



## **PRESS RELEASE**

November 2021

### **Grants available for outdoor learning groups in Scotland**

Charities and not-for profit organisations in Scotland, committed to helping get young people outdoors, are being invited to apply for a grant towards employing an Outdoor Learning Officer.

There are ten grants available to groups across the UK, in this latest round of Outdoor Learning Officer Grants given by educational charity The Ernest Cook Trust.

When the grant was last made available, there was just one successful application from a Scotland-based organisation – Cyrenians, in Edinburgh, whose work includes tackling the causes and consequences of homelessness, and which runs an inspirational community farm. Young people, who face difficulties at home or in school, or who have experienced trauma, can spend time on the farm growing food, learning skills and new ideas, and gaining confidence by connecting with nature.

Each grant is worth £15,000 per year, for three years, and can be used towards funding the salary of an Outdoor Learning Officer, who will help promote the benefits of getting outdoors to young people and their communities.

Suzie Paton, The Ernest Cook Trust's Head of Grants, said the Trust works across the UK and was keen to encourage applications from Scotland.

"We know that inspirational educators are key to helping young people form lasting connections with the natural environment," said Suzie.

"This is why we prioritise charities and organisations whose approach is to encourage young people to enjoy the outdoors and engage with nature. The Outdoor Learning Officers will educate communities about land, food production and biodiversity, their work will enable society to have a healthy respect for their local environment and drive sustainable behaviour."

*(continues...)*

Sam Gardiner, Cyrenians' Outdoor Learning Officer, whose role has been part-funded by The Ernest Cook Trust, said: "Thanks to The Ernest Cook Trust helping to fund my role here, we have been able to introduce a qualification that the young people can work towards, The Forest and Outdoor Learning Award. This gives them a route to college, or an apprenticeship, and a career in land-based employment."

Each grant recipient's new recruit will also get an opportunity to join The Ernest Cook Trust's network of Outdoor Learning Officers, sharing best practice and exchanging ideas and skills. As well as giving grants for outdoor learning activities, The Ernest Cook Trust creates outdoor experiences for children, young people and their families, on its own estates and with partner estates across the country.

Applications are open to charities and not-for-profit organisations in the UK. Projects focusing on supporting people with disadvantage – including disadvantage for social, physical, economic or community reasons – are prioritised.

For more information visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/what-we-do/everything-outdoors/outdoor-learning-officer-grant/>.

