







# Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) & Geopark Youth Leaders 2025



Welcome to Youth Leaders 2025. If you have a passion for the outdoors and nature conservation, are considering an environmental career, or want to encourage others to responsibly enjoy our precious landscapes; and are 16-24 years old we want to hear from you!

This exciting new youth programme will mainly be delivered within the Ring of Gullion and Strangford and Lecale AONBs. Please see the schedule of activities below for full details.

During the programme, which will run from July 2025 until January 2026, you will participate in a range of environmental and nature conservation themed sessions, where you will develop new personal and practical skills, allowing you to become an Environmental Youth Leader and champion for nature. Through the planned activities you will be introduced to a range of natural habitats and meet the people who are committed to protecting them. The skills you will gain are transferable skills, which you will be able to implement in your chosen career.





























## **Additional Opportunities**

By becoming an AONB & Geopark Youth Leader you will also;

- Have the opportunity to be selected to be part of the <u>Landscapes NI</u> Youth Panel, where you will engage with other like-minded young people from across Northern Ireland, sharing experiences and knowledge of your landscape areas. This youth panel aims to empower young people to have a voice and develop leadership skills. Two people from each AONB group will be selected to be part of this amazing opportunity.
- Complete a whopping **100 hours** connecting with nature which will mean you will receive the highest Wild Youth Award available, see Wild Youth Awards | <u>Ulster Wildlife</u> for more information. To reach this milestone you will commit to volunteer for nature conservation for approximately another 20 hours. E.g. conducting surveys or litter picks.

Thanks to funding from Action Renewables and sponsorship from Landscapes NI this programme is **free of charge**. All we ask from you is a commitment to attend the whole programme.

Please note when applying, there will be two groups of Youth Leaders, one in each AONB, you are applying to join either the Strangford and Lecale group or the Ring of Gullion group.

Applications close 5pm 30th June



Norlin Airlan Environment Agency























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Activity Overview	Strangford & Lecale	Ring of Gullion
<b>Introduction Day -</b> Get to know your fellow participants and become familiar	Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> July	Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> July
with your chosen Landscape.	Delamont Country Park	Derrymore House
Facilitating nature-based activities	Monday 21st-Tuesday 22nd July	
for wellbeing AQA – 2-day residential		
training. Learn how to lead fun, safe	Killbroney Centre, 1 Forestbrook Road, Newry BT34	
outdoor activity sessions and get	3BT	
hands-on practice facilitating them.		
You'll also learn a bit about the		
research linking nature and wellness.		
Introduction to survey methods- A	Tuesday 12th August	Wednesday 13th
taster day in biodiversity recording and	_	August
path audits.	Tyrella Beach	
		Bluebell Lane
		49 Tullymacreeve Rd,
		Mullaghbawn,
Sustainable Food — Visit a working	Sunday 31st August	Sunday 24 <sup>th</sup> August
farm which is managing to produce		
high quality food whilst encouraging	Downpatrick area	Newry area
biodiversity to thrive.		
<b>Woodlands</b> – An introduction to	Sunday 21st September	Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup>
woodland habitats and native seed		September
collection to grow trees for the future.	Delamont Country Park	
		Kilbroney Forest Park
<b>Leave no Trace</b> – Are you aware of	Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup> Oct	Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> Oct
how your actions affect wildlife? Take		
part in a leave no trace awareness	Delamont Country Park	Derrymore House
course.	D. TOOM ( )	
Orienteering – An opportunity to	Date TBC Nov (weekend)	
learn and develop navigational skills	Carthauallau Faurat Bada	
whilst traversing in a Forest Park and	Castlewellan Forest Park	
lowland mountain environment. Also,		
an introduction for carbon literacy.	Data TDC lan (waskend)	Data TDC lan
Practical conservation day – This is	Date TBC Jan (weekend)	Date TBC Jan
your opportunity to give something back. You could be tackling invasive	Ards Ponincula (ovast	(weekend)
species or taking part in a winter bird	Ards Peninsula (exact location tbc)	Slieve Gullion Forest
survey.	location toc)	Park
Let's celebrate! — Presentation of	TBC	Laik
certificates and celebration.	1 DC	
cerunicates and telepration.		

<sup>\*</sup>Please note that this schedule may be subject to change and will be dependent on weather conditions\*





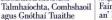
























#### What to expect?

- To learn about the natural environment you have to be in it! Each of our sessions will involve significant time outdoors in a range of weather conditions. We only cancel sessions if it is unsafe to be outside, not if it is raining.
- You will meet a range of people working in the Conservation sector and this is your opportunity to ask them questions. Make the most of your time by making as many contacts as possible.
- You will be expected to work as a team and adhere to the **Code of Conduct**
- Sessions will run from 10am to 4pm (with the exception of the 2-day residential)
- You will be required to arrange your own transportation to activities located within your own AONB. Transportation can be provided for any days that are scheduled outside your AONB (with the exception of the residential).

### What to bring?

- Sturdy outdoor shoes/boots
- Waterproof coat and trousers
- Spare dry clothing in a waterproof bag
- Packed lunch
- Personal medication
- Small rucksack

#### **Selection criteria**

- You must be 16 24 years of age on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025
- Q1. Why is your chosen AONB important to you? 50% weighting
- Q2. Why are you interested in becoming a Youth Leader? 50% weighting
- You must commit to attending at least 8 of the 9 workshops
- If there is a tie between candidates, then priority will be given to those living within the AONB in which they have selected to attend the Youth Ranger Programme, and who can attend all days of the programme in that area.





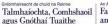
















<sup>\*</sup> All safety equipment will be provided