Scotland's National Parks:

Overcoming barriers to engagement

Literature and context review

strategic**directions** creative**solutions**

Contents Page

Abstract

The purpose of this literature and context review is to identify and examine a range of documents and available information in order to develop an understanding of the local plans, policy, and practice in each of Scotland's two National Parks. The review focuses on work that relates to the 2008/09 'Barriers to engagement' research commissioned by the Cairngorms National Park Authority, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage.

These partners commissioned the 'Barriers' research to help identify and understand better how to overcome barriers to engagement for young people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes and school groups. These target groups were identified by the partners following findings from visitor surveys, which showed a lack of participation from within these groups to National Parks, when compared with other visitor groups.

It is intended that this review, combined with the main research report, will aid the partners in developing their practice in relation to engaging underrepresented groups within Scotland's National Parks and National Nature Reserves. Additionally, it will help in creating a sustainable framework to deliver effective outreach services.

Early review of available literature and published research helped inform the choice of groups most appropriate for the case study element of the 'Barriers' research, while further relevant research informed project practice.

Combining evidence from policy, practice and literature, this review identifies a number of common themes in relation to barriers for all of the target groups. It then identifies some group-specific barriers. A discussion on a range of successful practices that have helped to overcome these barriers for some organisations is also provided. The review highlights that:

*The Parks are special places with special qualities that benefit all people;
*Some groups don't access these places for a variety of reasons;
*Some of these reasons have been addressed (by the Parks and others),
*Some of these reasons have not been addressed;
*There is relevant information about how to tackle the issues;
*There are gaps in understanding about what needs to change.

Finally, this review presents some conclusions. These are centred on a need for organisations involved in the outdoors to understand more comprehensively the barriers to access which some groups face; and the kind of strategies that might help tackle these, including ways in which people can maximise the way in which they work together.

1.0 Introduction and the structure of this review

It is necessary to explore several areas of literature, policy, and practice before being able to present any sort of digestible overview on why some groups within society are less likely than others to engage with and experience learning from the outdoors. This is of particular relevance to the 'Barriers to Engagement' research that precipitated this review. There are several reasons for this. First and foremost, the partners (Cairngorms National Park Authority, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, and Scottish Natural Heritage) wish to identify possible barriers to participation and engagement with National Parks by people who are from socially excluded groups and the opportunities that National Parks and Natural Nature Reserves offer. Secondly, it is expected that revised or new ways of overcoming these barriers could consequently be developed in order to increase access and opportunities for access to those groups. Finally, it is hoped that the whole process associated with the 'Barriers' research, of which this literature and context review is one part, will help the development of sustainable programme and education solutions for the commissioning partners.

The benefits and outcomes of accessing and engaging with the outdoors, natural environments, greenspaces, and woodlands are well documented, and did not form part of the remit for the barriers to engagement research and this literature and context review. These benefits are therefore assumed here and they include; raising environmental awareness, promoting sustainable behaviour, improving physical health through exercise and healthy behaviours, and improving mental health and personal development through skill acquisition and social connections (*Forestry Commission Scotland 2007, JMA Final Report 2003*). The benefits are further explored through other literature and research which are highlighted briefly in Section Two.

1.1 The context for this project

The social, economic, and political context within which this literature investigation fits is important. The issue of increasing access for socially excluded groups in the outdoors and the National Parks is not one which sits only with those responsible for maintaining and operating outdoor areas. Indeed, central and local government and various other agencies all need to play their part. The partners to this project have identified four groups that they would like to engage with more:

- Young people,
- People with disabilities,
- People on low incomes, *and*
- School groups.

The reasons why barriers to access and opportunities for access exist for these groups are not only relevant to the outdoors. Issues such as poverty, education,

health, geography, and demographics can be combined with societal infrastructures and inequalities, ultimately to create and sustain barriers to participation in many aspects of what is deemed mainstream and normative in society. The findings identified from this project overall, will also help inform the work that the partners have done and are doing in reaching out to other equalities groups influenced by their age, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation.

Each of the project partners has a corporate commitment to reaching and engaging hard to reach groups in the activities that they support and the opportunities that they offer. Their corporate and Park Plans (detailed in more depth in section 2 and appendix A1) links with the work of a wide range of public bodies both individually, such as local authorities, Police Forces, Local Economic Company Networks, Health Boards and others, as well as positioning the plan in terms of the joint responsibilities undertaken by Community Planning Partnerships. Each of whom individually, and collectively, has a contribution to make in supporting the engagement of hard to reach and under-represented groups. The plans aim to influence the strategic priorities of others to ensure that they are complementary to the Park Plans.

Within Cairngorms National Park Authority there is an established inclusion team working to support and promote engagement within the Park by those groups identified as under-represented and hard to reach. Current work in this area is set out within the Parks' joint equality scheme, published in July 2008, which reflects the organisation's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity for Park users and those employed by the organisation.

The Park's commitment to engaging equalities and under-represented groups is also highlighted in previous work to support initiatives with a range of equalities and others groups, and through its Inclusive Cairngorms forum.

Within Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority the development of work to support engagement with under-represented groups has historically been taken forward across the organisation without the kind of dedicated figure or team that is available in Cairngorms. Support for work with such groups has in the main fallen to local Ranger Teams and a dedicated Volunteer Co-ordinator. More recently the Park Authority had undergone a staff restructuring which has seen the appointment of The Park's Learning Development Adviser. This new post is in addition to the development of The Park's first education strategy.

1.2   The political context in Scotland

The political climate is also one of great importance to policy and practice development in the areas influential to this research. The change in administration within the Scottish Government in 2007 has brought with it a new set of policies and legislative provisions aimed at reducing levels of poverty and social exclusion in the country. The most notable, recent development comes

via the new framework to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland 'Achieving our potential' (November, 2008). This framework will be examined, where relevant, throughout this review. In June of the same year the Scottish Government also introduced SEARS, Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services partnership, bringing together nine lead organisations to coordinate rural and environmental services.

1.3　　The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000

The partners to this project are all keen to identify additional ways, both strategically and operationally, to ensure they meet the four aims established by the National Parks (Scotland) Act, 2000. These aims are to:

1. conserve and enhance natural and cultural heritage;
2. promote the sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
3. to promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
4. promote sustainable social and economic development of the communities of the area.

The business, operational plans and working practices of the partners attempt to reflect ways in which these aims will be achieved. Of particular relevance to this project are aims 2 and 3 of the Act, and it is intended that this literature and context review and overall research findings will help to understand better how these aims can be met. Aim 4 is also of significance as it sets Scottish National Parks apart from their English and Welsh counterparts in their responsibility to address and promote issues of equality for people living in communities with the Parks.

This review will therefore start by investigating what is meant by a National Park.

The process of conceptualising National Parks by society and individuals is pertinent for this project, since the perspectives and judgements of the outdoors, and the National Parks in particular (in their role as special iconic places that are part of a global family who address global issues such as climate change and environmental sustainability) help to inform our knowledge on why some people face barriers to engagement. It also helps to disaggregate the barriers into useful categories for understanding more the dynamic and, in many cases, absolute implications of these barriers, and ultimately, how best to overcome them. This section will provide some insight into the history of National Parks, both nationally and from elsewhere around the world, as well as their contemporary roles. It will also present an overview of many of the world's important organisations that need to be acknowledged when a review of this sort is being conducted.

The succeeding sections will respectively examine in greater depth the themes of:

- Inclusion;
- Barriers;
- Access; and
- Outreach.

These four overarching areas allow for an analysis of the policies and practice which can create, sustain, or remove barriers for many of societies socially excluded groups to the outdoors.

There are many aspects that need to be considered when researching these areas. There are several important questions that have to be asked, in order to gain appreciation of the impact they can, and have had, and the interlinked relationships that they share with other social policy areas. Fundamentally, the issues of inclusion, barriers, and access are not atypical to the outdoors, or the National Parks themselves. Therefore, to understand inclusion, barriers, and access on a more comprehensive level and on one that is appropriate for the partners of the 'Barriers' research, it is necessary to search and learn from literature, policy, and practice from other social disciplines. The final sections of this literature and context review will do that.

The review ends with concluding thoughts and the learning outcomes that have emerged from the process of reviewing the literature. This review complements the information, findings, and recommendations presented within the main report for the overall barriers to engagement research.

2.0 An overview of National Parks, Scottish Natural Heritage, and outdoor inclusion

First of all, it is necessary to determine how a National Park or a Natural Heritage site is identified. There are two important worldwide organisations of relevance here. With regards to National Parks, the International Union for Conservation of Nature has classified protected areas into six categories, defined by their principal management objective. These vary from areas of strict unmanaged wilderness and scientific research to those of landscape and community interaction. National Parks throughout the world vary significantly in their objectives and approaches to management and therefore vary widely in their protected area categorisation (see www.iucn.org for more information). Then, before going onto identify the important organisations on a global, European and National scale, it is necessary to examine what policy and literature says about inclusion and the outdoors. The concepts of social exclusion and inclusion will be explored alongside their relevancy when assessing barriers to engagement to the outdoors.

2.1 What is a National Park?

Though their objectives vary, National Parks around the world share common features, including (see SNH http://www.snh.gov.uk/strategy/natparks/sr-adnpi.asp for more information):

- they identify areas of land or sea - usually extensive areas - which are of the very highest value to the nation for their scenery and wildlife, and often for their cultural heritage value;
- they provide positive management and additional resources to safeguard the special qualities of these areas for the long term; *and*
- they provide opportunities for the public to enjoy these areas, because they are usually highly attractive places to visit.

There is currently a total of 14 National Parks in the United Kingdom; of which Loch Lomond and The Trossachs and Cairngorms National Parks in Scotland are two (see http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk for information on all of the National Parks throughout the UK). The distribution of National Parks throughout Scotland and the rest of the U.K. are shown here.

The distribution of National Parks throughout the rest of the world is illustrated in the following table:

Continent/Area	Total number of countries/areas	Number of countries/areas with National Parks
Europe	45	40
Africa	54	16
North America/Caribbean territory	10	10
Asia	37	21
South America	15	8
Oceania	15	4

The international family of National Parks is important for several reasons. At a global level, National Parks act collectively in a variety of areas, including protecting endangered species, habitats, livelihoods and landscapes. They endeavour to promote and facilitate environmental sustainability by raising awareness of such issues and by including individuals in the activities and outdoor experiences that National Parks can offer. The IUCN help National Parks in delivering on these activities.

2.2   What is a Heritage site?

A World Heritage Site is classed either as a cultural or a natural one, and this is overseen globally by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (hereafter referred to as UNESCO: See http://whc.unesco.org/en/about/ for more information). There are certain criteria for natural heritage site status according to UNESCO, which include for example a need for the site to '*contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance*' (UNESCO criteria, 2005). In addition to meeting one of the set criteria, all nominated sites must also be '*of outstanding universal value*' (UNESCO criteria, 2005). Across the world, there are approximately 174 Natural Heritage sites and 679 Cultural Heritage sites. In the United Kingdom, there are 27 heritage sites in total.

On a European and national level, there are key pieces of legislation that are directly relevant to National Parks and Natural Heritage organisations. At a European level, there is a series of environmental and conservation laws to which organisations in the UK are required to adhere. At a national level, the National Parks (Scotland) 2000 Act, the Natural Heritage (Scotland) 1991 Act, the Wildlife and Countryside 1981 Act, the Land Reform (Scotland) 2003 Act and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) 2004 Act all provide the legislative framework for National Park and Heritage Organisations, including Cairngorms National Park Authority, Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority, and Scottish Natural Heritage (partners in this project).

The partners' business plans, strategies and education/outreach processes will all reflect, on some levels, the overarching aims and objectives of these pieces of legislation. LL&TNPA and CNPA also both have National Park Plans, developed for the period of 2007-2012. The Park Plans are important to consider and are detailed in more depth in Appendix A1 One to this review. They provide strategic direction for the activities of the Parks and they were developed to help each Park achieve the four park aims as set out in the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000.

LL&TNPA envisages that its Park Plan will help in:

- Delivering better outcomes for special places – by co-ordinating activities and ensuring best use of resources and more sustainable benefits;
- Developing innovative solutions for rural Scotland – by demonstrating best practice in sustainable development;
- Providing a Park for All – by helping people of all ages backgrounds and abilities to understand and use the Park;
- Promoting the "Pride of Scotland" – by protecting an iconic part of Scotland's identity.

CNPA has three main objectives in its Park Plan:

- Conserving and enhancing the park;
- Living and working in the park;
- Enjoying and understanding the park.

The SNH equivalent to the Park Plans is the Corporate Plan, which gives strategic direction for the 2008-2013 period. It identifies five strategic priorities:

- Caring for nature;
- Responding to climate change;
- Delivering health and well-being;
- Supporting the Scottish economy;
- Delivering a high quality public service.

See Appendix A1 One for more information on the plans of the partners.

2.3   Inclusion and the outdoors

To understand inclusion, or social inclusion, it is helpful first of all to examine social exclusion. The term 'social exclusion' was first coined in France in the early 1970s. It has since had a continued use, particularly in Europe. In the UK, social exclusion and its influences have become increasingly significant, especially at a political level. It is particularly relevant to current policy initiatives since it is comprehensive and dynamic in nature and also seems to acknowledge both the relational and distributional effects of poverty and inequality. It is more comprehensive than a static measure of poverty based purely on income (see http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/monitoring-poverty-and-social-exclusion-2008 or information from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. Other useful sites include; http://www.poverty.org.uk/ and http://www.cesi.org.uk/).

The concept of social exclusion goes beyond that of the 'under-class' theory. This theory blames the behaviour of certain groups in society for the position they are in (Morris, 1994). It seeks to recognise the mechanisms of exclusion and therefore goes further than traditional measures of poverty and deprivation. Social exclusion is interpreted in relational terms (Corrigan, 1978). This means it examines relational processes such as societal links, social participation, and societal networks. Social exclusion is dynamic in nature, both in terms of its process and outcome. This means that the reasons for and the impacts of social exclusion can change throughout the lifetime of individuals. This also makes it a multi-dimensional process and this ultimately refers to the breakdown of many structures in society, which can prohibit social integration for many individuals in society (Berghman, 1995). Understanding more on these are all of significant relevance to this project.

The partners to the 'Barriers' research specifically wish to understand more about why young people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes and school groups do not engage or participate in National Parks as much as some other groups. These groups, as homogeneous sets, do not as a whole face more risk of social exclusion than others. There are many young people, people with disabilities, people on low income, and school groups who will go through life never experiencing the impacts of exclusion. Furthermore, low income groups can cross cut other equalities groups, such as older people. However, within these groups, polarisation can mean that some individuals are more at risk of social exclusion. There can be many influences to this process. It is beyond the scope of this review to examine in detail what these influences are and why they exist. However, drawing on what is known about social exclusion provides insights into the themes which emerge when considering the reasons why groups such as people with disabilities and young people may be more at risk of exclusion than others.

It is helpful to categorise inclusion into economic, political, and social inclusion. The compound effect of lack of inclusion in these three areas can be exclusion from much of mainstream society. Economic exclusion is experienced when

people are not included in the labour market or the workforce, for example, or when their income restricts their participation in society. In lacking the ability, opportunity, or resources needed to participate, some groups and individuals can become excluded from the democratic and political processes in society. These, combined with other issues such as low income, insecure housing tenure, poor education, poor mental or physical health, fear of physical and/or mental abuse, lack of opportunities, guidance, and support can all lead to social exclusion. All of these areas are important for consideration in this review and as part of the wider research remit. They will be examined more in the following two sections on barriers, access and outreach.

2.3.1   Inequalities – what does the evidence show us?

Some statistics can be helpful at this early stage to help understand the wider influences of social exclusion. It is relevant to investigate these alongside those held by the partners in the 'Barriers' research. They are important to consider at this early stage to establish the range of socio-economic factors that can contribute to a lack of access to the outdoors in general. In many cases, the partners in the 'Barriers' research have no direct control over the wider impacts of social exclusion; for example income levels.

In Scotland, the median weekly income after housing costs for households in 2006/07 was £321[1]. For the same time frame, 840,000 individuals in Scotland were living in relative poverty, before their housing costs were taken into account. Of this amount, 210,000 were children. This figure represents 21% of all children in Scotland at that time.

Poverty
The issue of concentrated poverty is also more typical to some parts of Scotland, than others. 34% of Glasgow City falls within the top 15% of the most deprived data zones in Scotland, according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (2006). This percentage far outstrips that of its closest counterparts, which are North Lanarkshire with 9%, the City of Edinburgh with 7% and South Lanarkshire with 6%.

Employment
Employment rates are also significant in relation to income levels. Once again, 2007 statistics indicate that in Glasgow City only 66.7% of its working age population were in work. When compared to the 80% in Argyll and Bute, 79.2% in Angus, 79.4% in Eilean Siar and 77.2% in the City of Edinburgh, an intuitive assumption can perhaps be made regarding the correlation between unemployment rates and social exclusion rates in Scotland's local authorities.

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[1] All statistical information accessed from:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/933/0075360.pdf
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/233368/0063951.pdf
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/06/25095306/8

Disability and employment

In Scotland in 2007, the average percentage of people with a disability and of working age in employment was 47.1%. This suggests that a high proportion of people with disabilities are dependent on state welfare support. There is also a clear difference for this group between urban and rural areas. Of those in rural and remote rural areas, 58.9% of their working age population were in employment compared to 41.1% for those in large urban areas. Within the 15% most deprived areas of Scotland, only 26.2% people with a disability were in employment. This represents almost half the average for the rest of Scotland. For those in receipt of welfare support, income potential is generally capped. This can have knock-on impacts on the types of social and leisure activities in which they can participate.

Children

Between 2004/05 and 2006/07, around 25% of all children were living in low-income households, and the number of children in workless households was approximately 120,000. In September 2007, there were 692,215 pupils in 2,729 publicly funded schools in Scotland. Of this amount, 375,946 pupils were in 2,168 primary schools and 309,560 pupils in 378 secondary schools. Of the 9% of the total pupils in Scotland assessed as having additional support needs, 70% of these were boys. Of the total amount of pupils, 10,926 were classed as having a disability (of varying degrees) and 7,250 of this total were male.

Language and culture

138 different languages were identified in schools, with Punjabi, Urdu and Polish being the most common after English. The language barrier can be obstructive and research has suggested that for better outdoor educational experiences *'there needs to be more understanding of the cultural, historical, and geographical differences between concepts and terminology used in both English and non-English speaking countries' (Turcova et al, 2005).*

2.3.2 Who visits our National Parks?

Evidence from The National Parks Visitor Surveys in 2003 and 2005 for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park (2003) and the Cairngorms National Park (2005) indicates that:

- Visitors to the Park areas tend to be older, with 75% age 35 or over in LL&TNP and 72% age 35 or over in CNP;
- 66% of visitors to LL&TNP and 70% of visitors to CNP are classified ABC1 social grade;
- The visiting parties consisted of two adults and no children in 49% of the visits for LL&TNP and only 22% of the parties included children; For CNP, 46% of the visits were parties of two adults, and 23% included children in their party;

- People travel to the Parks predominantly by car. 79% of visitors to LL&TNP and 78% of visitors to CNP indicated they came to the Parks areas in a car.

These figures indicate a strong representation of visitors to both of the Scottish National Parks from a higher socio-economic segment of the population of Scotland as a whole. People from the target audiences are currently and historically under-represented as visitors to the Parks and the outdoors.

2.4 Scottish policy context

In Britain, New Labour's 'third-way' politics sought to reduce the incidences of socially excluded groups in society via joined-up initiatives. In Scotland, the current Administration, led by the Scottish National Party, has adopted a similar approach. The objective is to seemingly combine both the state and the market in a way, which can minimise disadvantage, whilst at the same time allow for state intervention as and when required (Taylor, 2002). Prior to 1997, UK economic and social policy was concerned with the promotion of the free market and the new right ideology.

It is helpful to note at this stage that in Scotland, policy has been concerned with social *inclusion*. This contrasts with elsewhere in the U.K. where the focus has been more on social *exclusion*.

In March 1999, the Scottish Executive published its first social inclusion strategy, '*Social Inclusion, A Scotland Where Everyone Matters*', and committed to '*reducing inequalities between the least advantaged groups and communities and the rest of society by closing the opportunity gap and ensuring that support reaches those who need it most*'.

In the same year, the UK Government published its own strategy '*Opportunity for all: Tackling poverty and social exclusion*', which provided the initial framework for tackling social exclusion and supporting inclusion across Scotland and the wider UK. In June 2002, the Scottish Executive developed its strategy through the publication of its community regeneration statement '*Better Communities in Scotland: closing the gap*', setting out its strategy for regenerating Scotland's most deprived communities and supporting key target groups.

Following the 2003 parliamentary elections, the new Scottish Executive further developed its commitment to promoting social inclusion within its '*Partnership Agreement: A Partnership for A Better Scotland*'. It then moved away from its previous system of 29 Social Justice Milestones and introduced 6 Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG) objectives, as follows (see http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Social-Inclusion/poverty/17415-1 for more information on these):

- To increase the chances of sustained employment for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups - in order to lift them permanently out of poverty;
- To improve the confidence and skills of the most disadvantaged children and young people - in order to provide them with the greatest chance of avoiding poverty when they leave school;
- To reduce the vulnerability of low income families to financial exclusion and multiple debts - in order to prevent them becoming over-indebted and/or to lift them out of poverty;
- To regenerate the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods - in order that people living there can take advantage of job opportunities and improve their quality of life;
- To increase the rate of improvement of the health status of people living in the most deprived communities - in order to improve their quality of life, including their employability prospects;
- To improve access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in rural communities - in order to improve their quality of life and enhance their access to opportunity.

These were followed in December 2004 by the publication of 10 CtOG targets.

The final element of support for social inclusion and regeneration developed by the previous Executive was the publication of the Executive's '*Regeneration Policy Statement: People and Place*' in February 2006, setting out the geographic priorities for regeneration across Scotland.

These policies and strategies, particularly in relation to tackling concentrations of area-based multiple deprivation, are informed by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), which has influenced the allocation of funding to tackle geographic deprivation primarily in urban settings. Many overarching policies introduced by the previous Executive introduced geographical and target group focused initiatives and funding programmes.

Following the change in administration in 2007, there were changes to the social inclusion polices of the Government. The Scottish Government's overall strategic framework is now categorised into the following areas, to create a Scotland that is:

- **Wealthier and fairer** - enable businesses and people to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth;
- **Healthier** - help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care;
- **Safer and stronger** - help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life;
- **Smarter** - expand opportunities for Scots to succeed through lifelong learning ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements;

- **Greener** - improve Scotland's natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.

The Government is now working with COSLA and has in partnership produced a set of 15 national outcomes and 45 national indicators to cover the 2008-2011 period of funding for Scotland's public services (see http://www.cosla.gov.uk/attachments/aboutcosla/concordatnov07.pdf for more information on this).

'Achieving our potential' is the relevant policy and strategic framework for delivering social inclusion aims. It commenced in November, 2008, and is a joint partnership between COSLA and the government to tackle poverty and income inequality in Scotland. Its Solidarity target is to '*to increase the overall income and the proportion of income earned by the lowest 30% of people as a group by 2017*' (see http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/246104/0069433.pdf for more information).

This policy promotes collective action to deliver locally-influenced solutions to tackling poverty and inequality, by eradicating the long-term drivers of poverty. These solutions include:

- Giving children the best start in life;
- Tackling discrimination;
- Preventing health inequalities;
- Provision/promotion of affordable housing.

The social inclusion milestones, the CTOG objectives and targets, the Regeneration Policy Statement, and the 'Opportunity for all' aims set out very specific outcomes and may not, on the face of it, link easily to Park aims. However, the National Parks' social inclusion agenda sits within this policy context and the broader connections to the National Parks as assets for all. There has also been a legislative requirement for the partners to develop specific action plans detailing how they will proactively promote opportunities for inclusion to prevent discrimination for disability, gender and race groups. The current profile of National Park visitors indicates that many of the most disadvantaged groups are not represented. Their experience of accessing all services may apply to accessing the Parks and the outdoors, and the strategies aimed at addressing social exclusion may inform or be informed by this project. This project is aiming to provide insights into why this might be the case.

In Scotland, the Curriculum for Excellence agenda (see http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/ for more information), implemented in 2004 it has four overarching aims. These are to enable all young people to become:

- successful learners;
- confident individuals;

- responsible citizens; and
- effective contributors.

Within this curriculum agenda, the role for National Parks and Natural Nature Reserves has increased. They are being utilised as facilitators and providers of outdoor education in helping schools achieve the aims of the Curriculum for Excellence.

2.5 Why inclusion in the National Parks?

National Parks across the world are considered areas of importance and outstanding beauty. Along with this come many special places where people can visit, special sites can be protected and where natural and cultural heritage can be conserved and promoted. There are many obvious benefits in National Parks. Suffice to say that National Parks across the world deliver a range of services which can help individuals, communities, and nature alike. As the 'Barriers' research is interested in specific societal groups, it is useful to note the economic, personal, and collective benefits that National Parks can have. At the ANPA (Association of National Park Authorities) Conference in September 2008, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, spoke of the health and educational benefits of access to National Parks for people, especially children, living in urban areas, as well as the economic benefits that National Park status can bring to local communities. He described National Parks as '*Britain's green lungs*' (see http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/enpaa/whatsnew/whynationalparksmatter.htm for more information).

National Park Services across the world certainly share many of the same views on the importance of their parks in terms of national heritage. Many also realise the important role that National Parks can play in outdoor education and participation, especially for certain groups who may not experience this type of education in much of their day-to-day life, for whatever reason.

Outdoor learning is significant for facilitating the development of environmental sensitivity and knowledge *(Lugg, 2007)*. For school children, the majority of teachers seem to agree that outdoor learning is a valuable experience (QA Research, 2008). As well as giving depth to the curriculum, much of the literature suggests that the outdoors can impact upon a child's learning by '*addressing their intellectual, affective and social development*' *(Dismore & Bailey, 2005)*. Research argues that the challenges faced in wilderness settings can '*facilitate group bonding and co-operation*' as well as being a '*great source of sensory pleasure*' *(Barrett & Greenaway, 1995)*. Outdoor activities can also be significant in raising the physical activity levels of pupils when indoor and outdoor physical educational experiences are combined *(Mygind, 2007)*. Teachers also benefit from outdoor learning experiences *(Sheerman, 2006)*.

For all individuals, especially those facing stress and poor mental health, the Countryside and Recreation Network have evidence supporting the view that the outdoors and nature can '*make contributions to our health, help us recover from pre-existing stresses or problems, have an immunising effect by protecting us from future stresses and help us to think more clearly'*. This evidence may be important in light of the World Health Organisation suggesting that by 2020 depression and related illnesses will be the greatest source of ill-health.

Research provides evidence for the positive impact that outdoor experiences can have on people with learning disabilities. In a case study involving an adult who is congenitally deaf blind, results showed that positive personal and social development occurred through the provision of new and stimulating experiences and increased learning opportunities *(Gibson, 2000).*

Outdoor learning and education can have many positive benefits for most people in society. However, the opportunity for outdoor learning in the general outdoors, not just in National Parks, is not always there or attainable. Groups in society can benefit from the outdoor learning process. As well as the physical benefits of outdoor activities, there is the potential for capacity and relationship building, and it is these two areas that can help overcome some of the barriers associated with exclusion. The next two sections will now look at these areas specifically.

2.6   Relevant organisations

Appendix A1 One lists and explains global and European organisations of relevance. However, U.K. organisations are detailed here.

U.K.

As the partners to the 'Barriers' research are all based in Scotland, it is useful to draw together the relevant organisations which direct and impact upon them.

The **Association of National Park Authorities** (hereafter referred to as ANPA), brings together all of the 14 National Park Authorities in the UK, of which there are 9 in England, 3 in Wales and 2 in Scotland. It works in conjunction with the EUROPARC Federation (details on EUROPARC are contained in appendix A2). One of its principal functions is to raise the awareness of the National Park Authorities (NPAs) and to promote joint working. It also acts as the representative of the National Park Authorities to the English and Welsh governments. It provides a range of different information sources on the NPAs as part of its role. Much of this information is available to individuals and organisations via its website.

All of the NPAs in England and Wales also form an authorities' association for their respective countries. These are the English National Park Authorities Association and the Welsh National Park Authorities Association (see

http://www.nationalparks.gov.uk/aboutus/about_anpa.htm for more information on these).

The two NPAs in Scotland do not come together to form a Scottish association, but individually, they are both members of and represented by the ANPA. However, the 2008 Strategic Review of Scotland's National Parks has acknowledged that whilst the two NPAs may be sustainable in the short to medium term, if more NPAs are to be developed in future, it will be necessary to review current arrangements and to consider the possibility of establishing an umbrella body like those in England and Wales (Scottish Government, 2008).

All of the UK NPAs are independent, administrative bodies, funded by the UK government. They have two main functions:

- To conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; *and*
- To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of National Parks by the public.

National Parks in the UK differ from most other National Parks around the world in that they are places where local people live and work as well as areas of national interest and natural heritage. More detailed analysis of how UK NPAs attempt to fulfil their functions will be presented where relevant in the following sections of this review.

The **Department for Environment and Rural Affairs** (hereafter referred to as DEFRA: see http://www.defra.gov.uk for more information), has statutory responsibility for **Natural England** (more information on the work of Natural England is presented in the next sub-section). Its role is to '*agree Natural England's strategic objectives and policy and performance framework; approve the amount of grant-in-aid to be paid to Natural England; and to carry out responsibilities specified in the founding legislation, including appointments to the Board, approving the terms and conditions of Board members, appointment of the first Chief Executive, approval of the appointment of subsequent Chief Executives, and laying of the annual report and accounts before Parliament*'.

DEFRA also has sponsorship responsibilities for the **Joint Nature Conservation Committee** (JNCC – see below for more information). This responsibility is shared with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments. The Secretaries of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (or a country's equivalent) are also accountable to Parliament for the activities and performance of the JNCC.

The **Joint Nature Conservation Committee** (hereafter referred to as JNCC: see http://www.jncc.gov.uk/ for more information) is the statutory adviser to the government on UK and international nature conservation. It also works to deliver the UK and international responsibilities of its four country nature conservation agencies. These are:

- The Council of Nature Conservation.
- The Countryside Council for Wales.
- Natural England.
- Scottish Natural Heritage.

The JNCC was originally established by the 1990 Environmental Protection Act and was reconstituted in 2006 by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act. It works towards a set of strategic objectives, in coordination with its corporate plan. Current strategic objectives include:

- UK co-ordination: to provide strategic co-ordination, evaluation and, where necessary, leadership of UK-wide strategies, policies, practices, and standards that affect nature conservation; and to enhance the protection and enrichment of the UK's wildlife and natural features, with a particular focus on the terrestrial and inshore marine environment (see http://www.jncc.gov.uk/pdf/strategy_2005.pdf for more information on these).

There are 14 members on the JNCC, including a Chair and five independent members appointed by the Secretary of State; the Chairman of CNCC; the Chairmen or deputy Chairmen of CCW, Natural England and SNH; and one other member from each of these bodies.

England

Natural England is an important organisation for England. It is an official adviser to the government on the natural environment and provides *'practical advice, grounded in science, on how best to safeguard England's natural wealth for the benefit of everyone'* (*Natural England, 2009.* See http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/about_us/whatwedo/default.aspx for more information).

It works with a range of stakeholders, including farmers, business and industry, local communities and local government to fulfil its responsibilities. The responsibilities include *'increasing opportunities for everyone to enjoy the wonders of the natural world'*, *'designating National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty'* and *'managing most National Nature Reserves and notifying Sites of Special Scientific Interest'*. It provides a series of accessible information for six groups. These groups are countryside visitors; farmers and land managers; Sights of Special Scientific Interest owners/occupiers; researchers; students and teachers; and local authorities and policy makers. Of particular relevance to the 'Barriers' project are the students and teachers group, the countryside visitors group and the local authorities and policy makers group. There are several types of information sources for each of these groups, ranging from general advice to what is on in the groups' areas, to some practical resources for learning aimed at teachers.

Also in England, the **Institute for Outdoor Learning** (hereafter referred to as IOL) is important. IOL encourages '*outdoor learning by developing quality, safety and opportunity to experience outdoor activity provision and by supporting and enhancing the good practice of those who work in the outdoors*' (*IOL 2009*. See http://www.outdoor-learning.org/ for more information).

IOL is the key representative and lobbying group for outdoor learning and provides a range of information and resources aimed at those working and participating in the outdoors. This includes access to publications, information and news updates, as well as more specialised tools such as The Outdoor Source Book and specific information that is available only to those who register as members.

The **Campaign for National Parks** (formerly known as the Council for National Parks), is a national charity that aims to promote and protect National Parks in England and Wales. It is a voluntary sector organisation and an umbrella body for around 40 environmental and amenity groups across England and Wales. It is directed by the following strategic aims (see http://www.cnp.org.uk/4_About_CNP.html for more information on these):

- To secure protection for National Parks and to demonstrate their importance;
- To increase the number and range of people who know and care about National Parks;
- To secure the best possible new National Park for the South Downs and to campaign for other areas to be included in National Parks;
- To lead and strengthen the National Park movement.

Scotland

As detailed above, there is no Scottish National Parks Association. Instead, the two National Park Authorities in Scotland (LL&T and Cairngorms) operate as independent organisations. However, as already mentioned, this may change in the future (Scottish Government, 2008).

Formed in June 2008, **Scotland's Environmental and Rural Services** (hereafter referred to as SEARS: see http://www.sears.scotland.gov.uk/ for more information), is a partnership of nine public bodies responsible for delivering an efficient and effective service to Scotland's rural land managers. The partners to this research are three of these nine public bodies.

Within the **Scottish Government**, responsibility for the countryside, National Parks and Natural Heritage lies with the Environment Department and the Minister for the Environment who is responsible for the strategic operations of the Scottish National Parks and Scottish Natural Heritage.

The **Department for Rural Affairs and the Environment**, which sits within the Scottish Government, is also significant. It is led by the Cabinet Secretary for

Rural Affairs and the Environment and shares responsibility with the Minister for the Environment to oversee a range of activities and public bodies relating to the environment and rural affairs. However, with regards to the NPAs in Scotland and SNH, the responsibility lies generally with the Minister of the Environment and hence the Scottish Government (see http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/rae/documents/MinisterialResponsibilities.pdf for more information on this).

In Scotland, the **Outdoor Learning Strategic Advisory Group** (OLSAG), as part of **Learning and Teaching Scotland (LTS)**, has a remit to *'provide clear strategic advice and leadership on learning beyond the classroom, in all its forms'*.

OLSAG has two main associated outcomes, which are to have:

- schools providing sustainable opportunities for all children and young people to learn outdoors on a day-to-day basis throughout their learning; *and*
- outdoor learning in which all children and young people experience enjoyment, support and challenge with clear links to the curriculum.

OLSAG, established fully in August 2008, has representatives from various organisations across Scotland, of which Scottish Natural Heritage is one. The other representatives are from local authority, voluntary and commercial providers, teachers, education directorates, higher education institutions, the Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education, and the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

Following a meeting in December 2008, certain key tasks and work streams were identified for action. LTS has appointed a Development Officer (until June 2009) to help OLSAG deliver on these areas. This work is extremely relevant to the partners of this research. The following list details these tasks (all taken from http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/Images/OLSAG%20progress%20report%2C%20December%202008_tcm4-528664.doc):

- Explore what needs to be done at national and local level to support schools in using the outdoors as an extension of the classroom;
- Develop advice/tools to overcome the main barriers to outdoor learning as identified in Taking Learning Outdoors, partnership for excellence, and the summary of the LTS/SNH funded research;
- Demonstrate how outdoor learning can make a significant contribution to achieving the experiences and outcomes across all areas of the 3-18 curriculum for all pupils;
- Develop advice/tools to help plan children's learning in the outdoor environment in the early years. This could include promoting good examples of opportunities for children to explore the natural world and their local environment;

- Improve equality of access to outdoor learning in schools and through a residential experience, and consider the potential contribution of philanthropic input;
- Share good examples across the country and encourage schools to provide more opportunities for outdoor learning, including a 'Curriculum for Excellence' focussed 5-day residential experience.

OLSAG has commissioned sub-groups to take forward the work streams listed below:

- The Institute of Outdoor Learning (IOL) to work with Scottish Natural Heritage to consider whether, and if so how, IOL could be brought together with Grounds for Learning.
- Produce advice for schools on how to access information on the range of outdoor learning opportunities across the 3-18 curriculum.
- Host a National Conference on 27/28 April 2009 at the Crieff Hydro. A small steering group has been established to develop the programme.
- Provide advice for Ministers on financing outdoor learning in its widest sense, including 5 day residential experience.
- Discuss with the Scottish Government, General Teaching Council for Scotland and Initial Teacher Education Institutions the possibilities around outdoor learning being given a higher profile during initial teacher education.
- Develop easy to use guidance on good practice in health and safety, risk management and related child protection.
- LTS to work with Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission Scotland on mapping where the opportunities lie for outdoor learning in the Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes. Case studies will include exemplification of small activities that can be incorporated into the everyday school experience, will be included in this work.
- Develop good practice guidance for 5 day residential experiences.
- Explore the possibility of HMIE including outdoor learning in their series of portraits of current practice in Scottish schools.

An important non departmental government body is the **Scottish Environmental Protection Agency** (hereafter referred to as SEPA: see http://www.sepa.org.uk/about_us.aspx for more information). This body is the environmental regulator for Scotland with the main aim to protect and improve the environment. It is accountable via the Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament and advises Scottish Ministers, regulated businesses, industry, and the public on best practice relative to the environment. They publish many reports and information resources relating to their work. SEPA works with Scottish Natural Heritage where needed and appropriate on environmental issues.

The **Forestry Commission Scotland** is an organisation aiming to '*protect and expand Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment*' (see http://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-6aggzw for more information).

Created in April 2003, funded by the Scottish Government, and directed by Scottish Ministers, it acts as the forestry directorate of the Government and advises and implements forestry policy as well as managing the national forest estate. As part of its 2006 strategy, the Forestry Commission works to management practices that support the aims of Scotland's National Parks. The Forestry Frameworks developed by the Commission provide guidance and information for the delivery of local forestry strategies. These Frameworks are also important in relation to the statutory National Park Plans required of the two NPAs involved in this project.

This review can now go onto specifically explore barriers to the outdoors with relevance to National Parks.

3.0 Barriers: what are these?

For the 'Barriers to Engagement Project', the issues of access and inclusion cut across the four target audiences and do not start or stop with access to the outdoors, countryside, parks, woodlands, or other special places. In order to understand issues of access and social inclusion related to the National Parks, it is helpful to recognise that though each of the four target audiences may experience particular barriers to access, a review of the literature suggests common themes. Some of these themes relate to access and inclusion in areas other than the outdoors or the Parks, and are cultural and institutional in nature.

'We might all be equal on the starting line but political, economic and cultural resources that people have, and the hurdles that they have to climb to get there, are inherently unequal' (Marguire, 1991).

The body of literature on barriers to access for people with disabilities is more developed than for the other target audiences. More of the literature relates to access for people with mobility issues than sensory or other disabilities, and the term 'accessible' becomes generic to refer to accessibility for people with different kinds of disabilities.

There is a gap in the literature about the specific barriers to accessing the outdoors for people from the other three target audiences. Making connections between the barriers to access in other areas and the potential barriers to access to the outdoors and the National Parks can be useful to begin to fill the gap. This is especially true when themes such as income, demographics, and health are explored. Before considering the barriers for each of the target groups for this project, it is helpful to identify barriers which can exist and indeed are shown to through evidence from research and a review of literature.

First of all, there is perhaps a need to question what outdoor education does and how outdoor educators know what they know. There is a need also to challenge the social construction of outdoor activities which has supported many of the historical assumptions regarding gender roles, and has directed activities more towards males than females (*Cook, 2001*). The latter in itself could prevent barriers for many females in society, including those within the target groups that are the focus of the 'Barriers' project.

Other relevant barriers to accessing services generally include awareness and understanding of what is available, skills and confidence to do something new, availability of easy to understand signage, and perceptions about availability of

support structures (see the three reports on engaging different people in natural heritage or biodiversity-focussed activities jointly funded by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and Scottish Natural Heritage, 2007). In addition, the Forestry Commission literature review highlights barriers to physical activity and exercise in any context as:

- Lack of knowledge;
- Negative perceptions, fears and safety concerns;
- Lack of motivation;
- Lack of time;
- Physical accessibility;
- Lack of physical fitness;
- Feeling unwelcome;
- Lack of reasonable facilities;
- Conflicts of use.

(Forestry Commission, p 10, 11)

Additionally, perceptions amongst different groups in society towards others can sometimes create barriers. Much of these perceptions may involve negative views on certain groups accessing the outdoors and they may be grounded in certain groups believing they have more right to access than others. For instance, there may be negative judgements towards people with physical or mental disabilities being included in outdoor activities. However, it can be hard to provide evidence of negative perceptions as the literature in this area is light.

'Sport, Exercise and Physical Activity: Public Participation, Barriers and Attitudes' (2006) identifies further barriers to engaging in physical activity, with such barriers compared between the most and least deprived neighbourhood areas:

- Health and time were the biggest factors in the most deprived areas, as they were for those in the least deprived areas;
- Motivational reasons affected more people in deprived areas and they were more likely to say that neighbourhood safety would make a difference;
- Those living in the most deprived areas were not as strongly convinced of the benefits of exercise.

Hung (2003) studied Chinese people in Vancouver in order to understand why they did not visit wilderness areas. Based on 51 in-depth interviews she found that the more acculturated to Canadian culture people were the more likely they were to visit parks, stay for longer, and engage in more adventurous activities. The people in the study who tended not to visit parks tended to be less acculturated to Canadian culture, and reported fears of wilderness, preference for more developed parks, and a lack of awareness and information on parks. Hung concluded that *'lower levels of acculturation along with certain aspects of the Chinese sub-cultural identity, income, and external factors such as the availability of information appear to play a role in the overall lower Chinese participation rates in wilderness-oriented activities in Greater Vancouver'. (p. 91)*

Perhaps of more interest are the seven recommendations that she offered:

1. Provide a safe park environment;
2. Ensure that parks offer amenities and services that meet the needs of current and potential visitors;
3. Raise awareness of parks and recreation opportunities;
4. Facilitate access to park information;
5. Devise culturally sensitive means of addressing particular aspects of Chinese subculture that are hindering participation;
6. Generate means of coping with the unique barriers that immigrants face in accessing parks;
7. Ensure that all ethnic minority groups feel welcome in park spaces.

A similar project in the United Kingdom provided an in-depth evaluation of a three-year initiative to encourage ethnic communities to participate in the National Parks in England and Wales (Research House UK, 2004). The Mosaic Project was initiated by the Council for National Parks (CNP) and the Black Environment Network (BEN), and ran from July 2001 until July 2004. It was a collaborative access initiative led by a Management Team with representatives from the Association of National Park Authorities (ANPA), the Countryside Agency, CNP, and BEN. Eight of the twelve National Parks in England and Wales participated in the Project, and all were included in information sharing about lessons learned throughout the project.

The Project included five key aims:

1. To develop new ethnic audiences for heritage from identified areas and draw up detailed strategies for engagement with targeted ethnic communities in relative easy access to National Parks;
2. To increase understanding and enjoyment of the heritage in National Parks by ethnic communities by making National Park information and interpretation methodology more popular and accessible;
3. To encourage participation in heritage activities by facilitating visits to National Parks by a diversity of ethnic groups and ensuring a warm welcome;
4. To encourage enduring and sustainable relationships involving active participation in heritage activities by members of ethnic groups in National Parks, voluntary sector or statutory bodies;
5. To develop monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in assessing the levels of success for the project in relations to its aims.

The findings from the evaluation included:

- The barriers to visiting the Parks by members of ethnic communities included lack of awareness of the Parks and ideas about what to do there; perceptions that the Parks were places for middle class white people; and not knowing what to expect if they visited the Parks. Cultural

barriers were not identified as an important reason keeping ethnic minority groups from visiting the Parks.
- Initiatives aimed at providing community groups with organised and structured visits were not repeatable due to the lack of on-going and dedicated resources to continue to provide that service. Sustainability was seen as a key issue as the Project ended. The work is now being taken forward by the Mosaic Partnership (see section 4 for information on this project).
- Volunteering was of significant interest and thought to provide significant opportunities for promotion of the Parks, but the interest was not capitalised on with follow-up efforts or initiatives.
- Making contact between the Parks and the community groups was difficult, and more could have been done to train community group leaders in working with the National Park Authorities, and to train National Park Authorities staff in ways of working with the minority ethnic communities.

Much of the findings from this project are supported by an inclusion and access to open space case study project, conducted by the Tourism and Environmental Change Research Unit at Sheffield Hallam University in 2003 (see http://www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/conference/proceedings/PDF/Ayamba.pdf for more information on this).

This section can now go on to explore what is known about barriers and the target groups that were the subject of the 'Barriers to Engagement' research.
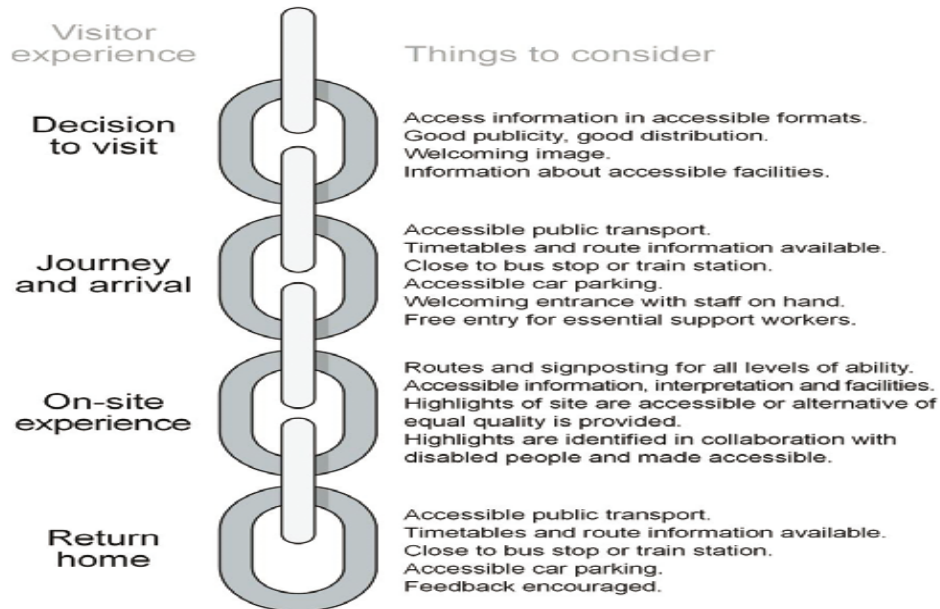
3.1   People with disabilities

The Countryside Agency in Gloucestershire describes the context surrounding access to the outdoors for people with disabilities and identifies the most common barriers for visiting the outdoors as:

- Physical barriers, such as steps, steep gradients, stiles and gates;
- Lack of accessible information;
- Lack of accessible toilets;
- Lack of confidence, low expectations, not feeling welcome, fear over safety or of getting lost;
- Too far to walk;
- Lack of convenient and accessible public transport;
- Inaccessible café, shop or visitor centre;
- Lack of seating and opportunities to rest or take shelter;
- Cost of transport, parking fees and refreshments;
- Lack of staff awareness of the needs of disabled visitors;
- A limited range of activities;
- Poorly maintained environment.
  (By all reasonable means: Inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people, Sensory Trust, Oct 2005).

The Sensory Trust also presents the notion of an access chain that begins with making a decision to visit the outdoors, and continues until the visit has been completed and the visitor is back at home. At any point in the experience, the chain can be broken and the experience may be deemed unsatisfactory, which may lead to a change in the access decision the next time.

Visitor experience	Things to consider
Decision to visit	Access information in accessible formats. Good publicity, good distribution. Welcoming image. Information about accessible facilities.
Journey and arrival	Accessible public transport. Timetables and route information available. Close to bus stop or train station. Accessible car parking. Welcoming entrance with staff on hand. Free entry for essential support workers.
On-site experience	Routes and signposting for all levels of ability. Accessible information, interpretation and facilities. Highlights of site are accessible or alternative of equal quality is provided. Highlights are identified in collaboration with disabled people and made accessible.
Return home	Accessible public transport. Timetables and route information available. Close to bus stop or train station. Accessible car parking. Feedback encouraged.

(The Sensory Trust www.sensorytrust.org.uk.)

Research on disability and the outdoors tends to focus on physical barriers for wheelchair users within park boundaries (e.g., National Park Service, Dept of Interior, Washington DC, 1984) and on outdoor programming (*e.g., Dillenschneider, 2007; McAvoy & Lais, 1999; Sugerman, 2001*). Some of the literature also focuses on providing information; for example on accessible campgrounds in recreational areas and National Parks and guides to activities such as '*Access America: An Atlas and Guide to the National Parks for Visitors with Disabilities.*'

In 1975, a National Forum meeting was held in the USA, focusing on meeting the recreation and park needs of people with disabilities. The meeting concentrated on 12 main issues which included financing, attitudes (of non-disabled to disabled), planning and design processing (including consultation, particularly with disabled people), employment of disabled people in the parks and transportation to visit parks. While the study is dated, the issues are similar to those the National Parks face now.

Many statutory, community and voluntary organisations address issues of access to the outdoors based on relevant research and good practice related to overcoming barriers (see Kent County Council 'Easy Access to the Countryside'

at http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture/explore-kent/easy-access-to-the-countryside.htm, the Forth & Tay Disabled Ramblers at http://www.ftdr.com).

3.2   Schools

'A Curriculum for Excellence', published by the Scottish Executive in November 2004, clearly sets out aims that children and young people should be successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors to society, and responsible citizens. It provides more freedom and flexibility for teachers to offer more choices for student-centred learning. '*Taking Learning Outdoors'* (2007) makes strong connections to '*A Curriculum for Excellence'* and suggests that learners can be better connected to their environment, community, society, and themselves through outdoor education (p 5) and that outdoor learning can improve children's learning experiences. The research that informed the strategy identified barriers for schools engaging in outdoor learning as follows:

- School culture – timetabling, disruption, exam attainment focus, planning time;
- Legitimacy of outdoor learning – lack of curricular imperative and limited learning evaluation and improvement planning;
- Risk/litigation perception;
- Health and safety bureaucracy;
- Staff competence and confidence;
- Access to suitable outdoor venues;
- Resources – cost, transport, ratios and weather.
  (p. 15)

In 2004, Rickinson et al undertook an extensive (though not exhaustive) review of research on outdoor learning which was widely publicised. They identified five barriers to outdoor learning (p. 42-45), as follows:

1. Fear and concern about young people's health and safety;
2. Teachers' confidence and expertise in teaching and learning outdoors;
3. The requirements of school and university curricula and timetables;
4. Shortages of time, resources and support;
5. Wider changes within the education sector and beyond.

It is worth noting that they also identified opportunities for outdoor learning as:

1. New legislation relating to outdoor education with young people;
2. Curriculum developments and initiatives;
3. Developments in UK higher education.

In 2006, Higgins et al conducted a study on the drivers and barriers to using the outdoors for learning. The study explored three main themes, summarised as follows:

1. The educational drivers which encourage teaching about the natural heritage out-of-doors;
2. The factors to which teachers have responded when they made a decision to use the outdoors and the natural heritage as a teaching aid;
3. The barriers which prevented teachers from deciding to use the outdoors and the natural heritage as a teaching aid, or from thinking about it in the first place.

The main findings of the study indicated that the location of the school was of crucial importance, as most outdoor learning through the formal curriculum occurs in relatively close proximity to the school. Findings indicated a number of barriers to outdoor learning which were further developed in the study below.

Nicol et al (2007) conducted a study focussed on opportunities through the formal education system to engage with the natural heritage. This work focussed on '*A Curriculum for Excellence*' and involved 211 questionnaires and a further 20 interviews. Among other things, they found that the following barriers were significant (in order of importance): cost, time, pupil/adult ratios and related issues, safety, weather, transport, disruption to classes, and teacher qualifications. They pointed out that these barriers tend to combine, often in sophisticated ways.

Perhaps more importantly, what are seen by some as barriers are seen as opportunities by others. For example, lower pupil to adult ratios can be difficult to achieve in many situations, however the benefits of low pupil to adult ratios can be large. The extra attention that can be given to the pupils where the ratio is low can have positive effects on the pupils and what they take away from the experience. The study found that effort and cost are important factors and when deciding on approaches to meet curricular aims, teachers weigh up the efforts and costs involved in a range of approaches. Therefore, teachers who had awareness of the potential benefits of outdoor activities were more likely to seek out ways to enable out-of-classroom learning activities. Thus, simply providing resources to teachers may not always be enough if awareness and a level of personal interest and commitment are not there in the first place.

There are also some structural and procedural barriers which can exist. Research has shown that in general '*there was very little evidence of any formalised or structured assessment and recording of outdoor and adventurous activity work and its impact on the pupils' learning and attainment*' *(Clay, 1999)*. Additionally, much of education is focussed on school-based tasks and ultimately there needs to be a move away from these towards learner-centred environmental work, for long-term changes to take place in schools *(Hicks, 2002)*. As mentioned before, the range of languages in schools is more than it ever was and evidence suggests that '*there needs to be more understanding of the cultural, historical and geographical differences between concepts and terminology used in both English and non-English speaking countries*' *(Turcova et al, 2005)* in order to advance the potential of outdoor education.

Over and above the barriers presented for schools, there is also the need to manage risks associated with outdoor learning and their pupils. Sometimes, managing this risk might be too much of a burden for certain schools, especially those with large class sizes. Research suggests that 'the knowledge and competency necessary to analyse and manage risk is integral to those providing outdoor adventure programmes' (*Harper & Robinson, 2005*). However, teachers, outdoor instructors, and outdoor education organisations need to be supported in developing the necessary and important knowledge and competency in this area.

3.3 Young people

The Scottish Government has outlined what it sees as the key needs for children and young people in its '*Vision of Scotland's Ministers for All Scottish Children*'. The principles are consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and set out the intended outcomes for all policies and all services concerned with children and families. The vision provides a framework to promote the wellbeing and interests of each child and young person, so that Scotland's children and young people are:

- **Safe:** protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community;
- **Healthy:** having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare, and support in learning to make healthy and safe choices;
- **Achieving:** being supported and guided in their learning and in the development of their skills, confidence and self-esteem at home, at school, and in the community;
- **Nurtured:** having a nurturing place to live, in a family setting with additional help if needed or, where this is not possible, in a suitable care setting;
- **Active:** having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport which contribute to healthy growth and development, both at home and in the community;
- **Respected:** having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions which affect them;
- **Responsible:** having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles in their schools and communities and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision;
- **Included:** having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn.

Below this overarching vision, the development of services for children and young people has been informed by the publication by the Scottish Executive in 2003 of the report '*For Scotland's Children*' which highlighted the problems caused by a lack of joint working across children's services. Over the last four

years the move to integrated children's services and planning takes a whole-child approach to service development and delivery, working across education, health, social care and other services. '*A Curriculum for Excellence*' echoes an integrated approach to improving outcomes for young people in schools.

It is helpful to differentiate between young people and therefore useful, for some purposes, to categorise young people into those of school age and those out-with school age(around the 16-24 year old age groups). For instance, for school aged young-people, major specific barriers relate to a lack of or no opportunity within schools to engage with outdoor activities.

A review of the literature finds very little that contributes to an understanding of specific barriers for young people accessing the outdoors. The most significant barrier for young people accessing the National Parks might be support to do so by their families, the schools, and other groups. However, it might also be a lack of desire amongst young people to participate in outdoor activities. In 1990, Hunt undertook a review of literature and a questionnaire-based empirical study which received 342 responses (36%) from the 950 that were sent out. The focus of the work was on opportunities for adventure and challenge for young people. The findings of the study include:

> '*70% of young people explained non-involvement in outdoor activities by them being 'too busy'. One third considered the activities as 'too expensive' and the same proportion blamed 'a lack of information'. Interestingly, elements of risk and danger were rarely mentioned*'. (*p.128-9*)

As mentioned in the previous sub-section on school children, risk or fear of injury may also present barriers for young people. This risk, combined with research evidence which suggests that for many groups and individuals in society there can be negative public perceptions of outdoor activities, might be enough of a barrier to put young people off outdoor activities altogether. Indeed, the same may be said for certain organisations or individuals who work to provide outdoor experiences for young people, particularly since '*responsibility and blame are ascribed to outdoor incidents more readily today*' in what Thomas and Raymond refer to as '*an increasingly litigious society*' (*Thomas & Raymond, 1998*),

3.4   Those on low incomes

One of the challenges of identifying barriers to access and social inclusion from the National Parks' perspective is the ability to engage target populations in a way that makes the National Parks relevant to their current lives. While the designation of the National Parks and NNRs as special places is supported by policy makers and those working within and committed to the areas, this special status does not necessarily have relevance for the target audiences.

For many of the people in the target groups, transportation is generally a barrier to accessing services to meet their needs. The Scottish Government's National

Planning Framework sets out a significant emphasis on transportation to improve social inclusion, connection, and access for people experiencing multiple disadvantages. Transport for people with disabilities becomes an important priority as the Disability Equality Duty has been in full force and effect since December 2006 and cuts across many aspects of the National Transport Strategy (http://www.drc-gb.org/about_us/drc_scotland/library/transport_policy/scotlands_national_transport.aspx).

In particular, access to the National Parks is sometimes an issue about actually getting there. Both of the National Parks visitors' surveys and the SNH study on transport within the Parks found that most people arrive at and travel within the Parks by private car ('*Experience and Best Practice In The Planning And Management of Transport Within National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in England and Wales*, Transport for Leisure', 2001; '*Visitor research in Scotland's proposed National Parks: Development of common baseline information*', NFO System Three, 2002).

The Scottish Household Survey (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00316-01.asp) indicates that for adults with incomes of £15,000 or less, those with no access to a private vehicle outnumber those with access to a private motor vehicle by nearly 2 to 1. This information presents a disconnection between the dominant mode of transportation used to access the Parks, and the availability of that mode within the target groups.

Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park completed a significant community transport feasibility study to investigate transportation issues in the Park area for all services, and for transportation within and outside of the Park boundaries ('*Community Transport Feasibility Study Final Report*', August 2004, Derek Halden Consultancy Ltd). The report highlights a need for improvements to transportation, but also highlights how much work must be done to connect services across various statutory bodies and diverse communities before transportation both within and out with the Park is not seen as a general barrier.

Having explored the range of barriers which can and do exist for the target groups, the next section can examine in more depth how access and increased participation can be facilitated by reviewing literature and good practice examples.

4.0 Access and outreach: what can be done?

Now that inclusion in outdoor education and barriers to participation have been reviewed, it is reasonable and makes sense for this section to look at the issue of access. Access to The Parks, NNRs and access to the countryside is, on the whole, one and the same thing. This is an important consideration as it has broadened the potential literature to be used in this review and has helped to gather a broader and richer conceptual understanding of barriers to accessing the countryside generally and National Parks in particular. In terms of facilitating access, there is evidence from the literature and also experience from National Parks and outdoor organisations, both in Scotland and from across the world, that can be looked at in conjunction with the literature. Before going on to present specific practice examples, it is helpful to review what the literature says about access to the outdoors.

First of all, it is argued that outdoor experiences, especially for school children and young people, should be about creating meaningful learning experiences that go further than *'just learning about something' (Taniguchi et al, 2005).* Along with other researchers such as Dewey, research in this area concludes that the learning process should go beyond the actual experience, and that a time for reflection on the experience needs to be there in order to promote relevancy and permanency *(Beard & Wilson, 2002).*

This type of process may also help challenge or reverse some of the processes associated with individuals conforming to what they feel are societal or peer norms, and bringing people back to their *'whole selves' (Palmer, 2004)* to ensure that all experiences are meaningful to individuals. For instance, some might view outdoor activities as only for certain groups in societies and not them.

Some commentators suggest that weak teaching focuses more on an activity itself, without giving enough attention to the way in which the activity contributes to the students' learning (*OFSTED, 2004*). The role model effect, and the success of the role model, whether that is the instructor, ranger or the teacher, is better where, for instance, a teacher goes beyond just supervising pupils in outdoor activities, and instead exploits more learning opportunities for themselves and the pupils (*OFSTED, 2004*).

The role model effect has been explored further by American research. This research implies that Individual instructors do have an influence on participants' perceptions of their outdoor experiences through the preparation, facilitation during, and discussion after process of the activity *(Bobilya et al, 2005)*. It is therefore recommended that instructors can enhance their role by knowing what participant expectations are before the activity, provide a clear rationale as to the purpose of the activity to the participant, and provide opportunities to

reflect and discuss the experience upon completion (Bobilya et al, 2005). It is also agreed generally in the literature that instructors have a significant influence on successful participant experience in wilderness programmes (see Cammack, 1996; *Ewert* & McAvoy, 2000 for instance).

Outdoor experiences can help in supporting a process and skills for transferable learning (*Exeter, 2001*) for all groups. However, the issues around structure of visits and the capacity of teachers, instructors, or trip organisers to ensure that everyone can have access to the outdoors, as well as realise the tangible benefits of an outdoor experience, have to be overcome. With regards to promotion and the organisation of outdoor trips, research suggests that word-of-mouth and previous experience is collectively the biggest source for organising further out-of-school trips and activities (*QA Research, 2008*). Therefore, the sharing of experiences between teachers, pupils, organisations, and individuals is a good source of promotion and one that should be encouraged and supported where possible.

4.1 Transferable experiences?

Looking through publicly-available information and materials, some programmes and projects that provide examples of different types of learning initiatives with positive results for the parties involved, relating to outreach and inclusion for National Parks, other protected areas and similar programmes or activities, were found. Some examples are the result of project-based or time-limited funding, and evidence of sustainability is limited. Many of the examples are developed with a National Park as provider, and some are examples of partnership working across public agencies, local authorities and voluntary service providers. Several are detailed here and might offer some insight into why the target groups for this research face barriers to participation and engagement with Scotland's National Parks and how to remove some of these.

Creative volunteering

'My National Park' project in North York Moors National Park creates opportunities for people with disabilities and special needs to fully participate in volunteering with the Park in ways that are different and more engaging for them than the volunteer opportunities typically offered. Participants worked alongside an artist to create artwork for exhibition that expresses the meaning of the Park's beautiful and special places to them. 'My National Park' is seen as an entry point for disabled people to see and understand what the Park is about and as a springboard for their involvement in future projects.

Award programme initiatives in schools

Incentive schemes can help people partake in activities, in which they may not typically become involved in. In Scotland, the John Muir Award (JMA: see http://www.jmt.org/jmaward-about-the-award.asp for more information) aims to

encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to discover, enjoy and care for the planet's wild places and it aims to do this through a structured and adaptable scheme, which is non-competitive and open to all. CNPA has worked successfully with Grantown School in embedding the JMA within the school's curriculum for the 2008/2009 session. For senior 1 and senior 2 pupils, one-day per week has been factored into timetables to facilitate a cross-curricular programme involving outdoor education and the JMA. CNPA officers have helped support the teachers and pupils of Grantown School to make the first-year of the programme a success. CNPA officers involved in supporting the school, feel that a lot of the success can be attributed to the far-sightedness and engagement of the teachers and head teacher who have acted as role models and positive promoters of the programme to peers and pupils in the school. The collaborative approach between Grantown School and CNPA seems to have worked well in this case and the hope would be for other schools to work with CNPA in such a way to develop programmes of similar nature.

Junior Rangers

The EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme provides a widely-accepted model, training framework, and support for establishing and operating Junior Ranger programmes in protected places throughout Europe (see http://www.europarc.org/what-we-do/junior-ranger for more information). During summer of 2008, CNPA operated a camp programme which worked with 20 young people (between 13-16 years old) from Europe and 11 from Scotland to promote inclusion and connection to protected areas via the EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme. This camp proved to be a success in several areas. It allowed local Rangers and the young people alike to experience first-hand the positive outcomes of this type of camp and this type of involvement. It was also deemed to be successful enough for CNPA to develop their own Junior Ranger Programme, with plans to run a couple of 5-day camps in summer 2009 in the Deeside and Speyside areas. These will involve 14 young people from local schools and the camps will promote conservation and outdoor education involvement to the young people involved. The long-term intention of this project, if successful, would be to roll out the opportunities for young people between 13-16 years old to all areas of the county.

Another positive outcome from the 2008 summer camp was the relationships which CNPA officers and Rangers developed with European colleagues. Furthermore, on a European scale, the CNPA camp of 2008 to viewed to be of such a success that CNPA officers were asked by EUROPARC to provide advice on how to deliver such successes, elsewhere in Europe, in the future.

Teaching the teachers

The Gros Morne National Park in Newfoundland, Canada, supports educational programmes through the Parks Canada Institute for Education Interns and the Teachers' Institute, offering teachers the opportunity to make personal

37

connections with the natural heritage that they then can share with their students. The Outdoor Education Programme offered at the Park presents students with learning experiences that help them gain greater understanding and appreciation for the protected areas and the natural heritage.

Policy, planning and practices

The Kelvingrove Museum's New Century Project included an Access Policy that presented a coordinated and comprehensive approach to outreach and access and reflected Glasgow City Council's commitment to 'Equality of Opportunity and positive action against discrimination due to special needs or social exclusion.' The Access Policy set out an approach to extending and improving physical, sensory, intellectual and social access based on the premise that the museum collection is publicly owned, and access must be available to all. The Policy included a monitoring and evaluation framework and marketing and outreach approaches to support deliberate attempts to reach those who may experience barriers based on special needs or social exclusion.

In 2002, the Glasgow Museum Resource Centre created an Audience Development Plan to address its aim of creating and promoting 'opportunities for the public to actively engage with the heritage we hold on their behalf.' The Plan includes outreach and education beyond the museum walls through creating travelling artefacts and collections and having staff meet with schools and community or voluntary groups at venues outside of the museum. Museum staff work in partnership with arts, sports, disability, and youth development workers to ensure they reach excluded audiences. These people form the bridge between events in local community halls, local libraries, places of worship (where Open Museum exhibitions are often shown) and specific museum facilities such as Kelvingrove, the Burrell Collection and GMRC. The Plan also calls for the provision of in-service training for teachers so that they understand how to access the collections and education information, or have support to plan 'taster visits' for schools to improve participation and engagement and to increase possibilities for return visits by students.

Coordinated web portal and centralised information

The National Park Service in the United States provides an Interpretation and Education website portal that offers 'curriculum, fun and games, a guide to park Junior Ranger programs and a host of other fun and educational media created by the National Park Service and our partners.' Individual National Parks web sites can be accessed through the National Park Service web to explore specific educational and outreach programmes offered in each National Park. They include age specific curriculum and connections to state and national standards through National Park Service themes (see http://www.nps.gov/learn/ for more information).

Learning by doing

The Reaching Out Project in the North York Moors National Park was a three year, Heritage Lottery funded project (from 2001 through 2004) designed to increase awareness of the heritage of the National Park, increase informal education opportunities, and provide new opportunities for healthy lifestyle pursuits whilst enjoying and learning about the special qualities of the National Park. The Project included a variety of initiatives that were intended to provide learning about how to broaden the participant profile of the National Park to include more young people, inner-city groups and families, cultural minority communities (including ethnic minority communities), people with health and mobility needs, school children outside of school hours, and the general urban public.

The Reaching Out Report describes key overall achievements of the project which include increasing awareness, establishing links between the Parks and urban communities, providing examples of outreach and audience development, setting up taster visits and events, and establishing the basis for future programme development. Next steps for the project are developing a more community-driven approach, and embedding achievements for future funding bids.

Specific good practices and learning from the ***Reaching Out Project*** include:

- Making contact with community workers in the target areas to provide a positive experience so community group leaders are in a position to influence group members in making choices to visit and use the Park. Specific activities used to engage with community workers and subsequently community groups include:

    o Creating an Outreach Road show
    o Guided walks
    o Special events hosted by the National Park
    o Talks and presentations given by Parks personnel through tours to community groups
    o Taster visits
    o Heritage art projects
    o Drama and performance art workshops
    o Conservation tasks for community volunteers.

- Adapting the range of activities on offer and the distribution of information about events and activities to be more relevant to target audiences. Findings from these activities included learning that the distribution of information was not reaching new audiences and a new distribution network was needed; new audiences needed new methods of engagement; events to attract urban audiences to the Parks could be staged at the edge of or outside the parks; venues for events should be accessible by public transport; and events should be designed and

delivered in consultation with the audiences to ensure relevance, interests and needs.

- It is essential to tap into the many existing organisations that engage the youth audience so that they can promote the use of the Parks as a resource. However, it is important to recognise that young people may come to the attention of some of these organisations through behavioural problems, truancy, and substance misuse, and the young people who are not identified as 'at risk' may be overlooked if they do not attend these community youth groups.

- 'Heritage by stealth' is seen as the way forward, delivering messages through exciting and attractive 'cool' activities rather than through heavy messaging related to the heritage itself.

Partnership working

The Integrated Access Demonstration Project in the Lake District National Park was established in March 2001 and has been re-branded as 'Open Return'. The aim of 'Open Return' is to meet national objectives for integrated access, and monitor practical access projects in partnership with other agencies. The LDNPA defines integrated access as 'using and improving countryside access to meet wider social goals'. Through the use of different case study projects, 'Open Return' provides examples of good practice related to overcoming barriers to access, and a check list for future programme planning. (See here for information on the 'Open Return' report: http://www.lake-district.gov.uk/index/caringfor/projects/rights_of_way_improvement_plan/open_return.htm) Specific case studies relevant to this research include the 'Miles without Stiles' project and the Langdale Youth Involvement Project.

'Miles without Stiles' in the Lake District, introduced a scoring mechanism for auditing trails and paths for use by different people for different purposes and with different abilities, taking into account landscape, archaeological, and safety considerations. The project team was established to produce an action plan to implement 25 routes over five years, and to obtain funding for implementing the action plan (see http://www.ourstolookafter.co.uk/pages/projects/miles.htm for more information).

The Langdale Youth Involvement Project took place in Langdale Valley in the Lake District, and included a primary school group and an older teenage group. The primary school group were given opportunities for exploring the special qualities of the National Park and developing understanding of the differences between urban and rural life. It included twinning the local Langdale Primary School with Medlock School in inner-city Manchester through the outdoor education centre for a joint day out. .The older group project worked with local (to the Park) teenagers in the Youth Club to identify their desire to engage in

more activities in the countryside and to learn mountain craft skills. Again, working with the Ghyll Head Outdoor Education Centre, groups of young people took part in facilitated outdoor activities and the young people identified greater connections with the outdoors and higher levels of interest in outdoor pursuits. (See here for more information: http://www.lake-district.gov.uk/lake_district_docs95/open_return_2004_7cs6.pdf)

The Mosaic Partnership was started in January 2005 and carried the work of the Mosaic Project forward based on the lessons learned and achievements made against five key aims. The Partnership involves the Council for National Parks (CNP) and the Youth Hostels Association (YHA) with the Peak District, Yorkshire Dales, North Yorkshire Moors and Brecon Beacons National Parks and their respective National Parks Societies. The Partnership is the result of a commitment to building stronger relationships between the Parks and minority ethnic communities, and improving participation by underrepresented minority ethnic groups in Parks activities. The Partnership trains 'community champions' who act as the link between the Parks and the minority communities and who are willing to promote the National Parks to their community groups, and the needs of their community groups to the National Parks (see http://www.mosaicpartnership.org/ for more information).

The Field Studies Council (FSC) is an educational charity working with over 2500 schools and nearly 100,000 students on courses in 17 Field Centres across the UK. The FSC has delivered residential courses for 11-14 year olds from all London secondary schools as part of the London Challenge project. London Challenge's goal is to raise standards in London secondary schools and to give the city's young people better opportunities in education. The Challenge, launched in 2003, is a five-year partnership between Government, schools, and London boroughs. It offers:

- London-wide resources for all schools;
- Individual bespoke support for around 70 of the city's most disadvantaged schools; and
- Intensive work with five key boroughs (Hackney, Islington, Haringey, Southwark and Lambeth).

5.0 Concluding thoughts and learning outcomes

Having reviewed a series of literature and research evidence, it is clear that exclusion from and barriers to access in the outdoors, including Scotland's National Parks, exist for many societal groups. The partners to the 'Barriers to Engagement' research were specifically interested in exploring why many young people, people with disabilities, people on low incomes, and schools groups were not typically engaging with and participating in Scotland's two National Parks. It is relevant therefore to identify what this review has shown for these groups.

The analysis given presents a rationale for more investment in raising knowledge and awareness levels for practitioners in the field of outdoor education in several areas. There seems to be a need for a broader understanding and indeed acknowledgment of the wider societal reasons that exist, and can ultimately create barriers or curtail access to the outdoors for the target groups. The implications of poverty and social exclusion are perhaps under researched in the literature on the outdoors. In some cases, for instance, the problems associated with lack of income can generally not be overcome by standalone inclusion strategies from the National Park Authorities themselves. In reality, co-ordinated efforts from a variety of organisations, schools, and/or local authorities will be needed. However, this co-ordination itself will not be enough unless there is genuine engagement with those in society from low income groups.

Then there is the challenge in convincing these groups, who may struggle daily to provide basic supports, such as meals for their family or heating for their home, that there are genuine reasons why they should engage in outdoor activities in general, never mind those associated with National Parks.

Additionally, the existence of other barriers, such as lack of time, lack of enthusiasm, lack of confidence, lack of support, lack of perceived relevancy, lack of transport, lack of knowledge, lack of opportunity, and fear of safety all seem to be common barriers for the four target groups researched.

When these barriers are combined with specific ones for the individual groups themselves, the compound effect can be a multi-layered, dynamic, and in many cases, an absolute set of perceptual and structural barriers which may seem too overwhelming or complex to breakdown. For example, in schools, disruptions to class, the constraints of the curriculum, shortage of time, or a lack of a teachers' confidence, experience, or commitment to outdoor education may all present barriers. For people with disabilities physical barriers, inaccessible facilities, a lack of seating and opportunities to rest or take shelter, a lack of staff awareness of the needs of disabled visitors, and a limited range of activities can present barriers.

However, what this review has shown is that once the reasons are identified and then understood, an increase in opportunities for access to the outdoors and indeed, National Parks, for the target groups can happen. Areas such as partnership working, investing in creative learning, and recognising the importance of role models and influential individuals, such as teachers, may help National Parks engage more with specific members of the target groups.   It may also help National Parks to target their resources in different ways.

> '*Although benefits are well known there is very little research into how to target resource management effectively and to distribute these benefits equitably to groups of people who are obviously under-represented and to individuals who need them most*' (*The Forestry Commission, 2007*).

A clear message from this review lies in the types of response made by outdoor organisations such as SNH and the Scottish NPAs when attempting to include targeted groups in their activities. It seems that blanket approaches and one-size-fits-all mechanisms and attitudes are not the way forward. In order to remove barriers for specific target groups, there needs to be a conscious effort for organisations to tailor strategies and approaches aimed particularly at the target groups. In many instances, a true appreciation of the scale of barriers facing particular groups will only be gained and ultimately combated, where there is a concerted effort to understand at a more micro level why some groups face barriers where others do not. Additionally, the encouragement of new and advancement of existing partnership working experiences between the partners and other relevant organisations would help in this area. It would also aid in promoting learning on both successful and less successful experiences between organisations.

Appendix A1: The partners

Both of the NPAs involved in this project share the four aims established by the National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000. Their individual Park Plans describe how these aims will be delivered. The National Park Authorities are responsible for managing the Park areas in ways that are aligned with the four aims and that conserve the areas for the benefit of all people. The four aims, already detailed above, are given as a reminder here:

- To conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area;
- To promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area;
- To promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public;
- To promote sustainable economic and social development of the area's communities (National Parks (Scotland) Act, 2000).

Established in 2002, **Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park Authority** (hereafter referred to as LL&TNPA: see http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/plan/default.asp for more information) was the first of Scotland's NPAs. Its board comprises 25 members and it has two statutory committees (planning & access and audit. See http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/looking-after/board-committees/menu-id-376.html for more information). Its overall objective is to fulfil the four aims of the National Parks (Scotland) Act, 2000 (as detailed above).

LL&TNPA's National Park Plan was implemented in March 2007 and provides strategic and policy direction (see http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park/default.asp?p=296 for more information). The plan covers the period 2007-2012 and aims to help the authority '*provide direction, give leadership, and promote common purpose across all activities to achieve the four park aims*' (LL&TNPA, 2007).

LL&TNPA envisages that the plan will help in:
- Delivering better outcomes for special places – by co-ordinating activities and ensuring best use of resources and more sustainable benefits;
- Developing innovative solutions for rural Scotland – by demonstrating best practice in sustainable development;
- Providing a Park for All – by helping people of all ages backgrounds and abilities to understand and use the Park;
- Promoting the "Pride of Scotland" – by protecting an iconic part of Scotland's identity.

The LL&TNPA plan also has two specific outcomes associated with the promotion of awareness, understanding of and involvement in the Park. These are:

- More people from a wider range of backgrounds having opportunities to learn about the Park's environment and wider sustainability.

- More people from a wider range of backgrounds experiencing the Park and becoming involved in the care of the Park's environment.

The plan establishes a long-term vision for LL&TNP by 2027 and it categorises relevant aims and actions into six themes in order to attain that vision. The six themes are:

- Land use and natural heritage;
- **Awareness, understanding and involvement;**
- **Recreation and enjoyment;**
- **People, communities and culture;**
- Economic growth and sustainability;
- Built heritage and design.

The themes which are of relevance to this project are highlighted in bold.

The plan identifies priorities for 2007-2012 for each of these themes. [Cairngorms National Park Authority](#) (CNPA: see <http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/> for more information) was established in September 2003. It is '*designed to be an enabling organisation, promoting partnership working and giving leadership to all those involved in the Cairngorms'*. CNPA aims to ensure that there is a joined-up approach to projects and initiatives employed to meet the four aims. It does not duplicate the work of other organisations such as SNH. The CNPA Park Plan establishes a framework for meeting the four aims described above. It has a 25-year vision, stipulating the related outcomes and has three strategic objectives and a series of 'priorities for action' for the period 2007-2012, to facilitate the fulfilment of these objectives. The three objectives are:

- Conserving and enhancing the park.
- Living and working in the park.
- Enjoying and understanding the park.

The eight 'priorities for action' for 2007-2012 are:

- Conserving and enhancing biodiversity and landscapes.
- Integrating public support for land management.
- Supporting sustainable deer management.
- **Providing high quality opportunities for outdoor access.**
- Making tourism and business more sustainable.
- Making housing more affordable and sustainable.
- **Raising awareness and understanding of the park.**

For this project, the priorities highlighted in bold are of highest relevance, and it is intended that the outcomes of this project will help the CNPA in fulfilling these priorities. The 2012 outcomes associated with these priorities will be referenced and discussed in the following sections of this review. CNPA provide an annual progress report and four-monthly Park Plan updates to provide information to individuals and stakeholders on their progress in meeting their 'priorities for

action' areas (see
http://www.cairngorms.co.uk/nationalparkplan/abouttheplan/ for information
on these reports).

Scottish Natural Heritage, is a non-departmental government body, established
in 1992 by the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991 '*to look after the natural
heritage, help people to enjoy and value it, and encourage people to use it
sustainably*' (see http://www.snh.org.uk/about/ab-main2007a.asp#1 for more
information). SNH act as an advisory body to the Scottish Government and
carries out its work via a corporate strategy to deliver on a range of tasks such as
developing policy, providing information and advice, producing publications,
and looking after designated sites.

SNH carries out its work via eleven area offices based throughout Scotland. Its
statutory purposes, established by the Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act 1991 are
to:

- secure the conservation and enhancement of Scotland's natural
  heritage;
- foster understanding and facilitate enjoyment of it;
- encourage its sustainable use.

In addition to these, there are duties incurred through the Wildlife & Countryside
Act 1981, the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 and the Nature Conservation
(Scotland) Act 2004. These duties include:

- notifying Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- responsibility for supporting several other national designations including
  National Nature Reserves and National Scenic Areas;
- promoting awareness and understanding of the Scottish Outdoor Access
  Code, Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code and Scottish Fossil Code.

The work priorities of SNH contribute to the National Performance Framework for
the Scottish Government (see http://www.scotland.gov.uk/About/scotPerforms
for more information on this framework). One of these priorities 'visits to the
outdoors', has direct relevance to the project that is the subject of this review.
The organisation's five strategic priorities set out in their Corporate Strategy for
2008-2013 are (see
http://www.snh.org.uk/pubs/results.asp?Q=corporate+strategy&rpp=10 for more
information on this):

- Caring for nature;
- Responding to climate change;
- Delivering health and well-being;
- Supporting the Scottish economy;
- Delivering a high quality public service.

Appendix A2: Global and European organisations

Global

The **International Union for Conservation of Nature** (hereafter referred to as IUCN) works on a worldwide level to *'develop conservation science, manage field projects all over the world, and bring together players from different domains and sectors to develop and implement policy, laws, and best practice'* (IUCN, 2009). It has a Commission on Education and Communication, which is a network of over 600 practitioners, from throughout the world. This commission works on *'advancing sustainability through education, learning and communication'* (IUCN, CEC, 2009). Part of its role is to provide a hub for members to exchange views, experiences and good practice guidance. It also provides some resources to members, such as access to publications and a series of toolkits to aid its members.

The mission of **UNESCO World Heritage** is directed by the international treaty 'Convention concerning the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage', which was adopted in 1972. Relevant aims include:

- encouraging countries to sign the World Heritage Convention and to ensure the protection of their natural and cultural heritage;
- supporting States Parties' public awareness-building activities for World Heritage conservation; *and*
- encouraging participation by the local population in the preservation of their cultural and natural heritage.

Included in its work is the Partnership for Conservation Initiative, launched in 2002 (also known as the World Heritage PACT). The objectives for this initiative include raising awareness about World Heritage, which is a responsibility for all members. World Heritage provides access to a series of resources and publications for the public and its members. These resources include brochures and information kits, all available in English, French or Spanish.

European

The EUROPARC Federation (also known as the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe) is an organisation that works in a European context to:

> '*help protected areas fulfil their role as preservers of the natural beauty of Europe in all its variety for us to experience and enjoy, to encourage cooperation and exchange between their managers and staff, and to promote their aims and work across Europe*' (*EUROPARC, 1973*: see http://www.europarc.org/who-we-are/our-history for more information).

Founded in 1972, it is working to a strategy for the period 2008-2012, and states the following as its mission statement:

> *'EUROPARC is the leading European organisation for protected areas, bringing together dedicated professionals, government agencies, decision makers, and supporters to increase effectiveness in conserving and enhancing natural and cultural heritage on land and sea for the well-being and benefit of current and future generations'* (*EUROPARC, 2008*).

It aims to meet this by promoting good practice, encouraging the creation of networks, the exchange of information between the represented parties of the Federation, and provides access to many publications and information sources to help in this process. It also provides information on what is happening on European policy areas relevant to The EUROPARC Federation.

The **European Directorate of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage** is part of the Council of Europe. It states it work as being based on the *'processes of creativity, open access and democratic pluralism'* and it promotes particularly *'the equal participation by all in cultural life'* (http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/About/mission_en.asp for more information). It carries out this work, by splitting the activities into the following four main areas:

- the implementation of Council of Europe Conventions in its fields of activity;
- the monitoring, analysis and development of policies and practices, and the offering of advice and support;
- direct assistance to governments to enhance governance and management capacities through comprehensive regional programmes and pilot projects;
- special initiatives and awareness raising activities which promote the principles and values through concrete actions highlighting Europe's common cultural and natural assets and creativity.

It carries out these activities with a range of different stakeholders, including governments, local authorities and independent experts. The Council provides access to resources, such as publications and links to other relevant organisations.

The **European National Parks Centre** (hereafter referred to as ENPC) is being established to coordinate information sharing between and the promotion of the 359 National Parks in Europe (see http://nationalparks.wikia.com/wiki/European_National_Parks_Centre for more information). Its mission is:

- To create a pan-European information databank on European National Parks; and to develop an independent system of National Park monitoring and support;
- To provide information management services to those in charge of National Parks through the effective use of modern technology, by global

reach and experience, rapid flexible approach and ability to offer innovative solutions;

- To form and support an international network of associates and partners who help to fulfil ENPC's vision;
- To explore new and cost-effective ways of promoting National Parks and their conservation at an international level;
- To educate the general public, so they develop a positive relationship with National Parks and support their conservation.

It aims to meet this mission by:

- Cooperating with all existing National Parks in Europe;
- Establishing a multilingual and interactive web portal about all European National Parks. This on-line guide will present their extraordinary landscapes, stunning sceneries, fascinating histories, rich biodiversity and habitats. It will also expose all threats to these areas which are causing their uniqueness, abundant wildlife and special charm to disappear in front of our eyes;
- Publishing and supporting the distribution of reliable information materials (books, maps, CD-rom) about all national parks in Europe.

Appendix A3: Literature search

In undertaking the literature and context review an examination of available research and published literature that explored barriers to accessing National Parks specifically with regard to the identified target groups, took place. A variety of literature reviews that contribute to an understanding of the benefits of being outdoors and engaging in physical activity was found. Information was also found in relation to outreach and inclusive community engagement.

Our literature and context review included internet searches, particularly with respect to national policy and strategy documents. We also performed literature searches using the following databases:

1. SportDiscus is a bibliographic database, international in scope, covering all aspects of sport, fitness, recreation, and related fields. Articles from more than 2,000 sport-related journals, monographs, books, theses, videotapes, audiotapes, book reviews, websites, and CD-ROMs in English, French and 59 other languages are indexed for inclusion. The majority of the database covers from 1975 to present with comprehensive thesis coverage dating back to 1949; other retrospective coverage (monographs, etc.) dates back to 1609.
2. The British Education Index (BEI) provides bibliographic references to 350 British and selected European English-language Periodicals in the field of education and training. The database's coverage ranges from early years' education to the education of older adults, including coverage of relevant training and management literature. Covers 1976 (theses listed back to 1950) to present.
3. The Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) is an internet-based digital library of education research and information sponsored by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) of the U.S. Department of Education. ERIC provides access to bibliographic records of journal and non-journal literature indexed from 1966 to the present.
4. The Australian Education index (AEI) gives references to monographs, research reports, conference papers, periodical articles, Parliamentary debates, tests, curriculum materials, reviews, and theses. Covers from 1976 to present.

In one attempt, the searches in the SportDiscus data base brought a total of 13 hits of which 9 were deemed to have possible relevance. In the BEI data base there were 20 hits, of which 8 were considered to be potentially useful. ERIC found seven articles of which two are of interest to this study. The AEI located one article of interest. The above searches were indicative of the lack of literature linking National Parks to youth groups, low incomes, disability, barrier or access. This indicates that conceptualising and attempting such a study may be addressing a gap in the extant literature.

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