

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT RUBBISH?

SUPPORT MATERIALS

If you need further support on specific aspects of outdoor learning these materials can enhance the engaging experiences you are providing. They can support you as you design, plan and implement your curriculum. Outdoor learning is a great way to develop learners' integral skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, personal effectiveness, planning and organising). You will want to focus on why learning matters and ensure you are meeting your learners' needs.

These materials show paths that could be taken through the activity. These are not meant to be prescriptive. You should adapt your approach depending on your learners' needs and interests and your local area.

OVERVIEW

Learners explore what happens to the things we throw away, what materials these things are made from and what items could be recycled and make a presentation to encourage others to reduce packed lunch waste. Learners carry out a litter survey in the area around school, consider how long materials take to break down and use the information to help reduce litter locally.

This activity encourages learners to explore their understanding of what rubbish is, how we dispose of it and where it goes afterwards. The aim is for learners to consider the part they play in consuming things and what they throw away and to understand that any small contribution they can make to reduce the problem can have a much larger impact collectively.

CURRICULUM FOR WALES

Areas explored:

- Expressive Arts
- Health and Well-being
- Humanities
- Languages, Literacy and Communication
- Mathematics and Numeracy
- Science and Technology

Activity also incorporates aspects of cross-curricular skills outlined in the LNF and DCF.

RESOURCES



Internet enabled device and internet access.

Access to a hard copy map of the local area around the school.

Means of taking photographs, e.g. smart phones, tablets, cameras, etc.

DOING THE ACTIVITY



- Most tasks require learners to work in pairs or groups.
- Encourage learners to share their ideas, and through open questioning, explain and justify their ideas when possible. Focus questions have been suggested to guide learners through the tasks.
- Some tasks might be more effective if pairs or groups of learners have access to an internet enabled device.
- When taking learners outdoors, it is essential that the [Countryside Code](#) is adhered to and any relevant risk assessments have been carried out with risks mitigated.

TASK 1

WHAT HAPPENS TO OUR RUBBISH?

The task starts by encouraging learners to consider what happens to rubbish when they throw it away. Invite learners to draw a complete sequence of their rubbish from waste bin to its final resting place. After each step, keep asking them where they think the rubbish goes next and to explain why.

Learners consider which materials can be recycled and the processes involved.

Some households in Wales can have up to 10 different waste bins [Waste recycling: Homes in Wales have the most bins in the UK - BBC News](#). However, this means that Wales is currently second in the world for recycling household waste, only behind Germany, and the Welsh Government says separating all the waste is the reason why.

If you wish learners to interrogate data about the amount of local authority municipal waste collected from household and non-household sources and the levels of recycling this can be located on the Stats Wales website [Waste management - StatsWales](#).

The final part of the task invites learners to collect rubbish from the packed lunch boxes of children in the class. Basic research [Dietician explains exactly what to put in a healthy school lunchbox - Wales Online](#) suggests that a typical learner's packed lunch box is likely to contain some or all of the following items:

- a sandwich
- a packet of crisps
- an apple
- a yogurt
- biscuit/chocolate bar.

This provides opportunities to engage learners in discussions about healthy eating habits and food waste [Join the Mighty Food Waste Mission - Wales Recycles](#) as well as using meaningful data to create bar charts, a poster/leaflet/podcast, etc. to persuade others to reduce packed lunch waste. If too few lunch boxes are available, due to free school meals, you could use the remnants of packed lunches from a school trip or organise a 'picnic day'.

TASK 2

PROBLEMS WITH LITTER

Learners carry out a litter survey in the area around school and consider how long materials take to break down. The task has some suggestions about how the learners could gather information about local litter, but it is important to allow learners to decide for themselves how they think a local litter survey should be carried out.

This is a mapping opportunity for learners as they could be encouraged to use a local street map to record where the bins are, litter hotspots, etc. Each locality will be unique, but they could predict where litter issues are likely, e.g. near a local takeaway or a car park. Learners could find litter hotspots and explore why the problem exists and possible solutions.

The term biodegradable could be introduced in this task and learners encouraged to consider what materials take longer to break down and the consequences if items made from these materials are part of the litter problem. Learners are invited to create a poster to show people how long litter takes to break down, presenting an opportunity to explore persuasive language as you could link this to encouraging people to dispose of such items responsibly.

In 2026, Eco-Schools released [The Litter Report Newsletter – Eco-Schools Wales](#). This could be used as a starting point when evaluating learners' findings in this task.

This task also presents an opportunity to explore what the local and county provision is for recycling centres and places to dispose of rubbish responsibly. Depending on where your school is it might be possible to visit a site or use a map to highlight where such sites exist within the local area. Most sites have online maps, detailing the type of rubbish that can be disposed of. These could form the basis of discussions as to what is and isn't recyclable and the reasons why.

Here are some links that might be worth exploring for each Designated Landscape:

Anglesey National Landscape

[Recycling centres and recycling banks – Isle of Anglesey County Council](#)

[Recycling banks on Anglesey – Isle of Anglesey County Council](#)

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

Powys: [Household Recycling Centres - Powys County Council](#)

Carmarthenshire: [Recycling Centres - Carmarthenshire County Council](#)

Monmouthshire: [Household waste recycling centres - Monmouthshire County Council](#)

Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape

Denbighshire: [Visiting our Recycling and Waste Parks - Denbighshire County Council](#)

Flintshire: [Household Recycling Centres - Flintshire County Council](#)

Eryri National Park

Conwy: [Household Recycling Centres - Conwy County Borough Council](#)

Gwynedd: [Bins and recycling - Gwynedd County Council](#)

Gower National Landscape

[Recycling centres - Swansea Council](#)

Llŷn National Landscape

[Bins and recycling - Gwynedd County Council](#)

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

[Waste and Recycling Centres - Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

Wye Valley National Landscape

[Household waste recycling centres - Monmouthshire County Council](#)

TASK 3

HOW CAN WE REDUCE RUBBISH IN THE LOCAL AREA?

This task invites learners to work collaboratively to try and reduce the litter in the area around the school. Using the information gathered from litter surveys, they develop and follow a plan to tackle the issue.

Learners are provided with some starting ideas and encouraged to add their own. The task suggests each group brainstorm and decide on their top three ideas, which they present to the class. Each learner then votes for what they think are the best ideas from the presentations. You could use dot-voting where every learners gives 3, 2, 1 points to their top 3 choices, etc.

Here are some online possibilities for whole class voting:

- [Poll Everywhere](#) – Well-known classroom response system where learners answer polls on phones or laptops; integrates with PowerPoint.
- [Vevox](#) – Real-time polling, Q&A and quizzes that work with mobile devices and integrates with tools like Teams or PowerPoint.
- [Mentimeter](#) – Interactive polling with visual results (multiple choice, word clouds, scales, etc.); useful for feedback and brainstorming.
- [QR Poll](#) – Simple polling via QR codes, no apps or accounts required - learners just scan and vote.
- [SlideLizard](#) – Adds live polls directly into PowerPoint presentations.
- [CloudVOTE](#) – Learner response system for uploading lessons and collecting real-time answers.

Choose the number of ideas that fits with the number of groups – 6 groups use the top 6 ideas, etc.

This approach is only a suggestion and you may already have class procedures for choosing the best ideas and for allocating ideas to groups, etc. You are looking for a way of gathering learner solutions to reducing the litter issue in the locality and a way of deciding the best ideas that can be put into action.

Invite learners to action their plans, use ongoing reflection on their plan, changing it if necessary. Encourage them to consider how they will know if their litter reduction ideas have had an impact.

Links to local initiatives

Anglesey National Landscape:

[Bwyd Da Môn](#) – food waste reduction initiative

[Cylchol](#) - Menter Môn Circular Economy Project

[Wild Landfill](#) – wild landfill solutions

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park:

[Brecon primary school pupils lead campaign to tackle river pollution in Bannau](#)

[Brycheiniog National Park - Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority](#)

[Bannau Brycheiniog mountain rescue team halts training over litter - BBC News](#)

Clwydian Range & Dee Valley National Landscape:

[Sustainable Development Fund - Clwydian Range and Dee Valley National Landscape](#)

Eryri National Park

[Plastic-Free Yr Wyddfa - Eryri National Park](#)

[COPA1 Youth Climate Summit: Schoolchildren Address Litter Crisis - Snowdonia Central](#)

[Volunteer - Eryri National Park](#)

[Helping Hands - Snowdonia Society](#)

Gower National Landscape

[Environment Centre Swansea](#)

[Keep Wales Tidy Impact Report Swansea - 2024 - Keep Wales Tidy](#)

[Environmental - YMCA Swansea](#)

LIŷn National Landscape

While there isn't a single official 'LIŷn litter campaign' website, coastal-care messaging and Leave No Trace principles are widely promoted by local tourism bodies, community councils and outdoor educators.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park

[Pembrokeshire school wins international awards - Pembrokeshire County Council](#)

[Pennar Community School wins national environmental award – The Pembrokeshire Herald](#)

[Beach cleans/reducing plastic - Pembrokeshire Marine SAC](#)

[We Are Food Warriors: Fighting Food Waste in Pembrokeshire Schools - Awel Aman Tawe](#)



Wye Valley National Landscape

[Citizen Science in the Wye - Engage Environment Agency](#)

Links to national initiatives in Wales

For a broader consideration of how learners might have an impact on litter across Wales, there are initiatives that the school can be part of. Examples might include:

- Eco-Schools is a global programme developed by the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) in 1994 and run in Wales by Keep Wales Tidy. It empowers and inspires learners to make positive environmental changes to their school and wider community, contributing to a process where the school could apply for an Eco-Schools Award – an internationally recognised accreditation: [Eco-Schools - Keep Wales Tidy](#)
- Keep Wales Tidy has information and a range of initiatives that might be useful to access as part of this activity: [Home - Keep Wales Tidy](#)
- Caru Cymru supports community action projects such as ‘Litter champions’ and litter picking hubs: [Community Action - Caru Cymru - Keep Wales Tidy](#)
- Climate Challenge Cymru is a competition for schools in Wales, inviting learners aged 5–18 to showcase their creativity, passion, and ideas for a better planet: [Climate Challenge Cymru - Eco-Schools - Keep Wales Tidy](#)

Other useful activities on Tirlun

Other activities on Tirlun that consider litter and its management include:

- [What to do with rubbish on Anglesey National Landscape?](#)
- [What to do with rubbish in Llŷn National Landscape?](#)
- [What to do with rubbish in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park?](#)

In addition, activities on Tirlun that consider pollution include:

- [What is pollution?](#)
- [How safe is sea swimming in Anglesey National Landscape?](#)
- [How safe is sea swimming in Pembrokeshire Coast National Park?](#)
- [How safe is wild swimming in Bannau Brycheiniog?](#)
- [How safe is wild swimming in Eryri?](#)
- [How safe is wild swimming in the Wye Valley?](#)
- [Surfing on the Gower](#)
- [Surfing off the Llŷn Peninsula](#)
- [What can we see in the dark in Clwydian Range and Dee Valley?](#)
- [What can we see in the dark on Anglesey?](#)

These can all be adapted for any location.

