

A Brief History of RWLCP before being renamed and rebranded as WCfOL

WCfOL began life as the Real World Learning Cymru Partnership (RWLCP), which held its inaugural meeting on 12th June 2007. It brought together providers and other stakeholders that support and deliver outdoor learning across Wales, mirroring and providing a platform to liaise with the Real World Learning networks already established in England and Scotland.

RWLCP was officially launched on 30th April 2009 and the event was attended by the Deputy Minister for Skills in the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG). RWLCP continued to liaise on a regular basis and meet with politicians and senior civil servants in WAG (firstly representing the former Department for Children, Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills (DCELLS) and then Department for Education and Skills (DfES) to discuss the contribution outdoor learning makes, and can make, to education (including Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)), health and wellbeing, and the rural economy and employment, and to address such issues as sustainability, diversity, Welsh language provision, social inclusion and equality.

The Partnership was represented on the ESDGC Schools Networks Programme Management Group and contributed to discussions about curriculum development, including representation on one of the Welsh Government Stakeholder groups involved in the development of the new Curriculum for Wales. RWLCP also collectively responded regularly to WAG and Welsh Government consultations on a wide variety of topics of relevance to education in general and outdoor learning in particular, including curriculum development, qualifications and schools inspection, and the wellbeing of children, young people and indeed people of all ages.

RWLCP itself and/or members of the Partnership developed important links with such organisations as Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel Wales (OEAPW), Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC), Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL), Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC), Wales Local Government Association (WLGA), Association of Directors of Education in Wales (ADEW), Education Support and Improvement Service (ESIS), Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP), Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation (WATO), Outdoor Alliance (OA), Regional Centre of Expertise on Education for Sustainable Development (RCE Cymru/Wales), Wales Global Learning (WGL), Cardiff Sustainable Education Network (CSEN), Swansea Environmental Education Forum (SEEF), Gwent Conservation Education Partnership (GCEP), Governors Wales (now Governors Cymru), and the Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA) via Wales Environment Link quarterly 3rd Sector meetings with the Minister for Education and Skills.

The Partnership collectively ran practical outdoor learning workshops for Initial Teacher Training (now Initial Teacher Education) and for In-service Training (now Continuing Professional Development) for qualified teachers. It delivered workshops/presentations for the UK Biodiversity Partnership, WBP and AHOEC, and supported numerous conferences in Wales on outdoor learning and ESDGC. The Partnership contributed to the writing and compilation of documents about outdoor learning, including the High Quality Outdoor Learning for Wales booklet (Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel, 2018).

The valuable work of RWLCP has continued under the new name 'Wales Council for Outdoor Learning' following the rebranding of the network in 2018.

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