



## Fact Sheet

### **How schools can respond to new Government guidance and become investors in biodiversity.**

In November, the Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi set out his vision for all children to be taught about the importance of conserving and protecting our planet. Through a new model science curriculum, pupil and school awards and biodiversity improvements to school grounds, children and young people will be encouraged to get hands on experience of understanding, nurturing and protecting the biodiversity around them.

A key commitment in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan is to encourage children to be close to nature to benefit their health and wellbeing. Alongside direct learning opportunities, getting close to nature can boost attainment and benefits wider transferable skills.

It has also been shown that children taking part in nature-based activities view their teachers and school in a more positive light, and one recent study has revealed how as little as an hour a week of outdoor learning also boosts teachers' job satisfaction.

In 2019, the UK Government announced that new English planning developments will be required to demonstrate a 10% increase in biodiversity on or near development sites.

The Chancellors' 2019 spring statement indicated it will be mandatory for all development in England to deliver a 'Biodiversity Net Gain'.

For schools, the developments bring the topic of biodiversity into sharper focus, both in terms of the organisations' own responsibilities and opportunities, and the associated educational opportunities.

### **The timeline.**

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The Government proposes that the requirement will come in force after a two-year 'transition period' after the new Environment Bill for England receives royal ascent.

- **Autumn 2021:** 9 Nov - Environment Bill gets Royal Assent - now the Environment Act Government consultation on Biodiversity net gain statutory instruments and regulations; 21 Nov - Dept Education consultation on Sustainability Strategy
- **Spring 2022:** Government response to consultation on BNG; Dept Education publishes final Sustainability Strategy
- **Spring 2023:** Biodiversity net gain site register and statutory credits sales platform go live; new model science curriculum in place
- **Autumn 2023:** Biodiversity net gain expected to become mandatory for all TCPA developments

## What opportunities does NatureArk® offer schools?

NatureArk has been developed to enhance, support and grow species-rich ecosystems and provide biodiversity net gain from a single multi-habitat unit.

NatureArk provides a focal point for biodiversity enhancement and outdoor learning, providing habitats for a wide range of our nature wildlife from hoverflies and beetles to frogs and butterflies. All within a discrete and easily maintained habitat unit.

It is constructed from untreated timber to avoid the presence of unwanted chemicals and is therefore designed to degrade over time.

Retailing from just £399.95, NatureArk offers the opportunity for schools to become genuine investors in biodiversity and generate unique new educational opportunities for students aged 4 to 16.

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Though effective in a range of environments, NatureArk is particularly suited to urban environments, offering a new pathway for biodiversity to thrive.

### References and further reading.

The Education Secretary's announcement at COP26.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/education-secretary-puts-climate-change-at-the-heart-of-education--2>

Department of Education Draft Sustainability Strategy.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1031454/SCC\\_DRAFT\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1031454/SCC_DRAFT_Strategy.pdf)

Biodiversity Net Gain: Future developments must improve wildlife habitats – *Biodiversity in Planning*

<https://www.biodiversityinplanning.org/news/bd-net-gain/>

Biodiversity Net Gain: more than just a number – *Gov.uk*

<https://naturalengland.blog.gov.uk/2021/09/21/biodiversity-net-gain-more-than-just-a-number/>

The Biodiversity Metric 3.0 – *Natural England*

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>