



FOREST SCHOOL TRAINER PROFILE

Sarah completed her own Forest School Practitioner training in 2002. She was working for the Forestry Commission in the Wyre Forest, Worcestershire as a Forest School Leader until 2012. In April 2012 she set up Step-Out Outdoor Learning, Training & Therapy CIC. Step-Out remained in the Wyre Forest until 2017 and then relocated to Ashford. Sarah returned to the West Midlands in July 2022.

We pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access the woodland environment. This includes working with young families, primary aged children, secondary school students, those children and young people who are unable to manage in traditional education establishments, children and adults with additional needs, asylum seekers, ex-military, homeless people and those suffering trauma.

In 2010 Sarah began her Forest School Trainer training with the Forest School Training Company (Simon and Marijke Shakespeare). This took two years to complete and she was, at the same time completing her Cert Ed at the University of Wolverhampton. She also has her Counselling Diploma and a Level 6 qualification in Counselling children and Young People. She's a Bushcraft Instructor, holding her Bushcraft Competency Certificate and is an Accredited Practitioner for the Institute for Outdoor Learning.

The Forest School Training is accredited by AIM which is where the original, current qualification was developed. Step-Out have been delivering both Forest School qualifications and other awards and certificates for OCNWM since 2012 and are a recognised Training Centre.

The current Level 3 Forest School Leader Training is an Ofqual approved qualification. It comprises of five modules taught over a five-day intensive training course followed by a three-day Leadership Training and Practical Skills Assessment course. On completion of these two courses, the trainee is expected to run a six-session 'Introduction to Forest School' with their own chosen client group. Sarah will attend one of these sessions at the trainee's site on session 4 or 5 and complete an 'on-site' assessment and follow-up tutorial. The trainee then has free access to 'Skills Development Sessions' to build upon the practical skills that have been taught during the training.

During their training, the Forest School trainee will learn about:

- The woodland environment and how to respect and look after it
- The health and safety requirements needed to run Forest School
- Learning and Development of children
- How to plan and prepare Forest School Programmes
- Practical Skills – lots of time to use tools, light and manage fires, tie knots and craft items using wood and natural materials

On completion of the training, the assessment process and writing a portfolio containing evidence of learning and a Handbook containing policies and procedures needed to run a safe Forest School, the trainee will receive a Certificate which is nationally recognised (and in some cases internationally). This process usually takes between 6 months and 1 year. Once it has been marked by Sarah, it is sent to an Internal Verifier and then is Externally Quality Assured by OCNWM.

As a Community Interest Company running Forest School and other family-friendly woodland learning, Step-Out has an ethos of inclusivity for all in the woods. There are many real and perceived barriers which prevent people from accessing the woodlands and having the opportunity to take ownership over their own learning. Forest School offers this opportunity and as Forest School Leaders we are privileged to help facilitate their learning process.

The Forest School Training is run with this in mind and although there is a specific curriculum and rigid learning outcomes to be met, the course is tailored specifically to the learning needs and preferences of the trainees. This feedback is consistently received from those who have attended the course.

In order to fulfil our wish to make all woodland learning fully inclusive, we would ask you to contact Sarah if there are any barriers to you being able to access this course. These may be financial barriers, barriers to learning or physical barriers and we will always be happy to have a frank conversation with you to see how we can overcome them. Please phone Sarah on 07962 446886 or email sarah@step-out.info for a confidential discussion

Step-Out Outdoor Learning, Training & Therapy CIC
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***The home of outdoor learning and experiences,
making the forest environment accessible to all - Live Life, Step-Out!***

