



Out-of-school-hours learning (oshl) Mini guide for local authorities

Impact of out-of-school-hours learning

The potential impact of out-of-school-hours learning (oshl) cannot be underestimated, both locally and nationally.

At its best, it will result in the next generation being confident lifelong learners, who are better prepared for success in our changing financial and political world.

One very important Welsh national agenda that oshl can help to address is child poverty, as referred to in the Estyn report, *Tackling child poverty and disadvantage in schools*, (January 2010): 'What is different in the schools that do well in disadvantaged areas is that they have highly effective leadership and consistently good teaching, and place an emphasis on particular activities or combination of activities. For instance, they attach great importance to extra-curricular and out-of-school-hours provision, including cultural and sport enrichment, as well as extra educational support such as homework clubs, at lunch times or after school'.

About this guide

This mini guide has been written to help local authorities understand the possibility for strategic development of out-of-school-hours learning, both in its own right and as part of wider national and local policies and priorities, particularly Community Focused Schools (CFS).

This mini guide is one of a series looking at oshl from different points of view. The complete set of mini guides and other useful resources relating to oshl can be downloaded from www.continyou.org.uk/oshl.

'Out-of-school-hours-learning (oshl) provides an opportunity for schools and partners to make a real difference to the lives of young people and others in their local area. Councillors are crucial to driving this agenda forward and helping to make sure that the benefits for the local community are life changing.'

County Councillor Peter Fox, Leader, Monmouthshire County Council



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A reminder of what oshl is

Out-of-school-hours learning (oshl) is any activity that young people take part in voluntarily, outside normal school hours. Oshl is:

- **for children and young people** – anyone of school age (aged 4 to 19)
- **voluntary** – young people choose to take part (although this doesn't mean activities cannot be 'targeted')
- **activities** – from gardening, drama, sailing and dancing, to subject support and homework clubs
- **outside normal school hours** – before the start of the school day, at lunch times, after school, at weekends or during the school holidays.

Out-of-school-hours learning activities are:

- often organised/provided by schools on or off a school site
- run by a range of providers in a variety of settings, for example, in church halls, leisure centres, drama, youth and sports clubs
- run for different lengths of time (for example, half an hour at lunchtime, an hour after school, or four or more hours a day during school holidays) and can be tailored to the needs of the participants
- either 'one-off' events/residential trips or regular activities.

While traditional oshl run by schools is usually provided free of charge, some activities are increasingly being charged for.

What has oshl got to do with local authorities?

As a local authority, you will be keen to support, develop, encourage and facilitate informal learning experiences (oshl) for children and young people.

It is important to recognise that oshl is a local authority-wide responsibility and not something that should only be given to LEAs to look after.

Strategic development and support will:

- help to maximise the range of opportunities available
- avoid duplication and re-inventing the wheel
- help match activity to local need/priority
- help with funding/resourcing and longer-term sustainability
- bring in a wider range of expertise/experience
- add value to the opportunities available
- be better value for money
- improve services available for looked-after children, as part of local authority corporate parenting responsibilities.

Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC, E3+

Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC has a clear vision for the development of out-of-school-hours learning. Its E3+ programme, which stands for 'extend, enrich and excite', offers young people the chance to spend time outside the school day in safe and secure settings, with access to personal support, as well as to exciting and fulfilling activities.

All activities are free of charge, with over 40 activities taking place every week until 8pm. These activities are aimed not only at young people of secondary school age, but also Year 6 pupils from the local feeder schools. Free use of the facilities at local sports and leisure centres, adult educational classes and school holiday programmes are also offered.

'The National Purpose for Schools makes no bones about the benefits to young people of access to a broad and diverse range of oshl opportunities. This cannot simply be about education but must be driven strategically by local authorities to involve all directorates in a holistic approach to this important agenda.'

Mike Keating, Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC



How does oshl benefit our young people?

Well-organised, informal and flexible oshl programmes have much to contribute to the broader learning and wellbeing of young people, complementing as they do the teaching and learning taking place during the school day.

To those involved in oshl, the delights always outweigh the challenges – oshl can open up opportunities that, in many cases, quite literally change lives. While the prime purpose of oshl is to enable young people to follow a specific interest or to fulfil a particular need, an important outcome is the improvement in their motivation and self-esteem, and their ability to become more effective lifelong learners.

However, it's not just children and young people who can benefit from oshl. Everyone who contributes to an oshl programme has something to gain.

For more information about the benefits of oshl, visit www.continyou.org.uk/oshl.



Key national strategies

The strategic development and support of oshl provision can help local authorities deliver on a number of key national strategies, including the following:

1 School improvement

School Effectiveness Framework (February 2008): 'Local authorities should encourage schools to be community schools, promoting a range of out-of-hours activities for young people and their families.'

2 Community development

Community Focused Schools (December 2003): 'A Community Focused School is one that provides a range of services and activities, often beyond the school day, to help meet the needs of its pupils, their families and the wider community.'

3 Community cohesion

Getting on Together (November 2009): This emphasises the value of local partnerships, the important role of organisations that are working at community level, and readily acknowledges that the engagement of people living in communities is vital.

4 Children's rights

Getting it Right (2009): The second of the sixteen priorities outlined in this five-year rolling action plan, in response to the concluding observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child 2008, is: 'To deliver positive outcomes for the most vulnerable children, young people and families.'

5 Child poverty

Children and Families (Wales) Measure (November 2009): The measure recognises that children and families in poverty often face multiple disadvantages which require highly specialist and intensive support, and will require Welsh authorities and Welsh ministers to prepare a strategy for contributing to the eradication of child poverty in Wales.

6 The National Purpose for Schools

As part of the School Effectiveness Framework, the Welsh Assembly Government and its partners have developed a statement of national purpose for schools, one aspect of which is to 'enable all children and young people to develop their full potential by acquiring skills, knowledge, understanding and attitudes, including personal, social and emotional skills, to enable them to become economically, socially and personally active citizens and lifelong learners'.

7 Health Challenge Wales, Healthy Schools and Change4Life

Health Challenge Wales, Healthy Schools and Change4Life are all working together as part of the Welsh Assembly Government's plans to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation.



Benefits of oshl for local authorities

'Local authorities are well placed to develop professional networks that go beyond the confines of education through their lead role in planning for children and young people.' (School Effectiveness Framework, WAG, February 2008)

Specifically, out-of-school-hours learning offers local authorities opportunities:

- to raise achievement and aspirations by providing new and additional ways to support children and young people's learning outside the school day
- for different parts of the local authority to work together to meet the priorities of Children and Young People's Plans
- to bring wider partnerships together, such as health teams and the police
- for different parts of the authority to meet their targets, for example, activities to address health and obesity, counselling services, childcare, library services/activities, family support/learning
- to deliver on a range of national priorities (see page 3).

'Working with Sport Caerphilly has been invaluable to oshl activities being developed. Sport officers have helped to develop after-school and holiday activities for both primary and secondary pupils, as well as developing many community clubs for pupils to access.'

Claire Williams, Community Focused Schools Officer, Caerphilly

Taking oshl forward: questions for consideration

- What oshl provision and support is currently in place?
- How is this being monitored and evaluated?
- Which areas of our work will this evidence support?
- How can we help facilitate and improve oshl provision across the authority?
- Who do we need to involve, both internally and externally, to help shape oshl across the authority?

For further information and resources to support the achievement of an integrated, local authority-wide oshl programme, visit www.continyou.org.uk/wales.

Acknowledgements

ContinYou Cymru is committed to supporting out-of-school-hours learning as a means of ensuring children and young people reach their potential and enjoy the wonders of becoming a lifelong learner.

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It was written by Angela Davies. It was produced for publication by staff at ContinYou: Paul Mephram (design) and Louise Reilly (editing). Welsh translation is by Vernon Hughes.

This guide is one of a series of oshl mini guides, which can be downloaded from www.continyou.org.uk/oshl.



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