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# Outdoors for All?

An Action Plan to increase the number of people from under-represented groups who access the natural environment.

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### **Further information**

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This Action Plan, along with further information on our research programme, is available online at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/natres/eco-actionp.htm>

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## Foreword from Jonathan Shaw MP

picture ?

In the Rural White Paper 2000 *Our Countryside: the future* the Government gave a commitment to investigate why some sectors of the community access the natural environment far less often than others, and to prepare an action plan.

The Diversity Action Plan is the result of a number of years of hard work – initially by the Countryside Agency and more recently by Natural England. It involved research, four action projects and a public consultation exercise, all of which were undertaken in such a way as to ensure the target groups in particular have felt engaged and thus have wanted to contribute. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the project so far, particularly those who took the trouble to respond to the public consultation exercise and those stakeholders who have committed to contribute to the Action Plan.

The Action Plan that has resulted from this process will help to achieve the Defra objective that “people enjoy, understand and care for the natural environment”. I would like to emphasise that although this project is directed at four particular groups, it remains Government policy that *everyone* should have the opportunity to access the natural environment. This does not just mean access for its own sake; there is plenty of evidence that contact with nature is good for you – in terms of both physical and mental health and well-being. We are working with colleagues across Government to ensure that these benefits are factored into policy development at an early stage.

But the Diversity Review research provided clear evidence that we need to do more to show people in the under-represented groups what the natural environment has to offer. Once people have tasted the experience, the evidence suggests they want more. We also need to ensure that the outdoor recreation sector understands what is needed to attract people from the under-represented groups. Indeed, perhaps the key to this issue is to ensure that those who provide outdoor recreation opportunities understand the benefits that attracting a more diverse customer base can bring. This will be crucial in ensuring that increased participation by the target groups is sustained.

This project is all about changing mindsets. This cannot be achieved overnight. But we are confident that adopting the Action Plan will, over time, result in a measurable increase in the number of people from the under-represented groups who take the opportunity to access the natural environment and experience the benefits that brings.

signature?

Jonathan Shaw

# 1 Introduction

## Vision

**England's natural beauty, from its rural countryside and varied coastline to the urban green spaces closer to home, is enjoyed by everyone.**

## Background

1.1 In the Rural White Paper 2000 the Government gave a commitment to undertake a Diversity Review and draw up an action plan aimed at increasing the number of people from four under-represented groups who access the natural environment. These groups were identified as the disabled, black and minority ethnic groups, the young and residents of inner cities.

## Make a difference

1.2 The action plan aims, over the next ten years, to increase the number of people from diverse groups who participate in outdoor recreation and access the natural environment. It has been drawn up in response to evidence that:

- not all groups feel confident in accessing the outdoors, even though they may want to; and
- organisations providing recreational opportunities lack the confidence to engage with new customers (see Annex 2: Diversity Review).

1.3 The action plan seeks to ensure the vision is achieved through a number of means:

- cross-government action to ensure that relevant strategies and policies promote equality of opportunity to access the natural environment;
- effective championing of the action plan by Natural England;
- by fostering and facilitating a willingness by service providers and the under-represented groups to work collaboratively to provide more, and more welcoming, opportunities to access the natural environment and to take advantage of those opportunities.

## Why the plan is needed

1.4 Outdoor activities are often associated with white, middle aged, middle class and able bodied people. The Government firmly believes that all sectors of the community should be given equal opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the natural environment. From adrenaline fuelled adventure, to walks with friends, bird watching or playing with the children, there is ample evidence of the benefits to physical and mental health and well being that such access can bring.

## Diversity and Equality Legislation

- 1.5 Recent legislation – in particular the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 – places a number of duties on public bodies. For example, they require public bodies to be proactive in positively promoting equality across all aspects of their business, as well as addressing discrimination where it occurs. This applies to the provision of goods and services to customers and clients, people's employment and their volunteering activities. Helping people to enjoy their right of access, for example on open access land or the public rights of way network, amounts to the provision of a service.
- 1.6 Legislation will be a significant catalyst for positive, practical action in shifting cultural and organisational attitudes and behaviours in relation to equality. It will help Defra, Natural England and delivery partners to focus on embedding equality of opportunity to access the natural environment into their planning process.
- 1.7 However, it is important that there should be no confusion between the statutory duties imposed by the legislation and the essentially voluntary actions contained in this Action Plan which are aimed specifically at encouraging people from the five under-represented groups to access the natural environment.
- 1.8 To avoid any such confusion this Action Plan does not include activities which are solely necessary to meet our statutory responsibilities either as employers or service providers.

## 2 The Action Plan

### Public Consultation

- 2.1 The Countryside Agency produced a draft 'Outdoors for All?' Diversity Action Plan for Defra, and undertook a public consultation on their behalf. The consultation document was produced following engagement with stakeholders to ensure that the plan was realistic and drew on their expertise and enthusiasm as potential delivery partners. The Countryside Agency appointed consultants to plan and manage a public consultation process and provide an analysis of the consultation responses.
- 2.2 Following the consultation launch event in May 2006, the Countryside Agency held a series of workshops to engage people at a more local, community level. These events, which included five regional workshops and a presentation to the UK Youth Parliament, attracted 205 attendees.
- 2.3 The written consultation exercise invited a variety of stakeholders, partners, community groups and representative organisations from the under-represented groups to comment on the content, targets and overall intention of the draft Action Plan. 247 responses were received. For more details of the consultation process and responses please visit: <http://defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/issues/recreation/diversity-actionplan/dap-consultation.pdf>

### Conclusions from the consultation exercise

- 2.4 The full analysis of the consultation responses, by Ecotec consultants, is available at <http://defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/issues/pdf/summary-consultation-dap.pdf>
- 2.5 The responses demonstrated considerable support for the vision, action areas, targets, outcomes and objectives outlined in the draft action plan. Key issues identified by the consultants included:
  - The need for further guidance and advice and information sharing;
  - The need to make all policies and services related to the outdoor recreation sector more coherent;
  - The need for an inclusive network of forums which reflect local diversity;
  - The need for quality, easily available information, and for people to feel ownership of policies and services;
  - The need to establish a baseline picture against which future changes can be measured;
  - The need for reliable resources;
  - The need to identify clear and tangible outcomes;
  - The need for strong leadership from Defra and Natural England.
- 2.6 Respondents also suggested that a major omission from the draft Action Plan is the need to address diversity in sector related employment. They also emphasised the need for an approach which identified all barriers and solutions and thus reached wider than the four groups identified, and embraced in particular carers, the elderly and young people from inner cities.

- 2.7. Defra and Natural England have noted the level of support for the proposals in the draft Action Plan and that respondents participated in the consultation process with enthusiasm. There is clearly good work already underway in many organisations to shape change through policy and planning, with the under-represented groups in mind.
- 2.8 We have very carefully considered all the comments made on the draft Action Plan. In our view a point that needs special mention is that addressing the needs of children and young people is particularly critical for achieving change. The Diversity Review and related projects demonstrate that young people appreciate the opportunity to experience positive differences in mood, and welcome the freedom to express themselves in the outdoors.
- 2.9 As well as drawing on the conclusions of the consultation exercise, the Action Plan has been developed in line with recent changes in equalities legislation. As a result it embraces the principles of equality and diversity. Furthermore, although the Action Plan is aimed specifically at the under-represented groups, it needs to be put in context. It remains Government policy to provide opportunities for *everyone* to access the natural environment and experience the benefits that can arise as a result, particularly to physical and mental health and well-being.
- 2.10 We believe that the Action Plan provides a sound basis for achievement of the targets set out below. Fundamental to the plan is the list of specific actions to be undertaken by Defra, Natural England, other public or private sector organisations as well as recreation service providers and representatives of under-represented groups. The list is attached as Annex 1. It sets out, at a reasonably high level, those actions that are currently underway or planned. It should be borne in mind that the list of actions must not only be flexible, to take account of initiatives that are completed or new ones which come on-stream, but also needs to reflect the fact that new delivery partners will engage with the Plan. And of course actions are dependent upon the level of resource available.
- 2.11 In response to concerns expressed by consultation respondents about sector related employment, a ninth area for action has been added covering volunteering and employment. These two are linked as volunteering is a traditional route into employment in the environmental sector, and evidence suggests that peoples choice of career in the environmental sector is influenced by their level of access to the environment as children and young people. A number of actions to increase the number and diversity of volunteers and employees are contained in Annex 1. In particular, Natural England has a target to “Increase the number and diversity of people volunteering their time to help conserve and enhance the natural environment on NE’s estate by 5%”. Natural England (and others) intend to pursue a number of initiatives aimed at increasing the level of access to the natural environment amongst young people from both urban and rural areas.

2.12 After consideration of the results of the consultation exercise, the Principles, Outcomes, Objectives, Action Areas and Targets for the action plan are confirmed as follows:

### **Principles of the Action Plan**

#### **The Action Plan:**

- Is a living document, subject to review and monitoring;
- seeks to embed equality and diversity into organisational cultures;
- encourages effective co-ordination and sharing of best practice;
- seeks to build on existing partnerships, and develop new ones, to support delivery;
- maximises use of existing resources to enable effective delivery.

### **Outcomes**

#### **The Government wants to see:**

- New customers from the under-represented groups, using the natural environment, understanding what the natural environment has to offer and with the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of recreational activities and confidently return for more;
- Providers, including rural businesses and land managers, skilled in working with under-represented groups, sensitive to their needs and keen and able to provide an enjoyable experience;
- Constructive relationships between providers and organisations representing the under-represented groups;
- Readily accessible information in a form that meets the requirements of the under-represented groups;
- Accessible, available and affordable transport together with accessible transport information.

### **Objectives**

#### **To help achieve these outcomes, the outdoor recreation sector needs to:**

- Embed diversity and equality principles into the planning and practice of outdoor recreation service providers so that the needs of under-represented groups are understood and met;
- Create a climate of confidence in under-represented groups about visiting their local green spaces and venturing further afield;
- Contribute to cross cutting Government agendas on social justice to ensure that inequalities in access to the benefits of the outdoors are covered;
- Gather and maintain robust evidence on the benefits of widening participation in outdoor recreation to inform stakeholder action.

## Action Areas

- Training and guidance – investing in improving skills of recreation providers, resulting in better delivery;
- Forums and Networks – sharing good practice on improving delivery;
- Plans and strategies – influencing a range of plans, including, for example, Local Transport Plans and Rights of Way Improvement Plans;
- Information and Marketing – key to raising awareness and confidence;
- Research – needed to test different approaches;
- Funding – to facilitate some of the above actions and, particularly, initial contact with what the natural environment has to offer;
- Service planning and performance measures – to monitor progress;
- Championing, governance and regulation – creating a focus for action;
- Volunteering, employment and careers – to create a more diverse volunteer base which will feed into the workforce.

## Targets

### The two targets for the Diversity Action Plan are:

#### to realise a measurable increase in:

- Awareness by under-represented groups of what the natural environment has to offer and where to go to enjoy it;
- The number, diversity and frequency of people in under-represented groups enjoying the natural environment.

## 3 Delivery

### Defra's role

#### 3.1 Defra will:

- adopt a strategic approach to ensuring the success of the Action Plan, providing a cross-government steer and influencing and encouraging the establishment of equality and diversity principles in access and recreation strategies at all levels of government – national, regional and local;
- work, through the Corporate Planning process, to promote the establishment of diversity targets and indicators in access and recreation strategies in executive agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) and other relevant public bodies;
- promote and embed equality and diversity throughout its organisation, via its Equality Schemes, and act as a role model for its own executive agencies, NDPBs and other public bodies.

3.2 Defra will also encourage and support the use of existing resources and funding streams to achieve equality of access to the natural environment, and keep under review the policies adopted by grant awarding bodies to ensure that promoting diversity is a factor taken into account when funding schemes are being designed.

3.3. It should also be borne in mind that a lot of action is already underway in a number of Government Departments to promote the diversity of visitors to the natural environment, either directly or indirectly. Examples include the Ministry of Defence's Access and Recreation Strategy; the Growing Schools Project and the Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto both sponsored by the Department for Children, Schools and Families; and the Tourism Strategy for 2012 published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sports.

### Natural England's role

3.4 Natural England will have a key role to act as the champion for the Action Plan. There are three over-arching aspects to the role:

- Acting as a champion for diversity and equality;
- Providing advice and guidance;
- Monitoring and maintaining an overview of plan delivery over the ten years.

### Acting as Champion

3.5 Natural England will demonstrate leadership in the management of its own business, ensuring that it meets its equalities duties and benchmark its own performance against similar bodies. Examples include engaging disabled people as volunteers in the management of National Nature Reserves to meet the Disability Equality Duty and in its work to deliver the Government's aspirations for coastal access, ensuring that the needs of people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are taken into account to meet the Race Equality Duty. But clearly their role as champion will necessitate Natural England going well beyond their statutory responsibilities.

3.6 Natural England will take the lead in promoting the benefits of the natural environment to new audiences and, with access managers, explain the business benefits from engaging with under-represented groups. This approach will be passed on to those who obtain grant aid from Natural England.

## Providing Advice and Guidance

- 3.7 Natural England will work in partnership with a range of organisations at national and regional levels and fulfil a signposting function for inquirers. Providing guidance<sup>1</sup> and advice are also part of the role. It will maintain an effective dialogue with stakeholders nationally and regionally, working through new and existing forums as well as bilaterally.

## Monitoring and maintaining an overview

- 3.8 Natural England will maintain an overview of progress across the outdoor recreation sector at national and regional level. This will both check progress against the objectives and monitor delivery of key actions.
- 3.9 Monitoring is a vital component of the champion role and has two key elements:
- Gathering data, and;
  - Reviewing performance

### Gathering Data

- 3.10 From 2008 onwards Natural England will establish a rolling programme of data collection to gather information to monitor progress in meeting the two targets. This data will be published.
- 3.11 The collection of data on volunteer and employee diversity in the sector will be led by Natural England working with key stakeholders.
- 3.12 Collecting information on the coverage of outdoor access within public sector equalities schemes, and the local government equalities standard reporting, will also be led by Natural England. Similarly, it will maintain an overview of the corporate responsibility and business reports of voluntary and private sector organisations in relation to equality of access for diverse groups.
- 3.13 Natural England will collaborate with the Audit Commission, the Office for Disability Issues the Equalities and Human Rights Commission and the Government Equalities Office in this monitoring activity.

### Reviewing performance

- 3.14 The Action Plan is a rolling programme with a ten-year timeframe that will be updated through stakeholder inputs.
- 3.15 Beneath the activities listed set out in Annex 1 lies a project database, which Natural England will maintain. The project database will comprise evaluated projects collated from stakeholders as part of the annual reviews. This will be available, along with the performance reviews and updated list of activities, through Defra's and Natural England's websites, and other links.
- 3.16 A programme of regional stakeholder events will facilitate the review process through a celebration of successes, as well as support effective information exchange.
- 3.17 Natural England will report regularly to Defra on performance against meeting the Action Plan's outcomes, objectives and targets; and propose to conduct a formal review in 2012. Key stakeholders will be involved in the review process.

<sup>1</sup> By All Reasonable Means gives guidance on meeting the needs of disabled people for access to the natural environment. And Your Evidence Is? gives guidance on effective evaluation.

## Outdoor Recreation Providers' Role

- 3.18 Outdoor recreation providers have a vital role in helping to deliver the Action Plan. They have contributed positively throughout the consultation process, showing a commitment to embedding diversity and equality, and sharing an interest in addressing inequalities in accessing the natural environment and increasing opportunities for everyone.
- 3.19 For the Action Plan to succeed, providers will need to continue to engage with it proactively, in will particular need to consider appointing a champion within their organisation; to work with the under-represented groups to identify barriers and how to overcome them and to share experience of actions that work.
- 3.20 We recognise that some stakeholders have been pursuing initiatives in this area for a number of years. The Mosaic Partnership, involving the Council for National Parks, the Youth Hostels Association and four National Park Authorities, is a good example of a project aimed at building a long-term and strategic engagement between black and minority ethnic (BME) communities and National Parks. For the Diversity Action Plan to succeed it is imperative that projects like this continue, and new ones are taken up that reach all the under-represented groups.

## Under-represented Groups' Role

- 3.21 Similarly, the under-represented groups have a responsibility to take advantage of those access opportunities on offer; to work constructively with service providers; to volunteer; and to participate in networks and forums.

## Resources

- 3.22 The resources needed to implement and monitor the Action Plan will be agreed through Natural England's Corporate Planning process. In the short term the focus will be on using existing resources to undertake initial activities.
- 3.23 New sources of funding, for example lottery schemes, will be investigated and assessed by Natural England. Natural England will also pursue opportunities to work with the private sector and seek sponsorship from that sector over the medium to long term.
- 3.24 Resources are already being spent on initiatives or activities that will help towards achieving the Action Plan targets. For example, Natural England is undertaking scoping studies on a new leisure visits survey which is also intended to address the need for a baseline diversity survey against which to judge progress of the plan; and Defra already provides funding via agri-environment schemes for the provision of educational access for school age children.

## Action Areas

- 3.25 In the consultation document 'Outdoors for All?', eight areas were identified where action is required either by Defra, Natural England or another of its agencies or NDPBs, other Government Departments or their agencies, Local Authorities, and other bodies both public and private. As explained in paragraph 2.11, we have added a ninth area, 'Volunteering, Employment and Careers' as a result of comments made during the consultation exercise.
- 3.26 These Action Areas have been used to help structure the activities in Annex 1.



# Annex 1: List of Actions

List of Actions	
Committed and Potential Delivery Partners	Proposed Action
<b>Training and Guidance</b>	
Natural England, National Park Authorities, Sensory Trust	Provide expert advice on diversity in the natural environment through the development, maintenance and promotion of good practice to service providers and others
Natural England, other Non Departmental Public Bodies, Sensory Trust, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV), Tourism for All UK, sector providers	Support staff and volunteers to understand and meet the needs of under-represented groups through diversity and equality training
Natural England, other Government Departments	Produce guidance on visitor survey methodologies in order to enable recreation providers to capture effective participation data from relevant target groups
Natural England, Sensory Trust	Produce and promote the Diversity Review evaluation framework and toolkit, internally and externally
Lantra, Skills Active, Natural England	Produce guide for sector providers on business benefits of employing a diverse workforce
<b>Information and Education</b>	
Natural England	Develop a suite of tools to market access to the natural environment to new audiences including the under-represented groups
Defra, other Government Departments, Natural England, National Park Authorities, Local Authorities, Youth Hostels Association (YHA), Field Studies Council (FSC), Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), BTCV, Tourism for All UK, The Wildlife Trusts, voluntary sector	Consider a marketing/promotional campaign aimed at target groups
Defra, other Government Departments, Natural England, National Park Authorities, Local Authorities, AONBs, YHA, Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR), FSC, other sector providers	Promote actions in the Plan through stakeholder websites, literature and media
Defra, other Government Departments, Natural England, National Park Authorities, Local Authorities, YHA	Provide information in a range of accessible formats and languages and at appropriate locations to meet the needs of under-represented groups

Committed and Potential Delivery Partners	Proposed Action
<b>Information and Education cont...</b>	
Natural England, BBC, Wildlife Trusts, Field Studies Council, Woodland Trust, BTCV	Develop and deliver a programme of community events linked to BBC Breathing Places campaign to provide an opportunity for people from under-represented groups to take local action to conserve and enhance their environment
Defra, Natural England, Department of Health, Primary Care Trusts, British Heart Foundation, MIND, BTCV, Local Authorities, Wildlife Trusts, National Park Authorities, AONBs, FSC	Promote health, social and environmental benefits of enjoying the natural environment to all sectors of the community including under-represented groups, e.g. Green Gyms, Walking your Way to Health, and National Step-o-meter programmes
Natural England, Wildlife Trusts, FSC	Establish a national partnership including representatives of under-represented groups to promote and develop a network of sites for the study and understanding of the natural environment, e.g. Wildlife Trust sites
Defra, Natural England, Department for Children, Schools and Families, YHA, Wildlife Trusts, Sensory Trust, AONBs, National Park Authorities, FSC, Woodland Trust	Engage and educate children and young people about the benefits of enjoying the natural environment
Defra, Natural England, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Farm visit providers	Further evaluation of the potential for grant schemes to deliver educational access to enhance the opportunities for the under-represented groups in particular eg the Environmental Stewardship Scheme; England Woodland Grants scheme
Defra, Natural England	To provide more detailed information about all access routes available under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme to assist all potential users in deciding whether a site is suitable for them
<b>Championing, Governance and Regulation</b>	
Defra, Natural England, National Park Authorities, Local Authorities, other public bodies, YHA, AONBs	Ensure access and recreation are covered in published equality schemes, ensuring policies and practices in these areas are reviewed to ensure that equality and diversity are embedded
Defra, Natural England, National Park Authorities	Influence relevant cross-government strategies and policies to promote equality of opportunity to access the natural environment
Defra, Natural England, Local Authorities, other public bodies, YHA, National Park Authorities	Promote role of diversity and equality champions in relation to access to the natural environment

Committed and Potential Delivery Partners	Proposed Action
<b>Championing, Governance and Regulation cont...</b>	
Natural England	Monitor progress of delivery of "Outdoors for All?" Diversity Action Plan, providing effective co-ordination, analysis and monitoring role at a national and regional level
Defra	Investigate the opportunity to create diversity exemplars in local government offered by Local Area Agreements, Multi Area Agreements and Beacon Council Scheme
Defra, Natural England	Under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme, target access opportunities in the urban fringe which should in particular benefit the under-represented groups
<b>Funding and Resources</b>	
Natural England, other Government Departments, Mind, British Waterways, BTCV, Environment Agency, Green Space, Groundwork UK, Land Restoration Trust, The National Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust, AONBs, National Park Authorities, FSC	Provide increased opportunities for disadvantaged communities to experience the natural environment, through applications to relevant lottery schemes, for example the "Access to Nature" scheme
Defra	Review policies adopted by lottery organisations to ensure that diversity is a factor considered when grant schemes on access and recreation are developed
Defra, Natural England, Local Authorities, other public bodies	Review and improve the utilisation of existing funding schemes, e.g. Environmental Stewardship Scheme, to support delivery of inclusive access to the natural environment
<b>Research and Evidence</b>	
Natural England, National Park Authorities, FSC, The Wildlife Trusts	Develop a programme for the most deprived communities in each region, to increase opportunities to experience the natural environment
Natural England, AONBs	Establish baseline data and report on access to the natural environment amongst the under-represented groups
Natural England, Regional Observatories, Local Authorities	Map local, regional and national demographic data in relation to data on green spaces, coast and trails to assess key areas for under-represented groups

Committed and Potential Delivery Partners	Proposed Action
<b>Research and Evidence cont...</b>	
Defra, Natural England	Monitor relevant cross-government research on health and sustainable development to produce evidence of the benefits that arise from more people from under-represented groups using the natural environment
Natural England	Pilot a new programme in the London region, to connect people to the natural environment and deliver the "Accessible Natural Green Space Standards"
Natural England, Sensory Trust, The Wildlife Trusts	Expand the evidence base on the health, social and economic benefits of using and enjoying the natural environment
Natural England, other Government Departments, National Park Authorities, BTCV	Develop a project database in order to share information on successful diversity projects in the natural environment
Association of Regional Observatories	Map local, regional, and national demographic data in relation to data on green spaces, coasts and trails. Expand the evidence base on health, social and economic benefits of using and enjoying the natural environment, including through effective evaluation. Supplementing national research with regional data, as well as the subsequent dissemination and promotion of research.
<b>Partnerships forums and networks</b>	
Defra, Natural England, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Local Education Authorities, National Park Authorities, FSC, YHA, Wildlife Trusts, Woodland Trust, national youth organisations	Promote the benefits of recreation and learning in the natural environment to organisations representing children and young people
Natural England	Through national action plan forum, review "Outdoors for All?" progress and share information and best practice
Natural England	Engage the private sector in improving access to under-represented groups, through for example, joint working with utility companies and other corporate landowners
National Park Authorities	To work with Community Champions/Clusters and other models of bottom-up community outreach work to promote diversity
Defra, Natural England, Local/access Authorities, Black Environment Network, The Wildlife Trusts, Voluntary Sector, and representative groups	Review membership/effectiveness of existing regional and national forums concerned with access to the natural environment, and establish new ones where necessary

Committed and Potential Delivery Partners	Proposed Action
<b>Partnerships forums and networks cont...</b>	
Defra	Encourage appointments to Local Access Forums to take account of appropriate diversity policies and the needs of under-represented groups
Natural England, Defra	Engage local authorities, IDeA and DCLG to help achieve the "Outdoors for All?" Diversity Action Plan objectives and targets alongside their wider work on diversity and equality
<b>Plans and Strategies</b>	
Defra, Natural England, other public bodies	Involve services users in planning and delivery of services, to ensure they meet the needs of under-represented groups in terms of access to the natural environment
National Park Authorities	Encourage each NPA to consider the establishment of an outreach strategy to include equality, and how this might be applied across all NPAs
Regional Development Agencies, Government Offices, Commission for Rural Communities, Natural England, Government Offices, Visit Britain	Ensure all regional development plans, e.g. Regional Spatial Strategies include equality of access to the natural environment as part of their assessment of the economic and social benefits to the region
Local Authorities	Ensure service plans meet the Local Government Equality Standards and Best Value Performance Indicators, set for equality of access to green space
Natural England, Local Authorities, AONBs	Review transport plans, rights of way improvement plans and Local Area Agreements to ensure green space access for the under-represented groups is specifically included
<b>Service Planning and Performance Measures</b>	
Natural England	Develop a new service framework for visitors to National Nature Reserves, to increase the level of protection and make visits easier to people from the under-represented groups
Natural England	Ensure that grant conditions encourage organisations to utilise the Diversity Review evaluation framework and toolkit
Natural England	Benchmark performance on equality schemes against exemplar organisations
National Park Authorities, AONBs	Management plans to include locally driven and measurable diversity/inclusion objectives

Committed and Potential Delivery Partners	Proposed Action
<b>Volunteering, Employment and Careers</b>	
Defra, Natural England, Lantra, other public bodies, BTCV, The Wildlife Trusts, voluntary sector	Encourage the outdoor recreation sector to address their workforce profile so that it better reflects England's diverse population
Lantra, Defra, Natural England, National Park Authorities	Identify positive role models from a diverse background within sector, and provide opportunities to work shadow
Defra, Natural England, AONBs, other public bodies	Monitor employee and volunteer profiles through equality scheme reporting
Natural England	Consider using Community Champions and mentors to engage people from under-represented groups to enter sector employment
Natural England, AONBs	Increase the number and diversity of people volunteering their time to help conserve and enhance the natural environment on NE's estate, by 5%

## Annex 2: Diversity Review

- A2.1 The Government decided it should find out why some groups of people participated in outdoor recreation when others either didn't do so at all, or did so less frequently.
- A2.2 In the Rural White Paper 2000 "Our Countryside: the future. A fair deal for England" the Government made the following commitment:
- "By 2005, we will carry out a full diversity review of how we can encourage more people with disabilities, more people from ethnic minorities, more people from the inner cities, and more young people to visit the countryside and participate in country activities. Initially, we will do this by seeking their views on what they need to enjoy the countryside. Then we will draw up a plan of action."
- A2.3 Between September 2002 and December 2005 the Countryside Agency carried out the review on behalf of Defra.
- A2.4 The Review included:
- Research with the four under-represented groups to establish their needs and perceptions of what is available for them;
  - Research with providers of outdoor recreation experiences assessing their awareness of the needs of the under-represented groups targeted in the Rural White Paper.
- A2.5 The Review concluded that:
- Groups clearly expressed a desire to enjoy the benefits of outdoor recreation, but had concerns about the lack of information in accessing the outdoors, about not being made welcome, and those without access to a car found transport a major barrier;
  - There is a lack of confidence in engaging with diverse groups amongst recreation providers.
- A2.6 The Diversity Review research ('What About Us – Part 1 Under-represented Groups' Visitors Needs') confirmed the influence of factors, such as health and available income. It also highlighted that England's increasingly diverse population do not have enough information about opportunities to enjoy the natural environment.
- A2.7 The review also highlighted the need to provide quality accessible green space in urban areas close to home as well as access to the countryside. Local parks and other urban greenspace are often the only natural environment accessible to some sectors of the community.
- For copies of the Diversity Review research reports please go to:  
<http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/DR/DRResearchIndex.asp>
- A2.8 A recommendation from the review was to undertake a mix of action research projects to meet the needs of specific groups, using less commonly employed outreach methods, which should be evaluated and form the basis of future good practice guides.
- A2.9 Four action research projects began in August 2004, testing novel ways of increasing access to outdoor recreation in the countryside that can be independently sustained. These projects have been continually evaluated for good practices and lessons learnt. For the participants, the benefits have broadly been improved health, social contact and the confidence to venture out independently into new environments; although some have discovered that a lack of confidence in using public transport affects their participation.

## **1. Beyond the Boundary – Yorkshire Dales National Park**

This project twinned Yorkshire Dales National Park and Bradford youth cricket teams and was managed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It tested whether twinning two culturally distinct communities, one urban and Asian, the other rural and white, around a shared interest in cricket led to mutual understanding, an increase in confidence in visiting both the Yorkshire Dales and Bradford, and a self-sustained habit of outdoor recreation.

## **2. Finding Common Ground – Plymouth Groundwork**

This project was managed by Plymouth Groundwork and focused on bringing together people living in economically poor areas of Plymouth, and those living in rural Devon. The project looked at engaging with women and their families in inner city Plymouth, and linking them with women in rural communities. It was hoped that this interaction would increase their confidence and unlock their ability to access the Devon countryside.

## **3. Stepping Out – Warwickshire Wildlife Trust**

This project was managed by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, and brought together social care and mental health professionals with environmental management professionals, to provide access to Coventry's open space and countryside for carers of people with mental health problems. The project tested ways of introducing carers to places on their doorstep that they can return to independently. As well as providing valuable respite for carers, some participants also invited those they are caring for to share their experiences on the project.

## **4. By All Means – Kent County Council**

This project was managed by Kent County Council, who tested ways of fully engaging with disability representative organisations to provide information and confidence for disabled people to feel informed and confident enough to access outdoor recreation sites. This project aims to involve disabled people in all aspects of planning and organising activities, and to assist in further educating staff working at the sites to cater for their needs and aspirations. This approach aimed to encourage and enable participants to independently enjoy the natural environment wherever possible.

A2.10 These projects have been continually evaluated for good practices and lessons learnt. For the participants, the benefits have been improved health, social contact and the confidence to venture out independently into new environments; although some have discovered that a lack of confidence in using public transport affects their participation.

A2.11 The action research projects were subject to a final evaluation in Autumn 2007, and the Evaluation Framework and Toolkit developed through these projects will be available shortly. A further review of the projects will be undertaken in 2008 to assess any sustained change, both in participants' access to the natural environment and in the approach of participating organisations in engaging with people from under-represented groups.

## Annex 3: Social Justice, Equality and Diversity

### Social Justice

- A3.1 A commitment to fairness in all areas of public life underpins government policy. This applies equally to environmental policy, whether tackling climate change or access to outdoor recreation.
- A3.2 There is good evidence<sup>2</sup> that poor environmental conditions, such as pollution and poor quality green space, go hand in hand with social and economic deprivation and disadvantage, all of which impacts on well-being and health. Addressing lack of access to green space and the countryside is a potential lever to addressing disadvantage.
- A3.3 Social justice seeks to address these inequalities.

#### The four principles of social justice are:

1. *Equal citizenship* where people have an equal set of basic rights and the means to exercise them.
2. *A minimum of resources* that meet people's essential needs and enable them to live fully.
3. *Equality of opportunity* so that gender, race, and disability do not interfere with people's ability to access what they need.
4. *Fair distribution* so that resources, such as the quality of the local environment, are not dependent on family income.

### Equality and Public Duties

- A3.4 The Equalities legislation requires public bodies to be proactive in positively promoting equality across all aspects of their business, as well as addressing discrimination where it occurs. This applies to the provision of goods and service to customers and clients, people's employment and their volunteering activities. The private and voluntary sectors are addressing equality of opportunity through their corporate responsibility and other reporting.
- A3.5 These are significant tools for realising the Action Plan outcomes and will be a catalyst for positive, practical action in shifting cultural and organisational attitudes and behaviours in relation to equality. They will help Defra, Natural England and delivery partners to focus on embedding equality of opportunity to access the natural environment into their planning process.
- A3.6 Further detailed guidance on the six equalities strands and the public duties are available on the website of the Commission for Equalities and Human Rights (CEHR).
- A3.7 In addition, the Equality Standard for local government was launched in 2001 and is now adopted by 90 per cent of all local authorities. It is a tool to enable local authorities to mainstream age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation into council policy and practice. It is a voluntary Best Value Performance Indicator. Further information on The Equality Standard can be found on the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) website.

<sup>2</sup> Midgely, Ashton, Casstles, McNamara, Tocque, and Bellis, (2005). *Health, Environment and Deprivation in North West England*. Liverpool John Moores University.

## Diversity

- A3.8 The term 'diversity' recognises that individuals have multiple identities and needs which are not reflected in the six equalities strands.
- A3.9 The Diversity Review and the Action Plan, 'Outdoors for All?', recognise this variety. By addressing the issues of under-representation, the Plan will aim to create more opportunities for everyone to access the natural environment. It will ensure that future participation reflects people making choices about how to spend their leisure time based on increased opportunities and more information.

## Annex 4: Impact Assessment

- A4.1 The consultation document *Outdoors for All?: Draft Diversity Action Plan*, which was published on 23 May 2006, contained a Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment which attempted to identify the costs and benefits of implementing the draft Action Plan. This can be found at <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/issues/recreation/diversity-actionplan/index.htm>
- A4.2 Although comments were sought on the partial assessment as part of the consultation exercise, very few were received. An analysis of those that were received did not suggest that the identified costs were inaccurate or had been misrepresented.
- A4.3 The Diversity Action Plan will not impose any additional costs on businesses or the third sector. There is nothing in the Plan that requires such organisations to take action to increase the diversity of their customer base. Should they decide to implement any of the suggestions, or undertake any activities, outlined in the Plan it will be their choice, based either on an assessment that it would be in their economic interests to attract a wider and more diverse range of customers, or simply because they consider it is something they should do on moral or social justice grounds.
- A4.4 Some costs will, however, fall on Natural England in view of their responsibilities to implement, champion and monitor operation of the Plan. We have therefore produced an Impact Assessment for this initiative. This can be found through the link in paragraph A4.1 above.



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