

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST ACROSS THE UK

OCTOBER 2017 – SEPTEMBER 2018



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THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST

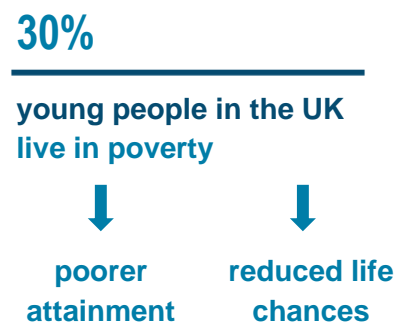
THE NEED FOR OUR WORK IN THE UK

We are increasingly concerned by the growing number of risks to young people's life chances; risks which reduce the likelihood that they will have a healthy, happy childhood, succeed at school and secure a fulfilling adulthood. The **attainment gap** between pupils from richer and poorer backgrounds continues, **mental health concerns** amongst young people are on the rise, and they report increasing levels of **loneliness**, despite being one of the best connected generations. Combined, these trends predict a worrying future for young people growing up in the UK. **A future we believe can be different.**

Many of the factors known to predict young people's life chances are beyond their control. Growing up in poverty is one of the most significant; affecting 30% of children in the UK¹ and severely reducing their chances of **doing well at school**², making a positive **transition into the workplace**³ and having **good overall health and well-being**⁴. Not only this, but *where* they grow up is closely linked with their chances of getting on in life, with ex-industrial areas, isolated and rural communities and deprived inner-cities offering far poorer prospects for disadvantaged young people to progress in life⁵. There are more deeply rooted barriers to education and employment for these young people than previously understood⁶, and long-term investment is required to break the cycle of underachievement for good.

Other factors have a strong influence on young people's quality of life, health and well-being. Notably, their changing lifestyles – with computer games, smartphones and a host of other technologies increasing the amount of time they spend in isolation from others and reducing the amount of time spent active and outdoors.

This has coincided with a rise in mental health issues amongst young people of all backgrounds, irrespective of their personal circumstances. A recent study⁷ shows they are becoming more stressed and anxious than previously recorded, with nearly **two thirds** reporting that they “always or “often” **feel stressed** and **just over half** reporting that they “always” or “often” **feel anxious**. Over a third **do not feel they have control over their lives**, despite having strong ambitions for the future.



It is essential that effective strategies are found to counteract these trends and that there is continued investment to enable all young people to flourish in life.

Equipping young people with essential social and emotional skills means that they can cope with **whatever life throws at them, take charge of their lives, and live life to the full. This is what we exist to do.**



THE YOUNG PEOPLE YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES US TO WORK WITH

Through the funding we received from our many donors and funders, we were able to provide **23,379 young people from across the UK** with an experience that helped shape their future aspirations, no matter what their circumstances.

Partnering with **410 schools and colleges**, we were able to reach young people from across the UK, many of whom are living in deprived inner-city and urban communities in **London**, the **Midlands**, the **North-West** and the **North-East of England** where opportunities to experience the outdoors are severely limited. We were also able to work with young people living in rural communities such as **Cornwall, Cumbria** and **Yorkshire** where social isolation is more prevalent and access to services and job opportunities can be more limited.

Many receive **Free Schools Meals** or **Pupil Premium funding**, which means that, without targeted support to access experiences like Outward Bound, it is significantly less likely that they will achieve the qualifications and develop the skills that will enable them to flourish in life and secure and sustain positive employment.

These pupils are typically selected by their teachers because they experience **low self-confidence** and self-esteem, feelings of **stress or anxiety, poor engagement in their learning** or **poor social skills**. These worries and concerns have been identified by their teachers as factors that hold them back from achieving their potential in school and throughout their lives.

In 2017-18 we worked with **23,379 young people** from across the UK. **77% received a bursary.**

THE OUTWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE

Outward Bound gives these young people a **different experience of challenge and achievement** – one they may never have felt before. It pushes them to the limits of what they think they're capable of and shows them that there is more in them than they think.

Their course takes place in **wilderness environments** that they may never have experienced before, nor even imagined existed. Away from school, where many feel **afraid of failure** and an overwhelming **pressure to succeed**, they're given the opportunity to go on a **real adventure**, to **take risks** and to **learn from their mistakes**.



The challenges start small – jumping into the sea or working together to scale a high wall. Gradually, they increase to include canoeing, kayaking or rock climbing adventures, and culminate in an overnight expedition where they sleep out in tents or cabins. They're trusted to take responsibility for their kit and equipment, to think as a team rather than individuals, and to live alongside others who they have never met before.

Day by day, their confidence increases and where they would previously have given up in the face of something they're afraid to do or that seems too hard, **they realise that they can go further**. By the end of the week, they've **discovered qualities they didn't know they had** – qualities they can be proud of and that can help them to live life more fully, especially during periods of difficulty. Instead of feeling **isolated** and afraid of **being judged by others**, they feel **valued and accepted for who they are**, and are often surprised to learn that they can make friends, especially with people they thought were different to them.



In the following sections of this report, we present three examples of work we are able to do with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK as a result of the funding we receive. Each example describes a partnership with a school where we work with young people at a different stage of their education and for a different purpose. We then present broader evidence of the impact of Outward Bound.



COURSE CASE STUDIES

STAMFORD WELLAND ACADEMY, LINCOLNSHIRE

Course for Year 7 students, 28th January – 1st February 2019, Aberdovey

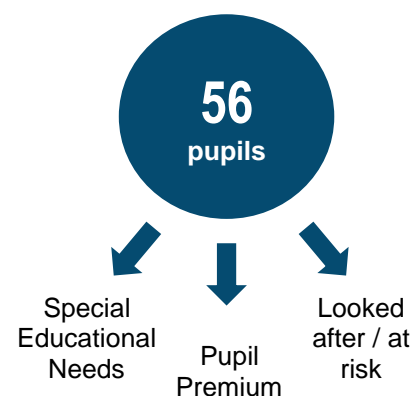
Stamford Welland Academy is a **small rural secondary school** set in the middle of a council estate in the small town of Welland. A higher than average proportion of students have **special educational needs** and come from **disadvantaged family backgrounds**, both of which have a significant effect on their **educational achievement** and **future prospects**.

The school has worked with Outward Bound for nine years to help tackle these issues by providing the most vulnerable students with an experience of adventure and challenge they would otherwise not be able to access. In 2019, **56 Year 7 students** attended, many of whom have specific needs: some have **special educational needs**, some are in receipt of **Pupil Premium funding**, whilst others are **looked after children** or have been identified as **'at risk'**.

The aim of the course was to help ensure these students make an effective transition into secondary school by developing both their **self-confidence** and specific **transition skills** such as **resilience**, **collaboration** and **communication**.

The students tried many new activities which challenged their beliefs about what they were capable of, including jumping into the sea and canoeing along the estuary. One of the most difficult parts of the course was hiking through snow and camping out overnight, which each student managed to achieve, either by sleeping in a tent or a cabin. The main learning outcome was **increased confidence to face and overcome challenges**, which is reflected in their feedback.

➔ 41% of students receive **Pupil Premium funding** and progress in learning is **well below average**.



➔ *"I learnt that **even when I am struggling at something, I need to stick at it and never give up.**"*
Brandon, 11

➔ *"I learnt that when things go wrong you need to **pick yourself up and stay strong.**"*
Mitchell, 11

IMPROVED CONFIDENCE IN LEARNING



93%

achieved things at Outward Bound they never thought they could do



91%

were more motivated to set learning goals that will challenge them

BEDE ACADEMY, NORTHUMBERLAND

Course for Year 8 & 9 students, 18th – 22nd March 2019, Ullswater

Bede Academy is a very large secondary school, also based on a council estate, in the town of Blyth, Northumberland. Blyth is the **most deprived community in Northumberland** and falls into the **most deprived 2% of communities in England**⁸. A high number of residents have **no qualifications**⁹, the percentage of people who are unemployed is above the UK average¹⁰ and there is a **high percentage of single parent families**¹¹.

The school has also worked with Outward Bound for nine years to help break the cycle of low aspiration and underachievement in students. The course, targeted at students in **Years 8 & 9**, forms part of the “Bede Award”, which is a school-wide initiative to develop young leaders who have the skills needed to make a difference in their school and wider community.

47 students attended in 2019 and were encouraged to believe “**I can be a leader**” throughout the week. Learning was focused around **leadership styles**, **responsibility** and **giving and receiving feedback** through challenges that included gorge walking, rowing and an overnight expedition.

Strong outcomes were reported by the students around different ways to work with, support and lead others, as is reflected in their feedback below.

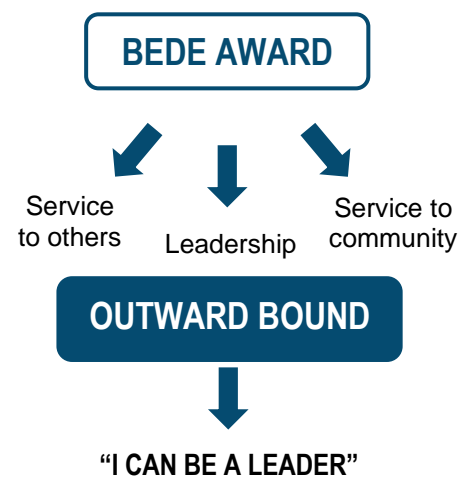
“People may have a range of ideas but we all have to agree on something that works for everyone.” **Ann, 13**

“I have learnt that being a team is more than just achieving the end goal, but getting to know one another and having fun along the way.” **Katie, 14**

“Everyone has a different mindset and you have to be able to work with those different mindsets to be able to get the job done.” **Sasha, 13**

“I’ve learnt that you need to give people more than one chance to show who they really are. If you don’t like someone, still help them.” **Imogen, 13**

➔ Deprived **post-industrial community** in Northumberland with a history of **high unemployment & low aspiration**.



IMPROVED INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



81% were more confident about **working with others as a team**

74%

were more confident about **putting forward their ideas** and **being the leader of a team**



MULBERRY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS, EAST LONDON

Course for Year 8 students, 1st – 15th April 2019, Aberdovey

Mulberry School for Girls serves a **very diverse community in East London** with **high levels of deprivation**. Nearly all students are of **Bangladeshi heritage**, while a very small minority are from other backgrounds, including **White British, Pakistani** and **African**.

Close to **two thirds of the student population are eligible for pupil premium funding** and 51% of students are on Free School Meals – significantly higher than the national average. The school has worked with Outward Bound for 5 years to provide all students in Years 8 & 9 with an experience that broadens their horizons beyond the deprived urban community in which they live.

In 2019, **137 Year 8 students** attended, the majority of whom have had **very limited exposure to the outdoors**, have led **sheltered lives** and **lack confidence**. The course was presented very much as an **introduction to the outdoors** and aimed to build their **enthusiasm for challenge**. Instructors carefully selected experiences that would engage and inspire them, for instance exploring the beach, short hill walks, campfires and orienteering worked well at the start of the week to build their interest in the course. As they became more comfortable with getting muddy and wet, instructors introduced them to bigger adventures where they tried gorge walking, scrambling and more challenging hill walks – all of which helped them to **overcome fears** and **build their confidence**.

➔ **61% of students receive Pupil Premium funding**, the local area is significantly **income deprived** and there are **high levels of crime**.

INCREASED OPENNESS TO CHALLENGE & THE OUTDOORS



80%

improved their confidence to set themselves challenges

50%

were more motivated to spend time outdoors



"I learnt that doing challenges you're very scared of isn't as terrifying when you actually try to attempt them." **Lailah, 12**

"I learnt that I can go into water without getting too scared." **Maheera, 13**

"I learnt that I can live without my phone for most of the day." **Jodie, 12**

"I've learnt that working together with people and listening to each other has helped prepare me for life." **Jalilah, 13**

Pupils from Mulberry School for Girls brave the adverse weather during a challenging day hike in Snowdonia



OUTWARD BOUND LEARNING OUTCOMES & LASTING IMPACT

We continue to evaluate the contribution Outward Bound courses make to improving the life chances of young people in the UK. We do this by assessing the **attitudes**, **skills** and **behaviours** that young people develop during their course and how these influence and support them as they progress in life – through school, when they enter employment and in living life to the full.

The evaluations we carry out combine self-assessment measures with individual and group interviews. Questionnaires – completed by young people before, after and several months on from their course – enable us to measure course outcomes. Interviews help us to understand what young people value the most about their experience. Surveys are also completed by teachers who accompany their students to give an objective view of the outcomes achieved both during the course and back in school.

The evidence presented below is divided into two main sections – one that shows outcomes achieved in the short-term at the end of our courses, and one that outlines our growing evidence base for lasting impact.

EVIDENCE OF LEARNING OUTCOMES AT END OF COURSE¹²

Improved interpersonal skills

Every aspect of an Outward Bound course involves an element of **teamwork, relationship building, communication** and **respect for others**, as young people tackle each challenge as a team and live alongside others – sharing dormitories, tents and mealtimes throughout the week. For many, the experience of meeting people from different schools and sharing their ideas is one of the most daunting parts of the course, but also one of the most rewarding as they discover that they have **more in common** and **more to contribute** than they realise.

A recent evaluation showed that **92% of young people improved their interpersonal skills by the end of their course**. They were most likely to develop their confidence to **meet new people, communicate their ideas, work with others in a team** and to **lead others**.

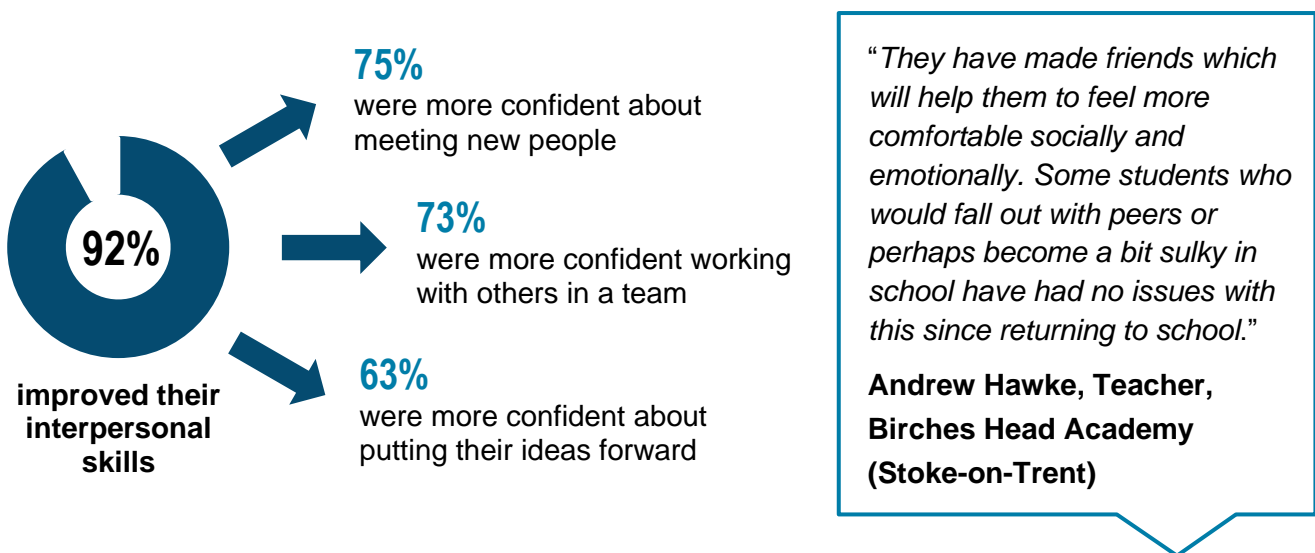
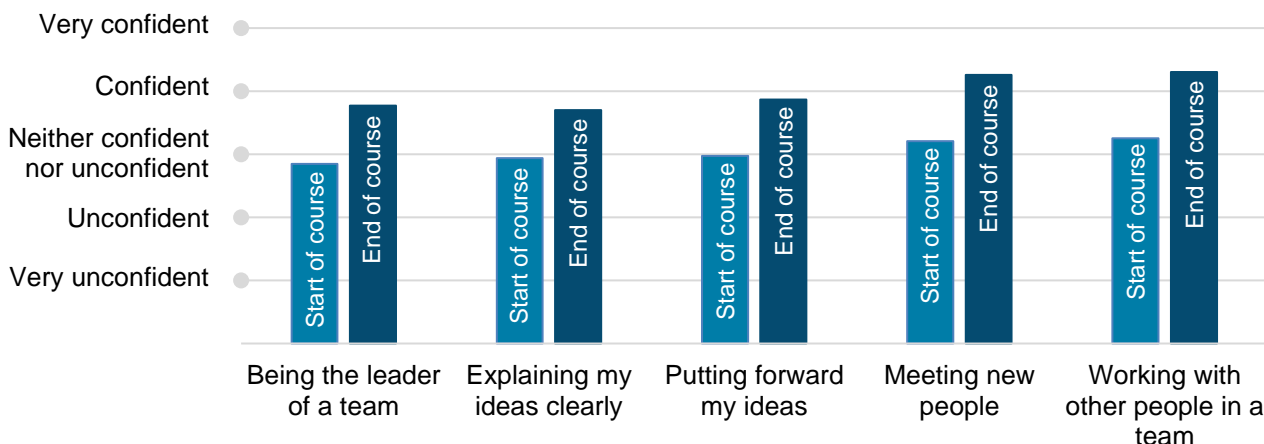


Figure 1 below shows the students’ average level of confidence in relation to each situation at the start and end of their course, indicating the extent to which they improved in each area.

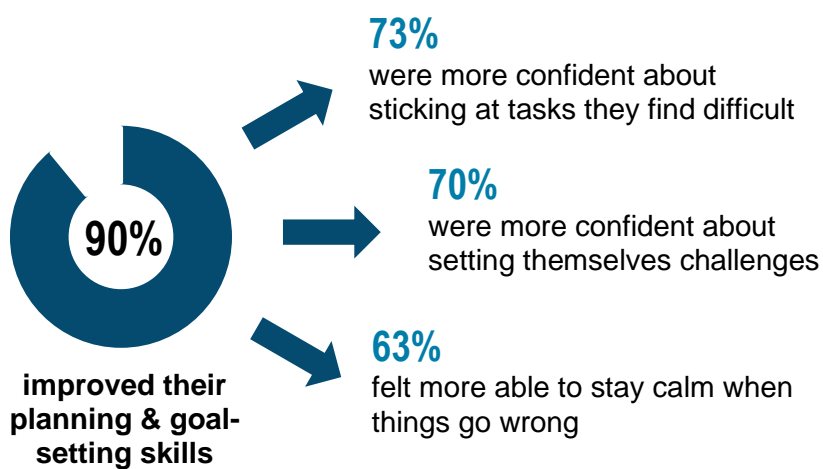
Figure 1: Students’ self-assessments at the start and end of their course



Improved planning, goal-setting and determination

Throughout each stage of their course, young people are set challenges that they must overcome as a group, using effective **planning** and **problem-solving** as well as **determination** and **resilience**. Through a process called “plan, do, review”, they learn to approach tasks methodically and to reflect on both their **successes** and **failures**, identifying ways to improve for next time. As a result, they become more confident about **facing and overcoming challenges, setting and achieving goals** and **coping with difficulty**.

A recent evaluation showed that **90% of students improved an aspect of their thinking and planning skills**. They were most likely to improve their **confidence to stick at things they find difficult** and **set challenging goals for themselves**.

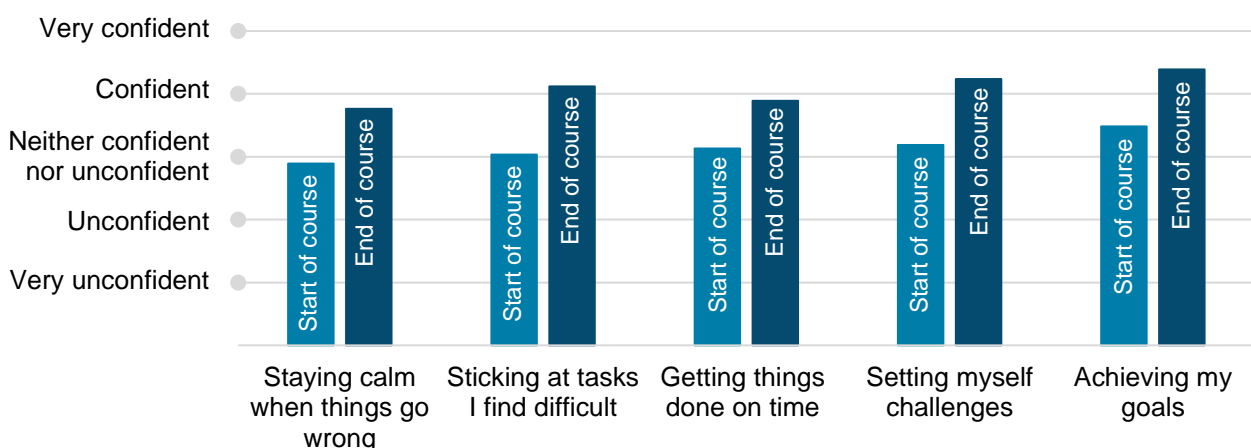


“The students were really proud of themselves after the trip. Confidence was definitely greatly improved. Motivation was at a high and the students were really keen to speak to us about their next steps back at school and how they felt able to really challenge themselves to do things they never thought possible.”

Kirrie Wallace, Head of Computer Science, Skinners' Kent Academy

Figure 2 below shows the students’ average level of confidence in relation to each situation at the start and end of their course, indicating the extent to which they improved in each area.

Figure 2: Students’ self-assessments at the start and end of their course



EVIDENCE OF LASTING IMPACT

Increased engagement in learning

We are committed to evaluating the extent to which the short-term impact of an Outward Bound course continues to influence and support young people when they return home – whether at school, in their community or as they move from full-time education into employment or training. The evaluations we carry out with teachers between three and four months after their course provide a strong indication that the increased confidence that students feel at the end of their course – in particular social confidence and confidence to overcome challenges – has a positive effect on their learning in school.

Data collected from teachers involved in three programmes¹³ shows that students are **more engaged in their schoolwork**, are **working harder** and showing **higher educational aspirations**:



90% agreed that their students were showing **more interest in their schoolwork**



86% agreed that their students had shown **higher educational aspirations**



79% agreed that their students were putting **more effort into their studies**



78% agreed that their students were **listening more in lessons**



67% agreed that their students had improved their level of **goal-setting**

These findings are supported by follow-up evaluations carried out with young people who completed a questionnaire three-four months after their course¹⁴. They continue to record improved confidence to **work with others in a team (68%)**, to **set and achieve goals (59%)** and to **communicate their ideas (56%)**.

Below are two case examples from teachers, showing the impact they have seen on their students back in the classroom, followed by a selection of feedback received from students describing the changes they have noticed in their approach to their schoolwork.

“Since returning, some students have put themselves forward for the role of Form Captain, completing a written application, formal interview and succeeding! A student who lacked confidence around her peers and in the classroom has applied for and been appointed as Form Captain. As part of this role, she will be doing some public speaking in assemblies, something I never thought she would be up for! She is more confident to share ideas and answers in the classroom too. A great result!”

Andrew Hawke, Teacher, Birches Head Academy (Stoke-on-Trent) three months after the course

“Carrie, age 16, lives alone with her mum, who is a lone parent and currently unemployed. She is considered to be academic but she struggles with her self-confidence, particularly in group situations where she has good ideas and often knows the answer to questions but does not speak up. **Building her confidence to put herself forwards in group situations would have a very positive impact on her by stretching her further and opening up new opportunities.**

During her Outward Bound course, Carrie became **more confident participating in a group and developed self-belief**, which enabled her to become **more aware of herself and her abilities**. Prior to the course, she would never dream of approaching people she didn't know, however at the end of the course she was approaching young people in the centre from other schools who were visiting at the same time.

Back in school, she is more willing to speak up instead of relying on others to pitch in ideas. She has since **set out clear goals for what she would like to achieve in the future**. These include ‘to do better in my exams this year than I did previously’ and ‘getting into university’. She now has the self-belief and confidence to achieve her goals.”

Mhairi Paton, Curriculum Leader Health & Well-being, Wester Hailes Education Centre (Edinburgh), four months after the course

“I am more confident in group work, I challenge myself more and put my ideas forward in school.” **Emma, 13, Haydon School (London)**

“I never say that I can't do something, I push myself and believe in myself. [I have applied this to] my work in class. Before I went on the course, I would say ‘I can't do it’ and I would just give up but now in my Maths class I tell myself if I can't do it one way, I will find another way.” **Charlie, 15, Walworth Academy (London)**

“Back at school I have used my leadership skills, I follow rules better and work in a team better.” **Annie, 15, St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy (Stoke-on-Trent)**

“I have been able to express my ideas more clearly and be able to make more complicated decisions.” **Alex, 12, Haydon School (London)**

“When I was there I challenged myself. I did things I never thought I would, its really helped with my confidence. I know I can do more than I thought. I used this confidence to become form captain, helping out at school and leading assemblies” **Kia, 12, Birches Head Academy (Stoke-on-Trent)**

“I feel more organised which means I can get more things done and I am better at being on time.” **Ben, 12, Haydon School (London)**

“Since I have returned from the course, I am more confident at making my own decisions and communicating with people.” **Louise, 12, Haydon School (London)**

“I've started to do more sports and be more active and help my family with more things.” **Kate, 12, St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy (Stoke-on-Trent)**

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:

"Thank you. The expedition was very challenging and hard but it truly is a wonderful experience. It's amazing that funding given enables teenagers like myself to explore nature and the rural area." **Tara, 15, Mulberry School for Girls (East London)**

*"Thank you for the **best time of my life** because I've never done something like this before and now I have, **I am proud.**"* **Lisa, 12, Broughton Catholic High School (Liverpool)**

*"Thank you and please keep doing what you're doing because you're **helping kids go out of their comfort zones** and have **life changing experiences.**"* **Zac, 14, Brompton Academy (Kent)**

*"More residentials like this so **more of us can overcome our fears in life.**"* **Tazmeen, 14, Mulberry School for Girls (East London)**

*"Thank you so much, **what you are doing is so great.** Before this **I never knew I would be able to climb up a mountain** and you made that possible. Thank you once again!"* **Eloise, 15, Northfleet School for Girls (Kent)**

*"Thank you for funding this trip. I got a lot of experience and I realised that there are **harder challenges I will have to overcome** when I reach adulthood but **now I am a bit more prepared.**"* **Yousef, 12, Nottingham Academy**

"Thank you for this opportunity, it has moulded me into a better person and has made me respect my surroundings." **Georgia, 15, Northfleet School for Girls (Kent)**

"I would like to thank you for the opportunity as it is something that will stick with me for the rest of my life." **Tyler, 16, Stoke-on-Trent Sixth Form College**

"The whole experience will stay with them forever, plus it will make them more confident to tackle any challenge presented to them personally and academically." **Esther Portela Vilar, Learning Assistant, Millbank Academy (London)**

"This week has been an exceptional opportunity for younger people to not only build the necessary skills to succeed, but to also experience being outside and the wonders of the natural environment." **Emily Sproston, Head of House, Blythe Bridge High School, Stoke-on-Trent**

"Thank you for giving the pupils a stepping stone for the future." **Nathan Charlesworth, Head of Year 9, Wolstanton High School, Stoke-on-Trent**

LOOKING FORWARD

As the number of children and young people living in poverty continues to rise and the effects of this, along with other factors, on their future life chances become more widely understood, it is ever more critical that charities, funders, youth services and education providers work in partnership to create opportunities that will secure a more promising future for them.

At The Outward Bound Trust, our mission remains clear to transform the lives of as many young people as possible by equipping them with the skills to cope with whatever life throws at them and the aspiration to believe that, with the right attitude, they can achieve anything they want to in life. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of all of our supporters and it is our sincere wish that, with your continued support, we will be able to play our part in improving the life chances of many more thousands of young people in the future.



A group of students prepare to camp out overnight

REFERENCES

- ¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2019/mar/28/poverty-increases-among-children-and-pensioners-across-uk>
- ² Education Endowment Foundation (2018). The Attainment Gap 2017.
- ³ Impetus (2019). Research Briefing 1: Establishing the Employment Gap.
- ⁴ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-poverty>
- ⁵ Social Mobility Commission (2017). State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain.
- ⁶ Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (2017). Research briefing 91: “Can we put the ‘poverty of aspiration’ myth to bed now?”
- ⁷ The Prince’s Trust (2019). The Prince’s Trust Ebay Youth Index 2019
- ⁸ <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Northumberland-Knowledge/NK%20place/Indices%20of%20deprivation/Northumberland-ID-2015.pdf>
- ⁹ 3 wards (Cowpen, Isabella and Croft) out of the top 5 wards with highest percentages of residents with no qualifications in Northumberland are situation in Blyth valley constituency (page 6).
<http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Northumberland-Knowledge/3-KnowNland2011CensusKeyStatsForWardsAndSmallAreasBulletin-3.pdf>
- ¹⁰
http://www.labourmarketnortheast.co.uk/app/assets/files/areaprofiles/northumberland_profile.pdf (page 2).
- ¹¹ In the North East, 42% are lone parent not in employment in the north east (census 2011) of whom 90% are female headed.
http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/filesetSelection.do?step=5&datasetFamilyId=2529&instanceSelection=133516&filesetIndex=11&rightPaneBoxHeight=490&JSAllowed=true&browserHeight=667&browserWidth=1090&%24ph=60_61_64&CurrentPageId=64&Ba
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- ¹² Results presented are drawn from a sample of courses that were evaluated between January and April 2019. Sample included school groups from London, Yorkshire, Manchester, Northumberland and Leeds. The sample size for each statement varies but all are between 838 - 842.
- ¹³ Evaluation involved 29 teachers who attended programmes between January – July 2018.
- ¹⁴ Evaluation involved 177 students from 5 schools who attended a course between January – July 2018.