

# LESSONS LEARNT FOR INCLUSIVE PRACTICE



The New to Nature programme was created to provide career opportunities in the nature sector for people from underrepresented groups. The programme was delivered between January 2023 and July 2024, providing 95 year-long, paid work placements. This summary shares the lessons learnt around inclusivity and diversity within the sector as outlined within the Process report.

## RECRUITMENT PROCESS

New to Nature attracted a diverse group of applicants, through a supportive and transparent recruitment process that enhanced candidates' experience and perceptions of the nature sector. This included:

### Targeted and inclusive promotion:

- Simplifying role descriptions to focus on essential requirements.
- Working with national and local partners to reach applicants that may otherwise have not applied.

### A clear and straightforward application form:

- Application form was focused on skills and motivations rather than experience and formal qualifications.
- Nearly all Trainees agreed that the application form was clear and straightforward.
- Some suggested clearer instructions would have supported them further.

### A centralised recruitment model:

- Groundwork UK's central role streamlined recruitment, removed bias from the selection process and supported smaller Host Organisations.

### Inclusive interviews:

- Informal interviews aimed to be welcoming and accessible, with less emphasis on 'performance'.
- Many candidates were offered a choice of virtual, or in-person interviews.
- Interview questions were shared with applicants in advance, this allowed applicants to better prepare for interviews.

More detailed information on New to Nature's inclusive recruitment approach can be found in the [Recruitment Learning paper](#).



Honestly that was the most straightforward, transparent, and responsive job seeking and starting I've ever experienced.

— Trainee



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I have a really lovely team and that helps massively. My role has been tailored to me, which has really helped me get through it as I have a chronic lung condition, and it's meant I can enjoy it to the best of my abilities even though I thought there would be barriers.

– Trainee

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## PLACEMENTS AND SUPPORT

### Placement type:

- Offering a wide range of roles allowed people from all backgrounds to identify possible careers.
- This led to an improved perception of the accessibility of the sector for those from Trainees who were disabled, ethnically diverse and/or from low-income backgrounds.

### Preparing for potential needs:

- New to Nature supported neurodiverse Trainees by providing training for employers and Trainees.
- This enabled Host Organisations to support Trainees with specific needs.

### Removing barriers:

- The Breaking Barriers Fund and training budget played a key role in making roles accessible to a wide range of people.
- The Breaking Barriers Fund covered specialist equipment, required uniforms (including personal protective equipment), transport costs and facilitated driving lessons.
- Transportation was frequently cited as a key barrier to Trainees' skill development.





“ I’ve definitely enjoyed making connections and seeing the impact of that diversity in place. It was just me and one other person from a different organisation that were the only people of colour [at our organisations]. Knowing that there’s other people going through the same experience has definitely been quite valuable to me.

– Trainee

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Peer support:

- Establishing peer support networks among Trainees helped create a sense of community and shared experience.
- These networks provided emotional support, facilitated knowledge sharing, and helped Trainees feel less isolated.

Understanding diverse needs:

- New to Nature’s wrap-around support system was effective in supporting a wide range of Trainees.
- However, individuals from underrepresented backgrounds disproportionately reported that they would have liked to receive additional support. This was particularly true for those belonging to multiple priority groups.
- Trainees most frequently sought additional opportunities to meet up with their peers and/or greater consistency in the support received from their Employment Coach.
- The exchange with peers was important for those that did not feel represented within their Host Organisations.
- Future provision should continue to understand Trainees’ diverse needs and adjust the support offer to address those needs.

