

Skills in the natural environment

Unit delivery and assessment pack



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Contents

This unit delivery and assessment pack provides teachers with the information they need to deliver this unit.

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The UK Government has announced plans to restrict social media use by children under 16, which may impact some of our qualifications. We will keep our qualifications under review and make any necessary updates as further details become available

Unit overview

Title	Skills in the natural environment
Suite	Skills for Life
Unit Codes	S624E1 S624E2 S624E3 S624L1 S624L2
GLH	20
Unit Aim	To develop learners' outdoor survival skills or sustainable living practices, enhancing their environmental awareness and stewardship.
Unit Summary	Learners will explore the benefits and challenges of spending time outdoors, develop practical survival skills, and learn how to care for the natural environment through responsible actions and environmental awareness. At Entry Level, the emphasis is on exploring and participating in outdoor activities safely, following simple instructions, recognising basic environmental features, and taking part in simple tasks such as building a shelter, identifying plants, or using tools with support. At Levels 1 and 2, the focus shifts towards developing independence and confidence in applying outdoor and survival skills in a range of situations. Learners plan and carry out more complex tasks, make decisions about safety and sustainability, and reflect on the impact of their actions on the environment. Practical activities such as shelter building, navigation, planting, and conservation projects allow learners to apply their knowledge, develop problem-solving skills, and experience how humans and living things interact with and depend on the natural environment.
Curriculum for Wales	Areas of learning and experience: This unit supports progress towards the Humanities statement of what matters: <i>our natural world is diverse and dynamic, influenced by processes and human actions</i>, and the Science and technology statement of what matters: <i>the world around us is full of living things which depend on each other for survival</i>. Learners will explore the diversity of the natural world, understand the relationships between humans and other living things, and develop practical skills to care for and sustain the environment. Integral and cross-curricular skills: Learners will have opportunities to develop their Critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as well as Personal effectiveness and Planning and organising and will demonstrate these skills in practical, real-life contexts. There may also be opportunities to

develop Literacy skills, with specialist vocabulary related to outdoor environments, safety, sustainability and survival skills.

At Entry Level, learners practise staying safe, following instructions, and working cooperatively with others during outdoor activities, they identify simple problems in outdoor tasks and try basic solutions, such as how to build a shelter.

At Levels 1 and 2, learners demonstrate more responsibility, independence, and resilience when planning and completing tasks outdoors, reflecting on their actions and making improvements.

Cross-cutting themes:

Human rights

Learners will think about everyone's right to a safe and healthy environment and how people's actions can affect nature and communities. At higher levels, they can explore how environmental choices affect people and wildlife, helping them understand responsibility and making fair, ethical decisions.

Diversity

Learners are encouraged to think about their own experiences and ideas when exploring the natural environment, such as how people from different cultures use or care for the land. At higher levels, learners may also look at how environmental issues affect different communities and wildlife, helping them understand fairness and respect for all living things.

Local, national and international contexts

Learners engage with environmental issues in their local area, such as habitat protection, sustainability initiatives, or community conservation projects, making their learning meaningful and relevant. Level 1 and 2 learners may extend this understanding by exploring national and global environmental issues, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable resource management, and consider how local actions connect with wider ethical and ecological responsibilities.

Careers and work-related experiences

Learners will engage in activities that develop personal skills, promote an understanding of safety, and link practical experiences to careers in planning, green industries, agriculture, design and health and safety sectors.

Entry Level Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes (the learner will)	Assessment Criteria (the learner can)		
	Entry 1	Entry 2	Entry 3
LO1 Know basic features of the natural environment and common outdoor settings	E1 1.1 Name at least two plants, animals, or natural features in the local environment. E1 1.2 Point out where it is safe to walk or work outdoors, with support.	E2 1.1 Give examples of some features of local outdoor environments. E2 1.2 Recognise differences between at least two types of outdoor settings.	E3 1.1 Give a simple description of the natural environment and common outdoor settings. E3 1.2 Match features of the environment to their roles for wildlife or people. E3 1.3 Give examples of plants, animals, and freshwater areas in the local environment.
LO2 Be aware of simple ways people use and affect the natural environment	E1 2.1 List what people do outdoors. E1 2.2 Match simple actions to how they can harm the environment.	E2 2.1 Give a statement about ways humans use natural spaces and how this affects plants or animals. E2 2.2 Give examples of some positive actions people can take to care for the environment.	E3 2.1 Give a description of the impact of human activities on local outdoor spaces. E3 2.2 Give examples of responsible behaviour to protect and maintain the environment.

LO3 Be able to take part in basic outdoor or environmental activities	E1 3.1 Take part in a simple outdoor task with guidance (e.g., planting seeds, collecting leaves). E1 3.2 Follow instructions to complete a short outdoor activity safely.	E2 3.1 Follow instructions to complete a simple outdoor activity. E2 3.2 Use basic tools or equipment correctly during an activity.	E3 3.1 Take part in outdoor activities with some independence. E3 3.2 Use simple tools or materials safely while completing a task. E3 3.3 Take part in a basic outdoor survival activity with support.
LO4 Be aware of the importance of personal safety and caring for the environment when outdoors	E1 4.1 Follow simple safety rules while outdoors. E1 4.2 Show how to care for plants, animals, and natural features when taking part in activities.	E2 4.1 Give examples of basic hazards in outdoor activities. E2 4.2 Point out simple steps to stay safe in outdoor environments. E2 4.3 Recognise how to respect the environment while working outdoors	E3 4.1 Identify things that could be dangerous in outdoor environments. E3 4.2 State why personal safety and environmental care are important. E3 4.3 Demonstrate safe and responsible behaviour during outdoor activities.

If not specified, then a plural reference within assessment criterion refers to a minimum of two.

Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria

Learning Outcomes (the learner will)	Assessment Criteria (the learner can)	
	Level 1	Level 2
LO1 Know key features of the natural environment and the resources it provides	L1 1.1 Identify key features of local outdoor environments. L1 1.2 Give examples of resources the environment provides for humans and other living things. L1 1.3 Outline simple uses of natural resources in daily life or outdoor activities. L1 1.4 Describe in simple terms how local ecosystems work together to support life.	L2 1.1 Explain the characteristics of different natural environments and ecosystems. L2 1.2 Analyse how natural resources are used sustainably or unsustainably. L2 1.3 Explain how humans depend on environmental resources and manage them responsibly. L2 1.4 Describe how plants, animals and freshwater environments interact in local ecosystems to support life and maintain balance.
LO2 Understand how human activities impact the natural environment and ecosystems	L1 2.1 Describe ways humans can have a positive or negative impact on local environments. L1 2.2 Give simple examples of environmental changes caused by people. L1 2.3 Identify one action that helps protect the environment. L1 2.4 Explain how human activity can affect biodiversity or freshwater environments.	L2 2.1 Explain the impact of human activities on ecosystems, biodiversity and freshwater health. L2 2.2 Analyse local or global environmental issues. L2 2.3 Suggest practical ways to reduce negative impacts and improve sustainability. L2 2.4 Reflect on how personal or community actions affect the natural environment.

LO3 Be able to apply outdoor survival or sustainable living skills	L1 3.1 Carry out outdoor survival or environmental activities in a familiar setting. L1 3.2 Use basic tools or equipment safely when completing tasks. L1 3.3 Follow simple instructions to apply outdoor survival or sustainable living skills.	L2 3.1 Select and apply appropriate methods and tools for a range of outdoor survival or environmental tasks. L2 3.2 Complete tasks independently and adapt approaches when needed. L2 3.3 Demonstrate problem-solving in practical situations. L2 3.4 Reflect on outcomes and suggest improvements for future activities.
LO4 Be able to demonstrate safe, responsible and environmentally sustainable behaviour in outdoor settings	L1 4.1 Follow safety rules and procedures when working outdoors. L1 4.2 Describe potential hazards in outdoor settings and ways to stay safe. L1 4.3 Show respect for the environment while carrying out outdoor activities.	L2 4.1 Apply safe practices consistently in a variety of outdoor situations. L2 4.2 Demonstrate responsible behaviour that protects both people and the environment. L2 4.3 Evaluate risks and take appropriate actions to reduce them. L2 4.4 Make environmentally sustainable choices during outdoor activities, showing awareness of wider impacts.

If not specified, then a plural reference within assessment criterion refers to a minimum of two.

Delivery guidance

Planning courses

Each unit in the Skills for Life and Work suite is awarded individually. When planning courses, teachers should consider the potential qualification outcomes for individual learners.

Closely related units that might be delivered alongside Skills in the natural environment include Community participation, Basic first aid, Teamwork, Personal safety, Practical gardening, Sustainability in action, Overcoming barriers, Health and safety at work, Working in Wales and Jobs of the future. These units complement this unit because they help learners apply practical outdoor skills in safe, cooperative, and responsible ways. They support learners to work effectively with others, care for themselves and the environment, engage in local conservation or gardening projects, and develop resilience and problem-solving abilities in real-world contexts. They also help learners understand how outdoor and environmental skills link to workplace safety, local employment opportunities in Wales, and emerging green careers, supporting awareness of future work pathways and responsible working practices.

There may also be links to other WJEC qualifications, including GCSE Geography, GCSE Biology, and GCSE Built Environment, the Work-Related Foundation qualification in Sport and Leisure and the VSCE in Sport and Leisure, and the Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications: Sustainability in Action, Sustainability in Context, and Sustainability in Practice. For full details of the Skills for Life and Work units and qualifications please refer to the qualification specification.

Amplification of learning outcomes

The amplification of the learning outcomes provided below should support teachers in developing content for delivery. Teachers can develop and tailor content as appropriate to their learners, whilst ensuring that the learners are provided with knowledge, understanding and the opportunity to develop and apply the skills needed to meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria. Content should be considered in the context of:

- the level the learner is working at
- providing opportunities for progression
- centre facilities and resources
- local, national and international contexts, as appropriate.

Teachers may find it helpful to refer to the level descriptors within the qualification specification.

Learning outcome	Amplification
LO1	Features of the natural environment and outdoors could include: • plants: trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses • animals: birds, insects, mammals, fish in freshwater areas • landforms: hills, valleys, slopes, rocks, soil types, sand, mud • water features: ponds, streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands • human-made features: paths, benches, bridges, fences, signs, picnic areas.

	For Level 1 and 2 learners: Resources the environment provides may include: • food: plants, fruit, fish, crops, and natural materials used for farming • water: rivers, streams, lakes, rainfall, and groundwater • materials: wood, stone, soil, fibres, and natural fuels • shelter: natural features or materials used to create shelter for people and wildlife • energy: wind, water flow, sunlight, and natural fuels. Uses of natural resources may include: • wood for building, tools, or firewood • water for drinking, washing, irrigation, or wildlife habitats • plants for food, medicine, or materials • land for farming, walking routes, or recreation • natural materials in outdoor survival or environmental activities. Ways ecosystems support life may include: • plants providing food, oxygen, and shelter • animals depending on plants, water, and habitats to survive • freshwater environments supporting plants, animals, and people • different living things interacting and depending on each other • ecosystems staying balanced when resources are used responsibly.
LO2	Ways people use the natural environment could include: • walking, hiking, cycling, swimming, or running • playing, relaxing, or socialising in parks and green spaces • farming, gardening, or growing food • fishing or collecting natural materials (e.g. stones, shells) • using outdoor spaces for learning, work, or leisure activities. Actions that can harm the environment could include: • dropping litter or waste • damaging plants or disturbing animals • walking off paths and damaging habitats • polluting water or soil. For Level 1 and 2 Learners: Impacts of human activity could include: • damage to habitats or loss of shelter for wildlife • disturbance to animals and plants • changes to water quality in ponds, streams, or rivers • overuse of paths or green spaces • improvements to areas through conservation or clean-up activities.

	Responsible behaviour could include: • following outdoor rules and guidance • respecting wildlife and natural features • using resources carefully and responsibly • taking part in conservation or community activities • encouraging others to care for the environment.
LO3	Outdoor or environmental activities could include: • planting seeds • collecting leaves or stones • watering plants • tidying outdoor spaces/litter picks • observing plants, animals, or insects • identifying trees, flowers, or wildlife • nature walks • using tools like trowels or watering cans • using a map or picture guide • following a route • building a shelter • practising simple navigation. For Level 1 and 2 learners: Additional outdoor survival and environmental tasks could include: • collecting and storing water safely using containers • building a shelter using provided materials • following a marked route or trail • carrying out basic environmental care tasks (e.g. planting, habitat tidying). Methods and tools could include: • hand tools such as trowels, saws, or mallets • navigation tools such as maps or compasses • wearing appropriate clothing and safety equipment • applying survival skills, like seeking shelter • using sustainable practices such as minimising waste/reusing materials.
LO4	Outdoor hazards or dangers could include: • uneven or slippery ground • water such as ponds, streams, or rivers • sharp tools or equipment • weather conditions such as cold, heat, wind, or rain • plants or animals that may cause harm if disturbed. Simple steps to stay safe outdoors could include: • staying with the group • walking carefully/staying on paths • wearing suitable clothing and footwear • following instructions from staff or leaders • keeping a safe distance from water • knowing when and how to ask for help.

	Caring for the environment when outdoors could include: • Treating plants and animals with care • Avoiding damage to natural features • Putting litter in bins or taking it home • Staying on paths to protect habitats • Using resources carefully and avoiding waste. For Level 1 and 2 learners: Safe, responsible behaviour could include: • following safety rules and procedures • following instructions and agreed outdoor rules • using tools and equipment safely • staying within designated areas • identifying hazards • showing respect for the environment • avoiding damage to habitats and wildlife • disposing of litter responsibly • following guidance to protect outdoor spaces.
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Suggested activities

This section gives some suggested activities to support teaching and learning in a vocational context consistent with the philosophy and intent of the unit and associated qualifications. Useful resources and possible contacts that could be made in the delivery of the learning are also signposted.

The following activities would be suitable for use with Entry Level learners:

- guided walks to observe plants, animals, and natural features
- matching pictures of natural features or resources to their use (e.g. pond → water for animals; tree → shelter for birds)
- labelling plants, animals, or natural features in the local environment
- matching photos, symbols, or signs to safe and unsafe outdoor areas
- roleplay shelter building with blankets and chairs
- mock navigation using maps or picture compasses
- group activities - planting seeds, collecting leaves, observing insects
- litter pick on school field or playground
- sorting activities – recyclable materials
- observation or checklist exercises – identifying hazards in outdoor areas (uneven ground, water)
- spotting features that support wildlife (logs, ponds, trees)
- roleplay activities – acting out being in a safe or unsafe outdoor situation.

The following activities would be suitable for use with Level 1 and 2 learners:

- local visits or field trips exploring different outdoor environments
- case studies or videos of outdoor environments (e.g. woodland, beach, river, hills)
- guided practice of survival skills
- building shelters with natural materials
- practising fire safety or supervised fire-lighting demonstrations
- using maps or a compass for basic navigation
- identifying potential hazards before and during activities
- group discussion on how to reduce risk in outdoor environments
- comparing human impacts (littering, pollution, habitat loss) on local ecosystems
- planning and carrying out eco-action tasks e.g. planting trees, wildlife surveys, habitat restoration
- designing a simple shelter considering the environment and resources available
- deciding the safest route across a given area or terrain
- matching exercise – choosing tools or methods for specific tasks
- group discussion on what worked well and what could be improved in survival activities
- presentation on safety actions or why environmental actions are important
- group or individual presentations on findings from local ecosystem observations or eco-action projects or explaining how survival skills and environmental care are connected.

Sources of evidence

This unit is centre assessed and externally quality assured by WJEC. Assessment must be accessible, using clear language and reflecting the learner's level. Learners should demonstrate knowledge and skills through realistic activities such as roleplay, case studies, or projects. Whilst evidence may be verbal, written, practical or visual, extended written work is not required unless appropriate. Each unit must be assessed independently, even if tasks cover multiple criteria. Assessor judgements should focus on the meeting of standards, not on spelling or presentation unless specifically assessed. Full assessment guidance is available in the qualification specification.

Possible sources of evidence may include:

- photos or short videos of learners carrying out survival tasks (e.g. building a shelter, using a compass, collecting water)
- annotated worksheets showing identification of plants, animals, or natural features
- records of eco-actions (e.g. litter picks, planting, wildlife surveys)
- teacher observation notes on learner ability to follow instructions safely outdoors
- teacher notes on independence, tool use, or correct application of survival skills
- observation of safe and responsible behaviour during environmental activities
- learner reflection logs on why safety and environmental care are important
- notes on what worked or didn't in a survival or eco-action activity
- plans for practical tasks or routes in outdoor navigation activities
- completed quizzes on hazards, safety signs, plants, animals, or freshwater features.

Experiences

To provide a real-world context you could:

- Invite a local outdoor expert or ranger to give a demonstration. A trained ranger, environmental officer, or survival instructor could show how to identify safe outdoor spaces, build a basic shelter, use simple tools, or observe wildlife responsibly. Learners could watch the demonstration and tick off steps or key skills they observe. Working in small groups, learners could practise building a simple shelter, navigating a short route, or safely handling tools, under supervision. Afterwards, learners could reflect on what they learned and discuss how these skills could help them in everyday life, or when exploring outdoor spaces safely.
- Arrange a visit to a local outdoor environment or community conservation project. Learners could explore parks, nature reserves, riversides, or woodland areas to see how humans use and care for natural spaces. Before the visit, learners could prepare questions about plants, animals, water safety, or local environmental projects. During the visit, they could identify natural features, hazards, and resources, and discuss safe and responsible ways to use and protect the environment. Learners could then note new skills or knowledge gained and reflect on how they could apply them in everyday life or future outdoor projects.
- Plan and carry out simple eco-action projects. Learners could undertake small conservation tasks such as planting seeds, conducting a wildlife survey, or picking up litter. They could plan the activity, identify potential hazards, and select safe tools and methods. After completing the project, learners could reflect on the impact of their actions on the local environment, what they learned, and how the project connects to sustainable living and environmental stewardship.

Resources and organisations

Resources required for delivery

Centres may need access to local green spaces, basic navigation tools (maps, compasses), and simple safety equipment. These resources enable safe exploration and practical tasks (e.g., shelter building, plant ID), supporting valid evidence of outdoor skills and environmental awareness.

Resources available to support delivery

Field Studies Council (FSC)	Offers outdoor learning frameworks, biodiversity surveys, and environmental education training materials suitable for school and community use. Provides visits, outreach and teacher training to support safe, engaging and inspiring outdoor and sustainability learning. To find out more, go to: https://www.field-studies-council.org/
Learning through Landscapes	Provides resources to support schools to make the outdoors a fundamental part of education. To find out more, go to: https://ltl.org.uk/resources
Water Safety Wales	Delivers bilingual safety education programmes such as 'Float, Stay Together, Call 999' and supports teaching about water hazards and safe behaviour near water. To find out more, go to: https://www.nationalwatersafety.org.uk/water-safety-wales
Dryad Bushcraft	Swansea-based bushcraft and wilderness survival training provider. Offers practical forest sessions on fire lighting, shelter building, and outdoor cooking. To find out more, go to: https://www.dryadbushcraft.co.uk/
Storey Arms	An outdoor adventurous education centre based in the Brecon Beacons National Park at the foot of Pen y Fan. Offers residential and day visits for schools and youth groups with the following activities: • kayaking and canoeing • caving • hill walking • rock climbing and abseiling • adventure/gorge walking • orienteering • problem solving. To find out more, go to: https://www.storeyarms.com/
Plas y Brenin	An outdoor centre located in Capel Curig in the heart of Eryri (Snowdonia) National Park. Offers a wide range of expert-led courses in climbing, mountaineering, kayaking, and mountain biking. To find out more, go to: https://pyb.co.uk/

Natural Resources Wales: 'Come Outside!'	Community outdoor learning programme offering bushcraft, habitat restoration, and geocaching. Promotes confidence, nature connection, and environmental responsibility. To find out more, go to: https://naturalresources.wales/
The Outdoors People	Offers ready-to-use classroom and camp resources for integrating outdoor, survival-based learning with school curricula and lessons. To find out more, go to: https://www.theoutdoorspeople.com/
Eco-Schools Wales (via Keep Wales Tidy)	Global environmental education programme engaging pupils in sustainable school actions. Offers structured topics like biodiversity, water, and waste, plus monitoring tools (e.g. SHRN data). To find out more, go to: https://www.eco-schools.org.uk/ SHRN resource via Keep Wales Tidy
Keep Wales Tidy (Cadwch Cymru'n Daclus)	Welsh charity offering environmental education programmes (e.g. Eco-Schools, Climate Action Schools). Provides resources for litter projects, water pollution lessons, and outdoor learning activities. To find out more, go to: https://keepwalestidy.cymru/
British Orienteering	Provides lesson plans and practical activities to develop navigation skills using maps and orienteering, increasing confidence in outdoor movement. To find out more, go to: https://www.britishorienteering.org.uk/
Mountain Training	A network of awarding organisations for skills courses and qualifications in walking, climbing and mountaineering that operates across the UK and Republic of Ireland. Offers e-learning courses on the following: • taking a bearing with a map and compass • planning a walk • tying-in with a rethreaded figure-of-eight • setting the map. To find out more, go to: https://www.mountain-training.org/qualifications/walking/mountain-leader/
Hwb Cymru – Water Safety	Provides a RNLI water safety lesson for secondary aged learners on: • how to plan for a trip to a waterside location • how to reduce the chances of getting into danger • identifying the hazards and understanding the risks • what happens to our bodies in cold water • what to do if we see someone in danger in the water To find out more, go to: Overview - Water safety education: Secondary - Resources - Hwb

PoMS – UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme	Provides tools to track changes in pollinator abundance – key resources include the FIT Count app, identification guides and survey guidance. To find out more, go to: Welcome to the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) PoMS
RSPB – Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Provides teacher resources and activity sheets, and curriculum-linked activities which are available in English and Welsh. Resources include • Big Schools' Birdwatch • Wild Challenge • Build a nestbox To find out more, go to: Big Garden Birdwatch How to Build a nestbox: DIY nestbox Plans
Imperial College London	Surveys exploring the health of our soils and trees, the quality of our air and water, how humans impact the climate, the distribution of invertebrates, and the importance of hedges and pollinators. To find out more, go to: Surveys Research groups Imperial College London

Resources required for assessment

Assessment of this unit should not require any additional resources to those required for delivery.

References to third-party materials and links to external websites in this document are provided for convenience and informational purposes only.

We select and review these resources at the time of publication to support teaching and learning; however, their inclusion does not imply endorsement or guarantee of the organisations, content or opinions expressed.

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Any questions or concerns about external content should be directed to the original providers. If you identify any links that are no longer working or are inappropriate, you are encouraged to inform the subject team so they can be reviewed. All information in this publication is accurate at the time of publication.

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