

Outdoor Learning Training Network

Timeline of the Training Network in Wales

The current Network has grown from one which started in Wales in 2006.

Open College Network (OCN) Units for Forest School were originally developed in Wales and began to be delivered in 2003.

The OCN Wales Forest School Training Network was set up at the beginning of 2006 and brought together all the existing Forest School trainers operating in Wales. It was facilitated by Forestry Commission Wales and advised by OCN Wales and two partner FE colleges - Coleg Gwent and the Welsh College of Horticulture. The Network enabled trainers to work together to address issues of concern and to start to build training capacity in Wales.

Level 3 History - The Network's first priority was to develop a new suite of Level 3 Units to create a coherent Forest School Practitioner Award module. The module would also have an endorsement that would require OCN centres wishing to deliver the units to meet agreed criteria and become members of the training network. Working closely with OCN Wales, three new Level 3 units were developed in the first half of 2006. The new units were added to the OCN Wales framework in July 2006.

Level 1 History - In 2007, the Network developed two new Level 1 units. These units were added to the OCN Wales framework in July 2007 with an endorsement. The Level 1 units were designed to accredit learners who were participating on a Forest School programme (post 14) or for adult learners who came on a specific course to gain a basic understanding of Forest School.

Level 2 History - In 2007, the Network developed two new Level 2 units. These units were added to the OCN Wales framework in July 2007 with an endorsement. Level 2 units were designed to qualify a learner to be a Forest School Assistant so they could take a proactive role in helping the Forest School Practitioner plan and deliver the Forest School programme and to support the learners.

The Wales Network always included Forest School trainers based in England who were delivering training in Wales. At the end of 2007, more English based training organisations requested use of the OCN Wales units so after discussion, it was decided the Network should lose its Wales focus and become a forum for all trainers in UK.

In 2009/2010 the Network revised the Level 1, 2 and 3 awards as a result of the standardisation events and these were finalised in 2010. OCN Wales became completely independent of the National OCN, and became Agored Cymru, meaning it had no legal obligation to share units with other OCN regions.

A regional group of the Network was formed in spring 2010 – Forest School Training Network Wales, for those delivering in Wales. In response to this the Forest School Trainers Network renamed itself in March 2010 – 'Forest School Trainers Network GB'. A representative from the Wales Training Network attends a minimum of one GB Network meeting per year.

Wales

During 2014 the Wales Training Network agreed to review the current Agored Cymru Forest School units in order to improve the standard of the award. Members also agreed to develop a new Outdoor Learning qualification that includes optional pathways for students to become Forest School or Coastal School Leaders as well as Curriculum Co-ordinators.

These new qualifications will become available for use by network members from August 2015, and alongside these changes the training network has become the Outdoor Learning Training Network.