THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST PARTNERSHIP REPORT

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST REPORT FOR THE NINEVEH CHARITABLE TRUST 2022/23





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THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST ACROSS THE UK

'Gen-Z' are proving they are anything but the vulnerable and fickle¹ generation that they are regularly characterised as in the media. Over the past three years, they have adapted and dealt with disruption to their lives on a scale that a generation has not been required to do for decades. Despite having *survived* the pandemic, it is clear from our own research²,³,⁴ and other reports, young people's wellbeing has not recovered and many still struggle to find a way forward. Their mental health, their confidence, happiness and sense of belonging continue to be further negatively compounded by challenges of the digital world in which they live, the continuing national and global issues such as the cost-of-living crisis⁵ and environmental and humanitarian issues⁶,७. These all add to the uncertainty and volatility of the world in which our young people are growing up.

THE NEED FOR OUR WORK

Young people's confidence, resilience and aspirations are continuing to be challenged against a global backdrop of uncertainty, inequality and imbalance.

The past three years of missed opportunity, disruption and insecurity to young people's lives as result of the pandemic remain as scars on their social and emotional development and behaviours.

Uncertainty is very much being felt on a local level by our young people; families are



struggling financially to heat their homes, buy clothes and put food on the table due to rising costs. Young people too feel anxious about finances⁵, their job prospects⁸, and are unhappy about their education⁹. All this, on top of already fractured social relationships, low levels of happiness and limited physical activity^{10,11,12} is resulting in young people struggling to reintegrate socially, to re-gain their confidence, their motivation and ambition.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE AND HAPPINESS

Confidence, our sense of purpose and how we feel life is going all contribute to our general happiness and are vital elements of our wellbeing. Confidence impacts an individual's drive and motivation together with their perception of what they believe they are capable of.



Young people's confidence and happiness remains lowⁱ with finances, emotional health, school⁵, a fear of failure, worries about their relationships, their appearance, physical health, and their futures all identified as key drivers⁹.

Young people's confidence and happiness remains lower than a peak recorded in 2012⁵

A *give up* or *opt out* culture has developed amongst young people which teachers believe has been brought about by an increasingly **technology-driven existence** combined with the fact that young people have **missed out on opportunities** to experience new places, meet new people and to experience and overcome challenge during recent years.



Our current S2s missed out on interhouse competitions and missed out on sport. You know, all the extra activities that we did, where you do get a chance to see each other out with the classroom, and interact, and compete, and support, and be part of a team. They've missed out on that, and those are the gaps that we need to try and fill.

Jim Purdie, Headteacher,
Hazlehead Academy, Aberdeen

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Young women in particular are more likely to lack self-confidence, feel anxious about finances, have lower aspirations for the future⁵ and generally experience poorer mental health and wellbeing outcomes⁷ than their male peers.

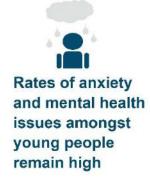
The Princes Trust NatWest Index 2023 highlight young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) as reporting the lowest overall confidence and happiness score – the most significant drop seen in recent years, along with young people from



Young people who are NEET or from ethnic minority backgrounds, have particularly low levels of confidence and happiness ethnic minority backgrounds who reported lower confidence and happiness scores than their white peers⁵. The motivation and concentration in the classroom of young people eligible for free school meals has also been highlighted as a concern⁷. The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis are reported to have particularly negatively impacted white, working class, males, further widening the gap between them and their more affluent peers, especially in terms of their engagement in school and university participation¹³.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH AND ANXIETY

There is a continuing decline in the mental health and wellbeing of young people. Rates of anxiety and mental health issues amongst young people remain high⁷ which in turn, is impacting on their attendance at school, their ability to focus in lessons and their motivation¹⁴. Parental mental health issues are adding to the pressure felt by young people who have found themselves increasingly taking on caring roles^{15,16}.



The amount of young people either with mental health difficulties or voicing their mental health challenges is definitely increasing. [...] There are also a lot of mental health difficulties amongst our parent and carer community, so young

mental health difficulties amongst our parent and carer community, so young people trying to support that – the level of young carers are higher than it has previously been.

Caroline Penny, Guidance Teacher, Braeview Academy, Dundee

Attendance rates is one of the biggest challenges currently facing schools, absences are at the highest they have been for yearsⁱⁱ with student **anxiety** cited as one of the contributing factors¹⁷. Teachers describe a **change in attitudes** to education amongst young people and their parents, which is adding further challenge when trying to re-engage young people in school.

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The social and emotional needs of young people against the backdrop of a challenging financial climate adds considerable additional demands on schools and teachers. Headteachers describe having to channel additional resource to be able to support families who are struggling with food and clothing together with additional subsidies to fund social intervention

We've had to start running things like breakfast clubs and stuff at school now because we are aware that some of our students are coming in and the only meal they'll potentially have for the day is their school dinner.

Chris Bede, Head of Outdoor Learning, Macmillan Academy, Middlesbrough 77

teams and blended learning packages for those students who are unable to attend full time⁷.

ii In the week commencing 6th February 2023 absence rates were reported as 7.4% - compared to 4.9% in Autumn 2019 before the pandemic hit.

THE NINEVEH CHARITABLE TRUST AND THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

Despite repeated calls for inclusion and tolerance and being one of the most well-connected generations, the instances of young people **reporting loneliness** have been on the rise⁷, especially amongst 17-22 year olds who are transitioning into the world of work⁵. Young people report



feeling excluded from society due to a lack of money⁵ and those eligible for free school meals are less likely to feel safe and a sense of belonging at school than their more affluent peers.

As was the case through the pandemic, social contact for young people was and still is largely online and as a result have **limited opportunities for face to face contact, play** and socialisation to establish deep, trusting bonds. As a result, teachers continue to report a **high dependency for adult intervention**, increased **immaturity**, a **lack of self-awareness** and **emotional fragility** in their classrooms.



Because they've missed out on so many experiences, [they don't know] how to handle situations properly. Little disagreements take on a whole set of other arms and legs. Whereas in the past, they were little things that just were normal, and they got used to how they all interact.

Jim Purdie, Headteacher, Hazlehead Academy, Aberdeen

Lack of contrast and time away from their normal surroundings and social situations remains a legacy from the pandemic that teachers believe is stifling young people's aspirations, confidence and sense of capability. There is a reluctance and anxiety amongst young people and their parents to travel away from home and take part in opportunities outside of the norm. These anxieties are compounded by families' financial constraints in the current crisis, particularly so for young people with additional educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premiumⁱⁱⁱ and free school meals.

iii Pupil premium is additional funding provided to state-funded schools in England. The aim is to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES US TO WORK WITH

In 2022, The Outward Bound Trust was able to partner with 238 schools and youth clubs to provide 18,795 young people from across the UK with an experience that helped shape their future aspirations, no matter what their circumstance. 68% of these young people received bursary funding.

Your generous support of £4,550 from The Nineveh Charitable Trust supported us in our mission to help inspire young people to believe they can achieve more than they ever thought possible.

Many of the young people we work with come from deprived urban and rural communities from across the UK who would typically have few opportunities to experience life outside their normal social and physical surroundings, to be challenged, develop a sense of capability - social and emotional skills which strengthen their wellbeing and increase the chance of them flourishing in life.

While young people from a variety of different socio-economic backgrounds are facing significant financial, social and emotional challenges in the current climate, the barriers for young people from BAME backgrounds, white working-class males, those in receipt of free school meals or pupil premium to achieving their potential are particularly amplified. Teachers have identified an urgent need for these pupils to have experiences that will help develop skills to support their engagement in learning, their social skills and their low self-confidence and aspirations.

THE OUTWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE

The wild, natural environments at Outward Bound provide an awe-inspiring backdrop to a young person's course.

Away from technology, their familiar home and school environments, young people are given time and space away from the constraints, pressures and social labels that often add to a young person's anxiety and low confidence. Experiences are carefully tailored to the young people's specific needs and school contexts, ensuring the degree of challenge is pitched at exactly the right level in a safe and supportive environment.



Often starting their course with a jog & dipiv or working together to get their team safely over a high wall, the young people's confidence and resilience steadily begins to grow and so too does the level of adventure and challenge to include activities such as canoeing, rock climbing or a gorge scramble. Their course often culminates in an overnight expedition where they sleep out under the stars or stay in bothies.

Away from home, young people are encouraged to take **responsibility** for their belongings, kit and for each other. They make **decisions** about their food, routes and equipment, and **living alongside new people**, they learn about the **value of support** and **deepen connections** with their peers and teachers.

As a result of the immersion in new environments, attempting and completing activities they thought they weren't capable of, all the while learning from mistakes, young people return home with a new sense of pride and awareness of their abilities. Having learnt to support one another, they feel a stronger sense of belonging and value amongst their peers, they feel accepted for who they are and less likely to feel judged or isolated. Coupled with their increased confidence and the knowledge that they are able to face and overcome future difficulties, young people are more likely to engage at school, seek out and take on new opportunities, broadening their aspirations and sense of what is possible.

CASE STUDIES

Working closely with schools, we ensure we have a full understanding of the specific needs and contexts of the young people who come on our courses. Each experience is carefully tailored to ensure the degree of challenge and achievement is pitched at the appropriate level required to enable personal growth and development.

The following two case studies highlight the experiences that can be had at Outward Bound and the range of outcomes that can be gained from our courses.



iv A short run, followed by a dip in the estuary, lake or loch.

DEVELOPING RESILIENCE IN STUDENTS FROM HAZLEHEAD ACADEMY IN ABERDEEN

Hazlehead Academy and The Outward Bound Trust, 30th January-3rd February 2023, Loch Eil

Hazlehead Academy is an urban, comprehensive secondary school in Aberdeen city. The pupils come from a large, diverse catchment to the west of the city with around a 50:50 representation from the upper and lower deciles of the Scottish indices of multiple deprivation. Around 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals and 20% of the pupil population are from a minority ethnic background¹⁸.

In January 2023, 92 S2 pupils attended a 5-day course at our Loch Eil centre to help build their confidence, sense of capability and to develop their **emotional and physical resilience**.

The S2 group had missed out on a residential experience during primary school due to the pandemic. Their week was designed to prepare the pupils for the challenges they will inevitably face in their lives; to challenge and demonstrate to the pupils what they can gain when they step outside of their comfort zones and take up opportunities to try new things.

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For most, [life is] a bit of a rollercoaster, and there are times when things are difficult. When that happens, the conversation you often find yourself having is the fact that this is part of life. When you've been through something that was difficult once, the next time you find something challenging, it's not quite as scary as it maybe was the last time round.

Jim Purdie, Headteacher, Hazlehead Academy, Aberdeen



The experiences at Outward Bound provided the pupils with real life challenge and discomfort in a safe environment. Back at school, they are able to reflect back on how they worked through them and employ similar strategies and mindsets when they are facing difficulties with exams or schoolwork.

As a result of their course:







93% reported an increased score for resilience (N=84)

84% reported an increased score for **emotional control** (N=80)

81% reported an increased score for **flexible thinking** (N=84)

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN STUDENTS AT MACMILLAN ACADEMY, MIDDLESBROUGH

Macmillan Academy and The Outward Bound Trust 16th-20th January 2023, Ullswater

Macmillan Academy is a comprehensive in Middlesborough – a city in the 1% most deprived areas of the country, around 30% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals¹⁹ and are in receipt of pupil premium funding – above the 19.7% for the UK²⁰.

Young people have existed very much with the familiar – socially, physically, mentally and geographically. [...] in the last three years, there've been very close friendship groups [and students have] not being overly willing to extend those.

Chris Bede, Head of outdoor learning, Macmillan Academy, Middlesbrough

the limited opportunities
young people have had to
see life outside of their
immediate social circles and
mix with different people over
the past three years and the
negative impact this is
having on their social
confidence.

Staff at the school recognise

Whilst at Outward Bound, the young people lived alongside each other. Activities such as rock climbing, gorge scrambling and raft building provided them with tangible examples

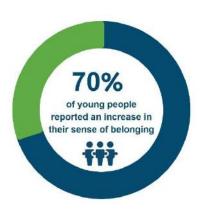
of where they had to communicate, listen and support one another to reach their goal - experiences not always possible in a classroom setting.

This is one of the things I like about Outward Bound, you can talk about the value of team working as much as you like but suddenly, they're standing at the bottom of Angle Tarn Gorge looking up and thinking, "Well how are we going to get up that? We're going to have to work together to do this." It very much puts these skills into the context that they have to be used in.

Over the course, they do learn to work with people. They do begin to understand that when they go out into life, they might not like somebody, but they still have to work with them [and] there's got to be that element of tolerance.

Chris Bede, Head of outdoor learning, Macmillan Academy, Middlesbrough





On return to school, 70% of the young people^v reported an increase in their **sense of belonging**. There have been positive changes in the young people's behaviours towards one another; young people who wouldn't talk to each other are now **having conversations**, and there has been a general improvement in their **emotional maturity** as a result.



What we would hope to see is that they are more independent, they are more able to take on challenges, that they are much more resilient, that they don't give up, they do help each other, and they are collaborative.

Chris Bede, Head of outdoor learning, Macmillan Academy, Middlesbrough

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[∨] N=10

OUTWARD BOUND LEARNING OUTCOMES

By assessing the attitudes, skills and behaviours that young people develop during their course, we are able to understand the impact that Outward Bound courses have on improving the life chances of young people in the UK.

To evaluate the impact of our courses, young people and their teachers complete questionnaires, before, after and several months on from their course. We combine these with interviews to gain a deeper insight into the value an Outward Bound experience has on the lives of young people and how they are able to use their learning in their home lives, as they progress through their education and into the world of work. The following data and insights are taken from a range of courses for young people from across the UK^{vi}.

DEVELOPING RESILIENCE AND THE ABILITY TO COPE WITH UNCERTAINTY AND CHANGE

Without the skills and attitudes to be able to adapt and respond to discomfort and change, a young person growing up in today's uncertain and volatile world is likely to experience anxiety, stress and feel easily overwhelmed. If these feelings are left to continue long-term, it can negatively impact aspirations, educational and outcomes and overall wellbeing.

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I have gained self-awareness of the fact that no matter how tough life gets, I can push through and achieve the task.

David, XP School Doncaster,

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At Outward Bound, young people are given the opportunity to **face and overcome challenges** in a **safe**, **supportive space**. Through tangible experiences and by employing a positive mindset, young people become aware of what they are capable of, and the

possibilities open to them. They leave Outward Bound knowing they can cope in emotionally and physically challenging situations (Figure 1) and have a new willingness and a more flexible attitude to challenge, risk and discomfort.

92%

of young people reported an increased score for resilience at the end of their course (N=108)

vi Young people's names have been changed to protect their anonymity, school staff names and job titles have been quoted where we have permission to do so.



Figure 1: Young people leave their course knowing they can cope in emotionally and physically challenging situations. Participants average scores before and after their course. N=110 for Confidence and Flexible thinking and N= 108 for Emotional control. Responses were indicated on an 8-point scale from 1 = False, not like me to 8 = True, like me. Participants were asked to give a retrospective pre-course rating.

46

It's being able to have these conversations in the classroom like 'remember that time that you thought you weren't going to be able to do it, but we did anyway', and then you can map it onto what that means for revising for a maths test.

Because it's a sense of 'OK, well, it was difficult, but we showed determination, we persevered, and we proved we could do it. So, we can definitely do it again here'.

Anna Bartlett, Head of House and Associate Senior Leader, Mulberry Academy, London



Accompanying school staff observed improvements in young people's awareness of their own capabilities and ability to persevere through challenges.

94%



of accompanying staff agreed that the young people will be more likely to persevere when they encounter difficulties in the future, as a result of the course (N=35).

100% 2

of accompanying staff agreed that during their course, the young people realised they were capable of more than they had thought (N=35).

On each course, the **level of challenge is tailored** to the needs and abilities of the young people to ensure personal growth and development. On our primary-school courses, young people are given the opportunity to build strong foundations in social skills, independence and confidence, meaning that as they progress through their lives, they will be less likely to fear new situations or making mistakes (Figure 2).

Primary school aged participants reported they developed the ability to persevere through challenges and complete things they thought they would not be able to do. In doing so, they learned more about themselves and their capabilities.

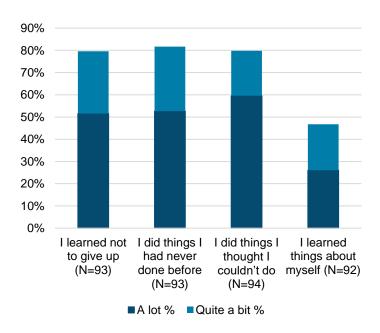


Figure 2: Primary aged young people developed their resilience at Outward Bound. The percentage of participants in agreeing 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' with the statements at the end of their course. Responses were recorded on a 4-point scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'a lot'.



Accompanying primary school staff^{vii} agreed that during the course, the young developed an increased sense of what they were capable of, they learnt to work together to solve problems and stick at things they found difficult, and they learnt how to manage their emotions when doing so.

90%



Young people learnt to stick at tasks they find difficult

100%



The young people learnt that they can achieve more than they think

100%



The young people learnt to solve problems as a group

100%



The young people learnt to manage their behaviour and emotions

DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE, CONFIDENCE AND SELF-BELIEF

Many young people continue to lack the confidence and independence they need to feel purpose and in control of their lives. Confidence and sense of capability are key to a young person feeling happy, a sense of direction and being able to navigate their own pathway through what can often seem like a confusing and noisy world.

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I overcame my fear of not being good enough and failing. The people I was in a group with helped me believe in myself and reassured me.

[Afterwards], I felt happy and proud of myself because some of things I've done, I thought I would never do.

Jana, 15, Flixton Girls' School, Manchester



Being away from their familiar home environments, having fun, working physically hard to solve problems and overcome challenges requires young people to step outside their comfort zones. It provides a unique sense of adventure and a chance to show different skills and behaviours. As they learn about and develop a connection with the natural surroundings it brings alive concepts that they may have only seen in books or on screens, it opens up conversations, and their understanding of the world around them grows.

vii N=10

Accompanying teachers^{viii} agreed that young people learned to look after themselves and learnt new things about themselves during their course (Figure 3).

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It's important that they can actually see what they can achieve. We can do it in school but to a point they still feel quite comforted and safe because they're used to us, and they know the environment. Taking them somewhere completely different it gets them out their comfort zones and they realise they've got no choice - the only way to get out of it is to support each other and to keep going.

Jessica Gibson, Assistant Principle and School SENCO, Granville Academy, Derbyshire 77



This increased awareness and understanding, combined with opportunities to make **decisions** and take **responsibility** builds **independence** and confidence.

Young people return home with a new sense of what they are capable of which translates back in school in increased **engagement**, **motivation** and **enthusiasm** for learning.

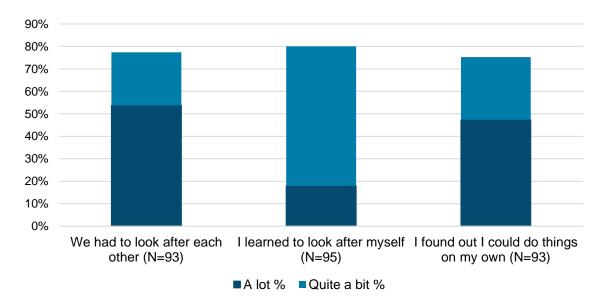


Figure 3: Primary aged young people developed their independence at Outward Bound. The percentage of participants in agreeing 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' with the statements at the end of their course. Responses were recorded on a 4-point scale ranging from 'not at all' to 'a lot'.

viii N=10

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS AND SOCIAL SKILLS

Shared experiences, living together and completing challenges at Outward Bound provides young people with an opportunity to repair fractured bonds and deepen relationships and connections. It gives individuals the opportunity to show different skills and sides to their

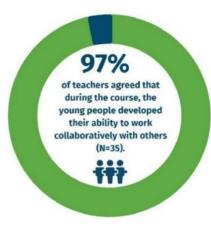
personalities. This combined with the safe, reassuring environment, encourages young people to be honest about their fears and difficulties. Throughout the week, they

74%

become more aware of each others' needs and they

learn the value of improved confidence in their interpersonal skills providing support.

of young people reported improved confidence in their interpersonal skills at the end of their course



N=302

Young people return to the classroom with an increased social confidence (Figure 4), sense of belonging and an increased understanding, and acceptance of others.

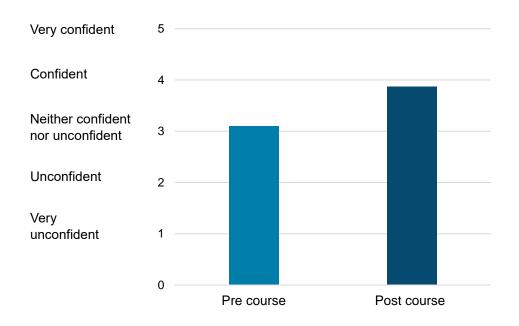


Figure 4: Young people reported an improved confidence in their interpersonal skills.
Confidence was indicated using a five-point scale where a higher score indicates a higher level of confidence (N= 302).



There is definitely a sense of camaraderie, and friendship and belonging to that group. But also, you know, in a wider sense, when they get back to school, there's definitely an identification with going to Outward Bound that is really positive.

Caroline Elliot Janvier, Director of Learning for Year 7 and Head of PSHCE, St Saviour's & St Olave's School, Southeast London

LOOKING FORWARD

As a generation of young people across the UK continue to face a series of challenges to their education, finances and their social and emotional skills, the relevance and need for the Outward Bound Trust to support their wellbeing and resilience is greater than ever. With over 80 years of experience in developing vital life skills that young people need to thrive in an uncertain world; our mission and core values combined with the skills of our instructors against the backdrop of the inspiring, wild locations in which we operate mean we are able to deliver quality adventurous, residential experiences that will create a positive, long-lasting impact on young people's aspirations and life chances.

We are now halfway through our Outward Rebound strategy²¹, which focuses on returning to our pre-pandemic scale of operation, running high quality residential courses at our six centres. With a new Chief Executive leading the charity from March 2023 and a surge forward in our transformative trust-wide digital project, we are more determined than ever to transform the lives of the young people we work with for the better.

The Outward Bound Trust would like to thank the school staff and young people that made this report possible by being involved in our research.



MESSAGES FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR TEACHERS

The young people and their teachers who were able to experience Outward Bound as a result of your funding wished to express their thanks:

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Thank you. This was an amazing opportunity for our pupils. They will go back to school feeling much more confident and ready to take on new challenges.

Laura Cairns, Teacher, Braeview School

For some of our young people this might be the first, and only, time some of them experience adventure sports, beautiful environments, being fed well and be encouraged and praised in a safe environment. Thank you.

Claire Macdonald, Teaching support, Hazlehead Academy

It's an incredible experience for young people and will have a lasting impact on their future development. Thank you!

Sophie Harrowes, Head of Careers, Hammersmith Academy

We have had an amazing experience – the weather, views and challenges have allowed students to develop and grow as young adults. Taking them far beyond their normal domain of life has brought about growth and confidence.

Mrs Gibson, Assistant Headteacher, Tanfield School

Outward Bound is a very good thing for teenagers, including myself. It gives us many new attributes like resilience, teamwork and leadership. **Adeel, 13**

Thank you for this opportunity. I will never forget this week. Joshua, 12

Thank you. This was the best week of my life. Samuel, 13

Thank you for your funding. My confidence has grown a lot and I'm grateful for this opportunity. Millie, 13

Thank you so much. You made me rethink and change my views of myself this week. Omar, 13

Thank you so much. You have helped me so much and have allowed me to experience different situations. Jamal, 13

I am very grateful for this experience. I have connected with people I never thought I would. Imani, 13

Thank you for giving me this opportunity. It has made me not to be shy and be more confident and not to give up in hard times. I really do appreciate it. Alicia, 13

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FURTHER INFORMATION

The Outward Bound Trust's Official Website

Our official website contains a wealth of information about The Trust, including information on our centres, the courses we offer, staff members and our upcoming events, as well as our latest news and additional case studies.

www.outwardbound.org.uk

The Outward Bound Trust Alumni

At the end of 2009, we launched a new initiative called 'Generations' to reach out to the million+ individuals who have participated in an Outward Bound course since the creation of the Aberdovey Outward Bound Sea School in 1941. The stories that over 400 alumni have shared with us suggest that an Outward Bound course can have a positive and enduring influence on their lives.

https://www.outwardbound.org.uk/ob-alumni

Patron's Company Members

A number of businesses and individuals support The Trust on a regular basis.

https://www.outwardbound.org.uk/support-the-outward-bound-trust

The Outward Bound Trust's Social Impact Report 2017

https://www.outwardbound.org.uk/our-impact/social-impact-report/

The Outward Bound Trust's Latest Annual Report and Accounts

https://www.outwardbound.org.uk/assets/pdf/uploads/Trust%20general/annual-report.pdf

The Outward Bound Trust Images on flickr

This site is full of photos from courses and of the stunning landscapes in which our centres are based.

www.flickr.com/photos/outwardbounduk/sets/



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THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST CENTRES

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