



Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Time and Date

10.00 am on Thursday, 11th September, 2025

Place

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

Public Business**1. Apologies and Substitutions****2. Declarations of Interests****3. Exclusion of Press and Public**

To consider whether to exclude the press and public for the item(s) of private business for the reasons shown in the report.

4. Minutes (Pages 3 - 6)

- a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th of July 2025
- b) Matters Arising

5. An Overview of Coventry Outdoor Education Service (Coventry Outdoors) (Pages 7 - 58)

Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education.

6. The complexities involved in finding homes for children in care and associated costs (Pages 59 - 68)

Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education.

7. Work Programme (Pages 69 - 74)

Briefing Note of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator

8. Any Other Business

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Private Business

9. The complexities involved in finding homes for children in care and associated costs (Pages 75 - 94)

Briefing Note of the Director of Children and Education.

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 3 September 2025

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Asher Veness Email: asher.veness@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors J Birdi, B Christopher (By Invitation), J Gardiner, S Hanson, Jackson (Co-opted Member), S Jobbar, L Kelly (Chair), M Mutton, S Nazir, E M Reeves, K Sandhu (By Invitation), P Seaman (By Invitation), R Thay, A Tucker and Vohra (Co-opted Member)

Public Access

Any member of the public who would like to attend the meeting in person is encouraged to contact the officer below in advance of the meeting regarding arrangements for public attendance. A guide to attending public meeting can be found here: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/publicAttendanceMeetings>

Asher Veness

Governance Services

Email: asher.veness@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 10 July 2025

Present:

Members: Councillor L Kelly (Chair)
Councillor J Birdi
Councillor J Gardiner
Councillor S Gray (substitute)
Councillor S Jobbar
Councillor R Lancaster (substitute)
Councillor M Mutton
Councillor S Nazir
Councillor R Thay

Co-Opted Members: Mrs Sybil Hanson, Mr David Jackson and Mr Ghulam Vohra

Other Members: Councillors P Seaman (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), and B Christopher (Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)

Employees (by Service Area):

Children and Education C Heeley, J Jones, R Sugars, A Whitrick

Law and Governance G Holmes, T Robinson

Apologies: Councillors E Reeves and A Tucker

Public Business

1. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 10th of April 2025 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

3. Cabinet Members' Priorities and Work Programme 2025/26

The Board considered a Briefing Note and presentation of the children and education service area to identify areas for further scrutiny to add to the work programme – attached to the report at Appendix 2. Officers presented their vision

for the service area, a detailed overview of each department, the key priorities for 2025-26 and those of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor P Seaman, and the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor K Sandhu – the presentation was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

In considering the briefing note and presentation, the Board questioned officers, received responses, and discussed matters as summarised below:

- Ways to reduce the burden on the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – the development and implementation of the Effective Support document that promotes partnership working to reduce the demand on the service whilst improving conversion rates of first contact to referrals and ensure the right support is identified for families.
- Coventry's MASH performance in comparison to other local authorities.
- Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) and the reasons why some fail.
- The provision of secure accommodation in the West Midlands for care leavers in custody and young offenders and the future development of a secure care facility in the West Midlands.
- The funding arrangements for the Family Group Conferencing service.
- Communication and data sharing arrangements for multi-agency working.
- The Woodlands School Site planned opening in September 2026.
- Coventry's response to the national increase of home education and ensuring every child is properly educated.
- Truancy and its effects on different demographics – utilising research to understand contexts and policy approaches.
- Approaches to bulge classes throughout the education lifecycle – ensuring there is provision when there is a bulge and managing the over-provision in times of no bulge.
- The Alternative Provision Academy replacing the Extended Learning Centre for excluded children.

The Cabinet Members further outlined their priorities following the update from the service area. Councillor Seaman highlighted that with the introduction of the care reforms and Coventry already being well placed to enact these, there would still be some significant changes to children's services over the next year. Additionally, the service would continue to expand and invest alongside building upon the work of MASH, the Kinship Strategy, and Lifelong Links to find better outcomes for children and their families.

Adding to these sentiments, Councillor Sandhu, highlighted how key education projects would add value over the next municipal year. Mainly, the service area would focus on sufficiency of school places, managing SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and its budget, implementing a smart phone campaign in schools, and continuing the successful work of the Holiday and Activities Programme (HAF).

These priorities prompted further questions on the following matters from the Board:

- Foster friendly employers and the national drive amongst local authorities to attract foster carers in their areas.

- The success of the Kinship Strategy in working to prevent children from going into care.
- The increasing difficulty of the SEND budget in schools.
- The costs of transport for schools – both for SEND pupils and for school sports trips.
- That schools still have playing fields and the rules in place to prevent the sale of the land.
- The workforce strategy for social workers and its impact on vacancies and retention.

RESOLVED that the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2):

1) Identifies the following further items to be considered for the Work Programme 2025-26:

- A progress report and update on MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub).
- Children absent from education – including truancy, alternative provision and elective home education.
- Recruitment and retention for children social care staff.
- Family Hubs and the overlap with MASH.
- The sufficiency of homes for children.
- The Kinship Strategy and work undertaken before children come into care.

4. Any Other Business

There were no items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 11.50 am)

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To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 11th September 2025

Subject: An Overview of Coventry Outdoor Education Service (Coventry Outdoors)

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Coventry Outdoor Education Service (Coventry Outdoors) including future developments and plans for celebrating 60 years of Dol Y Moch
- 1.2 The note will cover current delivery, strategic priorities, participation, financial position, and to present future development plans aligned with the One Coventry Plan including reducing health inequalities across the city and recommendations for the service's continued growth and sustainability.
- 1.3 The Coventry Outdoors Education Strategy 2025 – 2027 and 2025/26 Brochure is included at Appendix A and B.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
 - 1) Consider the information provided to comment and/or raise questions
 - 2) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member
 - 3) Identify any areas for further scrutiny to be added to the work programme

3 Information and Background

- 3.1 Coventry Outdoors, delivers a diverse programme of educational and personal development experiences for children, young people, and adults through outdoor learning and activity. The service currently operates at Coombe Abbey Country Park and the outdoor residential centre, Plas Dol-y-Moch, is in North Wales (Eryri National Park).
- 3.2 From 1966 – 2021 Coventry has operated an Outdoor Education service comprising Plas Dol-y-Moch, and in more recent years an Educational Visits Advice and Guidance service, and some Duke of Edinburgh provision.
- 3.3 Coventry's outdoor education has traditionally centred on Plas Dol-y-Moch. Whilst these are highly valued experiences this one-off experience approach does not

promote children's access to sustained and broader outdoor learning. The concern is that this disproportionately impacts disadvantaged children who may already face significant barriers to accessing green space.

- 3.4 In 2021, following consultation with schools and partners, the City Council committed to expanding the service. This led to the launch of the In-City Outdoor Education Service at Coombe, aimed at providing more children and young people regular local access to high-quality outdoor learning with the aim of providing wide-ranging benefits for health, wellbeing, and education. There is also an outreach service into schools.
- 3.5 Coventry Outdoors operates as a traded hybrid model of educational provision and commercial delivery to ensure a financially viable service meeting the City Council's expectation that traded services operate on a full cost recovery basis.
- 3.6 There are five key areas of focus within the service:
 - a) Enhancing Educational and Therapeutic Provision for Children and Young People through Outdoor Education. The service supports schools (including special educational needs & disability) in delivery of provision which focus on core curriculum, physical health, mental wellbeing, social development, and employability skills.
 - b) Educational Visits Advice and Guidance Service. The service provides professional high-quality advice, guidance and support for schools and establishments in managing educational visits and activities, to assist delivering outdoor education, learning and adventure.
 - c) Professional Development for Adults. The service provides Continuous Professional Development (CPD), training, and apprenticeship courses for educators and practitioners to embed outdoor education and activities within their curriculum intent or general practice.
 - d) Commercial strand activity. Commercial services such as group activities, expeditions, corporate packages, holiday programmes, and events to generate revenue while promoting outdoor engagement and education.
 - e) Sustainability Awareness and Development. The service is leading on the Coventry Green Awards Scheme for schools including integrated sustainability principles throughout the service and into outdoor education programmes, emphasising climate change education, conservation, and eco-friendly practices. In line with the One Coventry Plan and the City Council's Green Skills Roadmap.
- 3.7 The Coventry Outdoors strategy aims to enhance accessibility and engagement through the implementation of a sustainable hub-and-spoke model, connecting a central outdoor education, training, and wellbeing hub to smaller satellite locations across the city.
- 3.8 Coventry Outdoors contributes directly to several core strategies and statutory responsibilities detailed below:
 - a) The One Coventry Plan – particularly around health, inclusion, education, and climate action.

- b) The city's Skills Strategy (2022–2030) - through raising aspirations and creating progression pathways, promoting inclusive access, building green skills and sustainability awareness and enhancing skills for life and employment.
- c) Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy – by expanding meaningful access to green space.
- d) Coventry Alternative Provision Strategy – through delivery of innovative, accredited outdoor education for vulnerable learners.
- e) Coventry Climate Change Strategy – embedding sustainability into all aspects of delivery and promoting green skills and environmental awareness.

4 Participation & Reach

- 4.1 In the 2024/25 academic year 8,665 children and young people engaged with Coventry Outdoors. Of which 3,036 attended residential experiences at Plas Dol-y-Moch, and 5,629 engaged with In City provisions. 43% of those accessing the service are White British, 5% mixed heritage, 13% Asian, 11% Black/African/Caribbean, and 28% other or unknown. Further detail on participation and reach is included below:
- a) Of the bookings at Plas Dol-y-Moch 95% are adventure/personal development and 5% field study.
 - b) 129 children and young people at risk of Permanent Exclusion (PEX) or school avoidance were supported through therapeutic and Social Emotional & Mental Health (SEMH)-specific programmes.
 - c) 700 children and young people participated in the Holiday & Food Programme (HAF) and wider family holiday activities.
 - d) 339 adults participated in continuing professional development (CPD), accredited training and apprenticeships. There are currently 75 apprentices on a course or going through their end-point assessment.
 - e) 92 schools subscribe to the Educational Visits Advice and Guidance service level agreement.

5 Finance

- 5.1 The service is fully funded from traded income and grant. The total income received per annum is circa £1.8 million and this covers the full cost of the service including overheads. This has increased from circa £1.4 million in 2022/23, primarily because of the in-city expansion including growth of apprenticeship programmes.

6 Potential Future Developments

Plas Dol-y-Moch

- 6.1 A detailed design brief has been produced for required renovations of the main house, including introducing en-suite staff accommodation, improved student living spaces, and a reconfigured internal layout to better support residential outdoor learning and flexible group bookings.
- 6.2 In addition, a draft concept has been developed for a new multi-purpose external building (approx. 100sqm) to enable dedicated use of the current dining area by

relocating shared functions. The proposed space would also include additional staff accommodation to further increase operational flexibility.

- 6.3 Plas Dol-y-Moch has significant site development constraints including location within a national park, registration as a Grade II listed building with historic and architectural significance, flood risk identified through topography surveys limiting viable development locations.
- 6.4 Once the initial feasibility has concluded, a full business case including financial implications will be developed. There is not specific capital funding available, so any proposals will be subject to affordability and political approval in line with the constitution.

In-City

- 6.5 To contribute to the delivery of a strategic Hub and Spoke delivery approach it is an ambition to develop a rural sustainable community hub development located within the city. This would be designed as a specialist outdoor education, activity and training facility with a focus on education, green skills and health & wellbeing.
- 6.6 This initiative would require a hybrid approach to provision and commercialisation and would need to be underpinned by a self-sustaining commercial business model. Once appropriate land is identified a full business case including financial implications will be developed. There is not specific capital funding available, so any proposals will be subject to affordability and political approval in line with the constitution.

Plas Dol-y-Moch 60th Anniversary Celebrations

- 6.7 2026 will mark the 60th year of Coventry's ownership and operation of Plas Dol-y-Moch, an important milestone for the city and its residents. The anniversary provides an opportunity not only to celebrate the unique contribution the centre has made to generations of Coventry children and families but also to reaffirm its role in shaping the city's future through outdoor education and access to green space.
- 6.8 The celebrations will focus on three distinctive strands:
 - a) Celebrating the Past - Recognising the history and legacy of Plas Dol-y-Moch since 1966, highlighting the thousands of children, young people, and families whose lives have been positively influenced by the centre. This will include capturing and sharing stories, photographs, and testimonies from alumni, schools, and staff to illustrate the centre's enduring impact on Coventry's cultural and educational identity.
 - b) Celebrating the Present - Showcasing the current breadth of provision delivered by Coventry Outdoors at Plas Dol-y-Moch and across the city. This includes residential outdoor learning, therapeutic and SEMH programmes, educational visits, and professional development opportunities. Celebrations will highlight the service's role in tackling health inequalities, promoting inclusion, and embedding outdoor education into the daily lives of Coventry's children and young people.
 - c) Celebrating the Future - Using the anniversary to look forward and engage schools, partners, and communities in shaping the next phase of Coventry Outdoors. This will emphasise opportunities to expand access to outdoor education, ensure long-term sustainability of the service, and align with citywide

ambitions for health, skills, climate action, and green infrastructure. A key focus will be embedding outdoor activity further into the lives of Coventry residents and ensuring equitable access to green spaces for all communities.

- 6.9 The 60th anniversary year will therefore act as a celebratory milestone and a strategic platform—strengthening Coventry’s commitment to outdoor learning, inspiring civic pride, and creating momentum for future development and potential investment.

7 Health Inequalities Impact

7.1 Coventry Outdoors contributes to reducing health disparities across the city by:

- a) Improving Access to Green Space and Nature: providing access to the outdoor environment to those with limited access to green space, addressing historic green infrastructure inequalities.
- b) Promoting Mental Wellbeing: Offering structured, therapeutic programmes that support emotional regulation, resilience, and wellbeing, particularly for children and young people with SEMH needs.
- c) Increasing Physical Activity: Facilitating outdoor movement and engagement that supports healthier lifestyles and obesity prevention.
- d) Supporting Social Mobility: Providing accessible, inclusive programming for disadvantaged learners, including those with SEND, Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility, and in or on the edge of care.
- e) Upskilling the Workforce: Delivering apprenticeships, accredited training and CPD

Appendix A: The Coventry Outdoors Education Strategy 2025 – 2027

Appendix B: 2025/26 Brochure [coventry-outdoors-full-brochure](#)

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Introduction:

Coventry Outdoors Education Strategy 2025 - 2027

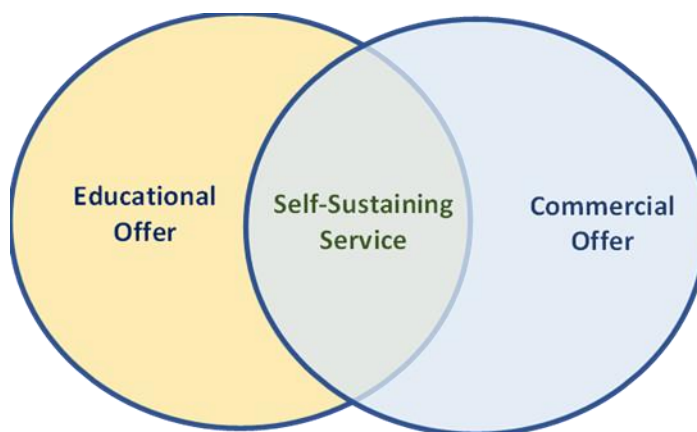
Introduction:

Outdoor education and activities hold immense value in promoting holistic development among individuals of all ages, fostering physical fitness, mental well-being, social skills, and environmental awareness.

Coventry City Council recognises the importance of integrating outdoor education and activity programs into education and its community services. This strategy aims to outline a comprehensive approach that caters to the diverse needs of children, young people, adults, and commercial ventures.

In line with the One Coventry Plan this strategy aims to enhance accessibility and engagement through the implementation of a sustainable hub-and-spoke model, connecting a central outdoor education, training, and wellbeing hub to smaller satellite locations across the city.

Coventry Outdoor Education (also known as Coventry Outdoors) aims to provide a sustainable Outdoor Education Service through operation of a hybrid provision, including educational provision and commercial ventures.



Objectives:

1. Enhancing Educational and Therapeutic Provision for Children and Young People through Outdoor Education:

Development and implementation of:

- Outdoor education programmes aligned with the National Curriculum, to support educational establishments in embedding outdoor education into the curriculum.
- Courses and programmes that support character education, personal development, and employability skills for children and young people.
- Bespoke Alternative Provision programmes as part of the Council's wider education entitlement framework to provide therapeutic programmes and

qualifications for individuals who may benefit from non-traditional educational approaches.

- In City holiday programmes that offer enriching outdoor experiences for children and young people during school breaks.
- Residential programmes at the Councils Outdoor Education Centre in North Wales for primary, secondary and higher education students offering both field study and adventure courses focusing on character and personal development
- Building and developing a Robust, agile and sustainable delivery infrastructure that meets need

2. Professional Development for Adults:

Development and implementation of:

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD), training, and apprenticeship courses for educators and practitioners to embed outdoor education and activities within their curriculum intent or general practice.
- Professional high-quality advice, guidance and support for schools and establishments in managing educational visits and activities, ensuring practitioners have access to resources and information necessary for safe and effective outdoor learning experiences.
- Implementation of new programmes and qualifications aligned with CCC climate change strategy and green skills roadmap

3. Sustainability Awareness and Development:

Development and implementation of:

- Integrated sustainability principles throughout the service and into outdoor education programmes, emphasising climate change education, conservation, and eco-friendly practices, in line with the One Coventry Plan
- Collaboration with local environmental organisations and stakeholders to develop initiatives that address climate change within the hub-and-spoke model.
- Integrated delivery plan aligned with CCC Green Skills Roadmap

4. Hub-and-Spoke Model Development:

Development and implementation of:

- An eco-friendly Outdoor Education, Training, and Well-being hub as the central point with a focus on outdoor education, training and health & wellbeing. The hub will operate under a self-sustaining commercial business model, delivering eco-friendly outdoor activities and ventures.
- Established smaller outdoor areas, or "spokes," in various wards across the city, located in schools, parks, and open spaces to increase inclusivity, accessibility, and engagement.

- Connecting schemes from the hub to the allocated spoke areas through coordinated programming, shared resources, and networking opportunities.

5. Commercial Strand Development:

Development and implementation of:

- An established commercial arm focused on outdoor activities that financially support educational provision, operating under a profit-for-purpose model.
- A range of commercial services such as group activities, expeditions, corporate packages, holiday programmes, and events to generate revenue while promoting outdoor engagement and education.
- Raising the profile of OES and developing joint initiatives with both internal and external stakeholders.

6. Equality and diversity, making Outdoor Education more attractive to underrepresented groups

- focus on addressing historical inequities, promoting accessibility, and fostering a sense of belonging.
- acknowledging past discrimination, providing financial and physical access to outdoor spaces, and actively engaging diverse communities in program development and outreach.
- Develop strategies that address green space inequalities empowering communities to provide skills and break down historic barriers.

Strategies:

1. Curriculum Development:

- Collaborate with educational institutions to develop and implement outdoor education programmes aligned with the National Curriculum.
- Through recognised theories and established approaches incorporate character education, personal development, and employability skills programmes.
- Operating through the Coventry Alternative Provision Framework, provide alternative provision programmes that offer therapeutic outdoor experiences for individuals with specific needs, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.
- Work to develop continuous pathways with other service providers for the benefit of Coventry residents, such as joint partnership with UCLAN to provide pathways to Further education.

2. Professional Development for Practitioners:

- Provide and deliver comprehensive CPD sessions, training workshops, and apprenticeship courses tailored to equip educators and practitioners with the skills and knowledge needed to integrate outdoor education into their teaching practice.

- Establish a platform and Service Level Agreement for Educational Visits Service Support to support practitioners in planning and executing safe, compliant, and enriching outdoor learning experiences.

3. Sustainability Integration:

- Aligning with the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy work closely with internal teams, local environmental organisations and stakeholders to develop initiatives that raise awareness and engagement, address climate change and promote conservation efforts with children, young people and their families. (Appendix D)
- Embed sustainability principles throughout the outdoor education service and into all outdoor education programmes, promoting environmental awareness and action among participants.

4. Hub-and-Spoke Integration:

- In line with the Parks and Open Space Strategy and the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, establish an eco-friendly hub as a central point for outdoor education, training, and well-being activities, while developing spokes in various wards to extend reach and accessibility.
- Facilitate coordination between the hub and spokes to ensure shared resources, programming, and networking opportunities.

5. Commercial Ventures:

- Focus on outdoor activities that financially support educational provision under a profit-for-purpose model.
- Offer a diverse range of commercial services to attract various audiences and generate revenue for sustaining educational initiatives.
- Develop marketing strategies to promote commercial offerings, targeting groups, corporations, and individuals seeking outdoor experiences for leisure, team-building, or special occasions.
- Establish partnerships with leads, businesses, and organisations to offer commercial outdoor activities that complement educational provision and generate revenue.

6. Equality and diversity, making Outdoor Education more attractive to underrepresented groups

- Be aware of the historical exclusion of certain groups from outdoor spaces and activities.
- Incorporate the stories, knowledge, and contributions of various communities to the outdoors in our programming.
- Make sure outdoor spaces and activities are accessible to individuals with disabilities
- Partner with community leaders and organisations to co-create programs that resonate with their needs and interests.
- Ensure that all participants feel safe, respected, and valued in the outdoor environment

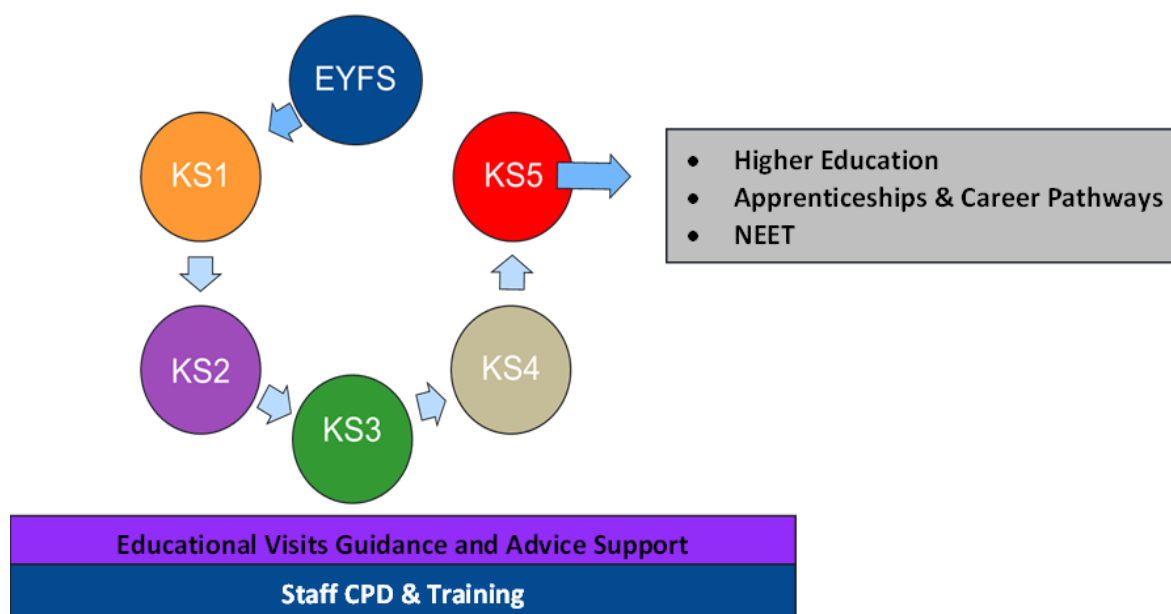
- Feature diverse individuals and stories in our outreach materials and program activities
- Integrate traditional ecological knowledge and practices from diverse culture
- Provide opportunities for participants to connect with nature on a personal level and reflect on their experiences

Implementation:

1. Hub-and-Spoke Implementation:

- For Hub and Spoke development, In line with the Parks and Open Space Strategy and the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy, conduct a thorough assessment to identify a suitable location for the eco-friendly Outdoor Education, Training, and Well-being hub, facility design, business model development, partnerships, community engagement, infrastructure development for each spoke site.
- Facilitate coordination between the hub and spokes to ensure shared resources, programming, and networking opportunities.

2. Curriculum & SEMH integration and Implementation:



- Allocate resources to support the development and implementation of outdoor education programmes for children, young people, and adults.
- Forge partnerships with schools, educational institutions, outdoor activity providers, and commercial entities to leverage expertise, resources, and support for program delivery.
- Working with the Green and Blue Infrastructure working group, develop and implement awards and schemes which can be rolled out into educational establishments within the city.

3. Professional Training and Support:

- Source funding for training initiatives and professional development opportunities for educators and practitioners interested in incorporating outdoor education into their practice.
- Implement and launch the professional Outdoor Education training and support hub. Offering courses, workshops, and apprenticeship programmes.
- Implement and launch the Educational Visits Advice and Guidance Service Level Agreement to assist practitioners in planning and executing educational visits, ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations and educational objectives.
- Collaborate with external partners to offer specialised training programmes and workshops.

4. Commercialisation and Revenue Generation:

- Develop a business plan for the commercial strand of outdoor activities, outlining revenue targets, marketing strategies, and operational plans.
- Monitor and evaluate the financial performance of commercial ventures, reinvesting profits into educational provision and program enhancement.

5. Promotion and Engagement:

- Promote outdoor education and activity programs through targeted marketing campaigns, community outreach, and engagement activities.
- Encourage participation from diverse groups within the community, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.

Evaluation and Review:

1. Monitoring and Feedback:

- Implement mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of outdoor education and activity programmes and commercial activities, from participants, practitioners, and stakeholders.
- Use feedback to inform service and programme improvements, address challenges, and identify opportunities for expansion and innovation.

2. Periodic Review:

- Conduct regular reviews of the outdoor education strategy to assess its effectiveness in achieving objectives, aligning with educational priorities, and remaining financially sustainable.
- Adjust strategies and priorities as necessary based on changing demographics, educational policies, business sustainability and stakeholder feedback.



COVENTRY OUTDOORS
EDUCATION & ADVENTURE SERVICE



COVENTRY OUTDOORS SERVICE BROCHURE

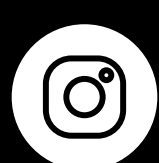
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COVENTRY ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

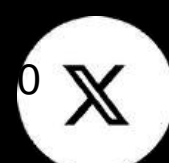
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EDUCATION & CURRICULUM PROGRAMMES

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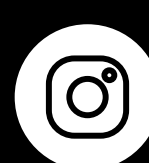
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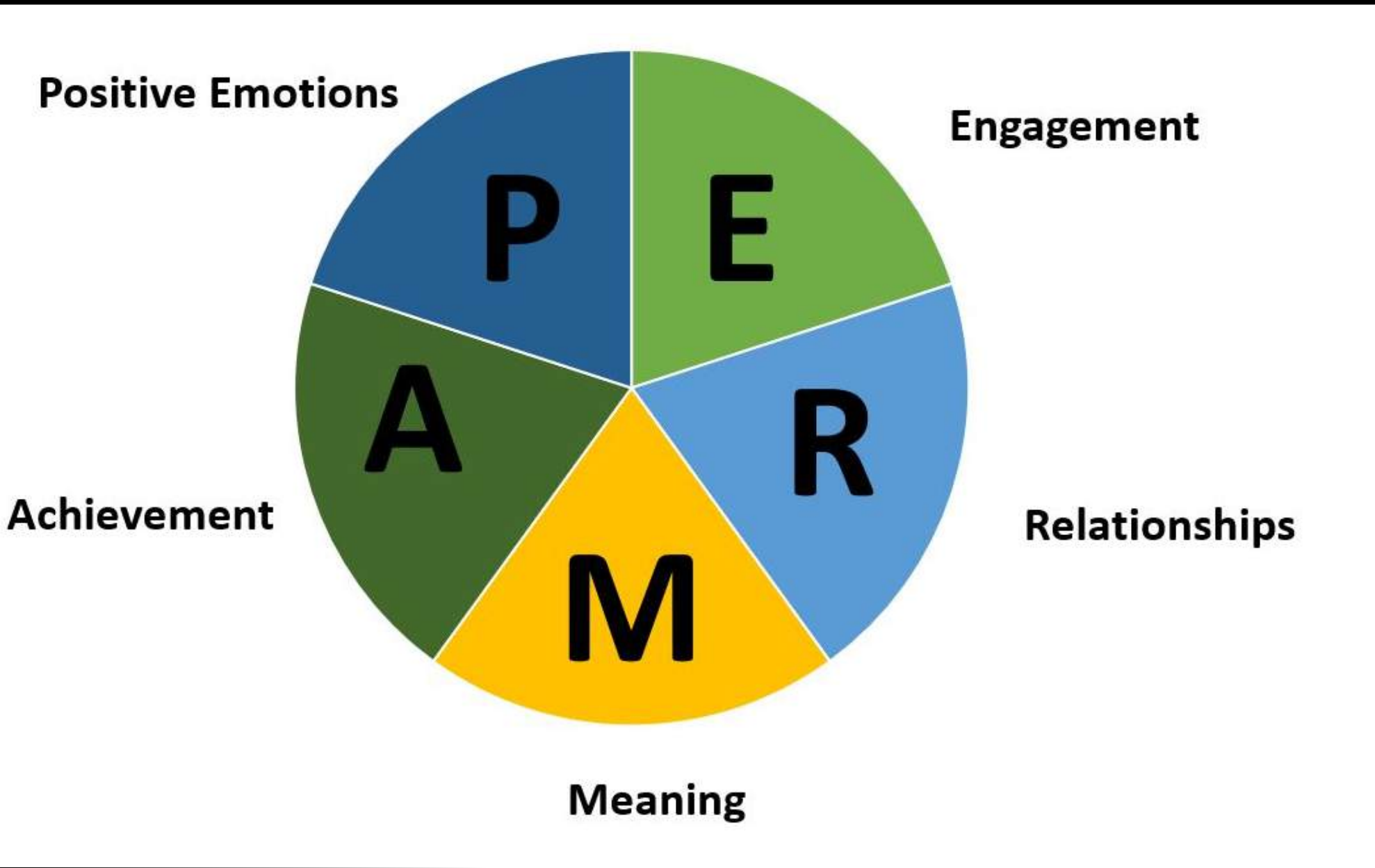


Introduction

Coventry Outdoors offers a broad range of educational and curriculum programmes for schools from early years through primary, secondary, special, schools, FE and HE as well as youth and uniformed groups. Our approach is to provide a world-class Outdoor Education Service which supports children and young people to flourish through a purpose-built provision which focusses on:

- Character Education and Personal Development
- Raising achievement through experimental, authentic learning experiences

Our service is designed to support children and young people to develop ‘Character Traits’ and ‘Flourish’ as individuals. This is achieved through specially designed programmes that promote strong links between the outdoor experience, the curriculum and character education. Children and young people will be able to explore and develop their character strengths along with the 5 key important building blocks of well being; assisting them in their transition to adulthood.



- Positive emotion - feel good factor and fulfilment
- Engagement - engrossed in whatever you are doing
- Relationships - authentic and secure connections
- Meaning - living with a sense of purpose
- Accomplishment - a sense of achievement



OutdoorEducation@coventry.gov.uk

Courses, Qualifications & CPD Packages

We have a range of courses and qualifications that will give confidence and inspiration to practitioners and teachers to use outdoor learning in day-to-day teaching; creating safe, valuable and effective experiences for children and young people in the outdoors.

The National Curriculum Outside Courses

Twilight (School based)
Learning Beyond the Classroom (Level 1)

Open Courses
Learning Beyond the Classroom (Level 1)
Learning Beyond the Classroom (Level 3)

Wilderness Therapeutic Approaches & Intervention

Wilderness Therapeutic approaches & Interventions (Level 2)

***Wild Things**
***Wild Tribe**
***Wild Crew**

Outdoor Learning competency based Curriculum Courses

Twilight (School based)
Wild Passport Practitioner (Level 1)

Open Courses
Wild Passport Practitioner (Level 1)
Wild Passport Practitioner (Level 3)

Extended Offer

Apprenticeships
Forest School Leader Training Education and Training (Level 5)
Curriculum Deep Dive
Outdoor First Aid
Consultancy & Grant Support
Staff Team Development Days

OutdoorEducation@coventry.gov.uk

Wilderness therapeutic approaches and interventions is an accredited qualification exclusively for schools. The therapeutic programmes are structured and progressive, using recognised and established therapeutic approaches.



Challenging, diverse activities and structured projects uniquely integrating elements from:

- Wilderness therapy management
- Other established therapeutic approaches
- Rites of passage
- Backwoods Survival and Hunter Gatherer living skills
- Environment Mastery Problem Solving
- Change and Transition
- Self Mastery
- Advanced Bushcraft
- Long-term wilderness
- Creativity and Strategy

Character Education:

- Perseverance, resilience, tolerance and respect for others
- Bullying response and behaviour
- Confidence and 'Can Do' attitude
- Self motivation, self regulation, self awareness
- Empathy, Social Skills and respect for our community and world
- Integrity, trust, openness, true self esteem and dignity
- A desire to explore and to learn
- Tenacity - Don't give up, concentration, team skills and practical skills



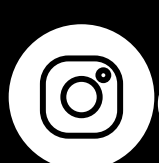
Wild Things (Key Stage 1)

Wild Things is a capacity building early intervention programme aimed at Key Stage 1 and can be used for children who may be struggling socially and emotionally or as a fun and developmental booster for all. This is a FUN programme, it uses Wilderness Therapy, Developmental and Creative Approaches whilst exploring specific key developmental Behaviour Schemas.

- Participants experience safety, containment and belonging
- They will learn to connect positively with others, and will develop a sense of appropriate boundaries.
- They will experience freedom to explore their environment, their peers, and themselves, and have their senses awakened
- Physical and specific mental developmental processes will be exercised



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Wild Tribe (Key Stage 2)

Wild Tribe is an outdoor, capacity building, therapeutic and developmental intervention programme for children in Years 3 and 4 who may be currently struggling socially and emotionally; or for those who may be presenting specific identified issues - typically SEBD, ADHD, Autism, or other special needs and issues.

“Who am I..? How do I relate to others..?” Wild Tribe consciously and directly explores and transfers social skills and responsibilities into all areas of children's lives.

Wild Tribe examines self, intrapersonal issues, responsibilities to others – Interpersonal issues like respect for self, for others, and for the world beyond our own skin.

It is about where we are now, developing acute self-knowledge, so changes and firm intentions can be made, to transfer experiences and learning in the wild back into everyday parts of children's lives – behaviours at home, and at school.

Wild Crew (9 - 24 years old)

Wild Crew is implemented in consultation with you to explore specific issues, needs and objectives for identified individuals and small groups – e.g. social / emotional issues, SEBD/SEMH, ADHD, Autism/ASD, and other special needs.

Wild Crew exploits a range of recognised and established therapeutic approaches, alongside Wilderness Therapy / Rites of Passage techniques and Mentoring. These are uniquely integrated, using eQe's long professional expertise in therapy and therapeutic approaches with children and young people.

Using specific activities, expertly designed to run alongside professionally structured and guided discussion and reflection activities, with low-level therapeutic approaches, it enables the group members to be:

- **Self Aware**
- **Emotionally Intelligent and therefore more aligned in their behaviour**
- **Able to develop in the Six Pillars of True Self-Esteem**
- **Improve their lives now and their expectations as they progress to become adults**



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These courses and qualifications are intended to provide practitioners and teachers with an understanding of the benefits of learning beyond the classroom and the practical skills in delivering the National Curriculum in the Outdoors. Outdoor Learning is proven to raise attainment levels and wellbeing through these authentic learning experiences.



Twilight
Option
Available

Learning Beyond the Classroom (Level 1) (Open Course)

An introduction to the key skills and pedagogy of educating outside the classroom. This course is a certificated Level 1 qualification for practitioners and teachers intended as an introduction to:



Planning and delivering individual or parts of lessons outdoors which are linked to the curriculum



Risk assessment, facilitation and practical delivery of learning beyond the classroom



Use nature based resources to supplement learning within the classroom

The Learning Beyond the Classroom introduction course can also be delivered as a training twilight for up to 16 participants and offering one individual the Level 1 qualification.



Learning Beyond the Classroom (Level 3) (Open Course)

A certificated Level 3 qualification delving deeper in to the key skills and pedagogy of educating outside the classroom enabling practitioners and teachers to regularly:



Plan and deliver all classroom based learning, schemes of work and individual lesson progressions including all statutory subjects outside on a regular basis



Support other staff to risk assess, facilitate and practically deliver learning beyond the classroom

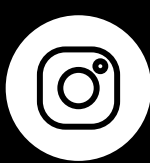


Use informal and natural learning environments to compliment and solidify more formal learning using nature based resources

Candidates will receive a complimentary book of their choice from the National Curriculum Outdoors series and discounts on further resources



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The WILD Passport is a skill, knowledge and competency based outdoor learning curriculum and progression monitoring system. Providing a five-year curriculum to take learners from the very foundations of woodland skills right through to an advanced level. WILD Passport provides a framework for evidencing learner progression and achievement, providing justification for the provision of outdoor learning opportunities.



**Twilight
Option
Available**

Wild Passport Practitioner (Level 1) (Open Course)

This bespoke course is an introduction into outdoor learning where skills will be learnt without the need for special tools and insurance. A certificated Level 1 qualification for practitioners and teachers to:



Learn how to use a specially designed resource with session plans and kit list to enable candidates to get started without any extra planning



Learn to visually risk assess and understand good practice when delivering outdoor skills

The introduction to Wild Passport can also be delivered as a training twilight for up to 16 participants and offering one individual the Level 1 qualification.



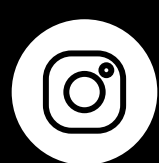
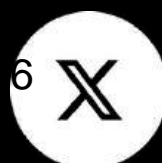
Wild Passport Practitioner (Level 3) (Open Course)

An advanced Outdoor Learning Practitioner Accredited Level 3 course designed to equip staff with the necessary competencies and assessment opportunities to take the National Curriculum outside.

- **A progressive, differentiated 5-year skills based curriculum for Outdoor learning**
- **Each task and lesson plan linked to the National Curriculum**
- **Visual assessment by task and activity**
- **Skill-evidence progress and improvement ready for Ofsted**
- **Can be used as a tool for school improvement, and social and emotional development**



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Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.



Forest School Leader Training (Level 3) (Open Course)

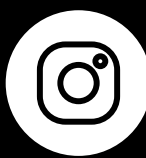
This course provides learners with the skills required to run and manage a forest school setting when conducting Forest School outdoor programmes and activities. It is designed to meet the needs of teachers and practitioners in providing everything required to set up a Forest School. A certificated Level 3 qualification for practitioners and teachers to:

-  **Understand the learning theories which underpin quality Forest Schools practice and how to apply theories in everyday practice**
-  **Learn about site selection, site set-up, woodland management and how to do this sustainably**
-  **Learn practical skills around the use of fire and safe effective use of tools in an education setting**
-  **Gain knowledge of setting up, delivering and evaluating a forest school programme**
-  **Safely conduct risk assessments and follow health and safety protocols associated with Forest Schools and outdoor learning**

As well as the practical training where skills will be learned and assessed, candidates will be required to complete a portfolio of coursework as part of their learning journey which they will have up to a year to complete.



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The Diploma in Education and Training qualification (Outdoor Learning Specialism) is designed to support an individual's entry into the teaching/training industry, and is aimed specifically at those wishing to be employed in the outdoor learning sector. Meeting the national Minimum Core Standards for Teacher Training Qualifications for the Further Education and Skills Sector.



Diploma in Education and Training Outdoor Learning Specialism (Level 5) (Open Course)

This course will allow practitioners to achieve a higher level qualification in education and training specialising in Outdoor Learning. Learners will be able to apply for QTLS status, through the Society for Education and Training on completion of this course.



Comprising of units designed to equip the candidates to deliver a range of different Outdoor Learning schemes of work, teaching learning and assessment in this specialism, theories, principles and models, professional practice in the outdoor learning sector, alongside wider professional practice.



Suitable for those that have started their journey in outdoor education through qualifications such as Wild Passport Practitioner, Forest School Leader (Level 3) or have experience of working with young people.



Learners will take part in a number of face to face, online and observed sessions in their setting with highly qualified and experienced teachers with many years' experience in the field.

As well as the practical training where skills will be learned and assessed, candidates will be required to complete a portfolio of coursework as part of their learning journey which they will have up to 2 years to complete.

Studying this course will enable a learner to:

- **plan and deliver sessions to groups of learners**
- **plan a programme of work in the outdoor learning sector**
- **undertake risk-benefit assessments**
- **develop their professional practice to a high level**



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Curriculum Deep Dive

This course will provide subject leaders with background information on the deep dive process and how taking Outdoor Learning may be used to assist in helping schools to prepare for the inspection.

We can deliver training aimed to ensure subject leaders are well-prepared for the inspection process and are able to demonstrate the effectiveness of their use of Outdoor learning.



Staff Team Development Days

Coventry Outdoors offer a vast range of activities or scenarios which can be great for encouraging bonding, creative thinking, problem solving, wellbeing and confidence boosting. You can choose from the following team day options:



Survival, Bushcraft and Wilderness Day

Action packed activities that will leave you feeling more confident in your future outdoor adventures



Woodland Craft Day

Select, prepare and craft your very own piece of work e.g making wooden eating utensils and wooden mallets



Survival Weekend

Working as part of a team, you will be responsible for making your own shelter, sourcing water, finding food and making fire



Consultation & Grant Support

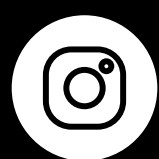
Through our consultancy package we can support you to develop a project and costed plan which will attract funding for the development of an outdoor education area for your own school site which practitioners and teachers can utilise as part of the outdoor learning school curriculum.

Outdoor First Aid (Level 3) (Open Course)

This qualification is designed to meet the needs of those working away from immediate assistance (more than 30 mins) in the remote and rural regions of the UK. This course is recognised throughout the UK and is the course of choice for experienced practitioners who use the outdoors and will maintain the license to practice for those with Outdoor National Governing Body Instructor awards.



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Committed to equipping children and young people with the vital skills, knowledge and experiences which assist them in their transition to adulthood

Apprenticeships

We have created bespoke apprenticeship pathways to enable schools and other educational organisations to develop their own specialist who support the school to embed outdoor education within their setting.

Outdoor Learning Specialist (Level 5)

Our Level 5 apprenticeship allows schools to gain a qualified practitioner (at no cost). The only commitment is one day study release a week for up to 2 years.

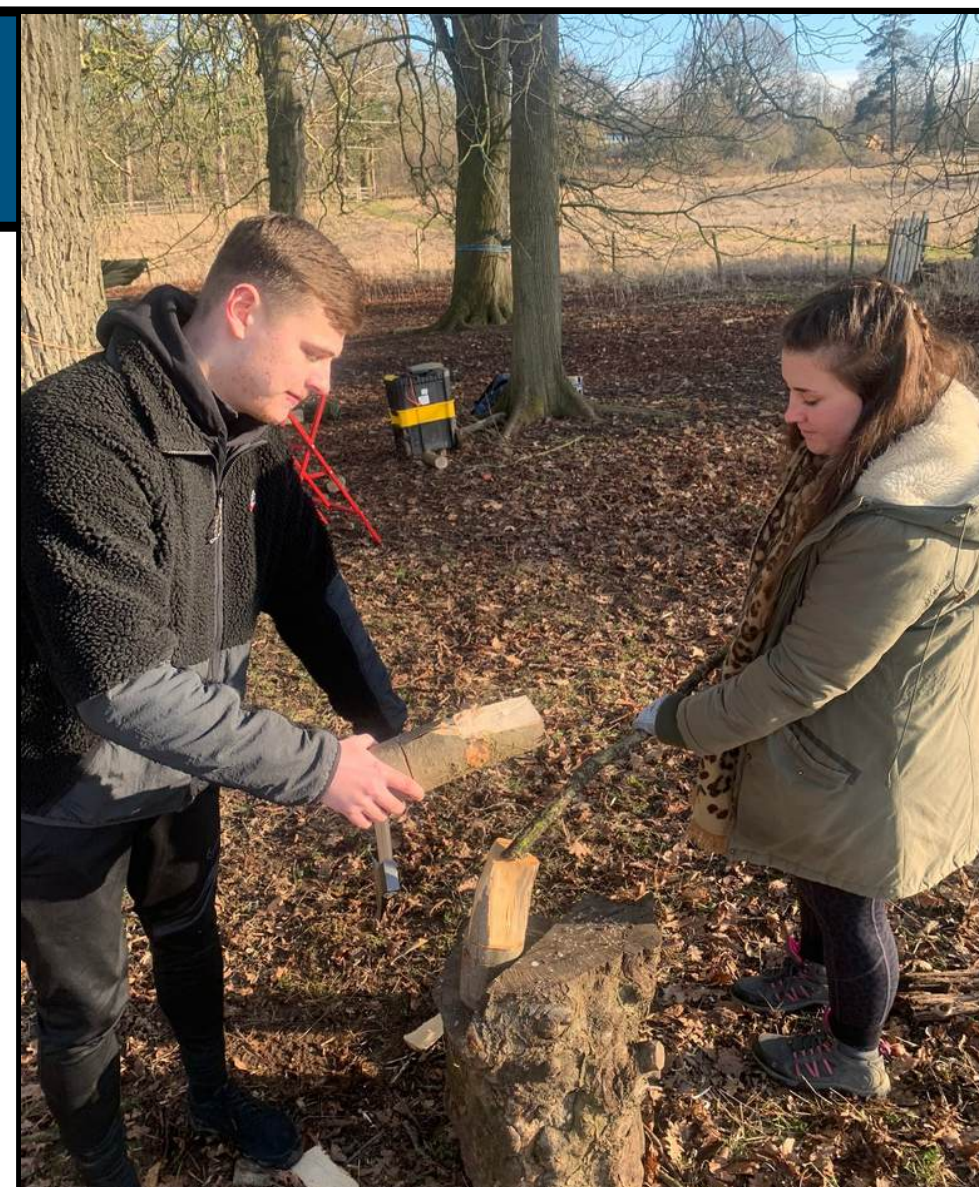
The apprenticeship develops educators that have the knowledge and skill to deliver a wide range of outdoor pedagogies including:

- Bushcraft and survival activities
- Learner led, play based sessions
- Outdoor therapeutic practices
- Curriculum lessons outdoors

Past and current apprentices have recorded positive impacts to their learners after delivering outdoor learning. The range of positive impacts have included improvement in their: well-being, in-school behaviour, social skills, academic achievement and attendance.

Qualifications & Awards Included

- L2 Wilderness Therapy Practitioner (Optional)
- L3 Forest School Leader Training (Optional)
- L3 Learning Beyond the Classroom (Optional)
- L3 Wild Passport Practitioner (Optional)
- L3 Outdoor First Aid (Essential)
- Safeguarding Training (Essential)



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Through our popular apprenticeship programme, we will equip learners with everything they need to kickstart their career in the great outdoors. We will show learners the ropes and help them gain a whole host of qualifications to be able to deliver both land and water based activities to people looking to make the most of their time in the great outdoors.



Outdoor Activity Instructor (Level 3)



A chance to develop a career in an outdoor education or outdoor activity (at no cost).

Based at our Outdoor Learning centre at Plas Dol-y-Moch. Come and learn a range of technical qualifications, in addition to the Apprenticeship standard as part of your training.

Qualifications such as Lowland leader, Paddlesports and Mine leader, can be funded as part of a training programme specifically designed for the needs of staff at Outdoor Activity and Adventure Centres.

Trained by highly experienced and qualified instructors, who have many years of experience in working and managing programmes and centres.

Learners will have the unique opportunity to bolt on two National Governing Body (NGB) qualifications and the Level 3 Outdoor First Aid qualification, all funded as part of the apprenticeship.

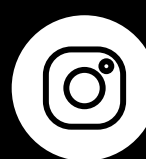
Qualifications & Awards Included

Supported by a dedicated, experienced staff team, our apprenticeship will give you the opportunity to gain a variety of in-house and nationally recognised industry qualifications such as:

- Canoeing/ Kayaking
- Climbing
- Archery
- Bushcraft
- Habitat & Wildlife
- Lowland Leader
- Paddlesports
- Mine Leader
- Mountain Leader
- L3 Outdoor First Aid
- L3 Safeguarding Training



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Educational Visits: Guidance & Advice Service

Coventry Outdoors provides professional high quality advice, guidance and support Service Level Agreement for schools and establishments in managing educational visits and activities, to assist delivering outdoor education, learning and adventure. We have a team of advisors who are members of the National Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) who are highly experienced Outdoor Educators.



The team can provide support and compulsory training to educational establishments, providing professional and practical advice on all aspects of managing educational visits, adventurous/hazardous activities and in developing curriculum-linked outdoor learning



Our proven framework will ensure educational establishments in the Local Authority meet all statutory health & safety responsibilities whilst observing duty of care requirements



The key to our service is that we ensure all off site visits that need Local Authority approval (overseas, residential and adventurous activities) are fully quality assured and compliant providing Headteachers, CEO's and School Leaders the reassurance they are often seeking



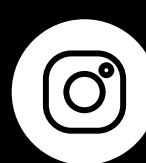
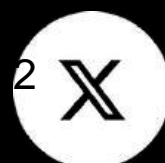
We provide educational establishments with a platform to plan and deliver successful educational visits and off-site activities by ensuring they have access to nationally-recognised OEAP training, advice and support and access to the current best practice



We ensure Quality Assurance visits (spot check visits) to a number of organised trips are conducted, along with a variety of reports available and produced giving Local Authorities insight to educational visits taking place



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Coventry City Council acknowledges the immense value of off-site visits and related activities to young people, and fully supports and encourages those that are well planned and managed. The key to effective and successful outdoor learning and off-site visits is having the right leaders doing the right activities with the right young people in the right places at the right times.



Our service will provide each establishment access to:



Advice and Support - on all aspects of the educational visits process from a team of qualified Education Visits Advisors & Industry Professionals



Online Advice and Notification System - with approval for high risk educational visits, to check that arrangements reflect Coventry City Council's guidance and current good practice



Access to EVOLVE - through the Coventry City Council EVOLVE website for educational visits



Inclusive Training – complimentary access to a range of flexible online training courses (saving cover costs and staff time) whilst being COVID secure, along with direct face-to-face and bespoke sessions available:

- EVC Training (OEAP & IOL Accredited)
- EVC Update Training (OEAP & IOL Accredited)
- Visit Leader Training (OEAP & IOL Accredited)
- EVOLVE Training



Administration & System Support – at hand advice and guidance on systems and procedures via telephone and email service



Termly Webinars – sharing national guidance and statutory requirement updates, advice and guidance on good practice & the EVOLVE system



Newsletter Updates – access to regular newsletter, guidance and statutory information



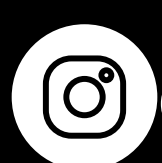
Policy Support - Educational Visits Policy and additional Policy Document support on request



Discounted CPD – Guidance and Advice SLA, gives exclusive access to membership rates for all our Courses, Qualifications and CPD packages!!



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Character Education & Intervention Programmes

A series of 12-week programmes, each session lasting a full day. Programmes are aimed at children and young people with a broad range of issues, ranging from mainstream with everyday basic social and emotional issues, low confidence, and low self-esteem, through to those with deeper issues such as behavioural and SEMH. Each programme is designed to enhance mental health and wellbeing, through focusing on personal development and character education whilst also equipping children and young people with new skills and qualifications.



Challenge Week : Each programme will focus on developing a set of key Outdoor Education skills over 11 weeks with the final week (week 12) being set as a challenge day! Participants will have to use all their developed skills and knowledge to complete the tasks set and complete the challenge as a team!



Awards/Qualifications : Participants will achieve recognised awards based on the challenges completed, such as the John Muir award, Sports Leaders UK and other National Governing Body Qualifications.



Programmes are designed to support the development of soft skills including:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Communication |  Teamwork |
|  Problem solving |  Organisation |
|  Dependability |  Positive attitude |
|  Critical thinking |  Adaptability |
|  Creativity |  Conflict resolution |
|  Perseverance |  Resilience |
|  Reflective learning |  Decision making |

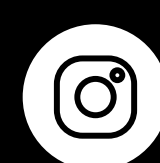
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Project Escape Challenge

This 12-week intervention programme is designed to help develop emotional intelligence in its participants. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to identify, evaluate, control and express emotions, and to be able to read and respond appropriately.

This course will focus on developing:



Emotional Literacy: Recognising your own feelings and the feelings of others



Managing emotions: Being able to control your emotions effectively



Developing empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of others



Motivation: Pushing yourself to meet the goals you have set



The challenge day will place pupils in an extreme situation where they use their wit's, teamwork and new skills to ensure all members of their team make it back to civilisation safely. Students will have to locate, assess injury and rescue a member of their team from the wilderness bringing them to safety.

Activities include:



Team Building Challenges



Ghillie Suit Challenge



Combat Archery



Principles of First Aid



Compass & Map



Following Trails



Rescue



Search & Evasion



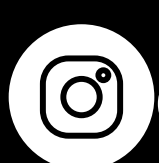
Build a log lean to



Rescue Challenge







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Project Survival Challenge

Trauma Informed Social and Emotional Learning is an approach to promote our pupil's social-emotional development whilst creating a safe and reliable environment where pupils who have experienced trauma and adverse childhood experiences feel supported. In order to do this, students will;

-  Explore their strengths and identities
-  Develop meaningful positive relationships
-  Provide positive experiences, and learning opportunities to support more formal learning
-  Facilitate pupils to engage positively with challenging and new scenarios;
 - Positive experiences
 - Mindfulness activities
 - Self Regulation and Self Care
 - Emotion Coaching



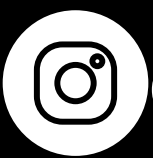
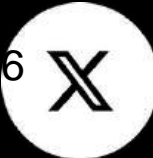
For the challenge Participants will be placed in teams, and will have to work together to complete tasks, using limited items of their choice, on the Ultimate Survival Challenge. Students will have to select a number of resources from a central store to complete a series of tasks and challenges to complete Project Survival

Activities include:

-  Tools & Sharps
-  Basket & Container Making
-  Cooking Utensils
-  Build a log lean to
-  Free standing Ridge Shelter
-  Making a Bender Shelter
-  Building a Campfire
-  Water Acquisition
-  Pre-historic Fire
-  Campfire Cooking
-  Making Cordage
-  Primitive Bow Making
-  Combat Archery
-  Trapping



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Woodland Enterprise Challenge

Woodland Enterprise is a child and young person initiated activity which is directly linked to developing students. Independence, responsibility and teamworking skills are key elements of enterprise. The project is designed to enrich the curriculum further and give children the opportunity to experience real life problems.

Traditional woodland craft can also be known as 'woodmanship' which means working with trees, forests and tools in a way that communities going back thousands of years would recognise. Traditional craft and green wood sessions will involve woodwork without the use of nails and screws - and with a focus on hand tools. As part of the intervention programme pupils will:



Experience work expectations first hand



Understand how an employing organisation functions



Experience social relationships in the working environment



Appreciate expectations that employees will have of fellow workers



Gain self-confidence, skills and knowledge needed for adult life



Increase self-esteem and self worth



Students will spend 12 weeks making several useable and saleable items that they can take away at the end of the course. These could include, a chair, table, spoon and butter knife or a piece of jewellery made from sourced materials or smelted metal. This provides students with an opportunity to gain work experience in a non-threatening environment

Activities include:



Tools & Sharps



Splitting & Cutting



Wood Carving



Carving a utensil



Making a stool



Joints & Pegs



Splitting Hazel & Willow



Wattle Fencing



Daubb & Cobb



Green Wood Framing



Table Production



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Coventry Alternative Provision




Coventry Alternative Provision (CAP) is set up to provide support for students who are, for many reasons, struggling in their respective educational establishments. The various opportunities we provide for the students are equipping them to deal with past trauma, SEMH needs and anxiety. The therapeutic programs all use various outdoor learning and life experiences that help bolster resilience and enable the students to benefit from the positive effects on mental health from being in an outdoor setting.

Flourish Programme

Flourish is a termly behavioural intervention programme that addresses the specific needs of young people with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

The programme aims to improve young people's mental well-being, self-regulation skills, and social interactions. The outdoor environment serves as a natural context for delivering therapeutic interventions, providing ample opportunities for experiential learning, physical movement, and interaction with nature.

This programme will help young people to:

-  **Foster a sense of belonging, improve attention, and reduce impulsivity**
-  **Facilitate emotional expression, enhance empathy, and promote problem-solving skills**
-  **To boost confidence, enhance social skills, and promote independence and resilience**

The programme not only addresses specific behavioural patterns but also fosters a love for nature, promotes physical health, and instils a sense of achievement and self-worth.






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EOTAS Programme

Education Other than in School (EOTAS) is a 12-week programme that provides education for young people outside of a formal school setting. This program aims to help young people to become better equipped when coping with various anxieties, gain self-confidence and self-belief by overcoming challenges and discovering their capabilities within the outdoor environment.

This programme will help young people to:





-  **Engage with their learning and improve their mental health**
-  **Develop skills that mainstream schools might not offer**
-  **Learn in a safer and more comfortable environment**



Personal Development Programme

The Personal Development programme runs for the full year, designed for young people to develop personal skills and to gain a Level 2 Award in Outdoor Skills Competency.

This programme will help young people to:




-  **Understand the learning theories which underpin quality Outdoor Skills practice and how to apply theories in everyday practice**
-  **Learn about site selection, site set-up, woodland management and how to do this sustainably**
-  **Learn practical skills around the use of fire and safe effective use of tools in an education setting**
-  **Safely conduct risk assessments and follow health and safety protocols associated with outdoor learning**



Level 3 Diploma in Work based Trees & Timber

The Diploma in Work-based Trees and Timber is aimed at Post 16 learners to develop their skills in forestry and arboriculture, this qualification is a 2 year diploma leading to pathways in to forestry establishments, maintenance and harvesting, green wood trades, and arboriculture.

Learners will receive qualifications in:

-  **Combined Chainsaw Maintenance, Cross Cutting and Felling up to 380mm**
-  **Lantra Wood Chipper & Brush Cutter - learning how to operate powerful machines and tools safely and confidently**
-  **Level 3 Outdoor First Aid with trauma module**



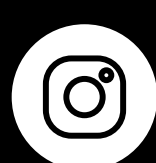
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Education & Curriculum Programmes



From rivers and habitats to den building, orienteering and natural art, our programmes cover science, geography, history, PE and team building and all with English and Maths embedded throughout.

If you have specific topics or themes, we can adapt our programmes to cover everything you need or even create a bespoke programme just for you.

How will the day work?



On your arrival, we will greet you outside the Visitor Centre and take you to our indoor classroom to drop off your bags and lunches before taking you in to the park to begin your activities. All programmes are two hours long and session times are 10am to 12pm and 12.30pm to 2.30pm but we can be flexible with this if necessary.



At lunchtime, our indoor classroom is available to you to eat your lunch, but we encourage having a picnic in the park if the weather is good, as this will add to the enjoyment of your day!



You are more than welcome to visit the park with your pupils to explore and run your own activities. However, we ask that you complete a 'Self-led Visit' form, which can be found on our website. This is so we can advise you on whether there are any other groups, events or work going on, onsite on the day that will affect your plans.



If you can't get to us, we can come to you! We can adapt some of programmes to deliver them in your school grounds. For more information, please get in touch with us.

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First Nature

Using their senses, pupils will explore the park through a series of short activities that include looking for different textures, colours, sounds and smells, bark rubbing, bug hunting and of course, feeding the ducks! Pupils will build on language skills, using adjectives to communicate what they see, hear, feel, and smell in the park and develop the confidence to explore their surroundings.

EYFS

-  Communication & Language
-  Physical Development
-  Understanding the World
-  Literacy
-  Mathematics
-  Personal, Social & Emotional Development

KS1

-  Plants and their seasonal changes
-  Living things and their habitats



Three Little Pigs

Pupils will listen to the story of the Three Little Pigs in the woodland before building their own house of sticks for the pigs to live in. Working in groups, they will build on their teamwork and communication skills to create their 'home in the woods'. Pupils will be encouraged to use their imaginations by selecting natural resources that look like or could be used as furniture (chairs, tables, beds etc), utensils (e.g. pots, pans, spoons), gardens (maybe a picket fence, outdoor seating, path or plants) and maybe even a trap for the wolf!

EYFS

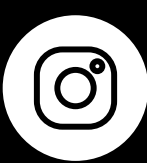
-  Communication & Language
-  Physical Development
-  Understanding the World
-  Literacy
-  Mathematics
-  Personal, Social & Emotional Development

KS1

-  Story Telling
-  Design & Technology



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Autumn Changes

Pupils will discover how the park changes during the autumn by exploring the park through a series of short activities that cover what happens to trees across the year, looking for autumn colours and seeds, bug hunting, bark rubbing and of course, feeding the ducks! Pupils will build on language skills using adjectives to explain what they discover in the park and develop the confidence to explore their surroundings and communicate with others what they find.

EYFS

-  Communication & Language
-  Physical Development
-  Understanding the World
-  Literacy
-  Mathematics
-  Personal, Social & Emotional Development

KS1




-  Plants and their seasonal changes
-  Living things and their habitats



Woods & Water

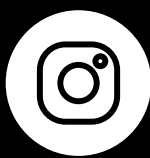
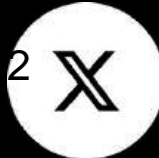
Pupils will investigate the woodland and pond habitats and the invertebrates that inhabit both areas. They will compare the two habitats, and the invertebrates found in them, building on the key vocabulary and language required to describe them. They will also discuss why the invertebrates and other animals seek out the habitats they live in and discover which will migrate between habitats for different stages of their lives. Pupils will keep a tally of each of the minibeasts they find and build on their confidence to explore their surroundings, independently and as a group by moving logs, touching the trees, mud and pond water, using fine and gross motor skills to use the equipment and collect and treat the animals with respect and care. This programme will be differentiated to meet the needs of each Key Stage.

KS1

-  Working scientifically
-  Living things and their habitats
-  Animals, including humans



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Monsters in Miniature (Summer Term)

Pupils will compare and contrast the woodland and meadow habitats. They will investigate the invertebrates found in each habitat. Pupils will be able to build on key vocabulary and language skills associated with describing the habitats and invertebrates, as well as improving their confidence to explore their surroundings, independently and as a group by moving logs, touching the trees, mud and plants, using fine and gross motor skills to use the equipment and collect and treat the animals with respect and care.

KS1 & KS2



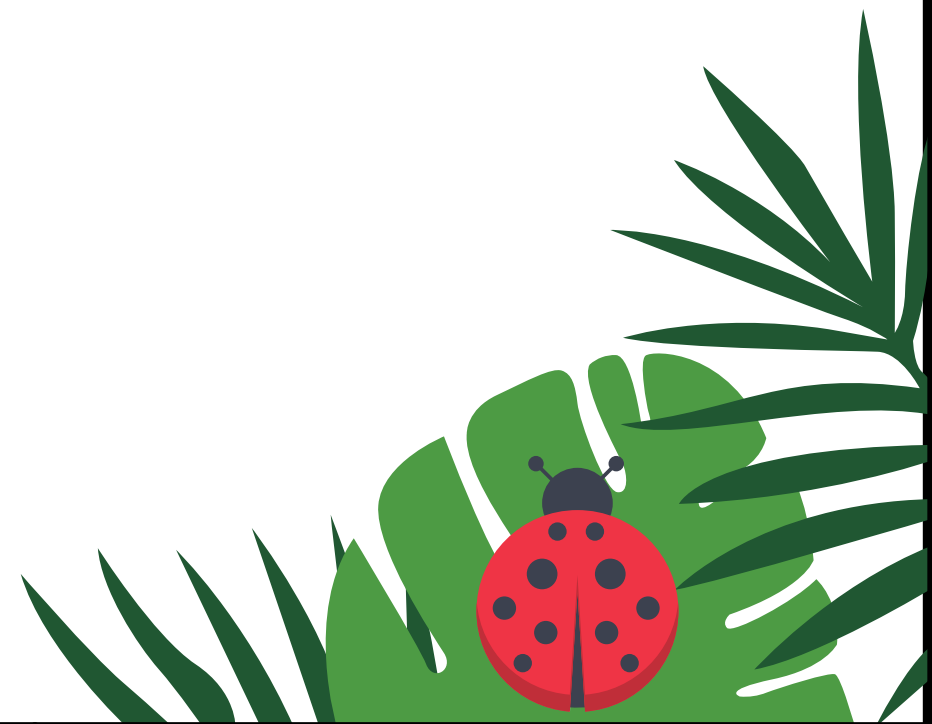
Working scientifically



Living things and their habitats



Animals, including humans



Discovering Fresh Water Life

Pupils will have the opportunity to explore the water life at Coombe in depth. They will observe and identify the water birds that inhabit the waterways at Coombe and of course, will get to feed the ducks! They will then do a pond dipping session to investigate the invertebrates that live in the water. Pupils will be able to build on key vocabulary and language skills associated with describing the habitat and invertebrates, as well as improving their confidence to explore new and magical learning environments. The programme is differentiated to meet the learning objectives of each Key Stage.

KS1



Working scientifically



Animals, including humans



Living things and their habitats

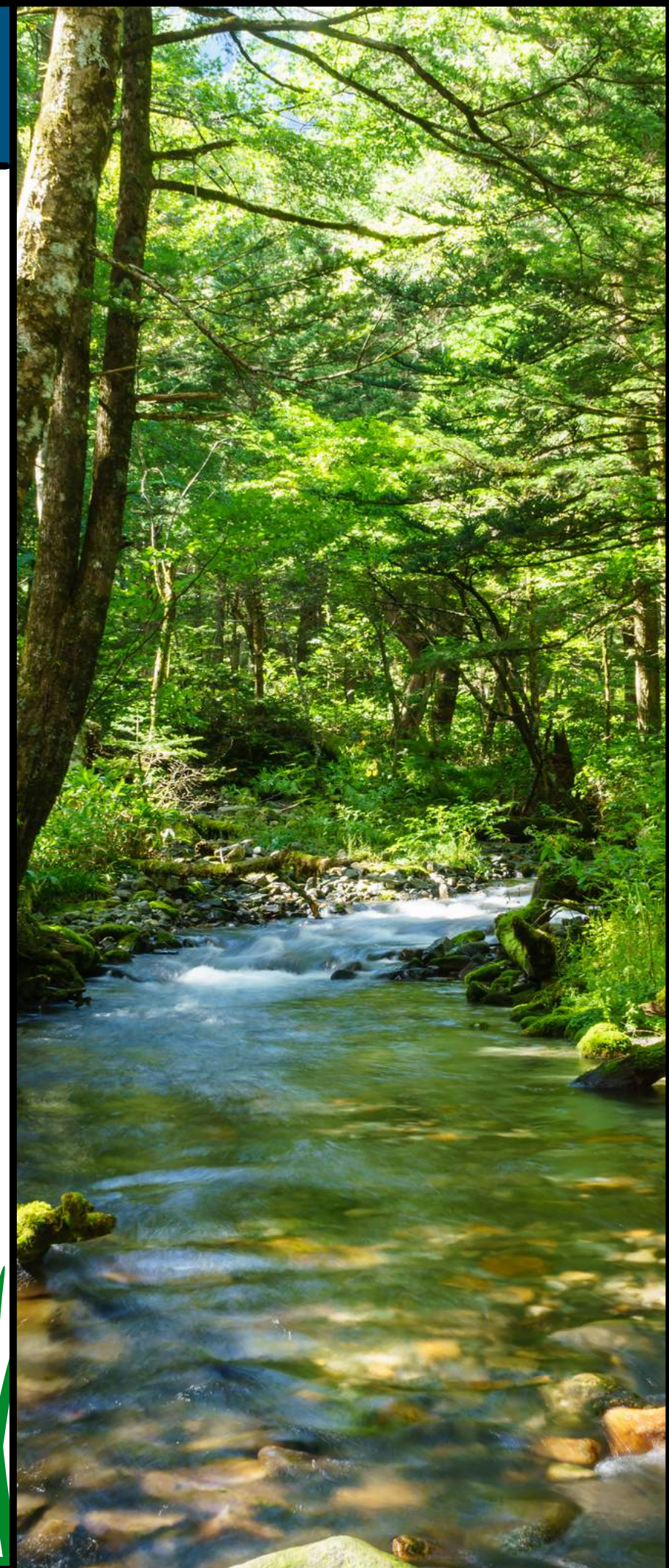
KS2



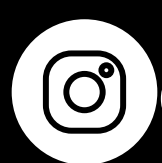
Working scientifically



Living things and their habitats



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Animal Adaptations

During this session, pupils will learn about the adaptations of a small woodland bird before discovering how it fits into the food chain, food web and the habitat in general. This interactive session uses props and a costume to get pupils thinking about how the bird would be affected if one or more parts of the food web or habitat were lost. Teachers can then choose one of the three habitats (woodland, meadow or pond) they would like the pupils to explore where they will investigate and classify the animals they find. The session is differentiated to meet the learning objectives for each Key Stage.

KS1

-  Working scientifically
 -  Plants
 -  Animals, including humans
 -  Living things and their habitats
- 








KS2

-  Working scientifically
-  Plants
-  Animals, including humans
-  Living things and their habitats
-  Evolution and Inheritance







Wild About Maths

Differentiated for each Key Stage, pupils will take part in activities that all build on key maths skills while exploring the park. They will measure the circumference of a tree and use this to work out its age, hunt for minibeasts, keep a tally of what they find and use this data to create a giant bar chart, use compass points to create shapes, look for symmetry and patterns in nature, create 2D and 3D shapes using natural materials.

KS1

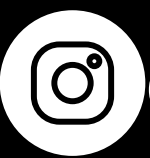
-  Number
-  Counting
-  Represent numbers using objects
-  Measurement
-  2D and 3D Shapes
-  Statistics
-  Position and direction

KS2

-  Number
-  Problem Solving
-  Measurement
-  2D and 3D Shapes
-  Statistics
-  Geometry



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River Study

Pupils will follow the path of the river through the park discussing it's natural and man-made features along the way. They will annotate a map with key vocabulary and learn how the river fits in to the wider river system. Pupils will also investigate the invertebrates that inhabit the freshwater river system during a pond dipping session and measure the width, depth, and flow of the river. This can be done as a half-day session or be extended to a full day to give your pupils more time to explore digest the information given. The programme is differentiated to meet the learning objectives for each Key Stage.

KS2

- Locational knowledge
- Human and physical geography
- Geographical skills and fieldwork
- Living things and their habitats
- Animals, including humans
- Measurement, plotting and data handling
- Whole numbers, place value, fractions and decimals

KS3 & KS4

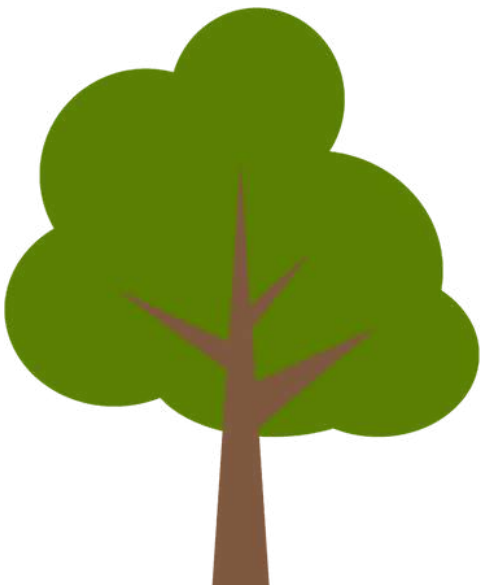
- Human and physical geography
- Geographical skills and fieldwork
- Biodiversity
- Ecosystems

Woodland Survey

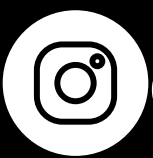
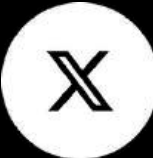
This programme focusses on the trees in the woodland at Coombe. Through a series of tasks, pupils will work in groups to identify trees using Identification Keys, identify their properties and classify them into deciduous and evergreen before working out the approximate age of the tree. Pupils will then investigate the invertebrates that live in the habitat and look for signs of other animals that make the woodland their home. The programme allows pupils to build on language and communication skills with pupils being encouraged to use the key vocabulary associated with the identification of trees and can be differentiated to meet the learning objectives of each Key Stage.

KS1 & KS2

- Plants and their seasonal changes
- Living things and their habitats
- Animals, including humans
- Measurement, plotting and data handling



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Den Building

In small groups, pupils will work together to create a den from natural materials they find on the woodland floor before giving the rest of the class a guided tour and explanation of their den. During the session, pupils will be able to work on their teamwork skills and self-esteem, as well as problem solving and are encouraged to use their imaginations to produce a fun, creative design.

KS1, KS2, KS3 & KS4



Woodland Art and Design



Materials and their properties



Design and Technology



Orienteering

After a short introduction to map reading and orienteering, pupils will work in small groups to navigate their way around the park to find a set of orienteering posts, collect the letters on them and work out the anagram. The programme develops pupils' teamwork and communication skills as well as map reading, building on geography, maths, PE and citizenship studies.

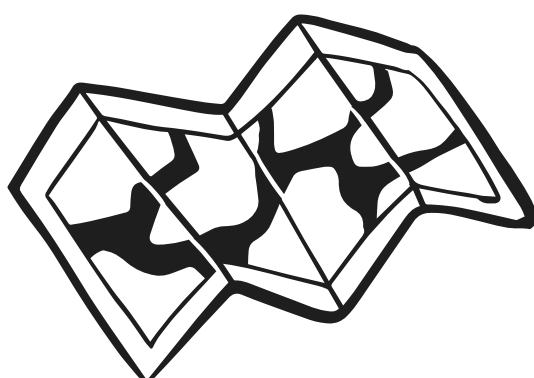
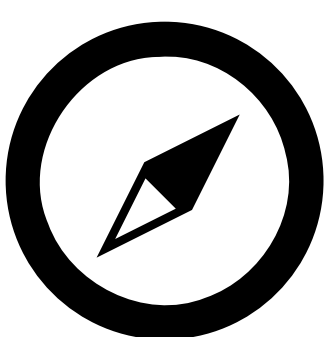
KS2, KS3 & KS4



Outdoor Adventurous Activity



Geography Skills and Fieldwork



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Art in the Park

Pupils will have the opportunity to create various pieces of art from natural materials found in the woodland. This will normally be 2D and 3D pictures of animals and landscapes or habitats however, if you have a particular topic or theme, we can tailor the activities to this for you to enhance their learning. Through exploring the woodland and creating their artwork, pupils will build on their communication skills and will be encouraged to use their imagination.

EYFS, KS1, KS2, KS3 & KS4



Use a range of materials



Woodland Art and Design



2D and 3D shapes



Materials and their properties



Tale of Two Boys Workshop (War Memorial Park)

Pupils will learn about the story of two childhood friends from Coventry who enlisted into the army during the First World War. Through discussing a series of photos, they will discover what the reality of life was like while in the trenches before learning the fate of the two friends. Pupils will also learn about the history and importance of the War Memorial Park, including the Memorial itself, and the Trees. They will discuss why it is important that we remember those who died in conflicts and the significance of the poppy before making their own poppies to take back to school. During the session, pupils will build on their language and communication skills and empathise with the soldiers.

KS2



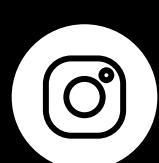
History topic immersive experience



Creative Writing



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Stone Age

Learn about how people in the Stone Age lived and survived. Discover all about the different types of houses, making your own stone age house. Learn about the different tools and weapons they would have used and have a go at making your own fire to keep you warm. Discover what they wore and what they used to create paint and even have a go at your own cave painting.

KS2



Learn about changes in Britain from stone age to iron age



Explore neolithic hunter-gatherers and early farmers



Native Americans

Spend the day thinking like the Native Americans. Work together to build a shelter from natural materials found in the woods and then learn how to make a fire to keep you warm, whittle sticks to toast marshmallows on the fire. Work together to create a Totem pole, decorating it with clay faces or other Native American crafts. All the essential skills every Native American needs!

KS2



Understand key aspects of human geography



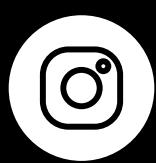
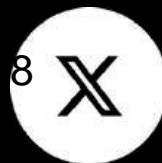
Explore types of settlement and land use economic activity including trade links



Explore distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water



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Bright Sparks

Join the team and learn all about renewable energy. Discover the different sources of energy including fossil fuels and renewable energy sources. Compare the benefits of each and their impact on the planet. How do you create energy from the sun, wind and water? Use our weather recorders to record the conditions on the day before having a go at creating energy from all three sources and then work out which one is the best on the day!

KS2



Plan different types of scientific enquiries, recognising and controlling variables, comparative and fair tests



Record findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, bar charts, classification keys, tables, scatter graphs, bar and line graphs



Draw simple conclusions, make predictions for new values, suggest improvements and raise further questions, set up further comparative and fair tests



Measurements using standard units, using a range of equipment, including thermometers and data logger increasing accuracy and precision

Wonderful Weather

What's the weather like today? What makes the weather? What are clouds? Where does rain come from? Observe and record the weather using our weather station and have a go at some fun experiments while learning all about the weather. Then discover how the weather affects the landscape and wildlife around in the habitats around us.

KS2



Set up simple practical enquiries, make predictions to set up further comparative and fair tests



Take measurements, using a range of scientific equipment, with increasing accuracy and precision,



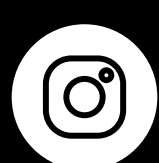
Take accurate recording findings using simple scientific language, drawings, labelled diagrams, bar charts, classification keys, tables, scatter graphs, bar and line graphs



Report on findings from enquiries, including oral and written explanations, displays or presentations of results and conclusions



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Bird Safari

What are birds? What features do they have? Where do they live? Discover the range of bird life at Coombe Abbey Park. Learn how to use binoculars. Discuss what different birds eat and how they have adapted to their environment. Feed the water birds. Immerse yourself into the life of a bird and create a nest using woodland materials.



KS1



Identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals



Identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores



Describe and compare the structure of a variety of common animals (fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals, including pets)

Coombe Safari

Put on your safari hat and explore the nature at Coombe Abbey Park. Study the main features of animals and learn how to classify them into different groups. Investigate our woodlands and wetlands, to discover a range of vertebrates and invertebrates. Identify, classify, and record your findings to demonstrate your new knowledge of the wild.

KS2



Explore how living things are classified into broad groups according to common observable characteristics and based on similarities and differences, including microorganisms, plants and animals



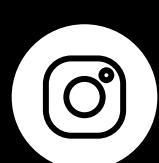
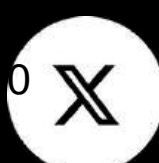
Classify plants and animals based on specific characteristics



Classify animals into commonly found invertebrates and vertebrates



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Viking Experience

Fearsome warriors from a land across the sea, Vikings brought a strange new culture to our shores. Build a fire and discuss life as a Viking whilst we eat marshmallows. Make a traditional craft item and create a Viking structure out of woodland materials.

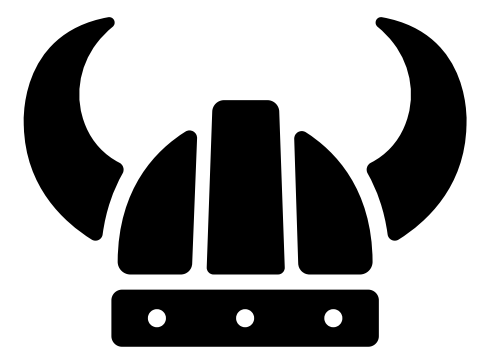
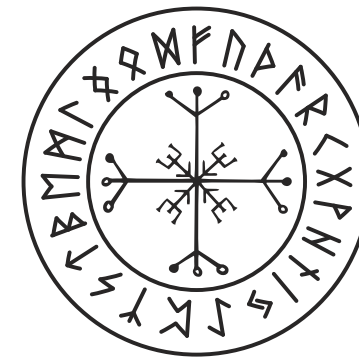
KS2



Explore the Viking and Anglo-Saxon struggle for the Kingdom of England to the time of Edward the Confessor



Understand the key aspects of human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources including energy, food, minerals and water



GCSE River Study

Explore a river landscape first-hand, learning how water flows from Coombe Abbey Park through the Severn water shed. Discuss the fluvial processes of erosion, transportation and deposition, understanding their key terms. Measure the rate of flow and sample the river sediment. Investigate how erosion and transportation interacts with the sediment. Examine our meanders, looking at their formation through erosion and deposition. Observe our flood management strategies. Explore a freshwater ecosystem through pond-dipping, collecting data on the species present.

KS4



River landscapes in the UK



Fluvial Processes and landforms



River management strategies



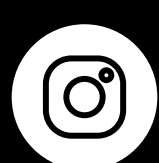
Recording and measuring river rate of flow



Sampling a freshwater pond ecosystem



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Belt Transects

Pupils will investigate the species distribution in the habitat. Using fieldwork and sampling methods, they will identify and record the species present along the transect, noting the changes in species coverage as they work. They will investigate and record the abiotic factors and use this information to draw conclusions on their effect on the biotic data they collect.

KS3



Working scientifically



Relationships in an ecosystem

KS4



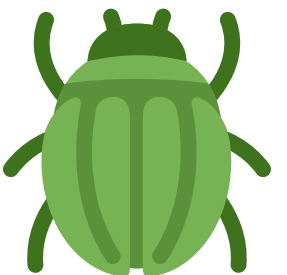
Working scientifically



Biodiversity



Ecosystems



Vegetation Sampling

Pupils will sample and identify the vegetation in the woodland and grassland habitats using quadrats, to investigate species abundance and distribution. They will record their results also investigate abiotic factors that will affect the species found in each habitat.

KS3



Working scientifically



Relationships in an ecosystem

KS4



Working scientifically



Biodiversity



Ecosystems



Invertebrate Sampling

Pupils will investigate the invertebrates found in the meadow. They will identify, classify, and record the species found as well as the flora species in each area sampled. They will also record abiotic factors such as temperature. Pupils will begin to draw conclusions from their findings about the relationships between flora and fauna species found in the meadow.

KS3



Working scientifically



Relationships in an ecosystem

KS4



Working scientifically



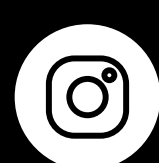
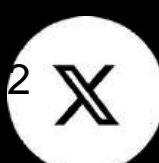
Biodiversity



Ecosystems



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Freshwater Invertebrate Sampling

Pupils investigate the invertebrates in the pond and river. Using sampling methods, they will identify and record the species found and draw conclusions about the food chains present. They will investigate abiotic factors in the habitat and use this information to draw conclusions on the species found.

KS3



Relationships in an ecosystem

KS4



Biodiversity



Ecosystems



Team Building

Pupils will participate in a variety of team challenges that will encourage teamwork, independent thinking and problem solving. We provide an experience that pupils will find challenging yet safe, encouraging them to develop both their individual and team working skills, allowing them to test themselves and their limits whilst developing a wide range of interpersonal skills.

KS2, KS3 & KS4



Communication



Collaboration



Co-operation



Decision Making



Problem Solving



Perseverance



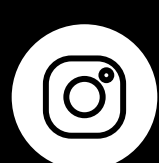
Resilience



Reflective Learning



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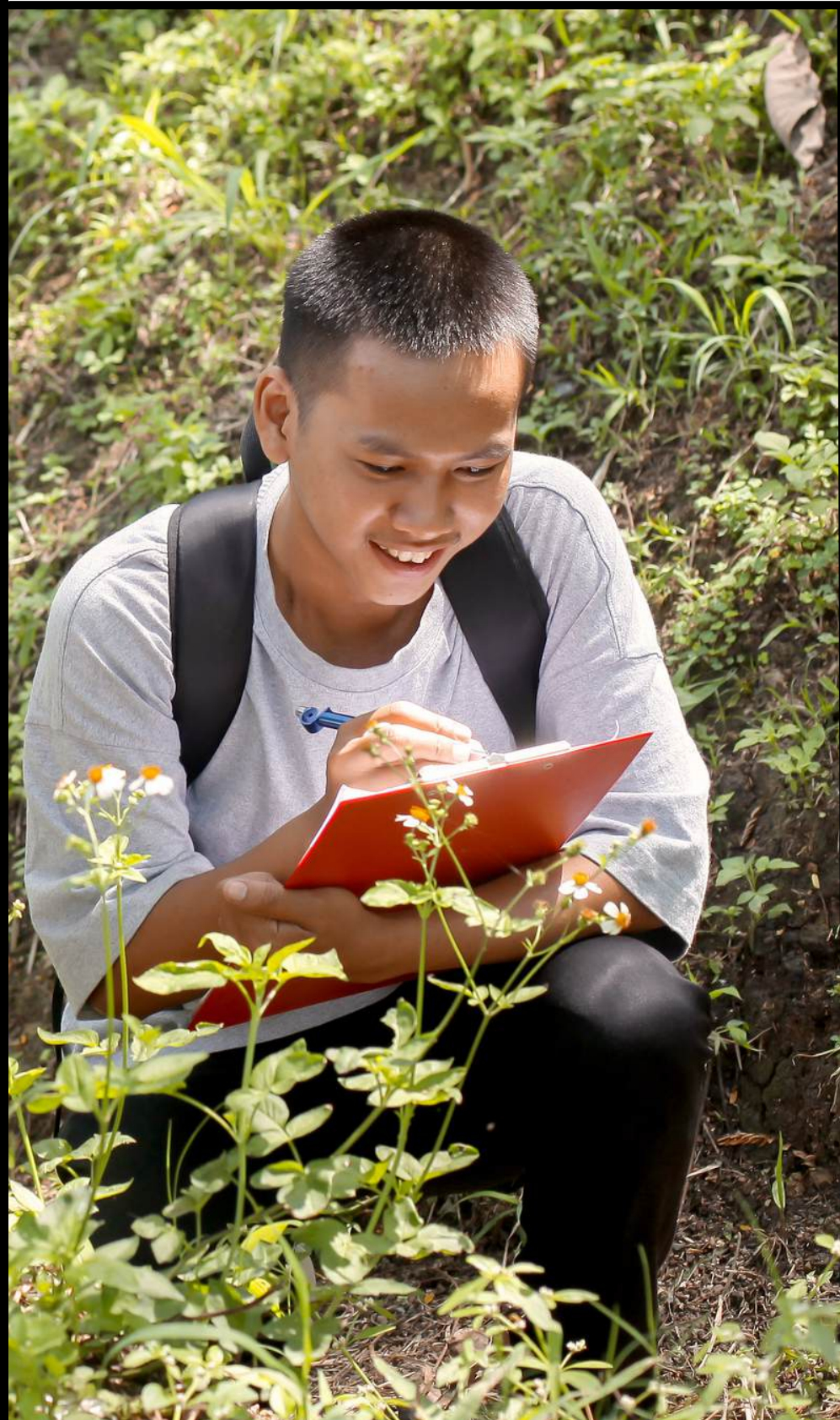


River Investigation (GCSE)

This is a two-hour programme where students will investigate the river in three separate locations. They will examine factors such as pH, biodiversity, litter and temperature and use the data gathered to draw conclusions about the differences across the locations and the effect it has on the invertebrates they find at each location. These locations will be upstream of a weir, downstream of a weir and a pond.

Meander Investigation (GCSE)

During this two-hour programme, students will investigate the effect of a meander on the river. They will observe, draw and annotate a field sketch of the meander. They will measure the width, depth and flow of the river before, through and after the meander, making observations of the river and surrounding area. They will then use this data to draw conclusions about the effect of the meander on the river.



Field Sampling Techniques (A-Level)

Throughout the day, students will use different sampling techniques:



The calculation of species diversity - Random sampling using quadrats on the events field and an open grassland



Measurement of the distribution and abundance of plants in a habitat - Transect through the open grassland, with part of the transect bordering a woodland



Investigating a correlation between a named species and a biotic and/or abiotic factor - An Invertebrate study



Freshwater invertebrate species diversity across three depths of the pond: Surface, water column and soil layer

Students would investigate the correlation of the abiotic factor of light and the species found but can also record the pH, temperature and general observations



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Bespoke Programmes	KS3	KS4	KS5
Weather & Micro Climate	🔥	🔥	
Urban Geography	🔥		
Riverstudy	🔥		
Passionate about place	🔥		
Geography Skills 21st Century	🔥		
Creative Writing	🔥		
Physical Education	🔥	🔥	
Counter Urbanisation		🔥	
Economic Growth		🔥	
Ecosystems		🔥	🔥
Fieldwork		🔥	
Flooding		🔥	
Population Change		🔥	
Quality of Life		🔥	
Regeneration		🔥	🔥
Rivers		🔥	
Sustainable Cities		🔥	
Urban Inequalities		🔥	
Challenges in Cities		🔥	🔥
Changing City Environments		🔥	
Photography		🔥	
Employability Skills		🔥	
Personal Development Skills		🔥	
Carbon Cycle			🔥
Human Geo Skills			🔥
Physical Geo Skills			🔥
NEA Data Collection			🔥
NEA Fieldwork/Technique Skills			🔥
Water Cycle			🔥

Residentials

Our Centre, Plas Dol-y-Moch provides high quality adventure, personal development and curriculum based courses within our residential setting. We strongly believe that children and young people deserve the opportunity to experience the outdoor environment as an integral part of their learning and development, complementing learning in the classroom.



Mountains & Mines

Within the Eryri National Park students have the opportunity to challenge themselves, explore themes such as resilience, respect, teamwork and commitment all whilst learning about the geography of the uplands. Mine exploration is a unique adventure exploring themes of personal challenge, resilience and respect. Students immerse themselves in the Victorian history of quarrying and the geology of slate.

Rivers, Lakes & Gorges

A canoe journey down the river provides students opportunities to explore working together, learning about river basins and tidal estuaries. Our kayak lake provides opportunities for students to explore themes such as personal responsibility and the importance of listening and following instructions as well as discipline. Gorges provide opportunities to explore teamwork, confidence, resilience and the delights of sliding down a waterfall, or jumping into a mountain stream!



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Coast & Beaches

The stunning coastline of North Wales is just a short drive from the Centre. Students have the opportunity to explore and learn about the coastal environment beneath the medieval Criccieth Castle, or support each other whilst climbing along the sea cliffs and zawns of Borth y Gest.

Learning through Adventure

Part of Coventry Outdoors, Plas Dol-y-Moch delivers high quality residential Outdoor Education Courses for the young people of Coventry and beyond. Bespoke adventure courses focus on developing young people’s social, emotional and mental health through genuine outdoor and adventure activity courses delivered by expert practitioners in Outdoor Education, all in a residential setting. Each day’s activities are tailored through consultation with your staff to maximise opportunities for each of your students.



Bespoke Adventure Courses



Included in the course fees are coach transport from Coventry and back (coach pickup & drop off out of Coventry can be arranged for an additional fee), as well as all transportation during your course. You'll receive expert tailored inspirational tuition from highly qualified and experienced outdoor professionals, working in low ratios (typically 1:12 including at least one participating adult). Additionally, all technical equipment and clothing, such as waterproofs, wellies or boots, fleece, and rucksack are issued to each student



Drying rooms with individual spaces are available, providing students the opportunity to realistically look after their own and issued equipment



Students are given the responsibility of the Centre, make their own beds (all bedding is provided), and tasked with looking after their dormitory and social space throughout the course. All meals are included, including wholesome home-made evening meals, breakfast, packed lunch, and world-famous cakes



The Centre boasts ample social and teaching spaces, equipped with whiteboards, high-speed internet access, and digital projectors. Outside, we have acres of woodland, fields suitable for football and volleyball, as well as a lit basketball court to help wear your students out if necessary! Additionally, there's a small tuck and souvenir shop available



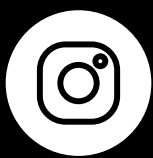
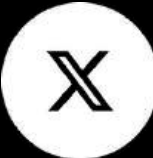
Our building is secure, with door code access complying with safeguarding best practice. Staff bedrooms are also secure, with visiting staff provided door passes to access their rooms



On arrival all groups are fully inducted to the Centre, outlining the course aims and ensuring you're all fully settled into the building. Our staff are available to support the delivery of evening activities as well as remaining on call overnight should your staff need any support



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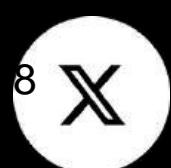


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EDUCATION & ADVENTURE SERVICE



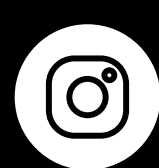
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Coventry City Council

To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: 11th September 2025

Subject: The complexities involved in finding homes for children in care and associated costs

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 This paper provides an update following the item considered by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) on 28th November 2024, outlining ongoing challenges in the children's social care market, recent national developments, and local authority responses.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board are recommended:
- 1) To note progress in relation to sufficiency, in line with national social care reforms.
 - 2) To formally acknowledge Coventry City Council's support to the 14 local authorities in the West Midlands by managing the West Midlands Commissioning Hub & leading on the Regional Frameworks for both Fostering and Residential homes.

3 Information and Background

- 3.1 As previously reported, in the last 4 years there has been a marked increase in the number of children and young people in care that local authorities have struggled to find appropriate homes for. This continues to be a widely reported national issue and is a consequence of several interlinked factors, which were highlighted in Competition and Market's Authority report of March 2022, the Independent Review of Children's Social care of May 2022 and the Government's response to this review – Stable Homes, Built on Love (February 2023)
- 3.2 There is national recognition that the children's 'placement' market is broken. Recent research published by the LGA in May 2025 considers the '*Costs and complexity in care. The real drivers of high-cost placements for children in care*'
- 3.3 Nationally, there has been a reduction in the number of mainstream foster carers of 9.6% since 2021, alongside a significant growth in new children's homes of 15% in the last year, with 84% of all homes being run by private organisations. However, it

is important to note that the size of a mainstream children's homes (how many children are cared for) continues to reduce with the average new home now caring for only 3 children, compared to 4 in 2023/2024.

- 3.4 Research has identified that these problems break down into two main areas and the government has started to consider ways in which these can be addressed, alongside wider Social Care & Education reforms. As reported to SB2 in November 2024, the two main areas were identified as:
1. *A lack of placements of the right kind in the right place, thereby increasing risk of unregulated placements with providers making materially higher profits and charging significantly higher prices than if the market were functioning effectively.*
 2. *A concern of the high level of debt some providers have and the impact if they exited the market as this would further exacerbate sufficiency and the ability of local authorities to meet the needs of these children.*
- 3.5 The Social Care Reforms, commenced in 2023, with an overarching focus on Keeping Children Safe, Helping Families Thrive. This sets out the aspirations and commitment of a whole system reform of the children's social care system.
- 3.6 In [Keeping Children Safe](#), the government have referenced the need to "*bring a swift end to excessive and exploitative profit making in a sector which supports our most vulnerable children*". Chapter 2 – focuses on legislating to make the care system child centred, and to tackle profiteering.
- 3.7 There continues to be a drive to create regional solutions through the establishment of Regional Commissioning Co-operatives (RCC'S). supporting local authorities in challenging profiteering providers "*as well as enabling greater central government oversight of the placements market*".
- 3.8 The Strategic Lead for Corporate Parenting & Sufficiency, alongside the Operational Lead for Placements with colleagues from finance are part of the Children's social care market interventions working group with the DfE.
- 3.9 [The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#) would introduce a financial oversight regime for providers who meet conditions set out in regulations; these are likely to relate to the size of the provider and whether it would be difficult to replace were it to fail. The bill would give the government the power to require these providers to submit a "recovery and resolution plan", setting out risks to their financial sustainability and actions they propose to take in response.
- 3.10 In addition, the [National Audit Office \(NAO\)](#), has launched a 'study' into the Department for Education's oversight of the children's homes sector, including supported accommodation, in light of the 35% rise in placement costs between 2015/16 and 2023/24.
- 3.11 The Government have also identified an additional £53m to support the capital funding (50%) to increase the number of local authority run Childrens homes (July 2025).
- 3.12 The Strategic Lead for Corporate Parenting & Sufficiency is part of the DfE working party on reforms linked to Childrens Residential Care. Recent research has been

published linked to findings from a workforce census and discussions are ongoing on the development of a national workforce strategy.

- 3.13 Ofsted are considering changes to regulations including 'location impact risk assessments' to ensure that new children's homes are being opened in the right places to meet need and only following collaborative work and agreement with the local authority in which they plan to situate the home.
- 3.14 Regional Fostering Recruitment Hubs are being established to enable local authorities to work together to recruit new foster carers and improve retention, supported by £25m in DfE funding.

4 The local picture

- 4.1 The Coventry practice model 'Family Valued' works on the premise of keeping children and families together when it is safe to do so. This approach seeks to enable families to find the solutions to challenges they face. Families are supported through Family Network Meetings and Family Group Conferences (FGC) and additional support to identify family led solutions. This approach aligns with the government 'keeping children safe, helping families thrive' principles,
- 4.2 In September 2024, 716 children from Coventry were in care, as of the 12 August 2025* this number had reduced to 684. This includes 71 children who are defined as unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC).
- 4.3 In May 2025, the number of children in care reached its lowest point in the past 12 months, at 668. However, as previously noted, the summer period has seen the usual seasonal increase. Further analysis will begin in September to explore the specific factors contributing to this rise and to identify potential mitigations that could be implemented next year, if applicable.
- 4.4 Family-led solutions, including kinship arrangements with connected carers, are considered when a child cannot safely remain with their parents. This area has seen notable growth in Coventry, with 129 children now placed in kinship care—representing 21% of the children in care (excluding UASC), compared to 13% in 2018. Additionally, between April 2024 and March 2025, 27 children previously in foster care have achieved permanence through a Special Guardianship Order (SGO).
- 4.5 If no suitable family or kinship carers can be identified and the child requires safeguarding and care by the local authority, the process of finding an appropriate alternative home will begin. In most cases, a foster placement is sought initially, allowing the child to receive care and support within a family setting—either through Coventry Fostering Service or an Independent Fostering Agency (IFA).
- 4.6 As of 12 August 2025, 72.4% of Coventry's children in care, lived within a fostering household, a higher proportion than the 'All England' average at 67% and statistical neighbours at 69%.
- 4.7 However, for some children, due to their complexity of need, placing them in a children's home will be deemed the most appropriate care plan and only if our internal children's homes or block providers cannot care for them, would the service seek to explore the wider residential market of commissioned children's homes.

- 4.8 9.7% of Coventry's children in care live within a children's home and this figure has remained fairly stable over the last 12 months.
- 4.9 The challenge of securing the right home in the right location is often intensified by the urgency with which placements must be made. Some children enter care under a Police Protection Order, are remanded to local authority care, or require immediate relocation due to incidents involving physical or perceived aggressive behaviour. In such cases, carers—both foster and residential, may give very limited notice, sometimes on the same day. Within an already pressured market and considering the factors previously outlined, finding a suitable new home immediately is not always possible. Children's Services consistently work to resist immediate or short-notice placement endings, dedicating significant daily resources to engaging with providers to stabilise placements at risk.
- 4.10 Weekly placement stability meetings are held to explore additional support options that may help maintain stability for children at risk of needing to move. This often involves securing extra funding, which some providers may require to continue the placement—stating that without it, the child will need to be relocated.
- 4.11 When a child must move from a children's home and another residential provider offers a placement, the associated costs can be high. Providers may seek to mitigate perceived risks by increasing fees, often basing their offer on the need for additional staffing or by charging for bed blocking (double funding).
- 4.12 For children who experience sudden moves, the impact on their emotional wellbeing can be significant, affecting their self-esteem, sense of self-worth, and their ability or willingness to form attachments with new carers. These children may assume that new carers will also give up on them at the first sign of difficulty, which can perpetuate a cycle of instability. This, in turn, can reinforce providers' justification for maintaining high levels of support and costs, as children respond to psychological trauma through 'fight, flight, or freeze' behaviours.
- 4.13 Both the increase in the number of 'out of hours' foster carers and the opening of the short stay same day children's home, has evidenced impact on our ability to address some of these challenges. There are currently no children living in an unregulated children's home or with an unregulated supported accommodation provider.
- 4.14 A report by the County Councils' Network & IMPOWER published in November 2024 states: *Councils are faced with unenviable choices when needing to place a child taken into care at short notice – they cannot just be left homeless until a suitable price can be negotiated for their care.*

5 Financial context

- 5.1 The challenge for Coventry is that the average unit cost of placements has been sharply increasing from year to year, high costs placement feature across the region, confirming demand outstripped availability of the right home in the right place to meet children's needs.
- 5.2 Although there are residential homes within the local market and Coventry will have 9 homes by 2026, it still remains extremely difficult to find homes for our most

complex children who exhibit significant trauma linked behaviours and often have additional needs such as autism.

- 5.3 External Residential (excluding Block) costs have almost doubled over the last 5 years with the current 10 highest cost packages of care accounting for 47% of the total external residential budget. Since November 2024, there has been little change in the total costs for the top 10 highest cost residential provisions weekly fee.

6 Mitigating activity

- 6.1 **The Sufficiency Steering Group**, alongside the Children's Commissioning Team carry out needs analysis into the issues to inform potential commissioning solutions. Several existing projects, alongside new initiatives seek to address the challenges of the 'placement mix'.
- 6.2 **The placement mix** is tracked throughout the year and reported monthly on a finance scorecard. To project future movements in the placement mix, input is gathered from across children's services covering:
- Expected changes in the overall number of children in care
 - Considerations of new contracts e.g., block contracts in the pipeline
 - Growth of internal provision, particularly for residential children's homes
 - Growth of internal fostering
 - Changes in UASC numbers
 - Impact of other projects, including House Project, Reunification
- 6.3 Once compiled, the placement mix is modelled across the next financial year along with the anticipated unit costs to create expected budgets.
- 6.4 Actuals versus projections are reviewed regularly including at the monthly Sufficiency Steering Group Meeting. In addition, expected delivery against budgets is scrutinised as part of Coventry's quarterly budgetary control process, Children's Services Leadership Team monthly business meeting and regular meetings between colleagues from finance and children's services.
- 6.5 **Peer review**- An LGA Peer Review took place over 3 days in October 2024 to consider Efficiencies and Resources within Children's Services, as reported to SB2 in early 2025. Several actions have been taken, based upon the recommendations and in addition led to working with Impower to expedite further areas for development.
- 6.6 **Working with Impower.** Children's Services in Coventry have been working in partnership with Impower on the 'Valuing Care and Opportunities Review' to strengthen needs assessments for children in care. As part of this initiative, a pilot has been launched using the 'Valuing Care' assessment tool, which includes a spider chart to visually represent a child's needs. This supports social workers in care planning and helps match children to appropriate current or future placements. A cross-service weekly Valuing Care Panel reviews assessment outcomes and identifies opportunities for children to transition from residential care to foster placements or to begin planning for independence. The panel also evaluates the appropriateness of additional funded resources—such as 1:1 staffing—and considers whether these are necessary or if alternative support could facilitate a

suitable move. A comprehensive review of the home-finding (placement) and commissioning teams has been completed to improve engagement with external providers, build on existing relationships with local providers, and assess the efficiency of current systems. The Valuing Care tool is being embedded into a new Placement Referral Form, and provider engagement events have been held with both residential and fostering services to support its implementation. The model has been well received, and the department plans to roll out the assessment tool over the next six months, alongside the appointment of a dedicated Valuing Care Practice Lead.

- 6.7 This project is overseen by a strategic board comprising the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Resources, Director of Children and Education Services, Strategic Lead for Children in Care, and senior representatives from Impower.
- 6.8 **The Fostering Excellence** programme aims to build on the growth in the number of carers supporting Coventry's children—whether through kinship care, mainstream fostering, or Next Steps arrangements. It enhances the support available to carers to promote stability and permanence wherever possible. Notably, the service has successfully increased the number of emergency foster carers, who now operate on a rota system to provide immediate care for children entering care in crisis. This has significantly reduced the use of unsuitable or unregistered provision.
- 6.9 Targeted recruitment activity continues, aligned to the specific types of placements needed—such as parent and child arrangements—and includes postcode-based recruitment in areas with larger properties that may be suitable for sibling groups. (Further details will be available in the Fostering Annual Report 2024–2025, due for publication in October.)
- 6.10 In line with the 2024 Kinship Statutory Guidance, Coventry has strengthened its Kinship Strategy and Local Offer. This now includes access to therapeutic support and a wider range of resources for all carers, aimed at encouraging and supporting potential kinship carers through both fostering and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) pathways. A formal launch of the updated strategy and Local Offer, alongside the rebranding of the Connected Persons Foster Team to the Kinship Team, is planned for this autumn.
- 6.11 Discussions are ongoing with four neighbouring local authorities regarding the development of a regional fostering recruitment hub. Although initial work began earlier this year, progress has been delayed due to changes in the Department for Education's funding criteria, particularly around the scope of the hub's role.
- 6.12 **Next Step foster carers.** The Next Steps fostering scheme offers a supportive, safe, and nurturing family environment for children with more complex needs who step across from a children's home or are on the cusp of entering residential care. 11 households are currently part of the scheme, with 11 young people living in a family home. 7 of the children are long-term matched with their carers and 3 children have been enabled to move to independence from their foster (next steps) home. This continues to show success in significantly improving outcomes for the children placed with Next Steps carers alongside delivering tangible cost saving / avoidance.

- 6.13 **Coventry's Residential Strategy (2023–2026)** outlines plans to expand the number of council-run children's homes from five to ten. Since the last report to SB2, two new homes have opened: a short-stay/same-day home and the city's first purpose-built residential home for children with disabilities. However, both experienced delays due to building works and Ofsted registration, with opening dates in December 2024 and February 2025, respectively.
- 6.14 As part of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, there is an opportunity to expand further, up to a total of 12. These additional homes will support children with the most complex needs, many of whom are currently in high-cost placements. Some of these children are subject to Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) following discharge from hospital due to serious mental health concerns. Although an opportunity arose in early 2025 to apply for a Department for Education (DfE) grant to cover 50% of the capital costs, Coventry was deemed ineligible under the DfE's criteria. This issue has been formally raised with the department. Two properties have since been purchased, planning permission has been granted, and building work is scheduled to begin in autumn. The homes are expected to open by April 2026, although Ofsted has advised that application processing times are now significantly delayed—taking 'several months' rather than the 16 weeks outlined in their guidance. A registered manager has already been appointed for these homes.
- 6.15 A residential review is currently underway to assess both the financial impact and the outcomes for children linked to the strategy. Ongoing evaluation is essential to ensure the number and type of homes meet the diverse needs of children requiring residential care in Coventry. Findings will be presented to the Capital Projects Board in the autumn to inform future planning.
- 6.16 Initial findings show that, within its first 16 weeks, the short-stay/same-day home supported five young people during crisis periods. It helped avoid the use of unregistered or illegal provision, enabled siblings to remain together, and improved the chances of securing long-term foster placements.
- 6.17 In addition to these positive outcomes, financial benefits have also been realised. It is estimated that up to £1 million in annual placement costs have been avoided during the first 16 weeks of operation. This is due to three young people transitioning to foster care instead of residential placements, and a timely search for new homes for two children resulting in reduced weekly costs.
- 6.18 **House Project & Staying Close**, plans are in place to increase the number of cohorts accessing this. The next cohort is due to commence later this year and 58 young people now having been successfully supported by the project. The House Project successfully registered as a Supported Accommodation provider earlier this year and are awaiting their first Ofsted inspection.

Several children from children's homes have successfully moved onto their own home through the House Project and will receive ongoing support through "Staying Close", from their former carers and through Lifelong links networks. The Strategic Lead for Corporate Parenting and Sufficiency alongside the Operational Lead for Residential Children's Homes are part of the Core Working Group for Staying Close Statutory Guidance development with the DfE.

- 6.19 **Reunification project:** Since the launch of the Reunification Project in June 2021, 54 children have returned to the care of their parent(s) through this project, with further children, young people and their families working towards reunification.
- 6.20 **A 'Hard 2 Place'** contract with 2 commissioned providers to meet the needs of children who require high levels of staffing in solo or 2 bedded homes due to the risks, was shared with SB2 last November. Unfortunately, neither provider was able to open a new home to meet the requirements of the contract within the 2-year period and therefore the contract ended.
- 6.21 **Regional contracts.** Working in partnership with the Commissioning Hub and local authorities across the West Midlands a new regional fostering framework was implemented in September 2024 to address some of the challenges linked to securing homes for children through Independent Fostering Agencies. 58 agencies signed up to the contract, supporting us to work with them on improving quality and fixed costs.
- 6.22 In addition, a new regional residential framework has been out to tender with the aim to address the challenges of working with providers through avoiding 'Spot' purchasing, enabling fixed contract costs, regional quality assurance and access to more homes closer to Coventry. It is anticipated that this will be implemented in Autumn 2025, as the success of the new framework exceeded expectations and subsequently has delayed the start / implementation date.
- 6.23 It is important to note that in partnership with the West Midlands Commissioning hub and other local authorities, Coventry are the lead for both of these regional frameworks on behalf of the West Midlands and an effective One Coventry team, including legal and procurement worked together to make this happen.
- 6.24 Our Commissioning team work collaboratively with other local authorities to undertake quality assurance linked to all providers. In addition, the team undertake checks before using new providers, quality assurance visits and work with social workers to ensure that children receive good quality care from providers.
- 6.25 **Regional Co-Operative Safe Centre.** The 14 Local Authorities from the West Midlands are working with the DfE to open a new West Midlands Safe Centre (secure welfare) children's home. There is a national shortage of secure welfare provision. The home will care for up to 20 children and is expected to open in the latter part of 2028. Birmingham Children's Trust are leading on the development and the Strategic Lead for Corporate Parenting & Sufficiency is part of the 'Practice & Operating Model' working group. A cabinet report is due to be submitted later this year with further details.
- 6.26 **Strategic Lead oversight** includes the weekly Gateway Panel, Resource & Placement Stability Panels and bi-monthly Residential Review. All new entrants to care are approved by a Strategic lead. A bimonthly review is undertaken of all children living in residential care, to consider a move on, in line with their care plan. Alongside this, children in residential care with additional packages of support are reviewed weekly. This meeting actively tracks each resource with additional support and works with social workers and providers to reduce the package in line with need. As noted above, the new Valuing Care model / panel and roll out across

children's services, will lead to a review of existing panel processes to avoid duplication and ensure efficiency.

- 6.27 **Unit cost inflation:** The outturn (end of year) position is analysed each year to determine the unit cost of different placement types, including contract type e.g., framework, block or spot. Work is then undertaken to determine contractually expected uplifts or to estimate non-contractual increases. This involves looking at historical uplift trends and consideration of national inflationary rates, including CPIH and National Living Wage. This supports ongoing budget forecasting.

7 Health Inequalities Impact

- 7.1 **Joint working with Health.** Joint Health funding is provided for those children who are discharged from hospital, having been sectioned under S2 of the Mental Health Act, under s.117 and for some children with complex needs. However, there are ongoing discussions with health regarding differing views as to whether several children should receive additional funding support through Childrens Continuing Health Care (CCHC) assessment outcomes. A complex needs panel meets monthly to consider funding 'splits' for children with the most complex needs- including the ICB, Childrens and Education service.

8 Summary & Conclusion

- 8.1 As evidenced, the primary budgetary pressures stem from the instability within the residential children's homes market. Coventry Children's Services is leading the way regionally in supporting the development of local authority-run children's homes, with seven homes currently operational and two additional homes scheduled to open by spring 2026.
- 8.2 A wide range of workstreams and projects are underway to identify and deliver alternative homes for children in care, tailored to their individual needs. The service remains committed to finding smarter, more effective ways of working and actively seeks feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- 8.3 Significant national social care reforms are also underway, aimed at strengthening support for children and families. Initiatives such as Family First Partnerships are designed to improve outcomes and prevent children from entering care.
- 8.4 It is noteworthy that many of the recommendations outlined in the May 2025 LGA publication, 'Costs and Complexity in Care: The Real Drivers of High-Cost Placements for Children in Care', are either already in place or have been identified as active workstreams through Coventry's Sufficiency Steering Group.
- 8.5 Collaborative efforts across the Council, Children's Services, and regional partners continue to focus on reducing the costs associated with children entering or remaining in care, and on supporting safe reunification with families wherever possible.

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Links to documents referenced:

[Care placements costs still driving up children's services spending, council budgets show - Community Care](#)

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/73.6%20High%20cost%20childcare_FINA_LAA.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67375fe5ed0fc07b53499a42/Keeping_Children_Safe_Helping_Families_Thrive_.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regional-care-co-operatives-pathfinder-areas/regional-care-cooperatives-rccs-pathfinder-regions>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-action-to-tackle-illegal-and-exploitative-childrens-homes>

[Government announces £53 million for council-run children's homes | Social Work Today](#)

[Changes to social care inspections aimed at improving stability for vulnerable children - GOV.UK](#)

<https://www.mutualventures.co.uk/fostering>

<https://www.ccinform.co.uk/practice-guidance/childrens-social-care-reforms/>

Agenda Item 7

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

Last updated 2nd September 2025

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

10 July 2025
Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities Draft Work Programme 25-26
11 September 2025
Outdoor Education The Complexities in Finding Homes for Children in Care
16 October 2025
27 November 2025
Adoption Service Annual Reports – November Fostering Annual Report - November Children Absent from Education
22 January 2026
Safeguarding Annual Report Kinship Strategy and Local Kinship Offer
26 February 2026
School Performance Data Annual Report SEND Strategy Update
26 March 2026
MASH – Effective Support for Children and Families in Coventry
Meetings to be allocated
School Places Sufficiency Sufficiency of Homes for Children Early Years Strategy
Items for 2025-26
Youth Provision in Coventry Health and Wellbeing in Schools Family Health and Lifestyles Service Progress on Peer Review Action Plan Behaviour Pathway Campaign on smart phones in school Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Local Transformation Plan April 2025 – March 2027 Family Valued and Reunification Project HAF Child-Friendly Cov
Items taken for information

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

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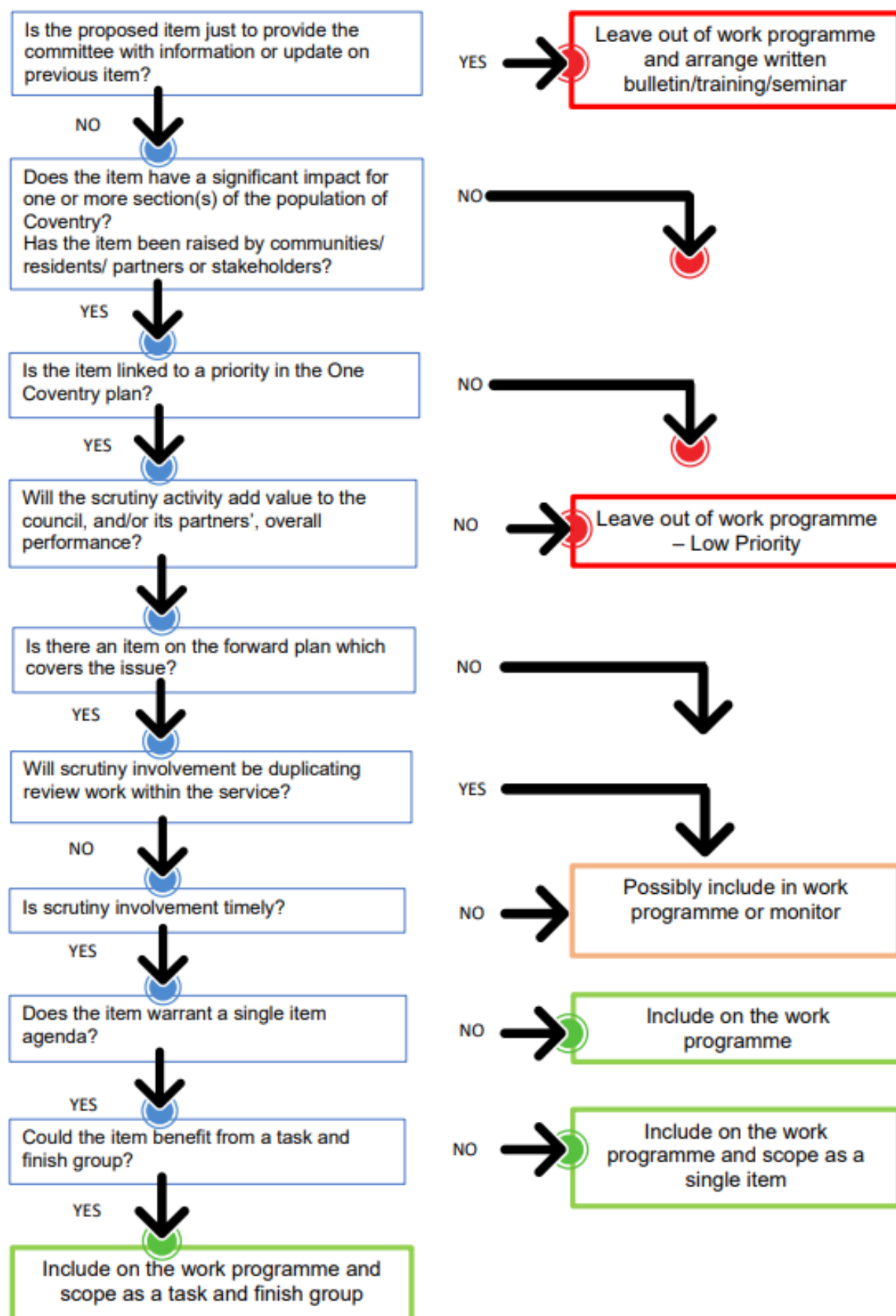
Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
10 July 2025	Cabinet Member Portfolio Priorities	To invite Cllr Sandhu and Cllr Seaman to identify their priorities for the coming year, for Scruto to be able to identify future items and hold Cabinet Members to account	Cllr Sandhu Cllr Seaman
	Draft Work Programme 25-26	To consider the draft work programme and to identify any additional items or task and finish groups	Cllr Kelly G Holmes
11 September 2025	Outdoor Education	To cover the work being delivered on Outdoor Education, including the extended offer as well as plans for celebrating Dol Y Moch's anniversary.	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
	The Complexities in Finding Homes for Children in Care	Looking at the complexities of homes for children, including placements, and the associated costs.	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
16 October 2025			
27 November 2025	Adoption Service Annual Reports – November	Annual report – including information about the diversity of the adoption panel and adopters as well as support to birth mothers after their children have been adopted	Cllr Seaman
	Fostering Annual Report - November	To consider performance of the fostering service including support to foster carers from their perspective	Cllr Seaman
	Children Absent from Education	To establish a T&F to look at this in more detail. Covering Elective Home Education, Child Missing Education, SEND without an appropriate place	Rachael Sugars, Angela Whitrick Cllr Sandhu
22 January 2026	Safeguarding Annual Report		
	Kinship Strategy and Local Kinship Offer		
26 February 2026	School Performance Data Annual Report	An annual report on looking at performance and progress against national indicators	Cllr Sandhu Rachael Sugars

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2025-26

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	SEND Strategy Update	To consider the refreshed strategy following co-production with children and parents. To specifically look at SEND provision in mainstream schools	Jeannette Essex Cllr Sandhu
26 March 2026	MASH – Effective Support for Children and Families in Coventry	Looking at the impact of the new partnership threshold document in reducing inappropriate referrals into MASH, as well as diversion to Family Hubs	Cllr Seaman Sukriti Sen
Meetings to be allocated	School Places Sufficiency	Primary, Secondary and Special – to look in more detail at the delivery on the One Strategic Plan	
	Sufficiency of Homes for Children	To include all placements as homes for children, not just residential care homes	Sukriti Sen Cllr Seaman
	Early Years Strategy	To come in 2025 and to include progress on actions requested on 17/7/24 re: oral and dental health	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu
Items for 2025-26			
	Youth Provision in Coventry	How and where we work with outside partners (and specifically the third sector) to deliver it	Sukriti Sen Cllr Seaman
	Health and Wellbeing in Schools	To look at what is being done to promote health and well-being in schools and universities – including the school nursing service	
	Family Health and Lifestyles Service	To looking in more detail at how the service is tackling health inequalities and targeting services at those in need on a localised basis. School nurse provision. Also how the service is supporting Early Help BN CM CYP & PHSW - Early Help.docx	Bill McCann, Angela Baker Cllr Caan
	Progress on Peer Review Action Plan	As a follow up to the item received on 13 Feb 2025, Members requested a more detailed progress report	S Sen Cllr Seaman
	Behaviour Pathway	To include the Belonging Strategy, Coventry Alternative Provision and the evaluation report on the pilot programme to reduce exclusions	R Sugars Cllr Sandhu

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	Campaign on smart phones in school	Looking at the impact on behaviour, mental health and attention span	Cllr Sandhu
	Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Local Transformation Plan April 2025 – March 2027		
	Family Valued and Reunification Project	Pick up outstanding items from 24-25, cost of care proceedings, ethnicity, cost of different levels of intervention	
	HAF	Update including progress on recommendation to Cabinet Members BN CM ES HAF Dec 24.docx	
	Child-Friendly Cov	Progress update on impact and recommendations made at the meeting on 17 th October 2024 BN CMCYP - Child Friendly Cov.docx	
Items taken for information			

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart



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