

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST PARTNERSHIP REPORT

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST: SCOTLAND'S NEXT GENERATION PROJECT 2023



**THE
OUTWARD
BOUND TRUST**

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THE NEED FOR OUTWARD BOUND

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 a 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 and their communities; **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 financesⁱ, their job prospectsⁱⁱ, and are **unhappy** about their educationⁱⁱⁱ. All this, on top of already **fractured social relationships**, **low levels of happiness** and **limited physical activity**^{iv,v,vi} is resulting in young people struggling to reintegrate socially, to re-gain their confidence, their motivation and ambition.

At Outward Bound, young people are taken out of their normal physical and social surroundings, and are immersed in new environments, where they can attempt and complete activities they thought they weren't capable of, they return home with a new **sense of pride** and **awareness of their abilities**. Having learnt to work alongside and 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 difficulties or social conflict**, 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**, helping to **thrive** in whatever they choose to do.

SCOTLAND'S NEXT GENERATION 2023

34 young people aged **14-17 years old** from Scotland participated in the project (see Table 1), during which they had the opportunity to step away from their normal surroundings and social groups and **overcome physical and emotional challenges** in inspiring, natural environments. The young people lived **alongside people who were new to them** and completed activities such as **rock climbing**, **canoeing**, and **mountain expeditions**.

As the young people **stepped outside their comfort zones**, their **confidence and sense of capability grew**, they developed their ability to **persevere** and became more **resilient**.

Throughout the course, they developed their team working skills; their ability to **lead others**, **listen** and **communicate**. They learnt to **support**, **motivate**, and **encourage** each other. As they developed their ability to trust and support their team, the young people learnt more about themselves and others; **breaking down social barriers**, **building connections** and **creating positive lasting memories**.

TABLE 1 – SNG IN 2023

	Centre	No. of young people
Ridge 7 days	Loch Eil	9
	Ullswater	1
Summit 14 days	Loch Eil	24
	Ullswater	0

“

As school starts in less than a week, I think my overall confidence in meeting and being with people has spiked, and being able to get myself out and doing things that scare me has become much easier.

Lydia, 14-day Summit course

”



“

[In the future] I think I will understand other people better and therefore be a better teammate. I also think because of the activities, I know I can do more things and that this experience will stay with me forever.

Layla, 7-day Ridge course

”

THE IMPACT OF THE COURSES

Three days after their course, participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire to assess the key outcomes of their course. The young people were asked to retrospectively rate their confidence in different skill areas at the beginning of the course compared to the end of the course¹. The results indicate that the majority of participants improved their personal and social skills, in particular their **confidence in their interpersonal skills, in managing their emotions and in being flexible in their thinking**, all of these outcomes contributing towards improved overall **wellbeing**.



79% reported an improved confidence in their interpersonal skills²



81% were more able to manage emotionally challenging situations



78% became more open and flexible in their thinking

Some of the young people also provided feedback on how they personally benefitted from their Outward Bound experience, and how they think it will help them in the future.



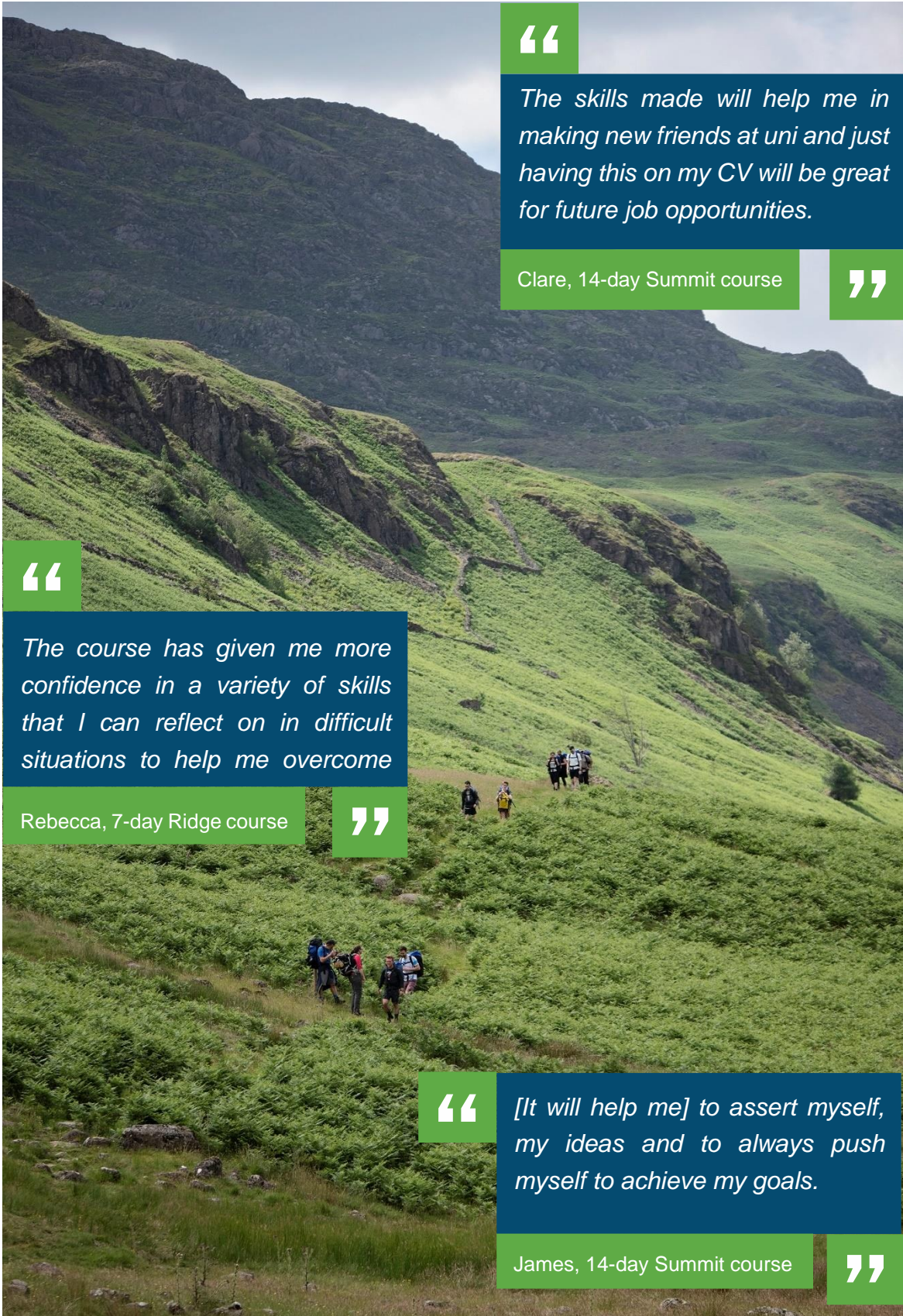
I think this course has taught me how important it is to interact with other people- I've neglected my needs to socialise in the past and spending two weeks constantly surrounded by people have made me realise that I draw my energy from social interaction. Of course, this was probably helped by the fact that in our group we were all like-minded and related to each other, and we made a brilliant team.

Molly, 14-day Summit course



¹ Retrospective pre-course questions allow for changes in self-awareness to be taken into account, as participants rate their skills more accurately against how they compare to the end of the course. Retrospective pre-course scores often give a more accurate measure of personal growth experienced.

² Interpersonal skills N=82; Emotional control N=80; Flexible thinking N=82



“

The skills made will help me in making new friends at uni and just having this on my CV will be great for future job opportunities.

Clare, 14-day Summit course

”

“

The course has given me more confidence in a variety of skills that I can reflect on in difficult situations to help me overcome

Rebecca, 7-day Ridge course

”

“

[It will help me] to assert myself, my ideas and to always push myself to achieve my goals.

James, 14-day Summit course

”

Telephone/online interviews were also carried out with participants³ from 1 month up to 1 year after their course, in order to understand the immediate and lasting impact of their course in more depth. The stories of three young people are presented on the following pages.

The themes resulting from these interviews demonstrate the opportunities at Outward Bound for young people to develop their **self-awareness**, their **self-confidence** and how **perseverance** and **effort equals reward**. The course provided a **contrast** and **change in perspective**, which for one individual in particular has greatly **improved his wellbeing** – helping him feel more **self-assured**, **independent** and **capable**. The **social side** of the course had a large impact on all three individuals, be that in **helping them to overcome their social anxiety**, **build interpersonal skills** and **relationships** or to **challenge perceptions** and their **awareness of others**.

In addition to this wider evaluation participants who took part in the Scotland's Next Generation project were asked to write a thank you letter to their sponsor.

³ Participants' names have been changed to protect their anonymity. Photos of interview participants are Outward Bound library images.



Dear Sponsor,

I trust this letter finds you well. My name is Reuben, and I have a profound passion for outdoor pursuits. Also, I am an enduro mountain bike racer. I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible opportunity you provided me with the two-week Outward Bound course it was incredible. From the moment I learned of this opportunity from my local scouting group, I was brimming with excitement, eager to embark on this adventure and meet new friends who share my passion.

The Outward Bound course proved to be a transformative experience for me. The expeditions were truthfully my favourite, I really enjoyed the hikes and beautiful camping spots. The rugged terrain and demanding conditions made it all the more enjoyable. Your sponsorship not only made this adventure possible but also helped me develop a newfound sense of self-assurance. One of my favourite moments was when we all went up one of the mountains to see the sunset, it was such a breathtaking view I'll never forget.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the culinary trials we faced during the course. The less-than-pleasant food options on the expeditions were undoubtedly a challenge, but they became a shared experience that brought our diverse group of participants closer together. It was through these simple yet meaningful moments that I had the privilege of meeting and bonding with incredible people from all corners of the world.

The connections I formed during the course are priceless. Interacting with individuals from various backgrounds and cultures broadened my perspective and enriched my life in ways I couldn't have imagined. The friendships forged during those two weeks are a lasting treasure, and I am sincerely thankful for the opportunity to meet and learn from such wonderful people.

In closing, I want to convey my heartfelt appreciation for your generous sponsorship of this Outward Bound course. It has been an experience that not only challenged me physically and mentally but also allowed me to grow as an individual. Your support has given me the confidence to face future challenges with enthusiasm and determination. I will forever be grateful for this life-changing opportunity.

Once again, thank you for believing in me and making this adventure possible. Your support has left an indelible mark on my journey, and I look forward to sharing my future successes with you.

With sincere gratitude,

Reuben





Dear Sponsor,

Hello, my name is Beth. I live in the Highlands of Scotland and am currently attending 5th year at Plockton High School. In Plockton, most of my friends enjoy playing video games or watching movies, showing me videos etc, but I crave for great outdoors. I heard about this glorious opportunity to do the course through my local scouts' group, which I have recently been routinely attending and will be working on my Bronze Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award! I was very excited about the whole thing, an adventure awaited.

Though I had my doubts, what if I held the group back? What if it was tougher than anticipated. What if I didn't fit in? I was basically worried if there was a criteria to meet, if not in the adults view then my peers.

The hardest bit was probably, saying goodbye. My group became very close in such a short period of time. We laughed, solved problems, played games, if someone fell (physically or mentally) the team would hold together. Together we were unbeatable! All the challenges at the centre were especially fun, as the group was so enthusiastic and encouraging.

My favourite bit was the expedition, I believe it was our 2nd night at Outward Bound. We went to a lovely sandy beach and camped. We played many games and that was where the first friendships were formed. We played hide and seek, man hunt, ultimate frisbee, Mafia and - when it got a bit darker- card games. The hardest thing was on expeditions, pacing myself for the slower members of the group. Originally it was tough, but I soon became a pro and often chilled at the back. I made good friends of the people at the back. We met a boy on the beach, the morning of leaving, he was very friendly and our age. We clicked instantly. He chatted to me, then was playing frisbee with the boys of my group. For that short period, he was the 13th member of Clan Cameron (Our group name was 'Clan Cameron') That is one of the things that I've gained from the experience is, I will find communicating with new people alot easier now. Thanks to this trip which has brought me a new perspective on my life.

It was very social and helped with my social confidence. One thing I loved out of many experiences, was meeting new people from all over the world, also this expedition has helped me with my confidence for my upcoming DofE expedition, and I feel more prepared.

Thank you so much for sponsoring me, because I couldn't do anything like this without your support and financial support. It was such a good opportunity mixing with such a big group of nice people. You gave this too me; I am forever grateful. I encourage you to sponsor more people like me. Who are the less fortunate, made fortunate by you. Without people like you, people like me would not be able to reach their goals.

Respectfully,

Beth



FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

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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Eskdale, The Lake District, England

Loch Eil, The Highlands, Scotland