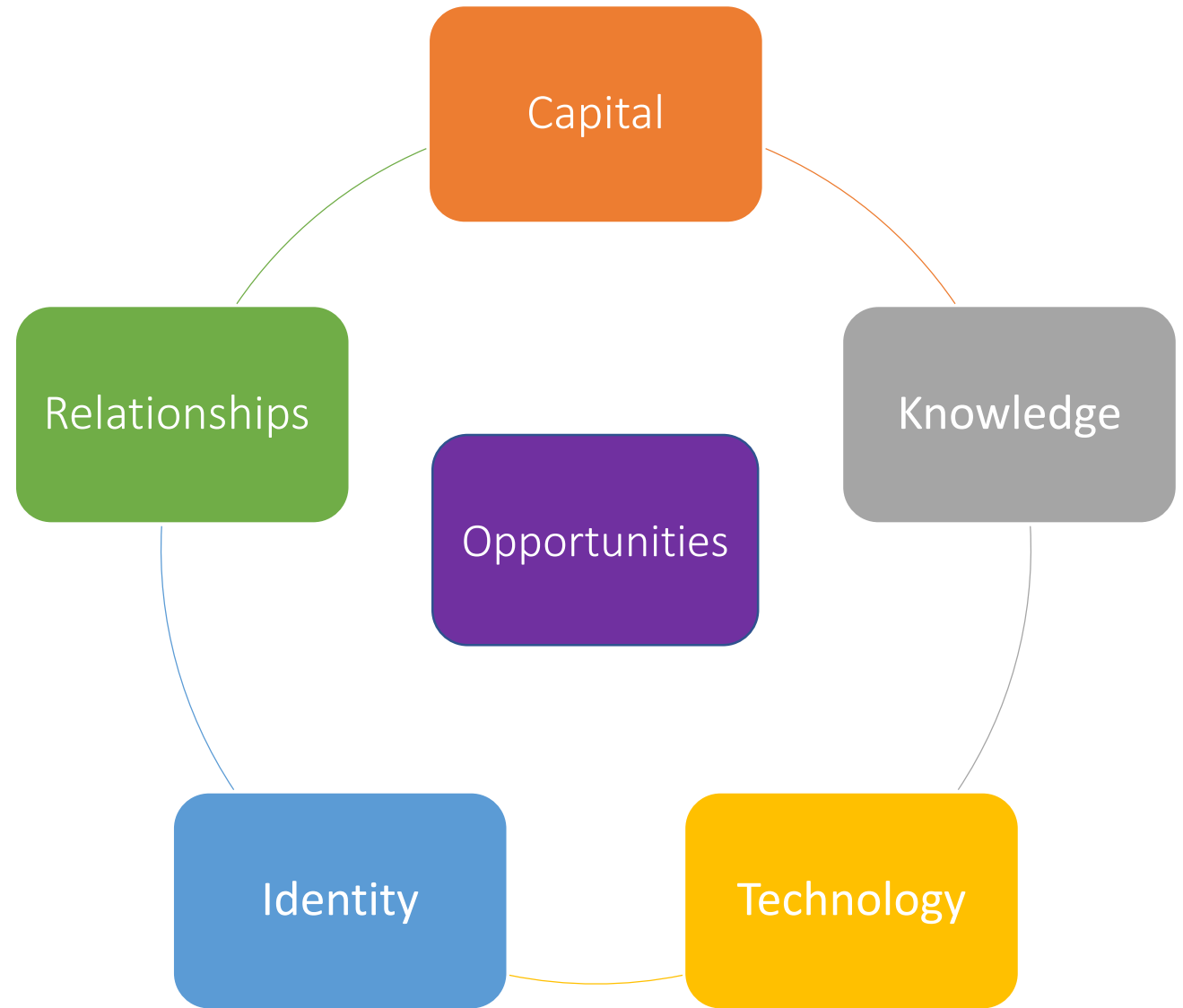
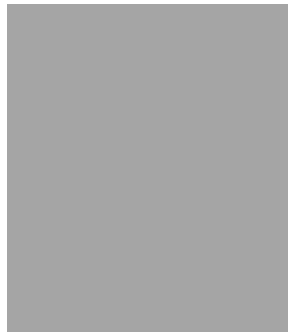
How do people access the world of outdoor learning?







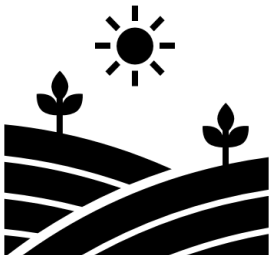
# Access mechanisms



After Ribot, J. and Peluso, N. (2003) A Theory of Access. *Rural Sociology*. 68 (2)



# Access to capital



Transport

Entry fees, car parking

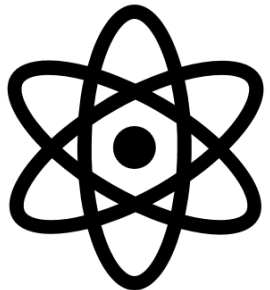
Equipment

Extracurricular activities, trips and visits  
contributions

Access to Further and Higher Education



# Access to knowledge



Appreciation of benefits

Awareness – what opportunities exist?

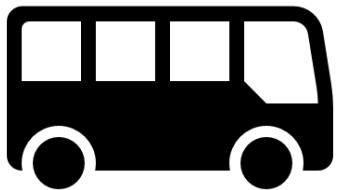
Engagement – how to access the opportunity

Participation – knowledge and skills

Qualifications



Access to  
technology



Transport

Infrastructure

Facilities and resources

Equipment



## Access through social identity



Beliefs, ideology and discursive practices

Membership of a community or group

Personal identity

Cultural narratives

Values and personal interests



Access via  
negotiated  
relationships



Family, friends and peers

Community

Colleagues

Networks

Gatekeepers

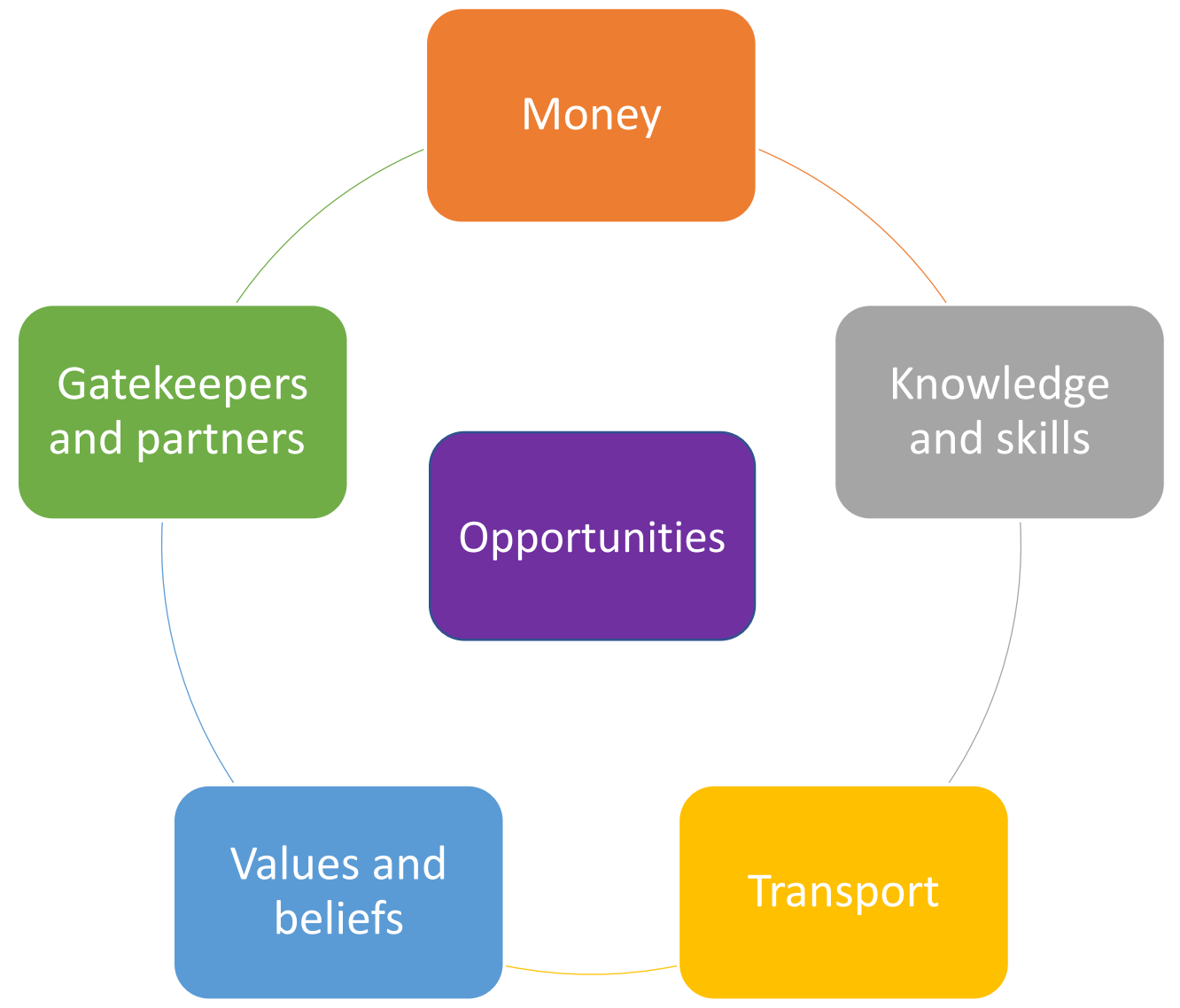
Co-partners in the experience



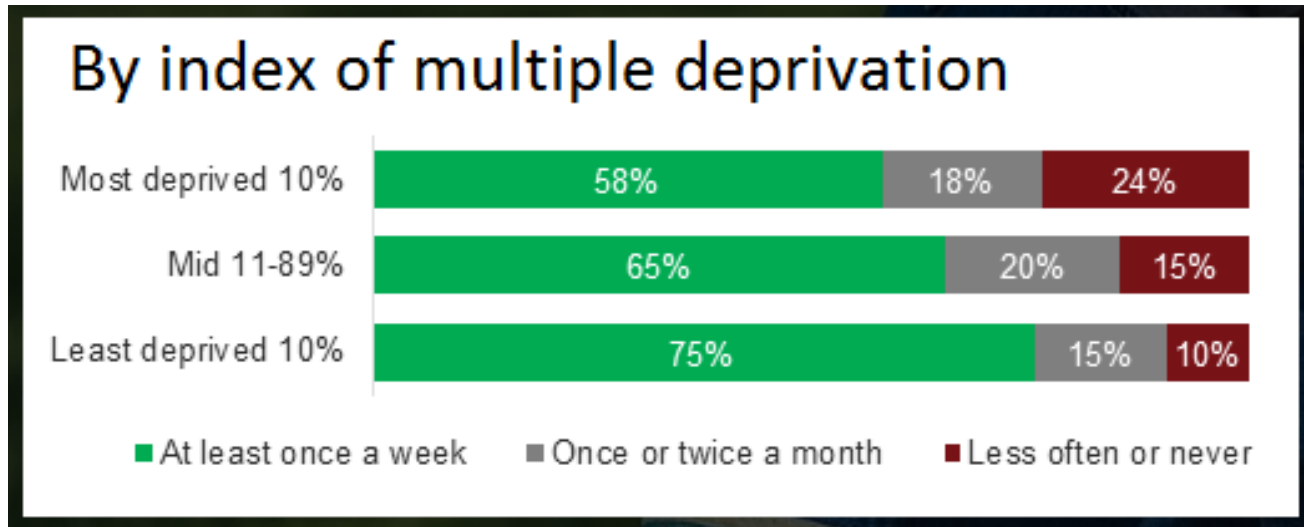


# A socio-economic lens

Socio-economic inequality relates to the combination of social and economic factors and how they affect people



# What is the outcome?



MENE: Visits to the countryside (Natural England, 2020)

People from the most deprived areas are least likely to visit the countryside

Car owners are more likely to visit the natural environment

Car ownership is lowest amongst people on lower incomes

# Levels of activity

Arrows show the percentage point change on 12 months ago. No arrows indicate no change



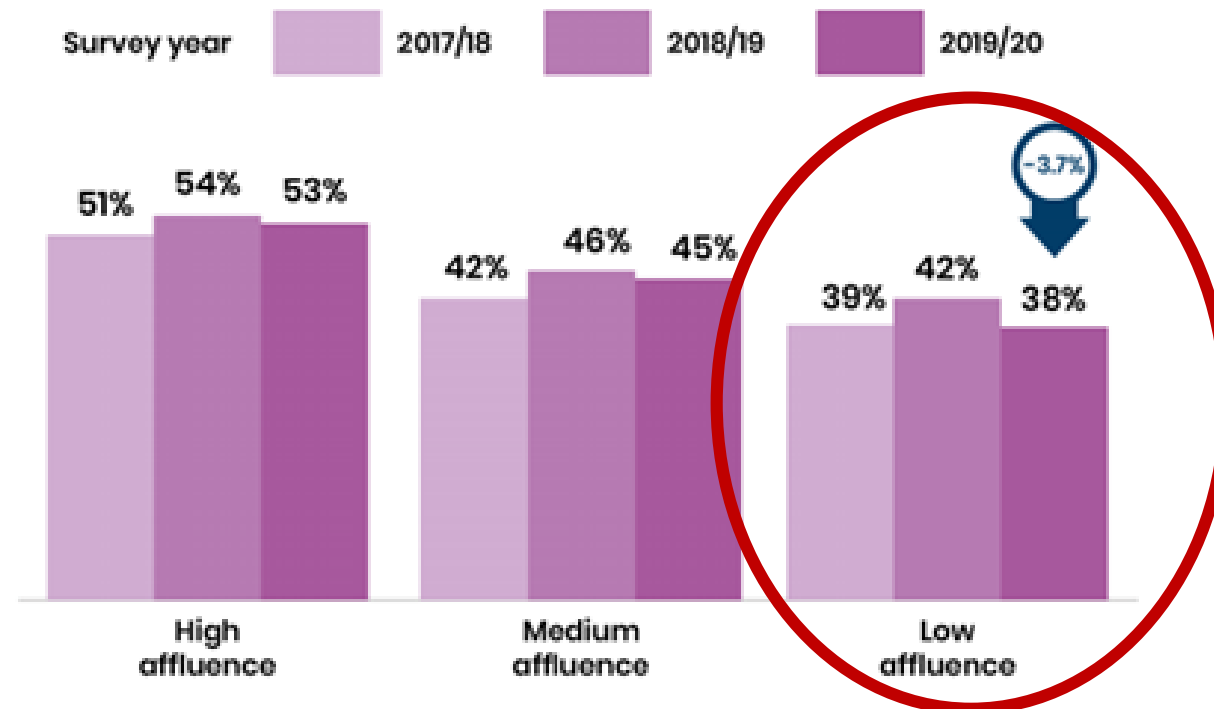
Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Academic year 2019/20

## Family affluence

Children and young people from the most affluent families are generally more active than those from medium affluence families, who in turn are generally more active than those from the least affluent families.

Activity levels have decreased for children and young people from low affluence groups, whilst they remain unchanged compared to 12 months ago for the two other groups. This has been driven by a decrease during the spring term, which coincided with multiple storms and floods across the country, indicating the important role school plays in providing opportunities for children and young people from the least affluent families.

## Active (an average of 60+ minutes a day)



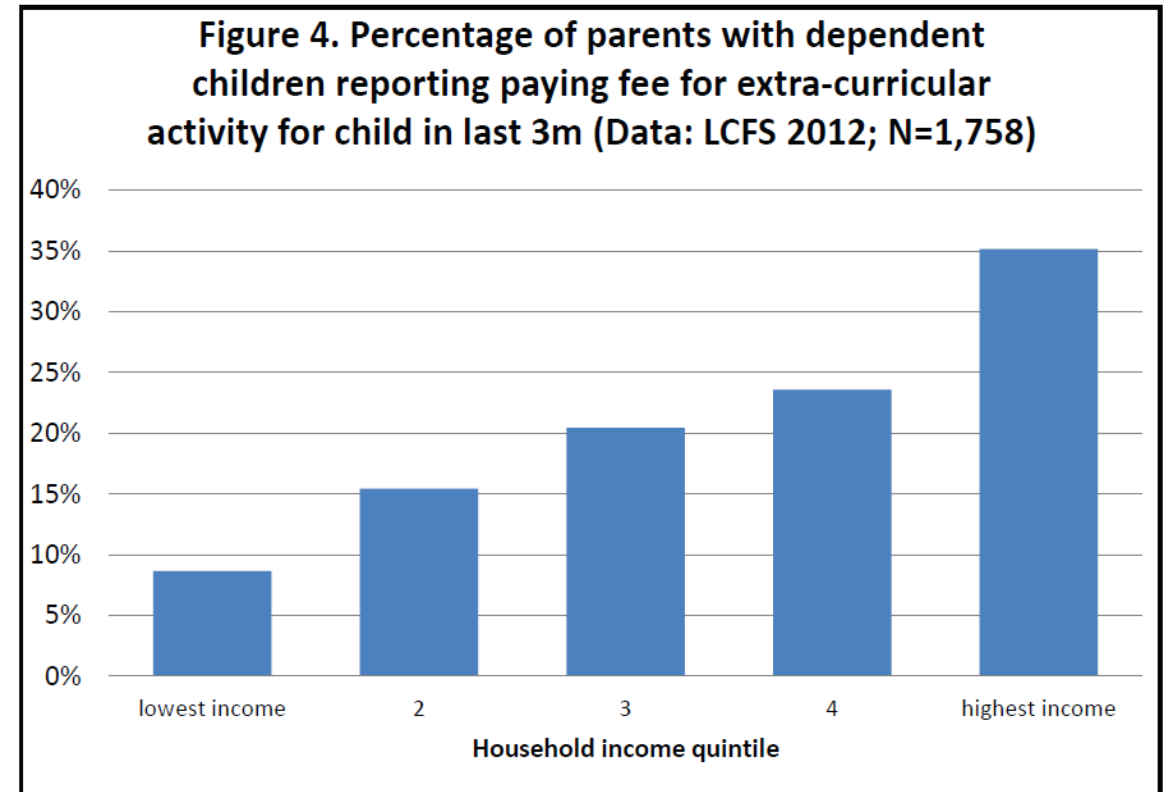
Note: See our [definitions](#) page for more details on family affluence.

[Link to data tables](#) ▶

# Sutton Trust: Extracurricular inequality

Barriers to taking part in extra-curricular activities for those from low-income households include:

- high cost
- a lack of confidence
- difficulties in access





<https://wildinthecity.org.uk/>

'Parents want children to look good and avoid getting dirty so that people don't think that they are poor, and also because parents can't afford to replace clothes or buy items specially for outdoor activities...trips to the launderette are expensive. In these communities the prevailing cultural attitude is that dirty clothes equals poverty. These children are caught between a materialistic message, itself evoked to cover a sense of shame or inadequacy about poverty, and any desire to engage with nature. A disadvantage that many children from middle class homes don't encounter, where the perceived cultural attitude may be that dirty clothes equals productivity and having fun.'

Beth Collier

Collier, B. (2013) 'Barriers to outdoor play and nature connection for inner city children'. *Horizons*, 63, pp. 12-13.

# Challenging assumptions

- Values matter
- Low income does not equal low aspirations
- Not all 'choices' are choices
- Providing opportunities is part of the picture – provision does always not equal participation



[Anita Kerwin-Nye](#) | November 22, 2019

## 'Estates'

'Time to pause and rethink our assumptions, our language and our approaches.'

'We need to learn. We need to listen. And frankly maybe we need to give up our power.'

'And perhaps most of all we, who are trying to do the right thing, who so clearly have chosen careers to improve outcomes for everyone, need to have humility to recognise that the things that we value are not the only things of value.'

<https://aknconsulting.uk/akn-post/estates/>

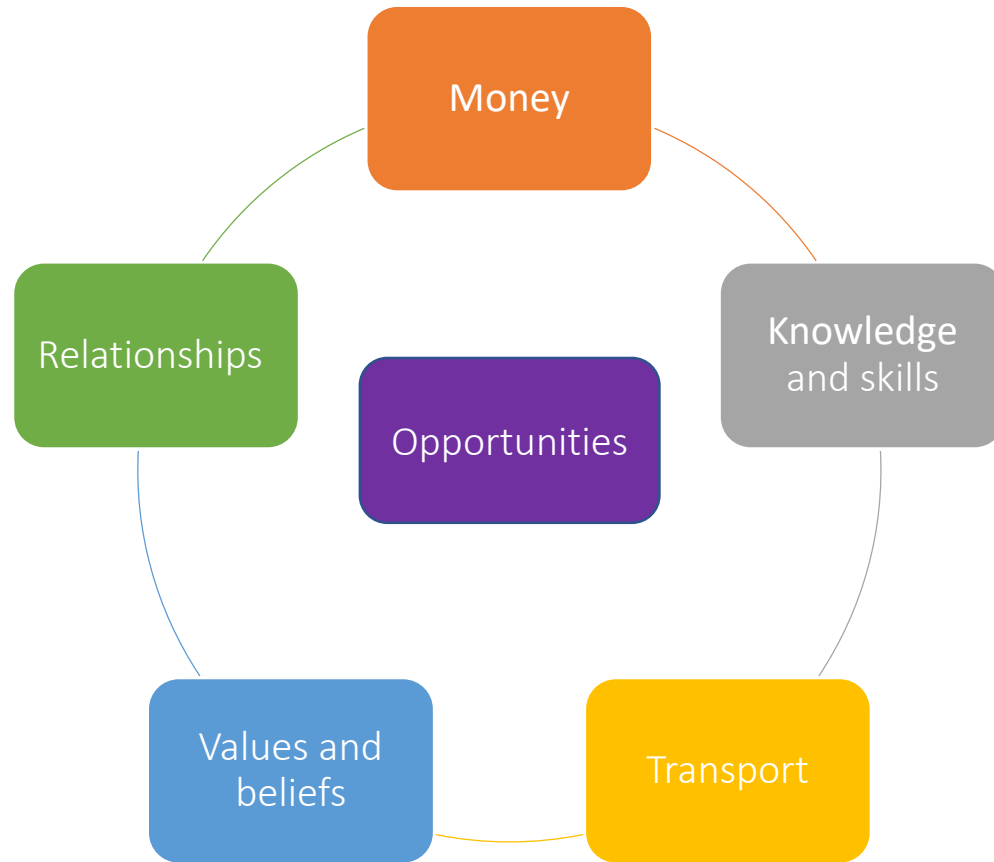


Power:  
Who controls  
access?

**Access control** is the ability to mediate others' access – landowners, government, culture, community, family, funders, providers

**Maintaining access** is the ongoing ability to benefit from the outdoors / outdoor learning

# What can you or your organisation do?



- ...to help facilitate access?
- ...to help maintain and sustain access?



Thank you

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[LinkedIn](#)