

Adventures Away from Home



2024/2025

Evaluation Report



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UK YOUTH

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This report was written by UK Youth's Impact team.

Executive Summary

The development of the Adventures Away from Home fund

The 2024/25 Adventures Away from Home (AAfH) fund built on the success of previous iterations of the fund (2022-2024) to deliver inclusive, engaging and impactful outdoor learning experiences to young people facing barriers to access these opportunities in England. Funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), AAfH 2024/25 offered two different experiences: a one-day experience and a two-night experience. The aim of the experiences was to break down barriers to opportunity and achieve a range of positive outcomes for young people and the practitioners who support them, while developing our learning on effective and inclusive delivery. These outcomes are:

Delivery Outcomes

1. Increased access for under-represented young people (aged 11-18 (or up to 25 for those with SEND)) to inclusive outdoor learning opportunities
2. Young people (aged 11-18 (or up to 25 for those with SEND)) improve their socio-emotional skills, fostering their lifelong personal growth
3. Youth practitioners develop stronger relationships with young people and gain new skills through their group's outdoor learning experience

Learning Outcomes

4. UK Youth builds evidence that AAfH can be successfully delivered at scale across outdoor learning venues in England, connecting them to youth organisations and organisations that specialise in inclusive provision
5. UK Youth improves understanding of the delivery chain, including the relationship between the outdoor learning providers and the youth groups that may be using the funding

Methodology

AAfH 2024/25 was evaluated by UK Youth, in line with an evaluation framework agreed with the DCMS ahead of the delivery window. We conducted an outcome evaluation with elements of process evaluation to answer key evaluation questions relating to the scalability of AAfH and the AAfH delivery chain. We collected young people's demographic data via online Trackers, socio-emotional skill scores via surveys and group leader observations, and more open insight via young people's stories of change. Additional insight was provided through Quality Assurance visits conducted by the UK Youth delivery team.



Impact of Adventures Away from Home 2024/25

1. The 2024/25 programme reached over 9,750 young people from 500 youth groups, working with 69 Outdoor Learning Providers in different parts of England. Over half of participating young people faced more than two barriers to accessing outdoor learning opportunities, such as a physical disability, learning disability or difficulty, or experience of the care system.
2. There were positive improvements in young people's socio-emotional skills across areas such as teamwork, initiative, and emotion management. There were positive changes to 60% of participating young peoples' average overall socio-emotional skill scores via the young person's pre/post survey. This figure was even higher via group leader observations, where improved socio-emotional skills were observed in 91% of young people. The data also indicates that young people with disabilities have the most to gain from accessing outdoor learning experiences.
3. We found no discernible differences to young people's socio-emotional skill scores across one-day versus two-night experiences via the young person's pre/post survey. However, across all the evidence gathered via all the evaluation tools and insight from quality assurance visits, we heard that having different levels of outdoor learning experience could offer an important ladder to participation. By providing different levels of commitment/intensity, young people who may not yet be ready for an overnight residential can still take part in a one-day outdoor learning experience. This can help build their confidence and familiarity with outdoor learning settings, and potentially encourage them to engage in longer residential outdoor learning opportunities in the future
4. AAfH 2024/25 saw 95% of youth group leaders reporting that they had developed stronger relationships with the young people in their group through the outdoor learning experience. Furthermore, 84% of group leaders reported that they developed new outdoor learning skills that they can apply to their practice.

Recommendations

AAfH is now proven as a highly effective model. This evaluation offers insight into how the impact of AAfH can be scaled further. We propose three overarching recommendations to guide and strengthen future iterations of AAfH. These are discussed in detail at the end of this report under 'Conclusions and Recommendations' (page 49).

- **Recommendation 1:** To sustainably scale and deepen the impact of this vital work with young people, it is recommended that Adventures Away from Home be continued as a multi-year funded programme.
- **Recommendation 2:** Build greater understanding of young people's barriers to accessing outdoor learning experiences and make practical changes to remove them through longer lead-in times and by considering one-night stays as a third 'type' of experience.
- **Recommendation 3:** Ensure that the evaluation and learning approach on future iterations of AAfH is proportionate, efficient and builds on the strong existing evidence base by focussing on gaps in data and understanding.

Introduction

The context behind Adventures Away from Home

There is extensive literature that has shown the many interlocking and overlapping challenges facing young people in England. Declining mental health, rising loneliness, increased school absenteeism and challenges in accessing and sustaining meaningful employment are just some of young people's many barriers to living a meaningful and fulfilling life.¹ Recent research has found that 15 year olds in the UK are the unhappiest in Europe.² These issues are compounded by a challenging economic climate, rising poverty and inequality, and widespread real-terms cuts to vital public services, including the youth sector.

Against this backdrop, access to outdoor learning has been shown to improve young people's wellbeing, socio-emotional skills and engagement in education.³ However, not enough young people are able to access these essential opportunities. Research has shown that certain groups of young people, for example from families on low income, minority ethnic backgrounds or with disabilities are less likely to access and therefore benefit from outdoor spaces and activities.⁴ Access to outdoor learning alone is not a silver bullet for the challenges that young people face but it offers a critical opportunity to build young people's confidence, resilience, and preparedness to navigate their adult lives. Outdoor learning opportunities, targeted to reach young people who may not otherwise access these life-changing experiences, can break down barriers to opportunity for young people, building their capacity to develop and succeed.

						
those living in poverty	with SEND	young women and girls	from minoritised ethnic groups	in the secure state	with low academic attainment	refugees
						
with English as an additional language	experiencing financial barriers to access	experienced care	with caring responsibilities	with physical disabilities	LGBTQI+	those who need additional support to participate

*plus other categories not listed

Adventures Away from Home as part of the solution (2022-25)

Since 2022/23, AAfH has been an important, valuable, and impactful government-funded mechanism to deliver outdoor learning experiences to those who have historically had less access to them. Including this latest iteration of the programme (2024/25), AAfH has now supported over 26,000 young people from 1,470 youth groups to access outdoor learning experiences through 197 outdoor learning provider contracts.

1 The Kings Trust, (2025). Youth Index Report. Available [here](#); Mental Health Foundation, Loneliness in young people: Research briefing. Available [here](#); DCMS, (2025). The relationship between mental ill health and absence in students aged 13 to 16: Results from the longitudinal study of young people – cohort 2. Available [here](#); Youth Futures Foundation, (2024). Youth Employment: 2024 Outlook. Available [here](#).

2 Children's Society, (2024). Good Childhood Report 2024. Available [here](#)

3 E.g. Vi Ly and Dianne A. Vella Brodrick, (2024). Effects of School-led Greenspace Interventions on Mental, Physical and Social Wellbeing in Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review, Educational Psychology Review, 36 (133); Vikki Slee and John F. Allan, (2019). Purposeful Outdoor Learning Empowers Children to Deal with School Transitions, Sports, 7(6).

4 E.g. Sue Waite et al. (2021). 'It's not for people like (them)': structural and cultural barriers to children and young people engaging with nature outside schooling', Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning, 23(1), pp. 54–73.

Crucially, these experiences have been shown to lead to improvements in:

- Young people's socio-emotional skills, enjoyment of the outdoors and appetite for challenge
- Youth practitioners' relationships with young people and skills they can apply day-to-day
- The outdoor learning sector's capacity and capability to cater to young people with various needs (e.g. young people with physical disabilities or those with learning difficulties or disabilities)

Critical to this success has been UK Youth's approach to delivering AAfH. The model sees bursaries distributed via Outdoor Learning Providers through closely working with youth groups and education providers catering for young people facing barriers to accessing outdoor learning opportunities. This has enabled young people to be more likely, willing and able to overcome any barriers they may face.

How Adventures Away from Home is delivered

Defining outdoor learning

UK Youth defines outdoor learning as 'experiential learning within an outdoor environment to support a young person's personal, social, and educational development; improve their health and well-being and raise environmental awareness.' The outdoor space in which learning takes place is an integral part of the learning process.

Introducing AAfH 2024/25

Funded by the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) and coordinated by UK Youth, Adventures Away from Home 2024/25 built on previous success to distribute £1.5 million, (initially £1.2m but uplifted in March 2025 by £300,000), to 69 grassroots outdoor learning providers. Between December 2024 and March 2025, these organisations worked with 500 youth groups across all nine regions of England, delivering 9,750 residential and day experiences to under-represented young people, helping them build socio-emotional and life skills.

AAfH aimed to achieve three overarching delivery outcomes:

1. Increased access for under-represented young people (aged 11-18 (or up to 25 for those with SEND)) to inclusive outdoor learning opportunities.
2. Young people aged 11-18 (or up to 25 for those with SEND) improve their socio-emotional skills, fostering their lifelong personal growth.
3. Youth practitioners develop stronger relationships with young people and gain new skills through their group's outdoor learning experience



The programme also aimed to achieve two evaluation outcomes:

4. UK Youth builds evidence that AAfH can be successfully delivered at scale across outdoor learning venues in England, connecting them to youth organisations and organisations that specialise in inclusive provision.
5. UK Youth improves understanding of the delivery chain, including the relationship between the outdoor learning providers and the youth groups that may be using the funding.

The AAfH Delivery model

Project leadership, management, provider support and quality assurance were provided by UK Youth's dedicated Outdoor Learning Team, with further cross-organisational support for specific areas such as technical IT for our dedicated online portal, marketing and communications, and evaluation.

Three webinars were held at inception to brief interested providers on the programme; all were well attended. Outdoor Learning providers were asked to apply for a grant via the UK Youth online portal, and had to demonstrate that they met the criteria. This included detailing a strong case for funding, having an external quality assurance certification or meeting set government standards, and having appropriate insurance in place. Applicants also had the opportunity to apply for discretionary funding to cover a proportion of the additional essential costs that would likely be incurred in their delivery of AAfH. For example, the costs of additional trusted adults attending to provide 1:1 support to young people. Applications for AAfH 2024/25 totalled £3.7m, equating to bursary requests for in excess of 32,700 under-represented young people. This demonstrates a high demand for support through AAfH that cannot be met at the current level of investment.

Three webinars were delivered with successful providers to engage them in the evaluation process and purpose and to help them understand their evaluation requirements. Digital versions of all evaluation tools were shared with providers, along with guidance, QR codes and other resources.

Using UK Youth's network of youth organisations across England, relationships were brokered between youth organisations and their local outdoor learning provider to enable them to work together to engage young people facing disadvantage or 'under-representation' to participate.

All successful providers were contracted to deliver, either single day or residential (multi-day) outdoor learning experiences, or a combination of both. To allow the providers flexibility, they were allowed a 10% dropout rate - i.e. 10% of young people could drop out due to illness, or personal circumstances at short notice.

Based on reports from outdoor learning providers there was some variation in drop-out rates during the delivery window. However, overall these were low with only 3 Outdoor Learning Providers underdelivering and, where capacity allowed, providers recovered the contractual numbers by providing additional experiences. A condensed delivery window across the Winter months made managing drop-outs challenging for a number of providers, as many pushed much of their delivery to the back end of the delivery window to give them more time to build new relationships with youth organisations, or in the hope of better weather. Despite these challenges, programme drop off did not compromise overall delivery numbers.



To encourage a breadth of provision styles and locations, programme deliverables were left flexible but all providers were required to work to the outcomes set out by the AAfH fund: Follow the UK Youth 'Experience, Learn, Develop' Framework with a clear focus on the learning outcomes

- Represent value for money by maximising engagement time with experienced facilitators/instructors in an outdoor environment
- Follow the ethos of experiential learning, inclusivity, respect for the natural environment and promote courage, curiosity and celebrate participation.
- Strive for excellence

One-day and two-night experiences each had additional set criteria:

One-day:

- A minimum of 4 hours direct engagement time.
- Every young person is provided with a meal as part of their experience

Two-night:

- A minimum of 12 hours direct engagement time
- Every young person is provided with full board accommodation across the duration of their 2-night stay, at a minimum of six meals of which at least two must be hot meals.

Evaluation approach

AAfH 2024/25 was evaluated by UK Youth, in line with an evaluation framework agreed with the DCMS ahead of the delivery window. Over time, we have identified new approaches to evaluating the programme, new evaluation questions to explore and more robust outcome measures. AAfH evaluations must strike a balance between capturing deep insight and outcomes data that can offer improvements for the programme and policy, alongside remaining proportionate. Although highly impactful for many young people, AAfH is a short-duration, low-dosage intervention (offering just one-day or two-night experiences) and it is important that the evaluation requirements do not overburden stakeholders or negatively impact their experience any more than is necessary.

In this section, we outline our approach to evaluating AAfH 2024/25, data protection and ethics, and analytical approach. We discuss in detail the limitations and recommendations for improvements in how AAfH is evaluated in future at Annex A, p. 53.

This 2024/25 evaluation built on previous AAfH evaluations by:

- Giving Outdoor Learning Providers more control and sight of the data they were responsible for collecting, including – for example – baseline and endline surveys completed by the young people and group leaders attending their site.
- Offering more flexibility in how data could be collected and submitted. For example, qualitative data such as Young People's Change Stories could be submitted as audio-recordings.
- Capturing more detailed demographic information from young people – although this wasn't mandated – to better understand the young people participating in AAfH, the barriers they face, and how outcomes differ across specific groups of young people (where sample sizes allow for disaggregation of outcomes data)
- More robustly employing sector-recognised outcomes measures to track young people's socio-emotional skills development, through a young person's survey and group leader observations (matched pre- and post-).

This evaluation sought to answer three evaluation questions:

1. How do short-term outdoor learning experiences support young people facing barriers to participation in developing socio-emotional skills, equipping them for educational resilience, positive social relationships, and overall health and well-being?
2. How do short-term outdoor learning experiences support youth practitioners to develop stronger relationships with young people, gain new skills and contribute to their professional development?
3. What is the experience of outdoor learning providers in delivering Adventures Away from Home?
 - » How effectively have they delivered on their role in the programme?
 - » What new relationships have they built with youth groups that they can sustain longer term?
 - » What new ways of working have they adopted that they can sustain longer-term?

Evaluation tools

We used a mixed-method approach to evaluate AAfH 2024/25. Five evaluation tools were developed and employed between December 2024 and April 2025. Additional insight was also gathered by UK Youth staff through their Quality Assurance visits to Outdoor Learning Providers. Full versions of the tools used are at Annex B, p. 55.

- **Outdoor Learning Provider Tracker:** An online Excel workbook that was shared between the Outdoor Learning Provider and UK Youth. Each provider had its own unique workbook that was used throughout the delivery period to track basic details relating to the attending youth groups, as well as more detailed demographic information relating to all young people. All providers were required to track all youth groups/young people. The Tracker also required providers to track which of the evaluation tools below were being employed with which young people, to support data matching. The Tracker was securely stored and access was restricted to selected, named staff only. This was used to explore relationships between the type/length of visits, the demographic profile of attendees and match with pre/post surveys.
- **Young Person Pre/Post Surveys:** Survey templates were shared that asked a series of questions about young people's socio-emotional skills across six domain areas (responsibility, empathy, problem solving, initiative, teamwork, emotion management). These surveys were adapted from YMCA George Williams College's Young Person's Survey (YPS).⁵ Young people, with support from an adult, were asked to complete these no more than three days before and after their visit. Data was then inputted to an online form by Outdoor Learning Providers. Providers were required to ensure 10% of young people attending their centre completed both the pre- and post- survey. These were used to compare young people's socio-emotional skill scores before and after their AAfH experience.
- **Group Leader Pre/Post Observations:** At each youth group visit to an Outdoor Learning Provider, a group leader completed a pre/post observation on one young person using a mobile-optimised online form. Group leaders were asked to select a young person at random at the start of the AAfH experience. The observation form was adapted from YMCA George Williams College's Young Person's Survey (YPS) and focussed on a smaller number of socio-emotional skills domain areas (emotional management, initiative and teamwork). The post-observation form also had a series of questions on the experience of the group leader, and an open text box. Providers were required to ensure there was one matched pre- and post- observation completed per attending group, at the start and at the end of their visit. This data was used to both compare young people's socio-emotional skill score before and after their AAfH experience, while also developing our understanding of the group leader's experience of AAfH.

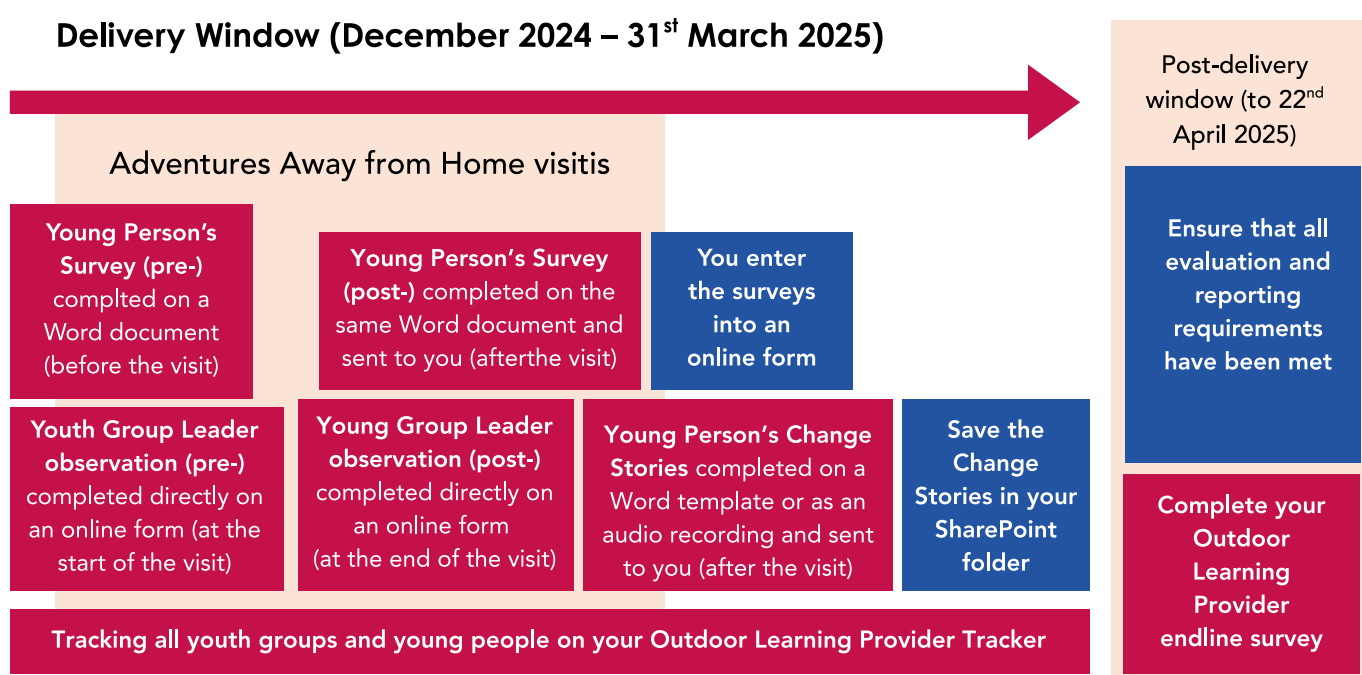
⁵ YMCA George Williams College, [Young People's Survey](#)

- **Young Persons Change Stories:** After their visit, youth group leaders were required to sit down with the young person they had observed (above) and complete a Young Person's Change Story. This involved asking the young person to reflect on what they had enjoyed the most, their biggest challenge, what they had learned about themselves, and/or any new skills they had acquired. As with the Group Leader Observations, providers were asked to supply one Young Person's Change Story per attending group. Change stories could be recorded and submitted via a Microsoft Word template, or as an audio-recording. This provided further qualitative insight into the experience of participating young people and was used to complement and support interpretation of the data from the surveys and observations.
- **Outdoor Learning Provider Endline Survey:** At the end of the delivery period, all Outdoor Learning Providers were required to complete an online survey to assess their experience of participating in Adventures Away from Home, and for their feedback/reflections on how it could be improved in the future. The survey also asked them to confirm that they had completed all other evaluation and reporting requirements.

UK Youth offered Outdoor Learning Providers a range of support to help them engage with the evaluation and meet their requirements. This included:

- Evaluation and reporting requirements being set out in Service Level Agreements
- A comprehensive evaluation pack, including background on the evaluation approach, an evaluation timeline (see figure 1 below) and a description of each evaluation tool
- Introductory webinars, focusing on both delivery and reporting, prior to the start of the delivery period and a follow-up FAQs document being shared with the cohort
- Optional mid-point webinar where Outdoor Learning Providers could come together to either ask UK Youth specific questions or discuss and reflect on their delivery with other providers
- Producing an AAFH specific data protection policy and a young person data protection policy to support providers feel more comfortable collecting young people's information
- Ad hoc support with any questions or concerns they had during or at the end of the delivery period and proactive support where UK Youth staff identified that evaluation and reporting requirements were not being met

Figure 1 – Evaluation timeline overview, provided to outdoor learning providers



Completion rates/sample sizes per evaluation tool:

Table 1			
Tool	Target	Actual	Completion
Outdoor Learning Provider Tracker	69	69	100%
Young People's Pre/Post Survey, matched	900	2295	255%
Group Leader Pre/Post Observations, matched	500	295	59%
Young Person's Change Stories	500	546	109%
Outdoor Learning Provider Endline Survey	69	71	100%

Evaluation requirements and target completion rates were either met or exceeded across each of the five tools, except for group leader pre/post observations. While there were solid completion rates for the pre-observation (621) and post-observations (452) respectively, only 295 were matchable. This is likely due to practical issues around data collection (i.e. not having enough time at the start and end of the day) given the high proportion of one-day experiences.

Despite this, given the high number of youth groups and young people engaged in AAfH 2024/25, sufficient data was collected to evaluate the programme across all outcomes. For a more detailed discussion on the limitations of this evaluation and recommendations for future evaluation design, see Annex A, Learning from our evaluation approach (p. 53).

Analytical approach

Quantitative data collected and analysed as part of this evaluation included young people's demographic information, pre- and post- socio-emotional skills scores (collected through the Young Person's Surveys and Group Leader Observation form), scaled responses gathered from group leaders in the Young Person's Survey (post) and scaled responses gathered from Outdoor Learning providers through the Outdoor Learning Provider Endline Survey. These datasets were cleaned, matched (where required) and descriptive analysis was undertaken to report against the programme outcomes and evaluation questions.

Qualitative data was collected from young people through the Young Person's Change Stories and from group leaders and Outdoor Learning Providers through open text fields included in the above tools. Thematic analysis was undertaken on these datasets. Open coding was primarily used to analyse qualitative data, with codes developed based on the themes identified in. These codes were adjusted over time as the data was analysed, to capture new themes emerging and consolidate closely related themes.

Given the quantity of data being analysed and the timeline for evaluation, robust testing for inter-rater reliability was not undertaken. This is a process that explores the extent to which those doing the analysis agree. Specific data points were discussed as new themes were identified and where there was doubt about how data should be interpreted and described.

Data Protection, Safeguarding & Ethical Considerations

AAfH is a complex programme to evaluate, given the different 'levels' of stakeholder involvement in providing and processing data. Therefore, a number of protocols and principles were put in place to ensure that sensitive, personal data was anonymised and was only accessible to named individuals. These can be found in full at Annex C p. 68.

All of the evaluation tools were designed and deployed in line with UK Youth's Privacy Policy.⁶ The Young Person's Survey and Youth Group Leader Observation form were developed from sector-recognised tools developed collaboratively by the now closed YMCA George Williams College (previously the Centre for Youth Impact). We discuss process learning in relation to the evaluation approach taken on AAfH 2024/25 at Annex A, p. 53.

During the project set up, we heard from some Outdoor Learning Providers that the evaluation tools that explore young people's socio-emotional skills (SES) were not suitable for young people with various accessibility requirements. To mitigate this we provided guidance around word selection for the various domain area questions, and reassured Providers that we were not asking them, or attending group leaders, to do anything that made them or the young people feel uncomfortable. To ensure the evaluation remained inclusive and flexible, while trying to gather rich and insightful data, we opted for proportionate sample sizes: Outdoor Learning Providers and Group Leaders had the flexibility to select which 10% of participating young people completed pre/post surveys and which young person was observed for pre/post surveys.



⁶ UK Youth, [Privacy Policy](#).

Notes on language

Under-represented versus underserved: We have opted to use under-represented rather than underserved throughout this report. This reflects DCMS's language, including in the contract between UK Youth and DCMS to deliver AAFH. However, we recognise that 'underserved' is a useful term that places the responsibility for inclusion and accessibility on the organisations and systems around young people, rather than 'hard to reach' or 'vulnerable' which can encourage deficit thinking around young people and their lives.

'Barriers': This is a general term that refers to how systems, background and circumstances can make it harder for some groups of young people to access a service/experience/opportunity when compared to other groups. This places the emphasis on those with power to remove barriers, rather than expecting young people facing disadvantages to have to overcome them. The specific barriers we considered in this evaluation are: ethnic minority background, physical disability, learning difficulty/disabilities, LGBTQIA+, care experienced, caring responsibilities, English as an additional language, refugee/asylum seeker, experience of the secure estate, low academic attainment, or whether they had experience of outdoor learning in the previous two years.

Ethnic minorities: While this is the Government's preferred term for referring to all ethnic groups except the White British group, it is not the term UK Youth typically uses. Our internal inclusive language guidance encourages terminology that recognises the social processes of racialisation and minoritisation. For further guidance on language around race and racism, we recommend resources such as Reframing Race.⁷

People first language: UK Youth uses "people first language" to describe people's identities, e.g. 'young people with disabilities' while acknowledging that there are a range of preferences and a long history to these positions on language. Language has power and can shift attitudes and behaviours. Identity is personal and the language we use to describe others can be complex and challenging and is always evolving.

Youth group leader: this term is used throughout the report to describe the adults who came with the young people on their AAFH experience. These would mostly likely be their youth worker, group leader, or teacher.

Schools: Throughout the report there are some quotes that contain references to schools. As well as engaging youth groups (which may be charities or other legal entities supporting young people) AAFH targeted either the SEND provision within a school, or specialist SEND schools.



⁷ Sanjiv Lingayah and Nina Kelly, Reframing Race. ['Contains Strong Language: A Guide to Talking About Racism' \(2023\)](#).

Delivery outcomes and learning

Outcome 1: increased access for under-represented young people (aged 11-18 (or up to 25 for those with SEND)) to inclusive outdoor learning opportunities.

Outcome 1 statement: AAfH 2024/25 built on the success of previous years and provided inclusive outdoor learning opportunities to 9784 under-represented young people. Over half of attending young people faced more than two barriers to accessing these kinds of opportunities. AAfH 2024/25 is a powerful example of a programme that can improve outcomes for under-represented young people, for example it was particularly successful in reaching young people with disabilities and those with learning difficulties/disabilities.

KPIs 1.1 & 1.2: Under-represented young people gain access to one day/two-night trips

Adventures Away from home was successful in providing access to one day experiences and two-night residential to a diverse range of under-represented young people. The vast majority (87%) of attendees faced at least one barrier to accessing outdoor learning, while just under half (44%) had not engaged with facilitated outdoor learning experiences in the last two years. Later in this section, we highlight the prevalence of specific barriers faced by young people attending AAfH 2024/25.

While 13% of attending young people were reported to not be experiencing any barriers via the online Trackers, of this number, nearly two thirds (65%) had missing or incomplete data on at least one demographic/barrier option. Additionally, the list of barriers and demographic characteristics we supplied is a non-exhaustive list and young people are likely to have been facing other barriers that we were not tracking (e.g. living in poverty).

Fig. 2 Type of visit (n=8358)

● One-day experience ● Two-night residential

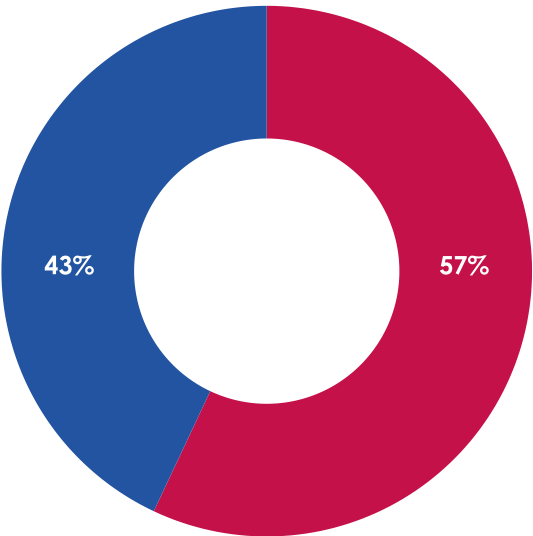
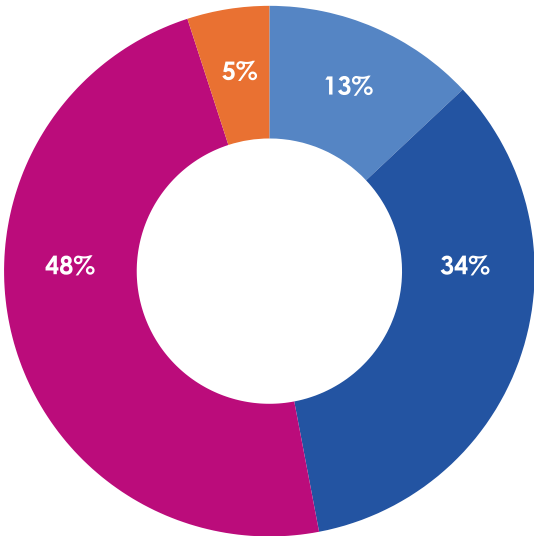


Fig. 3 Breakdown of number of barriers faced by participating young people (n=7393)

● 0 barriers ● 1 barrier ● 2-3 barriers
● 4+ barriers



AAfH 2024/25 delivered slightly more one-day experiences (57%) than two-night trips (43%), although this breakdown was in line with the funded places that Outdoor Learning Providers had applied for. This is likely due to some combination of practical reasons for Outdoor Learning Providers' preference for one-day experiences. For example, they are considered more practical to deliver on a tight delivery window, the increased likelihood of poor weather over January and February, and the fact that they require less preparation and fewer overnight facilities.

Who were the participants of Adventures Away from Home?

This section considers the participants of AAfH 2024/25 in more detail and compares with national averages to get a sense of how effective AAfH was in reaching under-represented young people.

Table 2 below shows the demographics of/barriers faced by participating young people in descending order (from most to least common).⁸

Barrier (n=8372)	% of young people facing this barrier	% of young people not facing this barrier	Sample
Low academic attainment	61%	39%	5544
Learning difficulty/ disability	54%	46%	6993
Experienced outdoor learning in the last two years?	38%	62%	5933
Ethnic minority background	25%	75%	5896
English as an additional language	13%	87%	6128
Physical disability	12%	88%	6584
Care experienced	12%	88%	4816
Caring responsibilities	10%	90%	6403
LGBTQI+	9%	91%	2931
Refugee/Asylum seeker	4%	96%	5233
Experience of the secure estate	1%	99%	4642

- Programme participants were 57% male, 42% female, and 1% non-binary. There was a mean average age of 13.7 years, with 80% aged 11-15, 17% 16-18, and 3% aged 19 or over. 25% of participating young people are from ethnic minority backgrounds (the national average for 11-18 year olds is approximately 32%).⁹ Therefore, AAfH 2024/25 engaged slightly below national averages for ethnic minority young people by 7 % pts. While complete national data around access to outdoor learning experiences by ethnicity is not available, this is slightly above another outdoor learning provider's average reach to ethnic minority groups of 15%.¹⁰ Moreover, this lower than average engagement with ethnic minority groups may have also been impacted by clashes with religious holidays (i.e Ramadan). We reflect on this further under recommendation 2. Together across gender, age, and ethnicity, these figures are broadly in line with the demographic profile that we saw in the previous iterations of AAfH 2023-24.
- Of attending young people, 12% of attendees were young people with physical disabilities (versus the national average for 10-19 year olds of approximately 10%).¹¹ This is an important achievement for AAfH, as young people with disabilities often encounter challenges with accessing physical activities

⁸ Excluding young people for whom we do not have data as it was left blank or 'Not declared' was selected.

⁹ ONS, [Ethnic group by age and sex, England and Wales: Census, 2021](#).

¹⁰ Outward Bound Trust, [Diversity in the Outdoors', 2018](#).

¹¹ ONS data, [Disability by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales: Census, 2021](#).

due to their access requirements not being met. By highlighting that ‘physical disability’ and ‘learning difficulty/disability’ are distinct barriers in AAfH 2024/25, we have been able to understand more about the profile of participants – the previous iteration of AAfH employed a more general ‘access requirements’ category.

- Of attending young people, 54% had a learning difficulty/disability which is much higher than the national average of 2.5%, which uses a more stringent definition.¹² Outdoor learning providers were likely to have also included neurodivergent young people under this category, which is estimated to be around 15-20% of young people nationally (and much higher among specific groups such as care experienced).¹³ To improve data collection under this barrier in future, AAfH should use a wider definition that specifically mentions “learning difficulty/disability/SEND” and/or “neurodivergent”.
- The proportion of attending young people with additional caring responsibilities was 12%.¹⁴ This is another important achievement for AAfH, as it can often be more difficult/challenging for young people with additional caring responsibilities to have time away from those that they care for.
- Of young people facing other barriers, 12% of young people were care experienced (either currently or in the past), in line with national averages.¹⁵ Furthermore, 9% were LGBTQIA+ young people which is in-line with national averages. There were 13% who had English as an additional language which is below the national average of 21% for all school pupils.¹⁶ There were 4% who were refugee/Asylum seeking young people (versus national average of 0.6%, not exclusive to the young person population).¹⁷ Also, 61% were young people with low academic attainment, although comparisons to national averages for low academic attainment are not possible as this barrier was not fully defined ; it was left to the discretion of youth group leaders.

For reference, Table 3 below shows the demographics of/barriers faced by participating young people in descending order of data completeness (from most to least complete):

Barrier (n=8372)	Blank/Not Declared
Learning difficulty/ disability	16%
Physical disability	21%
Caring responsibilities	24%
English as an additional language	27%
Experienced outdoor learning in the last two years?	29%
Ethnic minority background	30%
Low academic attainment	34%
Refugee/Asylum seeker	37%
Care experienced	42%
Experience of the secure estate	45%
LGBTQIA+	65%

¹² Mencap, [‘How common is learning disability in the UK’](#). This is a very low benchmark as Mencap uses a tight definition of learning disability/difficulties.

¹³ Department for Education, [Special Educational Needs in England, 2024](#).

¹⁴ Some debate as to how to define and calculate national average for this figure. [This 2023 report from the APPG on Young Carers](#) indicates 0.5% - 13% as best estimates. Therefore, AAfH 2024/25 reach is above/broadly in line with national averages.

¹⁵ NSPCC, [Statistic Briefing: Children in Care, 2024](#). Based on analysis of Local Authority data.

¹⁶ The Bell Foundation, [English as an Additional Language \(EAL\) and Educational Achievement in England: An Analysis of Publicly Available Data, 2025](#).

¹⁷ [Migration Observatory, 2024](#)

Comparing AAfH 2023/24 and AAfH 2024/25

We compared the reach of AAfH 2023/24 with AAfH 2024/25 to explore if UK Youth had continued to be successful in reaching a diverse range of under-represented young people, and if/how the reach had changed over time. We were seeking to explore whether we had been consistent in our ability to engage young people facing various barriers to accessing outdoor learning opportunities. Like-for-like comparisons were not possible across all barriers/demographic characteristics given improvements to data collection on AAfH 2024/25.

We found that we were broadly consistent across key areas of ethnic minority backgrounds (-2%ppts), care experience (+2%ppts), and English as an additional language (-1%), with slightly increased reach to LGBTQIA+ young people (+6%ppts).

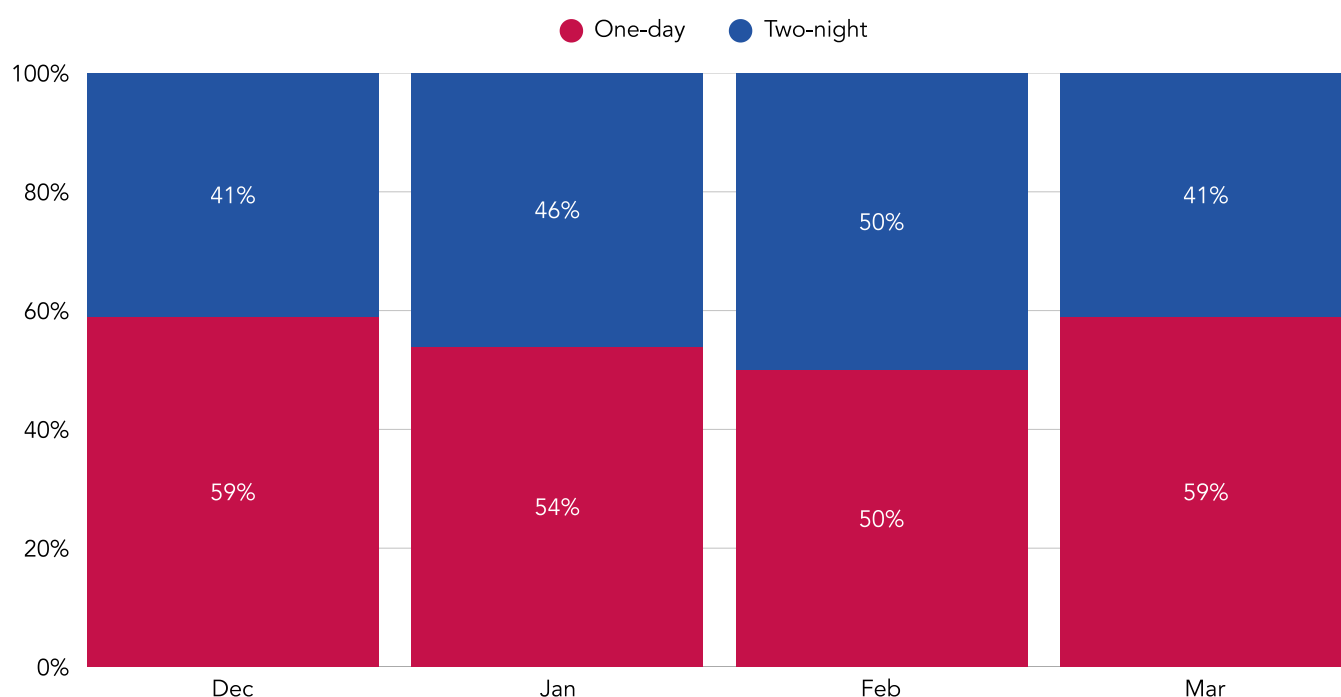
The most significant improvement is that AAfH 2024/25 was much more successful in reaching young people who had not experienced outdoor learning in the previous two years, a 20%ppt increase from 18% on AAfH 2023/24 to 38% on AAfH 2024/25.

Relationship between type/time of visit and attendee profile

We were also keen to explore if there were any relationships between the type of visit (one-day and two-night), delivery month, and the number of barriers faced by attending young people.

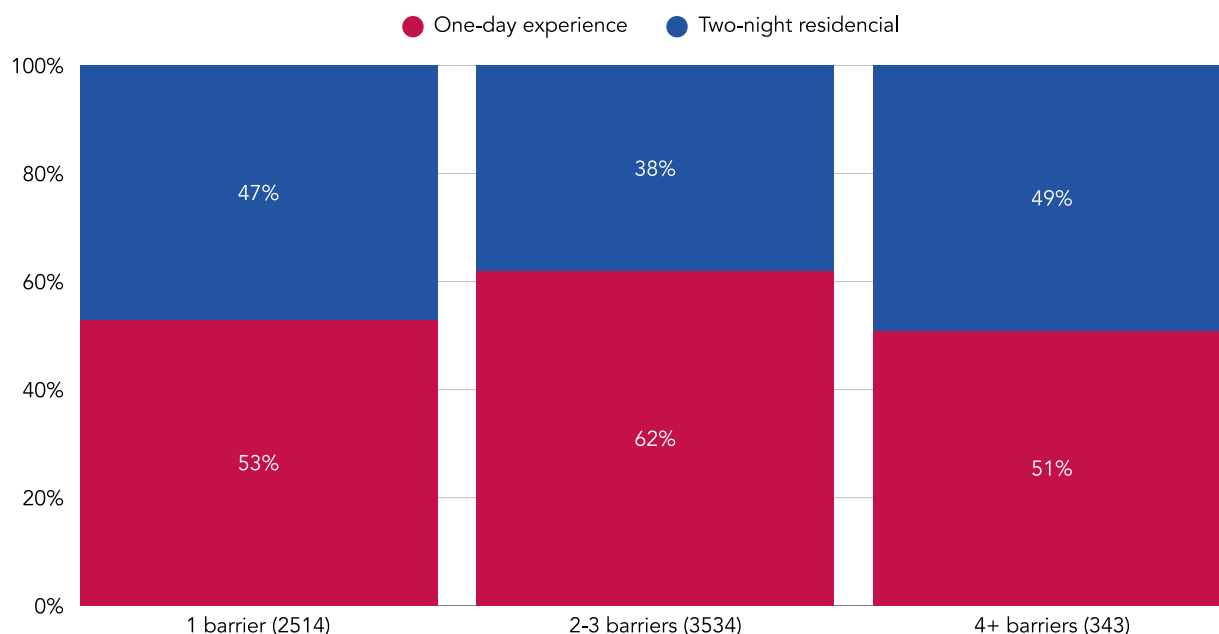
Across the whole delivery period, there was no strong pattern between the type of visit and when it took place, with the split remaining broadly consistent (Fig 4, below). Therefore, the timing of the visit does not significantly affect the type of visit offered, with providers delivering a fairly balanced split regardless of month. This indicates strong capacity across the Outdoor Learning Providers selected to participate in AAfH 2024/25.

Fig. 4 Comparing type of visits across the delivery period



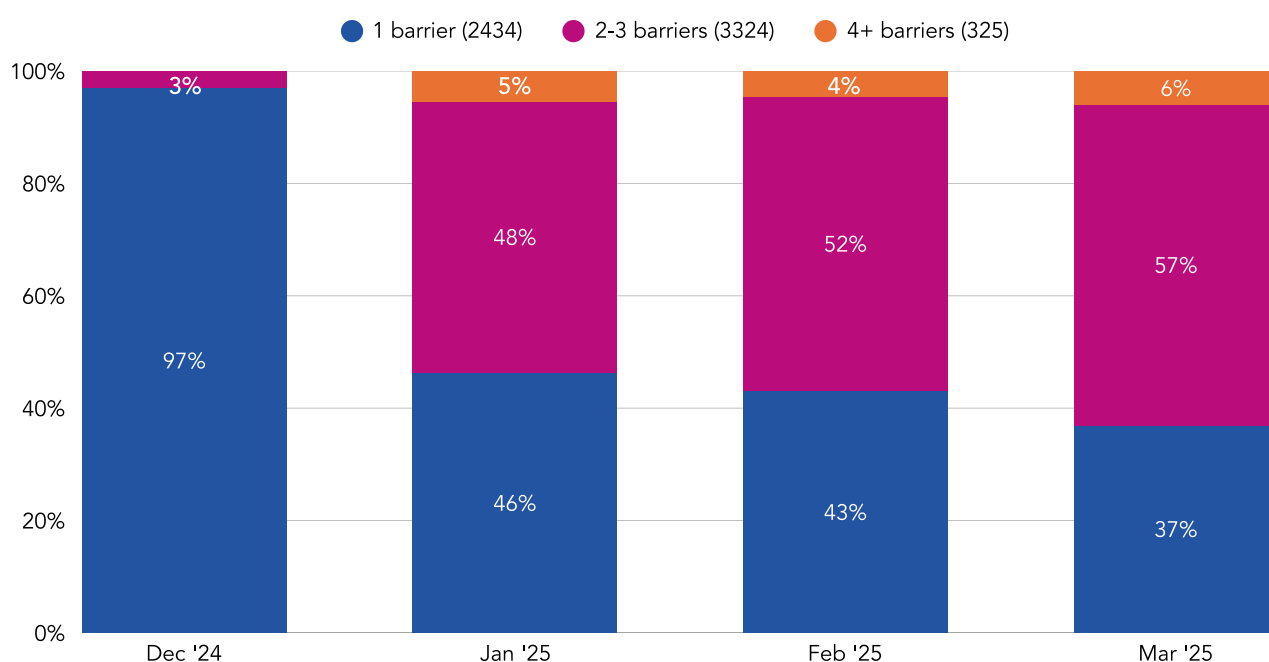
Equally, Fig 5 (below), shows that there is no relationship between the type of visit and the number of barriers being faced by attending young people. In other words, young people facing more barriers (and, we can assume, with more complex support needs) were as likely to attend a two-night residential as young people facing fewer barriers. This highlights the broad appeal of outdoor learning experiences to a diverse range of under-represented young people and Outdoor Learning Providers' ability to meet the sometimes complex needs of young people on overnight stays.

Fig. 5 Comparing type of visit with numbers of barriers, grouped (n=8358)



When considering the breakdown of the number of barriers faced by attending young people across the delivery period, we can see that a higher proportion of young people faced more/multiple barriers towards the end of the delivery period (Fig 6, below).

Fig 6. Number of barriers faced by attendees over the delivery period



In December 2024, only 3% of attendees faced 2-3 barriers, compared to 57% in March 2025 (a 54% ppt increase). In contrast, the proportion of attendees facing one barrier decreased from nearly all (97%) attendees in December 2024 to 37% by March 2025. This suggests a strong relationship between longer lead-in times and the successful engagement of young people with more complex needs.

These individuals may need more support to access AAfH because...

- they have not had previous access to a residential opportunity
- they have not experienced outdoor learning before
- they are more likely to be facing barriers to accessing outdoor learning opportunities.

With additional lead in and planning time, all the key stakeholders in the delivery chain – from UK Youth, outdoor learning providers, schools, youth organisations to young people themselves – have more opportunity to...

- build trust with parents/carers,
- understand and communicate accessibility needs
- embark on more meaningful collaboration to identify and implement reasonable adjustments which can support the provision of a more impactful development experience

These findings indicate that future rounds of AAfH should...

- extend the lead-in timelines to ensure that young people facing multiple barriers can be engaged
- provide a one-night option to deepen engagement with outdoor learning opportunities

KPI 1.3: Under-represented young people have an engaging and positive experience of their outdoor learning opportunity



"I'd just like to be able to do more activities like this, they were really fun, so if I get an opportunity to do similar things in the future I definitely will!" Young Person

AAfH 2024/25 is considered to have offered young people engaging and positive outdoor learning experiences. This is evidenced by a Net Promoter Score of +37 which is considered 'good' across most industries and demonstrates that participating young people are likely to recommend AAfH to others.¹⁸

Data and insight from across the evaluation tools show the engaging and positive experience that young people had through socio-emotional skills development (see outcome 2, p. 19), and improved relationships with group leaders (outcome 3, p. 29), while the specific mechanisms for these changes are explored under outcome 4 (p. 33). These themes are explored throughout this report.



"Seeing them face new challenges and scenarios that are simply not possible to complete in our youth centre will be invaluable experiences as they embark into adulthood. Many happy and accomplished memories were created this day" Youth Group Leader

¹⁸ Net Promoter Score is a standardised metric for measuring customer experience. It indicates whether a 'customer' is likely to promote a service or good to another potential customer – the higher the score the more likely customers are to recommend the service to others. This +37 can be considered 'good' by general benchmarks as an Outdoor Learning-specific industry benchmark is not available. ([SurveyMonkey](#))

Outcome 2: Young people (aged 11-18 (or up to 25 for those with SEND)) improve their socio-emotional skills, fostering their lifelong personal growth.

Outcome 2 statement: AAfH 2024/25 was successful in achieving positive improvements in young people’s socio-emotional skills (SES). This was evaluated across a range of domains and groups of young people, using robust, sector-recognised tools on short-term interventions. We explored the impact of outdoor learning opportunities on young people’s emotion management, empathy, initiative, problem solving, responsibility and teamwork. Improving young people’s socio-emotional skills in these areas is critically important, as these are associated with more positive outcomes later in life across education, employment, and health.¹⁹ Further investigation would be needed beyond the context of this evaluation to explore the longer-term impact of AAfH on young people’s socio-emotional skills to better understand their lifelong personal growth.

KPI 2.1: young people from under-represented backgrounds improve their socio-emotional scores.

AAfH does not just intend to reach and engage under-represented young people, but improve their socio-emotional skills through outdoor learning experiences. AAfH 2024/25 saw average positive improvements in young people’s socio-emotional skills across all domain areas. Table 4 shows the positive improvements across both young people’s pre/post surveys and group leaders’ pre/post observations.

This table presents average changes in socio-emotional skills across the six domains: each domain is composed of four indicators, assessed using a 1-5 scale, with higher scores indicating stronger socio-emotional skills. The values shown represent the average change in score for each domain, calculated by subtracting the pre-programme score from the post-programme score. For example, a value of 0.25 under “Problem Solving” (Young Person’s Survey) means there was an average improvement of 0.25 points on the 1-5 scale in that domain across the surveyed participants. The “/” indicates where data was not measured under that domain area, through that tool.

Table 4: Changes in socioemotional skills (SES) by domain							
Tool	Mean across all domains	Emotion Management	Empathy	Initiative	Problem solving	Responsibility	Teamwork
Improvement to SES score, Pre/ Post surveys	0.15	0.03	0.12	0.16	0.25	0.14	0.17
Improvement to SES score, Pre/Post Observations	0.9	0.85	/	0.95	/	/	0.91

¹⁹ Centre for Youth Impact, [YMCA George Williams College, A Framework of Outcomes for Young People](#), 2023.

Across the whole cohort, 60% of participating young people saw positive changes in their average overall socio-emotional skill scores via the Young Persons Survey (Fig. 7, below). This figure was even higher via group leader observations, where 91% of young people saw improvements across the three domain areas being measured through these observations: initiative, teamwork, and emotion management (see Fig. 8. below).

Fig. 7 Average change across young people's pre/post survey socio-emotional scores (n=2255)

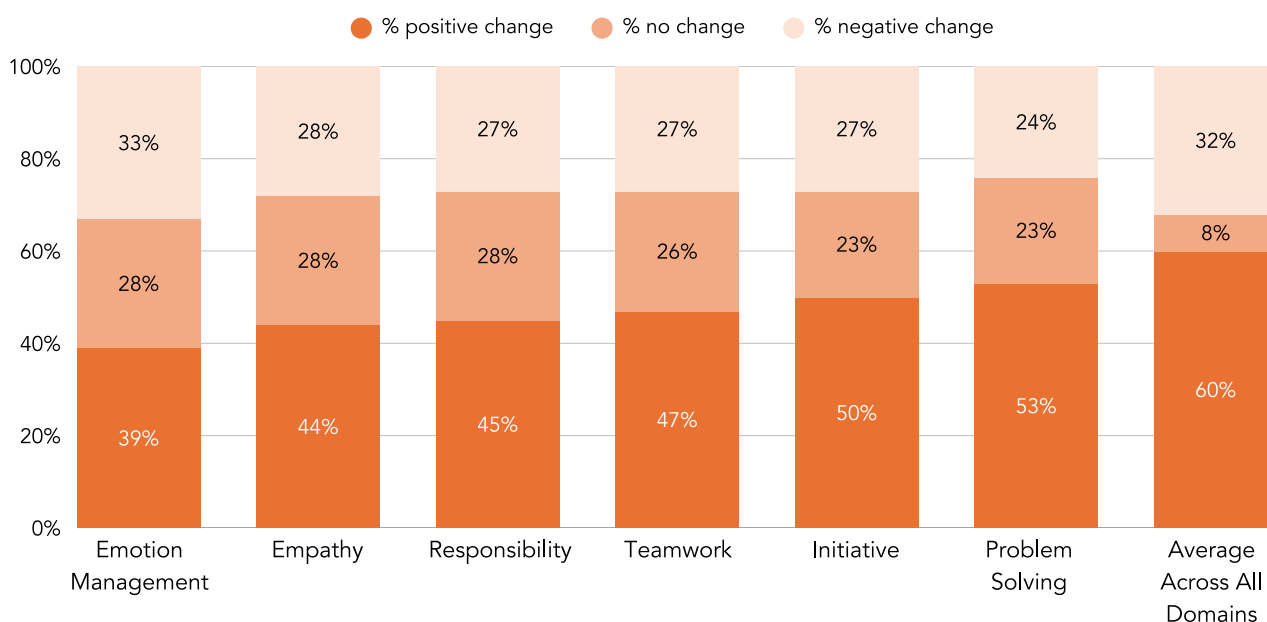
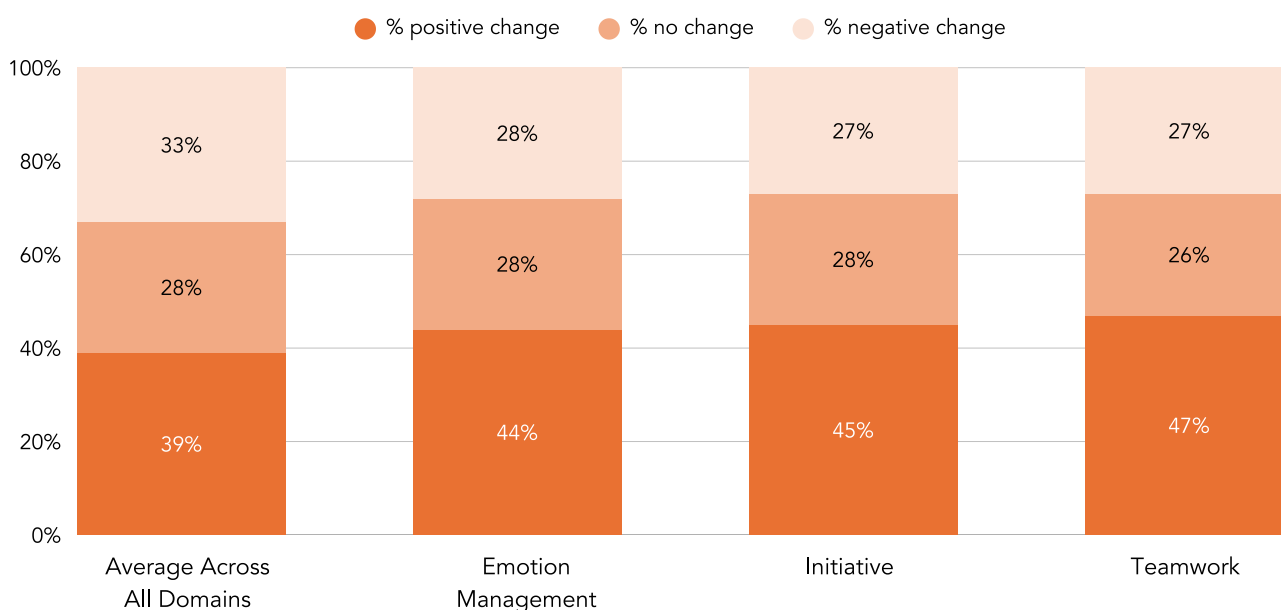


Fig. 8 Group Leader Observations of Socio-Emotional Skills (n=293)



Across both tools, the highest rates of positive change were in the problem solving and initiative domain areas. Conversely, the least amount of positive change across both tools was within emotion management, with two in five (39%) young people seeing positive change in this area via the young person's survey. Further exploration of the mechanisms that support positive socio-emotional skills development is discussed under outcome 4 (p. 33) but, in general, there is close alignment between the problem solving and initiative domain indicators and outdoor learning activities.

These activities involve being in a new physical environment, with new people, responding to new group dynamics with peers, group leaders and Outdoor Learning Provider staff. Crucially, as is discussed under outcome 4 (p. 33), outdoor learning activities are novel with high levels of perceived risk, subsequently young people are supported by peers and adults to challenge themselves.

It is perhaps not surprising that we saw less improvement in scores on the 'emotion management' domain compared to other domain areas as its indicators relate more to internal regulation and can therefore be harder to both externally observe and self-assess. Contextually, many of the more novel and 'risky' outdoor learning activities are described in young people's change stories as exciting, stimulating, and emotionally charged experiences. Perhaps managing emotions like fear and stress are more noticeable or observable to both group leaders and young people themselves as actions relating to taking the initiative, relying on teamwork, or problem solving to navigate challenges rather than being linked to emotion management specifically.

Interestingly, emotion management saw some of the biggest improvements compared to other domain areas during AAfH 2023/24, which adopted a less robust, group-level observation and measurement approach to evaluation. This suggests that emotion management is more easily observable at the group level through young people's interactions.



"the opportunity that this 2-night residential created for our students to experience the outdoors activities and be supported by a first-class specialist activities organisation was outstanding..."

This residential has had a positive impact on the students, who have left with memories and an experience that could not be replicated elsewhere. ...

...ranging from being independent and away from home for the first time to taking on new physical challenges...equipped them with an additional tier of resilience to take on and manage new situations and challenges in their everyday lives." Group Leader

We observed similar rates of improvement across pre/post young person survey scores, regardless of type of visit. This indicates the efficacy of both one-day and two-night outdoor learning experiences to have immediate positive effects on young people's socio-emotional skills. It highlights that neither delivery option is necessarily favourable or more acceptable to young people. Having at least two delivery options enables AAfH to accommodate young people with a variety of needs and differing levels of readiness for engaging with outdoor learning experiences of different lengths and depths. However, more longitudinal approaches to evaluation would be needed to better understand the depth and duration of socio-emotional skills development, or how this intersects with different combinations of demographic characteristics and barriers faced by young people.

Young people who take part in AAfH are also likely to experience other outcomes that are not captured by socio-emotional skills measurement, and these could also be contingent on type of visit. For example, considering improvements to young people's wellbeing could be explored in future iterations of the programme given that AAfH's positive impact on young people's socio-emotional skills is now well-evidenced.



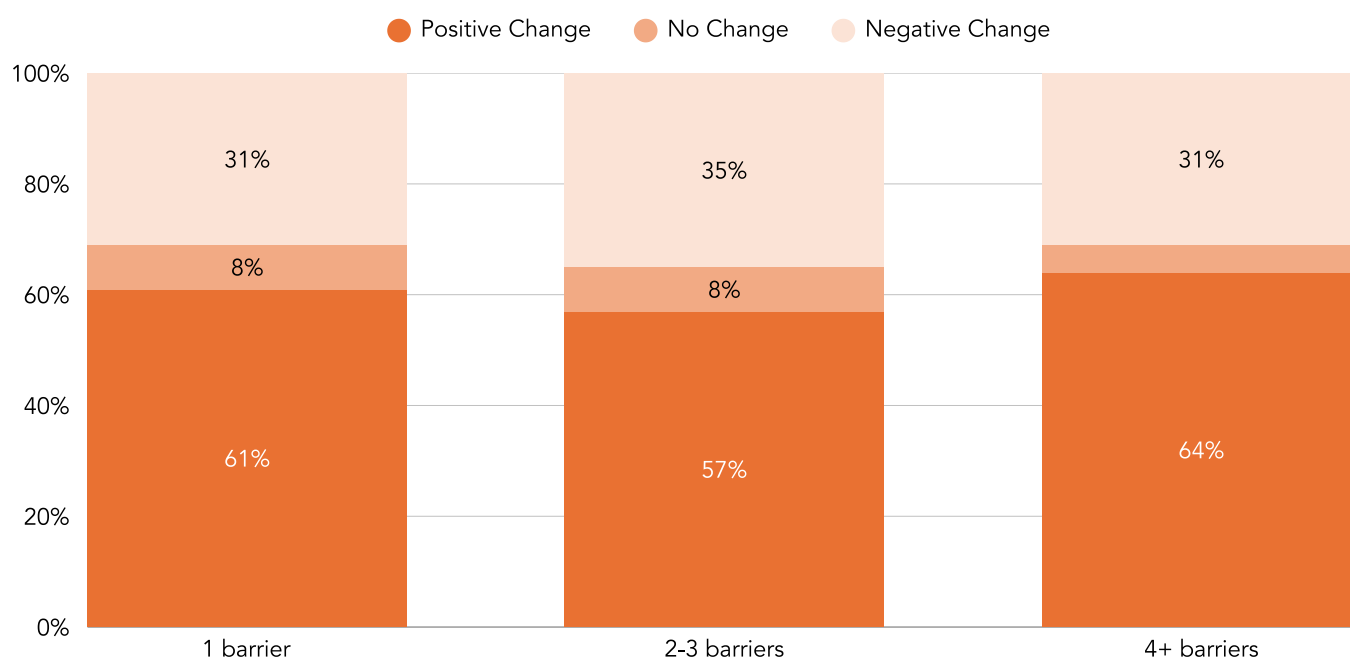
There was also a higher proportion of young people experiencing positive change observed by group leaders when compared to the proportion of positive change indicated by young people themselves (through surveys). This is likely due to some combination of:

- **selection bias:** group leaders selecting young people who they know better, and who they predict are more likely to have a positive experience of AAfH based on their knowledge of the young person's hobbies, interests, and personality.
- **delayed nature of impact:** AAfH is a short intervention, and data is captured before there has been sufficient time for young people themselves to meaningfully reflect and consider how the socio-emotional skills domains show up in other areas of their life.

KPI 2.2: Young people from different under-represented backgrounds improve their socio-emotional skills in different ways through their own personal experience of the outdoor learning opportunity

A key ambition for AAfH 2024/25 was to capture more robust socio-emotional skills data that could be disaggregated by different barriers faced by young people and demographic categories. This would allow us to explore how different under-represented young people experience AAfH. The majority of young people saw a positive change in their socio-emotional skills scores, regardless of how many barriers they face (Fig. 9, below).²⁰ The below graphs consider the average change in socio-emotional skills scores across all domain areas.

Fig. 9 Average socio-emotional score change across all domain areas, by number of barriers (Young Person's Survey)



Similarly, when disaggregating by specific barriers, we can see broadly comparable breakdowns of positive change. Considering learning difficulty/disability, belonging to an ethnic minority, or level of academic attainment as an illustrative set of examples, we can observe similar proportions of young people experiencing positive change across their average socio-emotional skills score (Figs. 10 – 12).

²⁰ See p. 10 for our definition and discussion of 'barriers'

The data collected from young people via the pre/post surveys indicates that outdoor learning, delivered with the youth sector, is a powerful tool for supporting the development of young people's socio-emotional skills, regardless of the barriers they may face. This highlights how AAFH is a powerful, inclusive mechanism to engage and support all young people, not just those with specific skills or prior knowledge of the outdoor learning world.

This impact was underpinned by UK Youth's inclusive and youth-led selection process of Outdoor Learning Providers. This involved assessing their external accreditations and reviewing their processes and policies. This selection process helped to ensure that funding was awarded to a diverse range of Outdoor Learning Providers in terms of size and type. The AAFH 2024/25 delivery team consider this to be an important factor in delivering impactful and inclusive outdoor learning experience for under-represented young people.

Fig. 10 Average socio-emotional score change across all domain areas, by ethnic minority

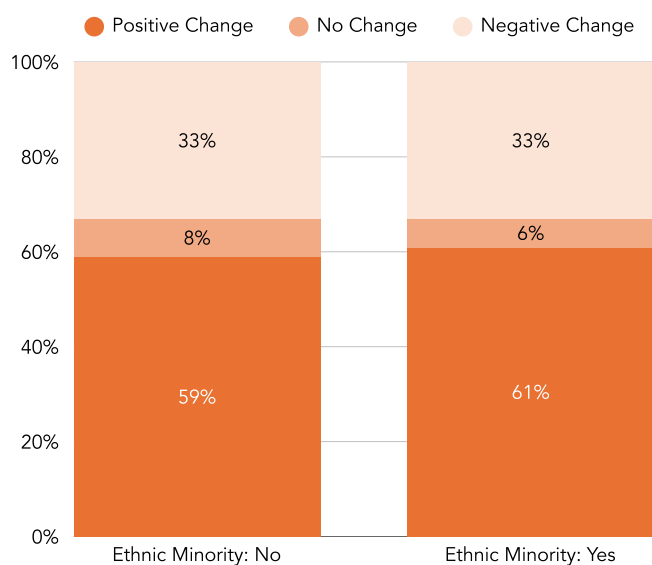


Fig. 11 Average socio-emotional score change across all domain areas, by attainment

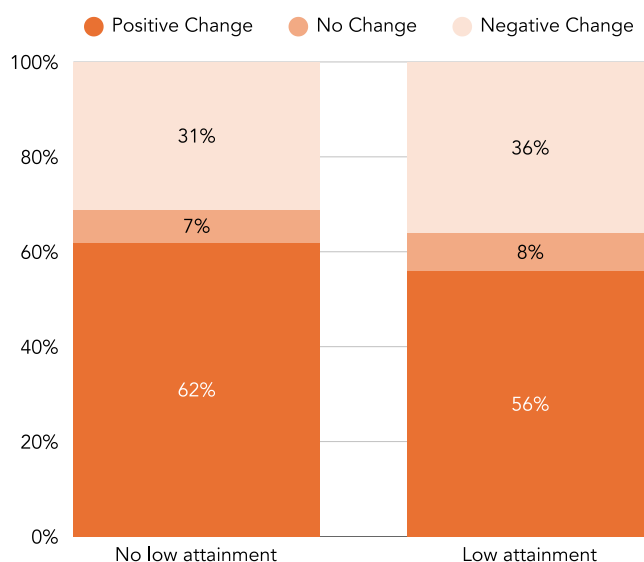
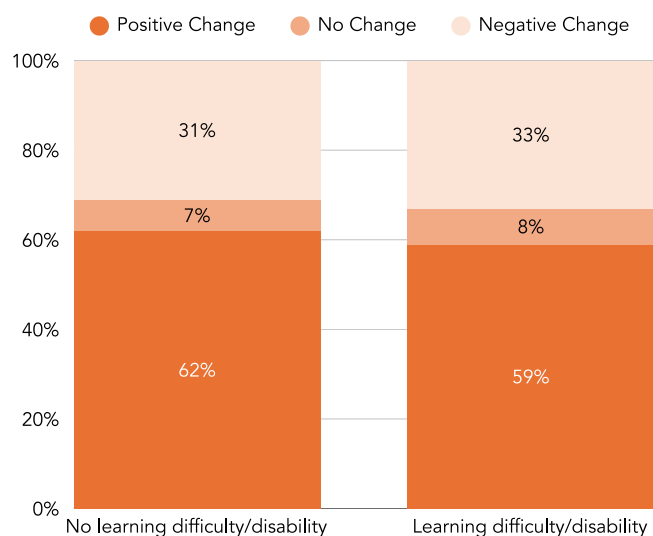
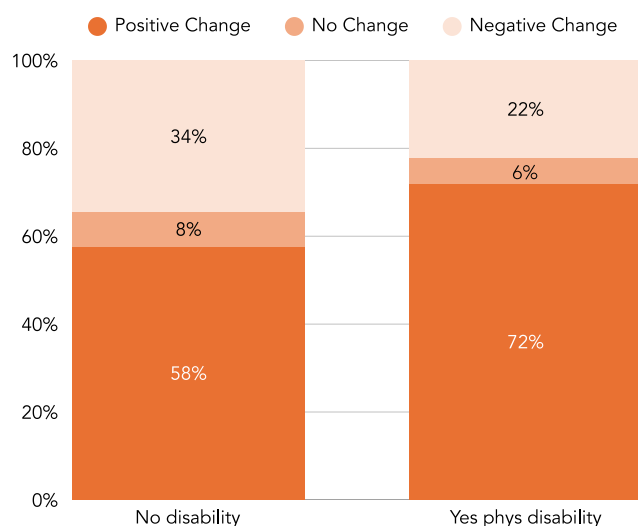


Fig. 12 Average socio-emotional score change across all domain areas, by learning difficulty/disability



However, when considering physical disability, we can see higher rates of positive change for young people with a disability when compared to young people without disabilities (72% of young people reporting a positive change versus 58%, Fig. 13 below). This means young people with a disability were 16% ppts more likely to see positive changes in their average socio-emotional skills scores when compared to non-disabled young people. This is an important finding that indicates that selected Outdoor Learning Providers were successful in delivering high quality, inclusive, and accessible outdoor learning provision. This is testament to the work of Providers' staff and the accessibility of their facilities.

Fig. 13 Average socio-emotional score change across all domain areas, by physical disability



When considering why young people with a physical disability saw comparably high increases in socio-emotional skills development, one possible explanation relates to the physical/embodied nature of many outdoor learning activities. AAfH offers activities that young people with disabilities are often either excluded from or, at the very least, are much harder to access. Young people with a disability are also more likely to be absent from school, experience loneliness and/or face stigmatisation from society with preconceived notions about what they can/cannot do, and what is/is not possible for them. AAfH 2024/25 served as an important experience and milestone that reminded both young people themselves, and the adults around them, as to what they can achieve. When resourced to do so, outdoor learning providers can offer experiences and provide opportunities that enable young people to overcome barriers they may be facing.



"I'm enough" Young Person



"For our Deaf students with additional needs this trip was nothing short of miraculous! We saw countless examples of students doing things they (and us!) never thought they could. They developed confidence, deepened their relationships with each other, learnt so many new skills. It was life changing. A large portion of our young people had not been away from home before. Parents were astounded at what they saw. It was a very moving and transformational experience.." – Youth Group Leader



“This was amazing...I chose to observe a [young person with selective mutism] and often withdraws from activities. Today the student participated and was observed laughing and spoke to another student”
– Youth Group Leader

Together, the data gathered on AAfH 2024/25 shows that outdoor learning opportunities support the development of young people’s socio-emotional skills. Socio-emotional skills are the foundations that support young people navigate their future decisions and experiences of education, employment, and their wider lives. Further detail and nuance on young people’s experience of their AAfH visit was collected via young people’s change stories.

Stories of change – ‘I’ve learned I can’

We received 546 young people’s change stories, including written and audio responses, which ask six open, broad questions about their AAfH visit.²¹ The responses varied widely in the level of detail provided and the depth of reflection on their experience. The stories discuss every aspect of the outdoor learning experience – perhaps primarily the activities, but also the natural settings, the experience of being away from home, and the primacy of the people alongside them. The stories captured through AAfH 2024/25 support the evaluation findings of previous iterations of AAfH. Overall, responses tell the stories of young people who have been changed by their experience, with voices that are excited, proud and often in awe of what they have achieved.

Taking an inductive, thematic approach to qualitative analysis, the socio-emotional skills that surface most often are those related primarily to emotional literacy (emotion management, empathy, resilience) and social interaction (communication, teamwork). Problem solving skills were not widely discussed despite emerging as an area of highest change from the survey, demonstrating an interesting incongruence between survey scores and what young people recognise in themselves or want to discuss. The wide array of skills demonstrated by young people within the outdoor learning setting sets them up to develop greater independence and successfully navigate their futures in education, the world of work and their personal relationships.

The centrality of increased self-confidence and improved self-perception are palpable in these stories as young people reflect on their visit, and this emerged as the strongest theme. The words “I can” resurface constantly in reflections on what participants have learnt about themselves. Learning that they are in fact able to do something – or many things – they previously did not know they were capable of, provides tangible evidence for young people of their own capacity for action and accomplishment. The challenge provided by outdoor learning provision is central to this development. The changes in confidence and self-perception offer a foundation for the development of other skills – both the ability to try the activities that will offer practice of these skills and the ability to perceive these skills in oneself.



“I didn’t think I would be able to complete any of the activities, but I wanted to make my family proud of me. I was really proud of myself afterwards. I have learnt to be more confident in myself.” Young Person



“I learnt I could handle being out of my comfort zone. Like when I push myself, I can achieve it.” Young Person

²¹ See Appendix B. The total of 546 was indicated by Outdoor Learning Providers via their Trackers.

Young people's narratives regarding their greatest challenges highlighted the emotional literacy skills that were required and developed during their visit. Most common were challenges relating to the physicality of activities and social interactions. Many young people then go on to explain and celebrate how they overcame these challenges, pushing themselves to try something new or to persevere with something difficult. This involves recognising a feeling in themselves, such as fear or anxiety, and then pushing themselves to overcome or control these feelings. Similarly, young people demonstrated significant resilience in overcoming physical challenges including fatiguing muscles during long walks or physically demanding activities, discomfort from being wet or muddy and lack of sleep. Young people recounted how they kept going despite these challenges to continue taking part in the experience. The empathy young people feel and express for one another presented a touching thread in many responses, with young people offering and receiving help from one another and recognising that others faced different challenges to them.



"I learned that I'm stronger and more independent than I thought. Even though I was nervous and missed my family, I managed to handle everything and enjoy the adventure. It showed me that I can face new challenges and grow from them." Young Person

Another common theme in young people's greatest personal challenges was facing social situations such as socialising, meeting new people or speaking in front of others. Social situations also featured in young people's reflections on their feelings before the visit, both uncertainty and nervousness about meeting new people and the inverse – excitement about taking part with friends. Despite this being a significant source of concern for young people, it was an area of significant development. Many young people mentioned working as part of a team as a skill they had developed during their visit. Spending time and working with their group was also mentioned in relation to what young people enjoyed most about their experience. More subtle reflections emerged from young people's accounts of what they had learnt about themselves. They told us that they had learnt through the visit that they are able to meet new people, make friends, work with others and even lead activities. The development of communication skills was evident through tangible examples – recognition of their ability to ask for help, to give instructions and to connect with peers. These reflections point to the outdoor learning setting and provision facilitating feelings of belonging and community among young people, even developing a sense of social cohesion among participants who may be meeting for the first time.



"I have learned that I don't need to worry about meeting people"



"I'm able to give instructions to my group and be heard"



"I can make friends. I feel less lonely now."



"I learned to ask for the things I want."

It is interesting that insights discussed above regarding evidence of socio-emotional skills development were concentrated in responses relating to 'learning about the self' rather than the development of

a specific skill. This, and the wording of responses, suggests perhaps that young people view these skills to have 'been there all along', with them only just noticing these qualities in themselves. It is certainly noticeable that young people quickly internalise certain skills once provided an opportunity to demonstrate or develop it. Many young people spoke about learning that "I can" do something they previously thought they could not do. Others go further than this, telling us that they are "good at" or that they "like" or "enjoy" something that was new or challenging for them. A key realisation was that an activity or opportunity being new or scary should not automatically mean it is avoided – in other words we should 'do it scared'. It is clear from the stories that many young people gained a different image of themselves, of someone who is more confident and capable than they realised.

What is the one biggest thing you learnt about yourself through this experience?

“

"That it is fun to socialise as before I was not very good at it"

“

"I don't give up easily"

“

"I have more stamina than I knew"

“

"We can all do more than we think we can!"

It is clear through the personal change stories that the vast majority of young people did experience a change – and for many, this change was truly profound. Recognition of their own capacity to try new things and to achieve what previously seemed impossible provided striking boosts to self-confidence. This strong foundation of self-esteem, as well as development of specific socio-emotional skills, sets young people up to be open, brave and persistent in the face of new opportunities and challenges in their education, work and wider life.

“

"I have learnt to try and do things even if it seems scary or something I wouldn't be very good at. I didn't ever think I would be able to go into the freezing cold water and it was really good and fun."

"I have learned to believe in myself and be more confident because now I have done that (go in the water) I can do more new things."



Outcome 3: Youth practitioners develop stronger relationships with young people and gain new skills through their group's outdoor learning experience

Outcome statement 3: AAfH 2024/25 strengthened relationships between youth practitioners and the young people they work with. Outdoor learning activities provided moments for trusted adults to relate and respond to the young people they work with in a different way, and in a different setting.

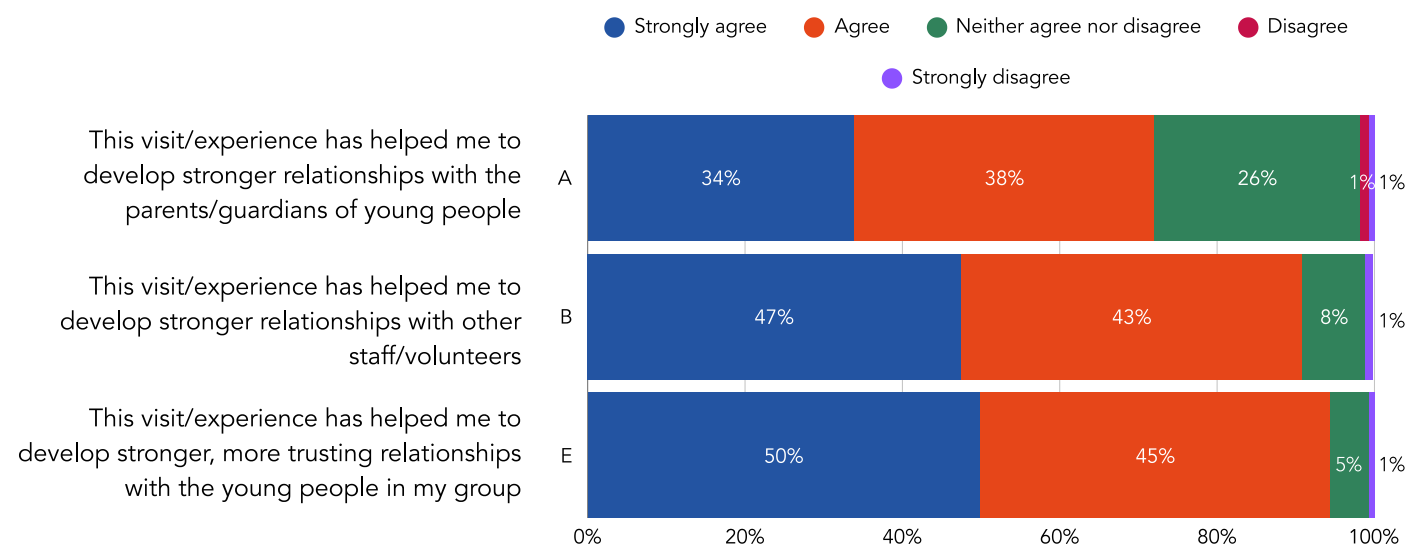
Throughout our evaluations of AAfH, the impact of these experiences on youth practitioners has been a key area of learning and exploration. Below, we highlight how these experiences relate to their perceptions of their relationships with young people and wider communities; the new skills they acquire through AAfH; and their overall experience of AAfH 2024/25. Further discussion of the underlying mechanisms is explored under outcome 4, evaluation question 2 (p. 38).

We collected data under this outcome in two key ways: principally via the post-youth group leader observation form, but further context and insight was supplied through quality assurance visit observations and informal interviews with key Outdoor Learning Provider delivery staff carried out by UK Youth's delivery team.

KPI 3.1: Youth practitioners develop stronger relationships with their groups of young people through the outdoor learning experience

Youth practitioners can often be a key trusted adult in a young person's life. These relationships are therefore the key first step in supporting young people to access learning and development opportunities. On AAfH 2024/25, 95% of youth group leaders agreed/strongly agreed that the visits helped them to develop stronger/more trusting relationships with the young people in their group (Fig. 14, below). This highlights the powerful role AAfH can play in building stronger and more trusting relationships with the young people they work with.

Fig. 14 Group Leader's Self-Perceived Outcomes (n=451)





"The whole experience was a great chance for myself to get to know the students more, and get to see their strengths and weaknesses and how they handle challenges, and how far they are willing to push themselves to achieve at a task." – Youth Group Leader, Post Visit Observation



"This was a great opportunity for the group to build relationships with both peers and staff beyond the classroom. Although this was only a day visit, it has laid the seed for extending the experience" – Youth Group Leader, Post Visit Observation

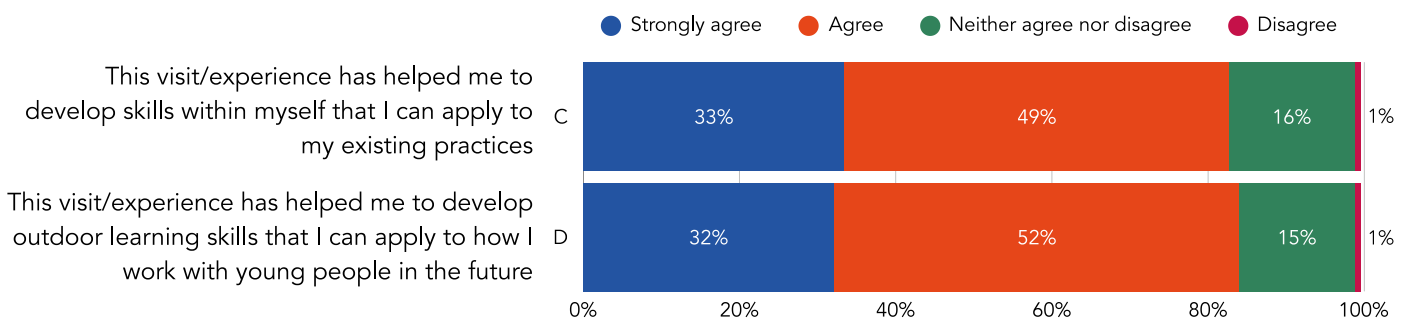
The statement with the highest proportion of neutral/neither responses, is around improved relationships with young people's parents/guardians. However, 72% still agreed/strongly agreed with this statement, which is a positive outcome that should be celebrated.

In many cases, youth group leaders are likely to have good relationships with parents/guardians in the first place, given that they have been trusted to take the young people away in the first place, so there was more limited scope for this to be improved. More fundamentally, many of the group leaders will have been more focused on building relationships directly with the young people themselves rather than their parents/guardians.

KPI 3.2: Youth practitioners develop new outdoor learning skills that they can apply to their practice

Outdoor learning is a diverse practice that encompasses many different types of activities. A key ambition of the AAfH delivery model is to create opportunities for onward impact by supporting group leaders to develop new outdoor learning skills that they can then go on to apply to their everyday practice with young people. In doing so, the longer-term impact of AAfH can potentially be sustained through the education/ youth sectors, and bring to life the various shared skills, activities, and outcomes that youth work and the outdoor learning sector are based on.

Fig 15. Group Leader Observations on Perception of Impact of AAfH Experience (n=451)



Over 4 out of 5 (84%) group leaders agreed/strongly agreed that they had developed new outdoor learning skills that they can apply to their practice. More targeted additional investigation would be needed to develop our understanding of the specific outdoor learning skills that were taken on more fully. There were nevertheless some illustrative examples through group leaders' open text responses:

- One response spoke to the **straightforward direct application of activities**, simply running the same activities at their setting. After witnessing how accessible and fun/engaging young people found bushcraft skills, they indicated that they would try and run similar activities as a wider group in their setting. This highlights the onward impact of AAfH in bringing outdoor learning skills and activities to audiences beyond participating groups.
- Another spoke of how the visit provided an **introduction to more hands-on, practical approaches to studying the natural environment**, with some groups taking part in activities related to learning about biology and the natural world. This suggests how some specific outdoor learning experiences can directly support/supplement the curriculum in a more practical/hands on way.
- A similar point was reflected in a different way, where a respondent reflected on how the outdoor learning setting and its activities **demonstrated ways to bring ideas/skills around personal development to life in real world situations**. The outdoor learning setting provided a new context for the ideas/skills that group leaders were already trying to share with young people in their usual settings. They reflected that reinforcing the importance of teamwork, resilience, and independence in a practical way helped attending young people understand them in a new or different way that is not always possible within a classroom/youth club. Therefore, AAfH provides crucial opportunities for educators/youth practitioners to demonstrate important skills in ways that young people may find more understandable and accessible.



"[Attending young people can]..reflect on their experiences which have equipped them with an additional tier of resilience to take on and manage new situations and challenges in their everyday lives" Group Leader

KPI 3.3: Youth group leaders have an engaging and positive experience of their group's outdoor learning opportunity and would recommend it to others

Beyond deepening their relationships with young people, or acquiring new skills, AAfH 2024/25 also set out to provide a positive engaging experience for youth group leaders. Youth group leaders had an engaging and positive experience of their group's outdoor learning opportunity, with a Net Promoter Score of +84.²² This score indicates participating group leaders are highly likely to recommend AAfH to other youth practitioners. Beyond this, analysis of the 238 open text responses to the post group leader observation form pulled out a number of key themes:

- Comments generally focused on the positive nature of the overall experience: the vast majority of feedback was very positive, with group leaders variously describing their visits as some combination of 'amazing' and 'brilliant', with many expressing a desire to repeat the experience in the future.
- A number of responses also reflected on the significant impact of the AAfH experience on young people's personal development: Within this, the most common areas mentioned were:
 - » **Increased confidence and self-esteem**, where young people were described as 'conquering their worries' and 'feeling proud of themselves'
 - » **Improved resilience and determination** where 'young people push themselves out of their comfort zones and conquer some real fears'

²² Net Promoter Score is a standardised metric for measuring customer experience. It indicates whether a 'customer' is likely to promote a service or good to another potential customer – the higher the score the more likely customers are to recommend the service to others. This +84 can be considered 'excellent' by general benchmarks as an Outdoor Learning-specific industry benchmark is not available. ([SurveyMonkey](#))

- » **Stronger teamwork and more developed social skills:** they described the importance of young people learning to work together towards a common goal. The absence of phones was sometimes noted as an enabling factor, with this creating space for young people to form and develop relationships.



"A really positive impact from spending time without phones which has helped with social skills." Group Leader



"we went from all the younger people barely communicating with their heads stuck in their mobile phones on arrival to a group confidently chatting and bantering with each other over shared experiences by the end" Group Leader

- **High quality and supportive outdoor learning teams:** the staff and instructors at the various provisions received widespread praise for being both friendly and approachable while being professional and knowledgeable about their work. Group leaders recognised outdoor learning instructors' abilities to engage young people, offer support and encouragement when taking part in activities, and adapt their approach/activities/instructions to meet the specific or different needs of participating young people.
- **Overall value of AAfH 2024/25 for under-represented young people:** Many respondents emphasised the value of the experience for young people who would not normally have such opportunities due to financial constraints and other barriers. For example, group leaders spoke of how the visits provided a chance for young carers to "be kids and let go of their worries", and for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people to reframe past negative experiences they had experienced outdoors in their journeys to the UK. The funding that made these trips possible was frequently mentioned as crucial, with many stating they could not have participated otherwise.



"The young people may have had experience of walking in the countryside, camping and eating outdoors on their difficult journeys to the UK, this trip gave them the opportunity to reframe their experiences and begin to develop a relationship with wider parts of the UK"
Group Leader

Evaluation Outcomes & Learning Questions

Outcome 4: UK Youth builds evidence that AAfH can be successfully delivered at scale across outdoor learning venues in England, connecting them to youth organisations and organisations that specialise in inclusive provision.

In this section, we reflect on findings from across the three delivery outcomes alongside key successes and learning across the mobilisation, delivery, and evaluation of AAfH 2024/25.

Initial mobilisation of the sector: In a relatively short timeframe, UK Youth ran an open funding application, sifted, quality assured and then onboarded 69 Outdoor Learning Providers. These providers range in size, model, and location, but have in common the delivery of engaging and inclusive outdoor learning activities. Drawing on both Outdoor Learning Providers' existing networks, and in places supported by UK Youth's own network, AAfH 2024/25 went on to engage over 500 youth groups/schools and 9,750 young people across a three-month period.

Crucially, as discussed under outcome 1, AAfH 2024/25 reached young people who have been historically under-represented in the outdoor learning sector, and faced barriers to accessing these opportunities. It was therefore critical that AAfH 2024/25 took place in settings that have been designed to be accessible, inclusive, and that can be further adapted according to young people's needs to ensure they have a positive experience. The evidence and insight discussed under outcome 2 speaks to the widespread positive impact of AAfH 2024/25 on young people's socio-emotional skills. Under outcome 3, this report highlights the onward systemic impact of AAfH on youth practitioners' relationships with young people and their communities, and by bringing outdoor learning skills and activities into the education/youth worlds.

Together, UK Youth's expertise in grant distribution, youth work and outdoor learning, coupled with a strong reputation for delivering AAfH over three years, supported the organisation's ability to mobilise quickly, effectively and at scale.

When additional funding was made available by DCMS in the final month of the 2024/25 delivery period, UK Youth and the funded Outdoor Learning Providers were able to mobilise to further accommodate higher numbers of young people. This demonstrates both the level of need and demand for financial support to access these opportunities, but also the sector's flexibility and capacity to deliver successfully at scale and pace.

UK Youth has now consistently reached large numbers of both Outdoor Learning Providers and young people across three iterations of AAfH. Underpinning the rapid mobilisation of the youth, SEND education, and outdoor learning sectors that is required for AAfH to be successful and impactful, is UK Youth's critical role as an infrastructure body that holds a number of relationships across these often distinct spheres of policy and practice.

However, relationships alone are not a sufficient mechanism to sustainably scale and deepen



impact. Simply put, the greater the funding, the longer the time made available for planning and delivery, the greater the scale, quality and impact that is possible on AAfH. As discussed under outcome 2, the longer the lead in time, the more likely the sector is able to engage and support young people facing multiple barriers to attend. Renewing AAfH on a multi-year basis would ensure the programme can provide continuity and continue to expand access to underserved young people.

Beyond rapid mobilisation, UK Youth's relationships, sector position, and expertise across delivery/evaluation of youth development initiatives enabled the organisation to collect a large amount of data to support a more robust and thorough evaluation of AAfH. To build on this evidence and expertise, we wanted to explore two evaluation questions that relate to the mechanisms underpinning the observed impact to deepen our understanding of how outcomes 2 and 3 discussed in the previous sections may have been achieved.

Evaluation question 1: How do short-term outdoor learning experiences support young people facing barriers to participation in developing socio-emotional skills, equipping them for educational resilience, positive social relationships, and overall health and well-being?

Insight under this evaluation question was generated through analysis of group leaders' open text responses and a random sample of young people's change stories. The analysis indicates the following are key to supporting young people's development through outdoor learning:

- **Natural environments:** Spending time in different, natural spaces and getting hands-on with nature had a strong, positive impact on young people's enjoyment, mood and lasting interest in nature.
- **Social support and relationship building:** Outdoor learning activities facilitated the development and strengthening of relationships between new and old friends, providing social cushioning that, in a cyclical process of impact, supported participation in more challenging aspects of the experience.
- **Supported challenge:** The mental and physical challenges experienced by young people provided real-world evidence of their own capacity and resilience that fed into improvements in self-esteem.
- **Novel and risky activities:** Short-term outdoor learning opportunities create 'real life' embodied experiences for young people to encounter and deal with increased levels of perceived risk in a safe and social setting. Encountering and dealing with new and 'risky' situations with both peers and trusted adults, serves as a critical enabler of positive socio-emotional outcomes.

These mechanisms of outdoor learning provide young people with experiences of new places and activities that inspire lasting interest in nature and physical activities, and improve essential socio-emotional skills and resilience to support their continued development.

Natural environments

There is much research about the connection between spending time in more natural environments and wellbeing benefits, and this theme came out strongly in young people's change stories across both AAfH 2023/24 and 2024/25.²³ Being outside, in a particular landscape or interacting with a particular element of nature, was often mentioned in young people's descriptions of what they enjoyed most about their AAfH experience. Young people describe simply "being outside" as a highlight of their visit, as well as more specifically being on, in or near water or visiting woods, mountains or a beach. This resonates with research that finds that 'wilder' environments offer better capacity for connecting with nature in comparison to green spaces in more built-up environments, demonstrating the value of the 'escape to the countryside' that many of the AAfH visits offered.²⁴ Many young people also valued getting truly stuck in with the natural world – enjoying bushcraft activities and exploring wildlife in ponds and woodland.

23 Natural England (2024) The Children's People and Nature Survey for England: 2024 update. [Available at here](#); Mental Health Foundation (2021) How connecting with nature benefits our mental health. [Available at here](#).

24 Lengieza, M. L., Richardson, M. & Hughes, J. P. (2025). Feature networks: [The environmental features that are central to nature-connectedness experiences. Landscape and Urban Planning](#)



"I loved the outdoor activities the most. We went hiking, which was amazing because the views were beautiful." – Young person



"I liked going to the woods and lifting logs and finding the creatures and seeing what their names were." – Young person

In addition to simply enjoying their interaction with nature, there were evident positive impacts of this experience. Young people described their experience as relaxing and linked this specifically to the natural environment. One young person shared,



"Being away from home, in nature and with the group helped me be calm" – Young person.

This greater engagement with and appreciation of nature can support young people to develop an understanding of environmental science and sustainability, provoking an interest in these areas of education and work.

Being outside also provoked an interest in spending more time in nature for many young people, with many expressing a desire to get involved in more outdoor activities beyond their trip. Young people expressed hope in and enthusiasm for spending more time in the countryside, on or near water and just generally outdoors after their trip. However young people also noted that they would not be able to do some of the outdoor activities outside of AAFH. For example, young people who do not live close to a body of water would have less opportunities for paddle boarding and kayaking. This highlights the need for the programme to enable young people access to nature and activities they would not have the opportunity to experience in their everyday lives.



"I would like to try more new things and do more things outside." – Young person



"In youth work you don't normally get to see the impact you have made on a young person until years down the line, but this weekend we got to see the impact on three young people almost straight away, to the point that one person wants to work with the team that took us climbing and the other wants to take up climbing" Group Leader

Social support and relationship building

The relationships that young people made or strengthened during their visit were also a key theme and enabler of an effective visit. As discussed above regarding the development of social skills (p. 34), the presence or lack of known peers or friends was a key determinant of young people's feelings towards the visit before attending, with the former related to more excitement and the latter related to greater anxiety. Additionally, social interactions were considered their greatest challenge by many young people. However,

during the visit young people mentioned time with peers and friends as one of the most enjoyable aspects of the experience, including meeting new people, working together as a team and spending downtime with one another. Additionally, the presence of outdoor learning instructors was mentioned, with their guidance and encouragement clearly a key element of support for participants.



"my instructormade me realise that I can do it." Young person



"This was such a magical trip for us and our young carers. They were able to be kids and let go of their worries for a weekend away. During free time back at the house we observed them setting up their own circle time to get to know each other, this wasn't prompted by us and completely off their own backs. They got to know each other on a deeper level and got to explore the outdoors in ways they would be able to back home" Group Leader

While the value for young people of time spent away from screens was mentioned by youth group leaders, this did not emerge in the young person's change stories. This indicates that these different circumstances were very noticeable for youth practitioners, who are perhaps more aware of the negative sides to excessive screentime for young people. Additionally, it suggests that for young people having time away from screens did not feel like a noteworthy part of their experience, highlighting how engaging, exciting and inspiring the experience was for many. Moreover, enabling time away from screens is not a primary goal of outdoor learning nor AafH. However, outdoor learning settings can provide engaging screen-free activities and offer opportunities for young people to develop the socio-emotional skills they need (such as 'initiative'), to facilitate effective self-management of screen time. This also provides a strong foundation for discernment of when screen time is appropriate in, for example, workplace and educational environments.

Supported challenge and 'challenge by choice'

Young people's experiences of varied challenges emerged from their stories. Some challenges young people felt they had some choice in – for example taking part in activities. Others were non-negotiable or involved unavoidable circumstances, such as adverse weather conditions, being away from home or interacting with others. Additionally, some challenges were primarily physical, such as tiredness, while others were largely mental challenges, like wanting to give up. However, young people were not overcome by these challenges. Many of these contributed to young people testing and developing their own resilience, and by extension their own self-belief and self-perception of their abilities and limitations.

Less than ideal weather was frequently mentioned in young people's descriptions of the challenges they faced during their visit. Young people faced cold, rain, wind, sleet and snow. Similarly, getting wet, dirty or tired were mentioned as their biggest challenges, and facing physical challenges such as long or steep walks, heights and activities requiring physical strength and stamina.



"The biggest challenge was the rock climbing. It was really tough physically and required a lot of strength and focus. I definitely wanted to give up, but my friends and the instructors kept encouraging me, and I eventually made it to the top." – Young person

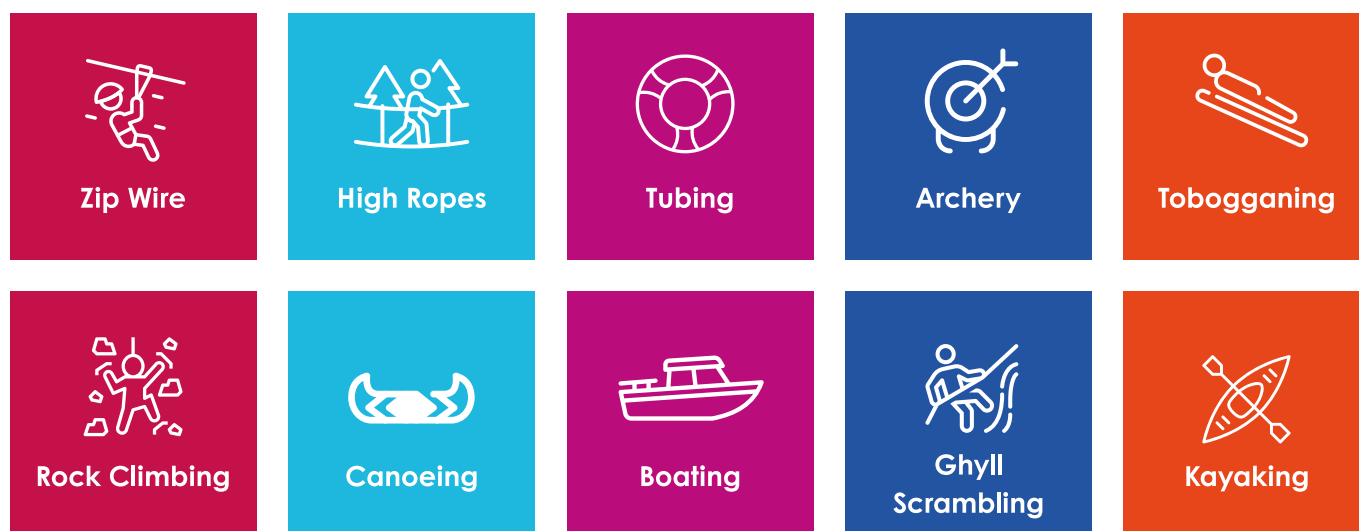
Young people also shared the mental challenges they faced during their visit. Many young people struggled with missing home and their families, or adapting to a new environment and routine, including sharing a room with other young people (especially those who snore!). Additionally, meeting new people or socialising at all was mentioned as the greatest challenge young people faced during their visit.

Novel and 'risky' activities

Young people discuss the activities they take part in as part of AAfH with lots of enthusiasm. Their discussion of the activities provides insight into the vast diversity of activities offered as part of AAfH (see Fig. 16 below). Much of this is down to their novelty – young people note that they 'haven't done something before' or 'it's something they hadn't thought to try'. Often, young people noted that they 'weren't sure they would like the activity' – or they 'were sure they wouldn't'. Trying the activity, in a group, with encouragement from instructors, group leaders and peers, supports young people to have a go – and often to be pleasantly surprised at their enjoyment or capacity to take part. Linked to the earlier reflections on the role of 'supported challenge', benefitting from a taste of a new activity provided an opportunity for young people to test their resilience and develop their self-confidence.

Activities that include higher elements of perceived risk were also frequently remarked upon by young people. For example, learning how to make a fire or taking part in archery were often mentioned as highlights of the visit. We know from anecdotal evidence that professionals working with young people can be uncertain and hesitant towards outdoor learning activities that they perceive as 'risky'.²⁵ Walking on slippery ground may be flagged as a health and safety risk for many youth group leaders, let alone considering activities such as axe-throwing or fire-starting. However, as discussed in the previous AAfH 2023/24 evaluation report, risky activities are a key hook for young people's interest in outdoor provision. Being trusted with 'risky' activities is an effective engagement tool as well as an opportunity for skills development, particularly in responsibility, independence and initiative. Outdoor learning providers are able to offer expertise in facilitating 'risky' activities that young people would not be offered elsewhere and so offer a unique approach to skills development.

Figure 16. What did you enjoy most about your visit? – key activities mentioned



²⁵ YouthLink Scotland and John Muir Trust (2020) [Taking Youth Work Outdoors \[webinar\]](#)

Evaluation question 2: How do short-term outdoor learning experiences support youth practitioners to develop stronger relationships with young people, gain new skills and contribute to their professional development?

Under outcome 3 (p. 29) we explored the impact of short-term outdoor learning experiences on youth practitioners: Their relationships with young people, the skills they gained and their overall professional development. This evaluation question explores youth group leader's open text responses to draw out the underlying mechanisms, focusing on 'how' the impact was achieved.

Group leaders' responses highlight a number of important themes:

- **Shared experience of overcoming challenges:** Practitioners would witness young people going outside their comfort zones. Being present and supportive during these moments can build trust and mutual respect. This aligns with UK Youth's 'Experience, Learn, Develop' framework for outdoor learning.²⁶ Additionally, activities that required teamwork and collaborative problem solving encouraged youth practitioners and young people to work together towards a common goal, which can build a sense of camaraderie. A respondent highlighted how:



"this is a great overall experience for young people and staff to bond in a challenging and enjoyable environment" Group Leader

- **Observing young people in a different context:** Away from their usual (and perhaps more formal) setting, practitioners have the opportunity to see different 'sides' of the young people they work with. This new perspective can lead to better mutual understanding and resultant relationships. For example:



"The centre and the number of students we could bring was perfect in helping LS to feel safe enough to participate fully. He has developed relationships with staff that previously were strained and we have seen a different side of him!" Group Leader

- **New perspectives on young people's capabilities:** Seeing young people succeed in challenging outdoor activities can change practitioners' perceptions of their abilities and resilience. One said:



"I can't believe what this opportunity has done to develop this young man it was a privilege to watch him for the past three days grow in this environment". Group Leader

Another noted,



"The pupils that were present on the residential have all overcome barriers/ obstacles which has allowed them to feel empowered...". Group Leader

²⁶ For a topline description of the various outcome areas of UK Youth's 'Experience, Learn, Develop' model, [see here](#). For a more detailed breakdown of how the model applies to specific outdoor learning activities, [see here](#).

- **Increased contact time and scope for informal interactions in a novel setting:** two-night experiences in particular offer more time for informal interactions outside of structured activities. This provides the time, space, and opportunity for both young people and youth practitioners to get to know and better understand each other. The role of the outdoor learning setting -simply being somewhere new and different for both practitioner and young person – means it is a more neutral environment than the classroom or youth club. One practitioner noted that:



“whole experience was a great chance for myself to get to know them [the young people] more, and get to see their strengths and weaknesses and how they handle challenges...” Group Leader

Another spoke of how the



“whole experience was a great chance for myself to get to know them [the young people] more, and get to see their strengths and weaknesses and how they handle challenges...” Group Leader

- **Gain new skills through observation,** direct participation, and developing their understanding of young people’s learning styles. This mechanism was encouraged by the pre/post group leader observational evaluation tool, which provided the opportunity for group leaders to observe one young person’s journey through the AAfH experience and reflect on their socio-emotional skills development and how they responded to the various component parts of an outdoor learning experience.
- **Observing expert facilitation:** youth practitioners saw skilled outdoor learning instructors/educators manage groups, adapt activities, and engage young people with diverse needs, while managing a dynamic health and safety environment. This can provide a model for their own practice, with a respondent noting:



“Very professional, informative, confident staff team which helped us to enjoy our own experience” Group Leader



- Observing expert outdoor learning practitioners can also provide **new ideas, activities, or techniques for their own practice**, either by implementing them directly themselves, or seeking out resources to support ideas/activities/techniques to be further explored/adapted to their setting.
- Underpinning the previous two points around developing new skills, is how outdoor learning opportunities **support practitioners to understand young people's different learning styles**. Seeing how young people thrive in an experiential and hands on environment can deepen this understanding of how to cater to their needs. This does not just apply to academic learning, but personal and social development too.

Contributing to their professional development by... broadening perspectives, enhancing understanding of young people, and providing practical experience:

- **Increased understanding of group dynamics:** Observing how groups form, interact, and support each other in a less structured environment provides valuable insights into group dynamics that can inform their practice across formal and informal education settings. This was a key finding on AAFH 2023/24 too.
- **Increased confidence in supporting young people with diverse needs:** The need to support all young people in the outdoor environment, including those with complex needs, emotional difficulties, or language barriers, provides practical experience and builds practitioner's confidence in inclusive practices.
- **Building confidence to advocate for the importance of outdoor learning:** While not always explicitly stated as a skill gained, the wide-ranging positive experiences observed for participating young people will likely contribute to practitioners' confidence in advocating for the importance of outdoor learning opportunities.



Outcome 5: UK Youth improves understanding of the delivery chain, including the relationship between the outdoor learning providers and the youth groups that may be using the funding.

Under this outcome area, UK Youth sought to better-understand the AAFH delivery chain to identify areas of success, impact, and improvement. This learning is guided by the following overarching evaluation question and sub-questions, and draws on insight from the Outdoor Learning Provider Endline survey:

- **Evaluation question 3: What is the experience of outdoor learning providers in delivering AAFH?**
 - » What new relationships have they built with youth groups that they can sustain longer term?
 - » What new ways of working have they adopted that they can sustain longer-term?
 - » How effectively have they delivered on their role in the programme?

In general, Outdoor Learning Providers reported a positive experience of delivering AAFH 2024/25, best evidenced through a Net Promoter Score of +81. This score indicates that Outdoor Learning Providers are extremely likely to recommend the experience of delivering AAFH to others. The contributing factors behind this are explored below in response to each of the sub-questions listed above.

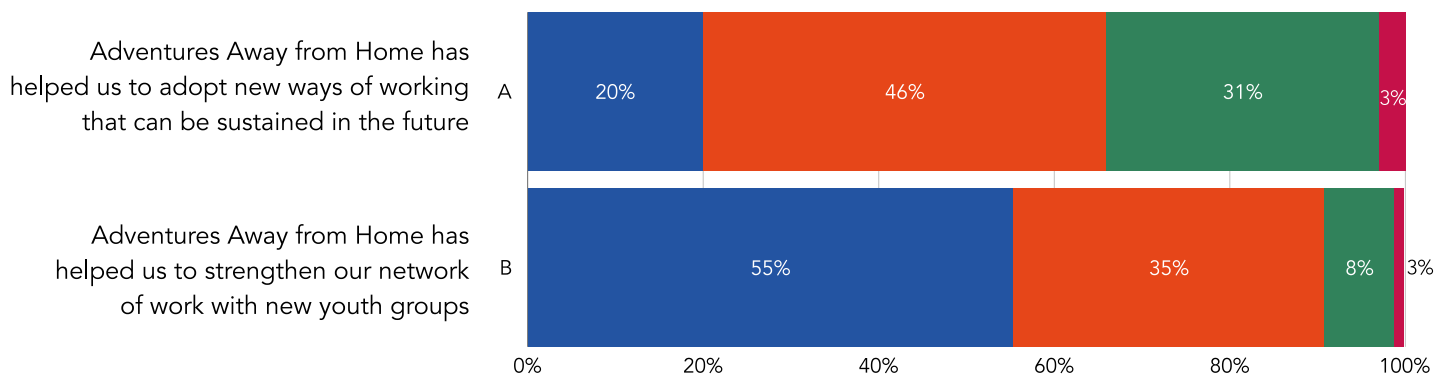
What new relationships have Outdoor Learning Providers built with youth groups that they can sustain longer term?

There were particularly strong levels of agreement around improvements to building relationships with youth groups and establishing new ways of working. 90% of Outdoor Learning Providers agreed/strongly agreed that AAFH 2024/25 helped **strengthen their network or work with new youth groups** and 66% agreed/strongly agreed that AAFH 2024/25 helped them to **adopt new ways of working** that can be sustained into the future.



Fig. 17 Outdoor Learning Provide Endline Survey (n=71)

● Strongly agree ● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree
● Strongly disagree



Many Outdoor Learning Providers **built new partnerships with groups/schools that they had no previous engagement with before**. Several reported first time engagements with SEND schools, refugee groups, or faith-based youth groups. These engagements often came with follow-up opportunities, including:

- Exploring future project collaborations
- Ongoing access to outdoor learning provision
- SEND schools gaining confidence to book with a specific Outdoor Learning Provider again
- Youth organisations returning independently or expressing long-term interest in using an Outdoor Learning Provider's site or services



"We have gained the confidence of four SEND schools to use our provision in the future."



"We partnered with groups we've never engaged with before — this has already had a ripple effect."

Others also mentioned the importance of having this funding to be able to reconnect with groups with which they had lost contact with since before the pandemic. This is an indication of the role AAfH can play in supporting post-Covid recovery efforts. Equally, some youth groups had been unable to afford outdoor learning opportunities in recent years and were now able to re-engage through AAfH 2024/25.



"This year was very useful in allowing us to target providers we haven't seen at the Centre since before COVID."



"We have renewed existing partnerships with groups who had not planned a visit."

Together, Outdoor Learning Providers highlighted how AAfH 2024/25 supported them to develop stronger strategic partnerships with local schools' SEND provision and youth services. The targeted nature of the AAfH funding supports onward future impact in improving under-represented young people's access to outdoor learning opportunities through these relationships. However, more consistent, reliable, long-term funding would help to sustain these relationships long-term.





"This experience strengthened our work with disadvantaged youth groups and SEND organisations across the borough."



"We were able to deepen our engagement with local community groups, schools, and youth services."

What new ways of working have Outdoor Learning Providers adopted that they can sustain longer-term?

Outdoor Learning Providers' responses highlighted a number of ways in which they developed new ways of working through AAFH 2024/25, with the most common responses focussing on how they had **increased flexibility in their delivery models**. This included building in session-by-session flexibility, shorter trips if needed, and weekend delivery.



"We tailored activities to encourage the greatest participation."



"We adapted timings of sessions to create better flow for a group's engagement."

Underpinning this more flexible approach, and the second most common theme highlighted, was a **commitment to embedding inclusive and accessible practice**.

Adjustments to support inclusivity included ensuring dedicated prayer spaces, running sensory-friendly sessions, developing bespoke outcomes to meet the needs of specific groups, or engaging the services of BSL interpreters to ensure full participation from deaf young people.



"Sessions were adapted for neurodivergent young people, including sensory-friendly activities."





"We offered sole-use spaces for privacy, prayer, or gender-sensitive needs."

In terms of **accessibility**, Outdoor Learning Providers mentioned offering free or subsidised transport to attending groups, flexible meal provision, sole-use site booking, and supplying additional pre-visit materials to support parents/guardians feel comfortable with the visit. This highlights the importance of the discretionary funds to support delivery.



"We offered free transport, which we don't normally do."



"We ensured groups had the site to themselves to feel safe and welcome."



"We provided snacks for children to take home."

A third thematic area, and a secondary impact of the changes to inclusivity and accessibility outlined above, was around **Outdoor Learning Provider workforce development**. In working with young people who are historically underserved by the outdoor learning sector, Outdoor Learning Provider staff gained greater confidence, skills and motivation in working with new behaviours and needs. Outdoor Learning Providers reported strengthening their ability to tailor to diverse learning styles and young people's differing levels of familiarity with outdoor learning activities.

One response also went on to highlight how they are now "aiming to recruit more staff from underrepresented groups". Together, this highlights the potential onward systemic impact of AafH in building capacity/capability of the outdoor learning sector to offer inclusive/accessible experiences to young people.



"It was a good learning curve for our staff."



"Our instructors gained experience with more complex needs."



"Staff got to work with a greater diversity of customers than usual."

Beyond the delivery of outdoor learning experiences, Outdoor Learning Providers fed back that their involvement in AAFH 2024/25 was **enhancing their data collection and overall evaluation practice**. Some respondents mentioned how they are planning to adopt Young People’s Change Stories as part of their future evaluation efforts or use AAFH data to advocate for future funding. This highlights the important role that infrastructure bodies like UK Youth can play in building confidence and capacity across sectors by piloting and refining more comprehensive cross-sector approaches to evaluating outdoor learning.



"We're adopting change stories into our own evaluations."



"The data helped us show impact to future funders."

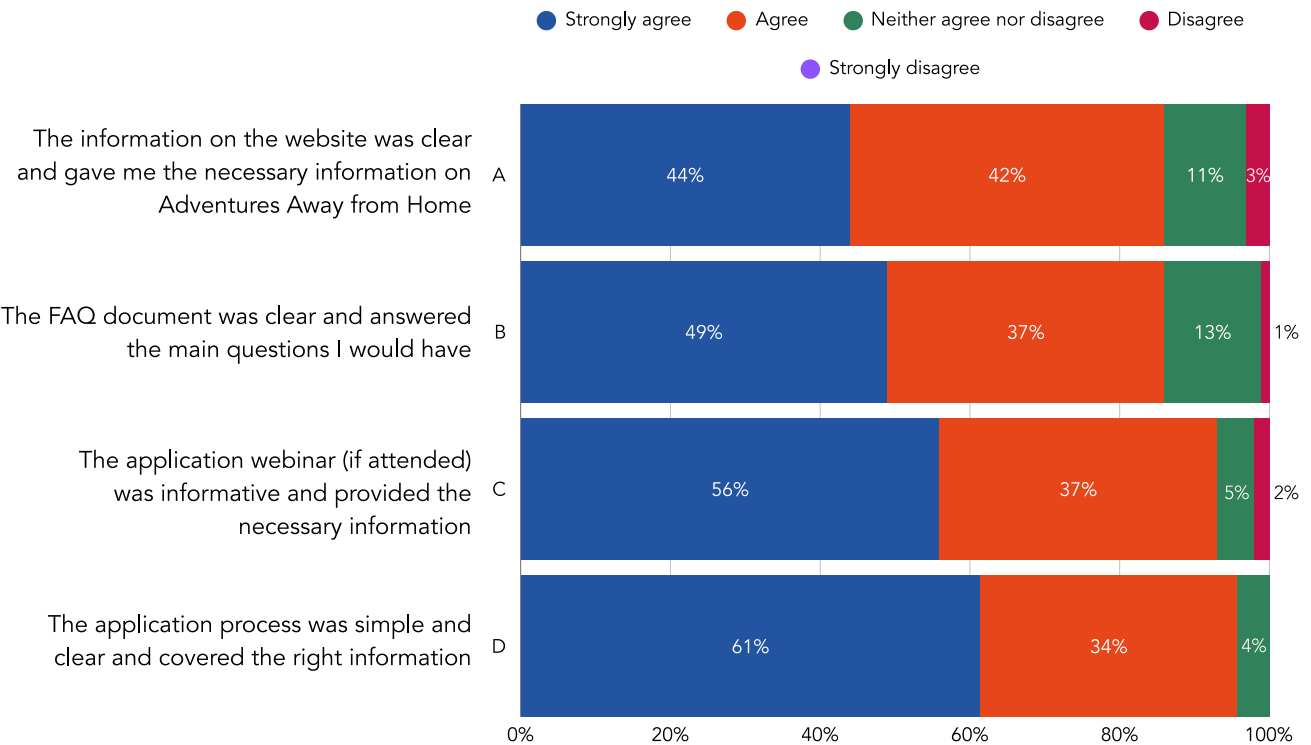


"The feedback inspired us to improve our own data collection."

How effectively have Outdoor Learning Providers delivered on their role in the programme?

For Outdoor Learning Providers to be effective in delivering AAFH, it is critical for them to understand the delivery and evaluation requirements. There were high levels of agreement across the range of touchpoints UK Youth put in place to support Outdoor Learning Providers to develop this understanding (Fig. 18, below). This is testament to both the learning and subsequent evolution of AAFH from 2022/23 to 2024/25 and the in-house expertise of UK Youth’s delivery team to ensure smooth project mobilisation.

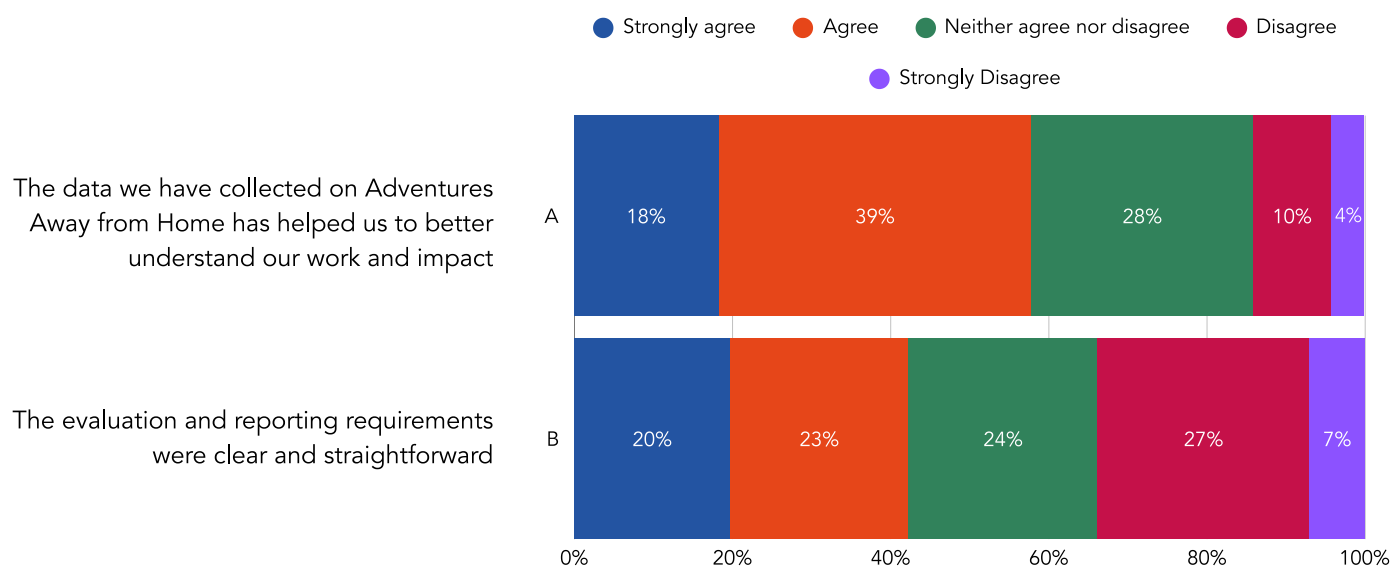
Fig. 18 Outdoor Learning Provide Endline Survey (n=71)



There were **lower levels of agreement about the ease of the evaluation and the usefulness of the data collected** on AAFH 2024/25 (Fig. 19, below). However, as highlighted above, some providers did indicate that they developed new skills by engaging with a more thorough and robust evaluation.

However, it is also critical for UK Youth to reflect on the importance of ‘inclusive rigour’ when designing and implementing evaluations, especially those that are targeting young people facing multiple barriers to accessing outdoor learning opportunities.²⁷

Fig 19. Outdoor Learning Provide Endline Survey (n=71)



In general, there were high degrees of compliance with the delivery and evaluation requirements on AAFH, with only three Outdoor Learning Providers underdelivering on their requirements. This is testament to the dedication and hard work of many Outdoor Learning Provider staff and group leaders. When considering Outdoor Learning Provider open text responses, suggestions for how to improve the delivery of AAFH in future tended to focus on five main areas:

- Funding and delivery timelines
- Evaluation scope and accessibility
- The need for streamlined digital systems
- More support/guidance on how to communicate with youth groups/schools
- More opportunities for peer learning

²⁷ E.g.: <https://www.betterevaluation.org/tools-resources/causal-pathways-introductory-session-inclusive-rigour-framework>

Table 5

Area for improvement	Suggested improvements from Outdoor Learning Providers	Reflection	Indication of frequency/importance
Tight timelines and the need for greater flexibility. The short notice period between confirmation of funding and the delivery window placed pressure on schools/youth groups. This had implications on their ability to plan staffing and transport.	Extend funding windows, offer earlier notice if successful <i>"Getting groups to commit in a short space of time proved to be hard."</i> <i>"Allow a longer period from allocation of funds to end date for delivery."</i>	This resonates with what we saw under outcome 1, where Outdoor Learning Providers were able engage groups facing multiple barriers to accessing outdoor learning later on in the delivery period. We also do not have data around how many groups Outdoor Learning Providers were in contact with, but were not able to attend given the tight timelines.	Very common
Excessive/complicated 'paperwork' and evaluation processes. This is in terms of both volume and complexity. Some also mentioned accessibility challenges with deaf and SEND young people in particular.	Simplify and streamline evaluation tools. Less paperwork, links to the importance of digital systems for managing attendance and evaluation requirements. <i>"The paperwork was unnecessarily excessive and caused lots of confusion for the groups."</i> <i>"It took two days of staff time to input all individual forms into the online system."</i>	There is strong overlap here with the need for more streamlined digital processes/platforms, given the evaluation was thought of as 'paperwork' rather than opportunity for meaningful reflection/learning.	Very common
Need for streamlined digital systems. Responses called for simplified online forms, unified data collection platforms, and frustration with manual data entry.	This covered registering young people's attendance, demographics, and evaluation submissions <i>"If reporting could be more proportionate to the scale of funding, that would help smaller teams."</i>	This needs to be balanced with the limited digital confidence/capabilities of some youth groups and Outdoor Learning Providers. Many returned paper versions of completed evaluation tools.	Common

More support/ guidance, especially in how to communicate the delivery/evaluation requirements to youth groups/schools	Provide email templates and flowcharts to support communications with youth groups/schools and more webinars on the reporting process. <i>"It would have been helpful to have email templates and concise instructions."</i> <i>"More webinars about the reporting process."</i>	UK Youth did share multiple resources, then ran, recorded and shared a webinar on the evaluation and reporting tools, and then hosted x3 drop ins. But the point around tailoring these resources to example delivery contexts or youth groups/schools should be considered in future iterations.	Common
More opportunities for collaboration and peer learning as cohort of providers	Provide or facilitate peer forums, case studies, and wider resources on delivering inclusive outdoor learning provision <i>"Facilitating a short online peer forum midway through the project would add value."</i> <i>"A forum for funded organisations to meet could have helped us support each other."</i>	This is an important point, and the peer forum UK Youth ran was not very well attended, so there is some learning here and when/how these spaces are organised, facilitated, and communicated to the cohort. Possibility of including a wrap-up/celebration online event at the end of the delivery.	Occasional

Conclusions & Recommendations

This third year of AAfH (2024/25) built on the strengths of the previous two years of delivery, achieving positive outcomes for young people as well as group leaders and outdoor learning providers.

Impact of Adventures Away from Home 2024/25

- The programme reached over 9,750 young people from 500 youth groups, working with 69 Outdoor Learning Providers. Over half of participating young people faced more than two barriers to accessing outdoor learning opportunities, such as a physical disability, learning disability or difficulty, or experience of the care system.
- There were positive improvements in young people's socio-emotional skills across domain areas such as teamwork, initiative, and emotion management. 60% of participating young people saw positive changes to their average overall socio-emotional skill scores via the young person's pre/post survey. This figure was even higher via group leader observations, where improved socio-emotional skills were observed in 91% of young people. The data also indicates that young people with disabilities have most to gain from accessing outdoor learning experiences.
- 95% of youth group leaders reported developing stronger relationships with the young people in their group through the outdoor learning experience. 84% of group leaders reported that they developed new outdoor learning skills that they can apply to their practice.

AAfH is now proven as a highly effective model. However, this evaluation offers further insights into how the impact of AAfH can be scaled further. This section builds on the learning and insight highlighted across all reported outcomes, outlines the implications of this learning and makes recommendations for future iterations of AAfH.

Recommendation 1: Sustaining and Scaling Impact: The Case for Multi-Year Funding of Adventures Away from Home.

UK Youth welcomes the Government's [commitment to increasing access to outdoor learning](#) and is eager to further collaborate with the Government to build on the success of AAfH 2024/25.

To ensure the sustainable growth and lasting impact of this vital work with young people, it is recommended that Adventures Away from Home progresses as a multi-year funded programme. This would not only continue to improve young people's outcomes through a proven, scalable model, but offer continuity and predictability to outdoor learning providers and youth groups. AAfH 2024/25 supported outdoor learning providers to develop stronger strategic partnerships with local schools' SEND provision and youth services. More consistent, reliable, long-term funding would help to sustain these relationships long-term and break down barriers to opportunity for more under-represented young people.

We recommend taking a cross-departmental approach to increasing its investment in future. AAfH has a crucial role to play in supporting the Government's [missions](#), recognising the links between short-term socio-emotional skills development and longer-term outcomes that [can be sustained into adulthood](#) and bring [wider societal benefits](#).

Recommendation 2: Build greater understanding of young people's barriers to accessing outdoor learning experiences and make practical changes to remove them through longer lead-in times and by offering one-night stays as a third 'type' of experience.

Conduct further research into the less-well-understood barriers to accessing outdoor learning experiences

AAfH 2024/25 successfully engaged young people facing barriers to accessing outdoor learning experiences. For example, over half of participating young people faced more than two barriers to accessing these kinds of opportunities. However, and beyond the scope of this evaluation, not enough is yet known about who AAfH has not been able to engage and why. To ensure that future iterations of AAfH are as equitable and inclusive as possible, dedicated research should explore if and why some groups are currently unable or unwilling to access AAfH experiences. This would inform improvements to Outdoor Learning Providers' engagement and recruitment strategies, the 'types' of experiences offered through AAfH and a range of other design considerations.

Maximise lead-in times ahead of the delivery window on AAfH

It is important that future iterations of AAfH are commissioned with maximum lead-in time ahead of the delivery window. A longer lead-in time has a number of benefits for young people, Outdoor Learning Providers and group leaders, as highlighted throughout this evaluation. Specifically:

- Outdoor Learning Providers are allowed adequate opportunity to build trusted relationships with youth groups and group leaders, enabling them to engage and tailor delivery to young people with more complex needs or facing more barriers to access
- Outdoor Learning Providers are more able to adapt their delivery around holiday periods and religious celebrations such as Ramadan to maximise equitable and inclusive access

Offer one-night residential as a third 'type' of experience on AAfH

AAfH 2024/25 offered one-day and two-night outdoor learning experiences and both 'types' of experience were found to be equally successful in engaging young people facing access barriers and improving young people's socio-emotional skills. However, this evaluation has identified that two-night experiences offer more time, space, and opportunity for both young people and group leaders to get to know and better understand each other in a novel and more neutral environment.

It is recommended that future iterations of AAfH consider one-night residential as a third offer, to embrace the benefits of overnight stays and act as a stepping stone towards longer outdoor learning experiences and adventures away from home in future. One-night experiences may be more appealing to young people (and their parents/guardians) who feel apprehensive about overnight stays away from home and are not willing or able to commit to a two-night residential. For those who would have previously opted for a one-day experience, the option to attend a one-night residential may be appealing and deepen the experience for both young people and group leaders. Future evaluations of AAfH could then test for differences in the acceptability of one-day, one-night and two-night experiences to better understand the ideal offer to young people through AAfH.

Recommendation 3: Ensure that the evaluation and learning approach on future iterations of AAfH is proportionate, efficient and builds on the strong existing evidence base by focussing on gaps in data and understanding.

Build on demonstrable improvements in young people's socio-emotional skills development by focussing on related outcomes and longer-term benefits

This evaluation of AAfH 2024/25 was comprehensive and extensive and Outdoor Learning Providers fed back that the data collection requirements were relatively complex and resource intensive. UK Youth

provided a range of support to Outdoor Learning Providers and took steps to minimise the evaluation burden on them, group leaders and young people – for example, only 10% of young people participating in AAfH 2024/25 were required to complete the Young Person's Survey. Although the evaluation requirements were burdensome for stakeholders on AAfH 2024/25, the range and scale of data collection has resulted in a robust evaluation of the AAfH model, covering a number of key outcomes, stakeholder groups and evaluation questions.

Given that AAfH outdoor learning experiences are short in duration and relatively low-dosage, it is recommended that future evaluation of AAfH is more proportional to the short-term nature of these outdoor learning experiences. The evaluation design should embrace the principle of 'inclusive rigour'. In simple terms, fewer evaluation requirements enables Outdoor Learning Providers, group leaders and young people to focus on what is most important – enjoying and engaging with inclusive and accessible outdoor learning experiences. Evaluation design on future iterations of AAfH should focus on only measuring what is needed to fill remaining gaps in data and understanding – there is little value in continuing to collect data under delivery outcomes 2 and 3 and duplicating existing findings. Therefore, it is recommended that, over the coming years, outcomes measurement on AAfH focuses on:

- 1. Understanding young people's wellbeing outcomes:** Socio-emotional skills development is considered the primary outcome for young people participating in AAfH and there is now strong evidence that it achieves this. Employing the ONS-4 Personal Wellbeing measure on future iterations of AAfH would enable us to understand AAfH's impact on young people's wellbeing and how this is linked to their socio-emotional skills development.²⁸
- 2. Exploring medium/longer-term approaches to measuring young people's outcomes:** If practical to do so within funding, delivery and reporting cycles, the ONS-4 could be deployed prior to the AAfH experience and several months after the visit. This would enable us to understand the extent to which AAfH improves young people's wellbeing, the extent to which these outcomes are sustained over the medium-term and how this differs across different groups of young people (or groups of young people facing specific barriers to participation in outdoor learning).

In combination, these approaches to wellbeing measurement could support comparison with a control group (i.e. a demographically matched sample of young people who had not participated in AAfH). This would not be delivered as a randomised control trial, but would simply analyse and compare AAfH data against an existing, comparable ONS-4 dataset. This could open up new options for analysis and learning, such as 'monetising' young people's wellbeing outcomes – i.e. estimating the economic benefits of AAfH. This is an approach that is increasingly being adopted by [PBE](#), in their recent work with [Football Beyond Borders](#) and [Spirit of 2012](#).

Create opportunities for peer learning amongst Outdoor Learning Providers and group leaders

While UK Youth provided substantial support and guidance to Outdoor Learning Providers on AAfH 2024/25 – and they were generally positive about this in their feedback – its uptake and comprehension amongst Outdoor Learning Providers could be improved. Creating dedicated forums and mechanisms for learning and knowledge exchange would build a deeper understanding of delivery and evaluation requirements amongst Outdoor Learning Providers and attending youth/SEND groups, and foster peer learning around delivering equitable, inclusive, and accessible outdoor learning experiences. This would help to bridge knowledge gaps and facilitate the sharing of best practices across the cohort.

²⁸ ONS, Personal well-being in the UK QMI (2025). [Available at here](#).

Invest in an integrated digital platform to support delivery, evaluation and learning

Even with a simplification of the AAfH evaluation framework as outlined above, the five levels of stakeholder on AAfH will always create complexity in how data is collected, processed, managed, analysed and reported: DCMS, UK Youth, Outdoor Learning Providers, youth groups/group leaders and young people all require secure access to evaluation tools and data to some extent to engage with -and learn from- the evaluation. On AAfH 2024/25, Outdoor Learning Providers in particular fed back that the volume of 'paperwork' and confusing data collection processes were difficult for them to manage.

There is a clear opportunity on future iterations of AAfH to streamline the evaluation by implementing a digital system for capturing attendance and evaluation data from all stakeholders. A fully-integrated digital platform would boost confidence among Outdoor Learning Providers and group leaders in data collection, while also being far more time-efficient for staff across the busy outdoor and youth sectors. The digital platform could enable young people to input their own data, improve data quality, increase completion rates and improve transparency (e.g. through data dashboards) during and after the delivery period. This platform would also support a medium/longer-term approach to measuring young people's outcomes, as outlined earlier in this section.



Annexes

Annex A. Limitations of the evaluation approach and learning for future evaluation

This section builds on the evaluation approach set out in the introduction and main body of this report to both reflect on the limitations of our approach to evaluation on AAfH 2024/25 and provide recommendation as to how it could be more effective, efficient, and proportionate in any future iterations of AAfH.

Reflections on completion rates per tool

There were slightly lower completion rates of Group Leader Pre/Post observations. While there were higher numbers submitted for the pre (621) and post (452) respectively, only 295 were matchable across pre and post. There are two key mitigating factors for this: accessibility needs of the participating young people and then more practical issues around data collection (not having enough time at start/end of day), given the high proportion of one-day experiences.

In general, we heard how it was harder to create the time/space to complete pre/post surveys and pre/post observations within a one-day experience. The below-target completion rate of group leader pre/post observations is somewhat offset by very high completion rates of young person's pre/post surveys. Of the 2295 returned via the online form, it was possible to match 984 young people's survey responses with corresponding barrier/demographic information via the trackers. While lower than hoped, this is still above the intended target of 900 (10% of the 9000).

The issue here was around data cleanliness to support data matching. Efficient data matching relied on outdoor learning providers and group leaders accurately inputting date of visit and young person's initials into multiple open text touch points. Drawing on a more streamlined digital solution will support more accurate, reliable, and time-efficient ways of collecting and analysing the data.

Reflections on data completeness

In order to better understand and ascertain the mechanisms of support/impact as they relate to different young people facing different combinations of barriers, we asked Outdoor Learning Providers to collect more detailed demographic data on the young people who would be taking part in a visit.

Some of this data is more routine to collect for health and safety reasons, but there was less confidence (and therefore established processes) around collecting some of the additional and potentially more sensitive data points.

This can be seen in the high completion rates for access requirements such as learning difficulty/disability and physical disability versus lower completion rates for experience of the secure estate and LGBTQIA+. ²⁹ However, there were generally high rates of data completion across Outdoor Learning Providers and attending youth groups. Across all barriers/demographic categories, there was an average completion rate of 68%.

To support Outdoor Learning Providers to feel confident/comfortable in collecting this data, UK Youth...

- Responded to individual organisation's concerns
- Provided detailed written guidance and support on using the data collection tools
- Ran optional drop in Q&A webinars with the evaluation team

²⁹ N.B., only over 16s were expected to supply sexuality data.

- Made it clear that it was not an essential feature of the funding, but made the point that it is only with robust and accurate data on the experience of different young people, that we can make the strongest possible argument for outdoor learning and youth work.

Improvements for future iterations

- **Focus of the evaluation:** The first two iterations of AAfH 2023-2024 showed strong indications that short-term outdoor learning experiences had positive impacts on young people's socio-emotional skills. This most recent iteration drew on a more robust evaluation approach and outcome framework to further consolidate this insight. To ensure the evaluation remains proportionate and continue to meet the needs of young people, outdoor learning providers, and the wider youth and outdoor learning sectors, it should now instead focus on two key areas:
 1. The relationship between accessing outdoor learning experiences and young people's wellbeing. This can be measured using sector agreed tools and frameworks.
 2. The longer-term impact of accessing short-term outdoor learning experiences, especially on young people's perceptions of their own socioemotional skill development.
- **Implementation of the evaluation:** As highlighted throughout the report, there is scope for the evaluation of AAfH to make use of a more streamlined digital platform to support the delivery of a more equitable and impactful evaluation. Learning from the sport and physical literacy sector's approach to monitoring, evaluation and learning could provide opportunities to develop more consistent practice across sectors. Moreover, narrowing the scope of the evaluation, given the repeated demonstration of AAfH's ability to lead to short term improvements in young people's socioemotional skills, will also support this streamlining.
- **Beyond the evaluation:** As highlighted on p. 48, there is a need to explore the barriers/enablers for youth groups in accessing AAfH, to explore those for whom the model is unable to engage. This can inform design decision and engagement and recruitment strategies to ensure AAfH continues to reach under-represented and under-served young people in safe, inclusive, and accessible ways.

Annex B. Evaluation Tools

Young People's Pre/Post Survey

Young Person's Pre-visit Survey

This survey is designed to be completed by a young person before they attend their Adventures Away from Home experience. It should be completed no more than three days before they attend.

We recommend that the young person completes this survey with the support of an adult (e.g. a Youth Group Leader) to help them with any details or questions they are unsure of.

How we use your data

- We use surveys like this one to help us understand the journey that young people go on when they attend an Adventure Away from Home
- We use what you tell us to measure the impact of the programme on young people, so that we can report to our funders and help others to understand the benefits of outdoor learning.
- The outdoor learning provider/centre that you'll be attending may use your responses to better understand the experiences they offer.
- We collect some basic details about you to help us analyse the data, but the responses you provide will be treated anonymously and you won't be personally identifiable in anything we report or share publicly.

As part of this survey, we do not ask for your personal information, only the details we need to analyse your responses. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and in line with UK Youth's privacy policy <https://www.ukyouth.org/privacy-policy/>

If you have any questions about the purpose of this survey you can contact the UK Youth team: outdoorlearning@ukyouth.org

☐ Please check this box to confirm that you are happy for your responses to be used to evaluate the Adventures Away from Home fund.

Basic details

Question	Response
What is the name of the organisation or youth group that is taking the young person on their Adventures Away from Home experience?	
What is the name of the outdoor learning provider/centre that the young person is visiting?	
What are the initials of the young person? (e.g. Joe Bloggs would be written as 'JB')	
What is the date that the young person is attending their Adventures Away from Home experience?	Click or tap to enter a date.

About the young person's social and emotional skills

For each of the following statements, you should indicate how often it is true for you.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
<i>Emotion management</i>					
I easily calm myself down when I'm feeling upset.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I react to things before thinking much about them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My strong feelings get in the way of talking with others or taking part in activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I easily stop myself from doing things that might be bad for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Empathy</i>					
I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think I understand how people close to me feel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is easy for me to feel what other people are feeling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel bad for those who are suffering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Initiative</i>					
I stay focused and on-task despite distractions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I give up when things get difficult.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I work as long and hard as necessary to get a job done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to risk mistakes and setbacks to reach my goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Problem solving</i>					
I start a new task by thinking about different options for doing it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I make step-by-step plans to reach my goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I make back-up plans in case things don't work out.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take time to think about how others might react before I say something	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Responsibility</i>					
People can count on me to get my part done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do the things I say I am going to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take responsibility for my actions, even if I make a mistake.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do my best when a trusted adult asks me to do something.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
<i>Teamwork</i>					
I seek help from others when I need it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I respect other points of view, even if I disagree.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I go out of my way to help others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I encourage others to do their part.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Young Person's post-visit Survey

We hope you enjoyed your Adventure Away from Home.

This survey is designed to be completed by a young person after they attend their Adventures Away from Home experience. It should be completed no more than three days after they attend and ideally just after their visit.

We recommend that the young person completes this survey with the support of an adult (e.g. a Youth Group Leader) to help them with any details or questions they are unsure of.

About the young person's social and emotional skills

For each of the following statements, you should indicate how often it is true for you.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
<i>Emotion management</i>					
I easily calm myself down when I'm feeling upset.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I react to things before thinking much about them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My strong feelings get in the way of talking with others or taking part in activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I easily stop myself from doing things that might be bad for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Empathy</i>					
I feel bad when someone gets their feelings hurt.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I think I understand how people close to me feel	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It is easy for me to feel what other people are feeling	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel bad for those who are suffering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Initiative</i>					
I stay focused and on-task despite distractions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I give up when things get difficult.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I work as long and hard as necessary to get a job done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to risk mistakes and setbacks to reach my goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Problem solving</i>					
I start a new task by thinking about different options for doing it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I make step-by-step plans to reach my goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
I make back-up plans in case things don't work out.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take time to think about how others might react before I say something	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Responsibility</i>					
People can count on me to get my part done.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do the things I say I am going to do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I take responsibility for my actions, even if I make a mistake.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I do my best when a trusted adult asks me to do something.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Teamwork</i>					
I seek help from others when I need it.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I respect other points of view, even if I disagree.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I go out of my way to help others.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I encourage others to do their part.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How likely are you to recommend your Adventures Away from Home experience to someone else?

Not at all likely										Extremely likely
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Youth Group Leader Observation (at the start of the Adventures Away from Home experience)

This form is designed to be completed by a Youth Group Leader. You will record your observations of one young person in your group before they start their Adventures Away from Home experience. You will then observe the same young person as they reach the end of their visit.

How we use your data

- We use observational methods like this to help us understand the journey that young people go on when they attend an Adventure Away from Home. We use what you tell us to measure the impact of the programme on young people, so that we can report to our funders and help others to understand the benefits of outdoor learning. We collect some basic details about the young person you're observing to help us analyse the data, but the responses you provide will be treated anonymously and you won't be personally identifiable in anything we report or share publicly

As part of this survey we do not ask for your personal information, only the details we need to analyse your observations. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and in line with UK Youth's privacy policy <https://www.ukyouth.org/privacy-policy/>

If you have any questions about the purpose of this form you can contact the UK Youth team: outdoorlearning@ukyouth.org

☐ Please check this box to confirm that you are happy for your observations to be used to evaluate the Adventures Away from Home fund.

When you have finished your observation, please make sure you click 'submit'.

Basic details

Question	Response
What is the name of the organisation or youth group that is taking the young person on their Adventures Away from Home experience?	
What is the name of the outdoor learning provider/centre that the young person is visiting?	
What are the initials of the young person?	
What is the date that the young person is attending their Adventures Away from Home experience?	Click or tap to enter a date.

Some questions about the young person in your group

From your recent experience and knowledge of this young person, please answer the following questions. Focus on the young person's behaviour you have observed over the past two weeks.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
<i>Emotion management</i>					
1. How often did the young person easily manage both positive and negative feelings (e.g. didn't lash out at others when feeling bad; didn't brag or gloat when feeling good)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. How often did the young person get easily frustrated (e.g. challenging tasks, minor setbacks, disagreements, or critical feedback cause more frustration than expected for a successful provision experience)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. How often did the young person respond constructively when frustrated by challenging tasks, minor setbacks, disagreements, or critical feedback (e.g. thought about it and tried again or sought help)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. How often did the young person disrupt or withdraw from participation (e.g. stopped paying attention; stopped participating in an activity)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Initiative</i>					
9. How often did the young person take the initiative (e.g. volunteer for a challenging task; quick to raise hand in response to a question put to the group)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. How often were goals set that were ambitious?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. How often did the young person stay focused and on-task despite distractions?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. How often did the young person push through during a challenging task?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Teamwork</i>					
21. How often did the young person help or cooperate with others?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. How often did the young person encourage others to do their part?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. How often did the young person seek help from others when stuck?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. How often did the young person	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

keep track of their own and others' group progress?					
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Youth Group Leader Observation (at the end of the Adventures Away from Home experience)

This form is designed to be completed by a Youth Group Leader. You will record your observations of one young person in your group at the end of their Adventures Away from Home experience. This should be the same young person that you observed at the start of your visit.

How we use your data

- We use observational methods like this to help us understand the journey that young people go on when they attend an Adventure Away from Home
- We use what you tell us to measure the impact of the programme on young people, so that we can report to our funders and help others to understand the benefits of outdoor learning
- We collect some basic details about the young person you're observing to help us analyse the data, but the responses you provide will be treated anonymously and you won't be personally identifiable in anything we report or share publicly

As part of this survey we do not ask for your personal information, only the details we need to analyse your observations. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and in line with UK Youth's privacy policy <https://www.ukyouth.org/privacy-policy/>

If you have any questions about the purpose of this form you can contact the UK Youth team: outdoorlearning@ukyouth.org

☐ Please check this box to confirm that you are happy for your observations to be used to evaluate the Adventures Away from Home fund.

When you have finished your observation, please make sure you click 'submit'.

Basic details

Question	Response
What is the name of the organisation or youth group that is taking the young person on their Adventures Away from Home experience?	
What is the name of the outdoor learning provider/centre that the young person is visiting?	
What are the initials of the young person?	
What is the date that the young person is attending their Adventures Away from Home experience?	Click or tap to enter a date.

Some questions about the young person in your group

From observing this young person as they reach the end of their Adventures Away from Home experience, please answer the following questions. Focus on the behaviour you have observed in this young person during their visit.

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
<i>Emotion management</i>					
1. How often did the young person easily manage both positive and negative feelings (e.g. didn't lash out at others when feeling bad; didn't brag or gloat when feeling good)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. How often did the young person get easily frustrated (e.g. challenging tasks, minor setbacks, disagreements, or critical feedback cause more frustration than expected for a successful provision experience)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. How often did the young person respond constructively when frustrated by challenging tasks, minor setbacks, disagreements, or critical feedback (e.g. thought about it and tried again or sought help)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. How often did the young person disrupt or withdraw from participation (e.g. stopped paying attention; stopped participating in an activity)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Initiative</i>					
9. How often did the young person take the initiative (e.g. volunteer for a challenging task; quick to raise hand in response to a question put to the group)?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. How often were goals set that were ambitious?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. How often did the young person stay focused and on-task despite distractions?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. How often did the young person push through during a challenging task?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
<i>Teamwork</i>					

21. How often did the young person help or cooperate with others?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. How often did the young person encourage others to do their part?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. How often did the young person seek help from others when stuck?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. How often did the young person keep track of their own and others' group progress?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Young People's Change Story

This Young Person's Change Story is designed to be completed by a youth group leader and a young person after they have attended their Adventures Away from Home experience. It should be completed no more than three days after they attend. This Change Story should be completed with the *same* young person that you observed during your visit.

This Young Person's Change story should be completed as an interview/discussion. You have two options for how you complete it:

1. **The young person's responses can be captured on this form, in writing.** Please send the form to the outdoor learning provider/centre that you have visited, once you've completed it.
2. **You can record the interview on your phone using a voice recorder app.** If you are audio-recording this Change Story, please ensure that the file is no larger than 2MB in size and that it is in one of the following formats: .aac, .mp3, .mp4, .m4a, .wma, .mpeg (most Apple and Android phones use these as standard).
3. Please ask the young person each of the questions in this form on the audio-recording and record their responses. You can prompt them or guide them if any of the questions are unclear to them. Please send the audio file to the outdoor learning provider/centre that you have visited, once you've recorded it.

How we use your data

- We use the responses you provide to help us understand the journey that young people go on when they attend an Adventure Away from Home
- We use what you tell us to measure the impact of the programme on young people, so that we can report to our funders and help others to understand the benefits of outdoor learning.
- The outdoor learning provider/centre that you've attending may use your responses to better understand the experiences they offer.
- We collect some basic details about you to help us analyse the data, but the responses you provide will be treated anonymously and you won't be personally identifiable in anything we report or share publicly.
- We will use quotes and excerpts from audio-recordings in external communications and promotional materials. You and the young person would not be named in these communications/materials and would only be personally identifiable by your voices.

We do not ask for personal information, only the details we need to analyse your responses. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and in line with UK Youth's privacy policy <https://www.ukyouth.org/privacy-policy/>

If you have any questions about the purpose of this survey you can contact the UK Youth team:

☐ Please check this box (*or confirm at the start of your audio-recording*) to tell us that you and the young person are happy for your responses to be used to evaluate the Adventures Away from Home fund.

☐ Please check this box (*or confirm at the start of your audio-recording*) if you and the young person are happy for your responses to be used anonymously in external communications and promotional material.

Basic details

Question	Response
What is the name of the organisation or youth group that has taken the young person on their Adventures Away from Home experience?	
What is the name of the outdoor learning provider/centre that the young person has visited?	
What are the initials of the young person?	
What is the date that the young person attended their Adventures Away from Home experience (in DD/MM/YYYY format)?	

About the young person's Adventures Away from Home experience

How did you feel about going on this Adventure Away from Home before your visit?
What did you enjoy the most about your visit?
What was the biggest challenge during your visit?
What is the one biggest thing you have learned about yourself through this experience?
Have you learned any new skills through this experience?
Are there any activities that you'd like to do more often, now that you've had this experience?

When you've finished capturing the Young Person's Change Story, please send it to the Outdoor Learning Provider/Centre you recently attended.

Thank you for completing this Young Person's Change Story

Outdoor Learning Provider Endline Survey

This survey should be completed by a representative at your Outdoor Learning organisation at the end of the Adventures Away from Home delivery window. It captures your experience of being an Outdoor Learning Provider on Adventures Away from Home.

How we use your data

- We use surveys like this one to help us understand your experience of being an Outdoor Learning Provider on Adventures Away from Home.
- We use what you tell us to understand the impact of the programme, so that we can report to our funders and help others to understand the benefits of outdoor learning.
- We also use your feedback to change and improve how we run programmes like Adventures Away from Home in future.
- We collect some basic details about you to help us analyse the data, but the responses you provide will be treated anonymously and you or your organisation won't be identifiable in anything we report or share publicly.

As part of this survey we do not ask for your personal information, only the details we need to analyse your responses. All information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and in line with UK Youth's privacy policy <https://www.ukyouth.org/privacy-policy/>

If you have any questions about the purpose of this survey you can contact the UK Youth team: outdoorlearning@ukyouth.org

☐ Please check this box to confirm that you are happy for your responses to be used to evaluate the Adventures Away from Home fund

Basic details

- What is the name of your organisation? This should be the organisation name that is written on your contract with UK Youth.
- Please confirm that, to the best of your knowledge, you have met all other evaluation and reporting requirements:
 - Your Outdoor Learning Provider Tracker is up-to-date, accurate and complete ☐
 - 10% of the young people attending an Adventures Away from Home experience at your site/centre have completed the Young Person's Survey (pre- and post-) ☐
 - Each Youth Group/Youth Group Leader attending your site/centre has completed:
 - A pre- and post- observation of a young person in their group ☐
 - A Young Person's Change Story relating to the young person they observed ☐

If you believe that any of your evaluation and reporting requirements may not have been met, please

provide specific details below.

Click or tap here to enter text.

About your experience on Adventures Away from Home

1. Is there any feedback you would like to give UK Youth about how we helped to provide and distribute the bursaries and the support you received from us?
2. To what extent do you agree with these statements?

Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
The application process was simple and clear and covered the right information					
The application webinar (if attended) was informative and provided the necessary information					
The FAQ document was clear and answered the main questions I would have					
The information on the website was clear and gave me the necessary information on Adventures Away from Home					
The evaluation and reporting requirements were clear and straightforward					
The data we have collected on Adventures Away from Home has helped us to better understand our work and impact					
Adventures Away from Home has helped us to strengthen our network or work with new youth groups					
Adventures Away from Home has helped us to adopt new ways of working that can be sustained into the future					

3. Would you have any suggestions for us to improve the support we offer on programmes like Adventures Away from Home?
4. Please tell us about the main benefits that this bursary brought to your outdoor learning/provision
5. Did you make any changes to your provision or your facilities to support under-represented young people to attend your site?
6. Overall, how likely are you to recommend Adventures Away from Home to another organisation?

Annex C. Data Protection, Safeguarding & Ethical Considerations

AAfH is a complex programme to evaluate, given the different 'levels' of stakeholder involvement in providing and processing data: UK Youth as the organisation delivering and evaluating AAfH; Outdoor Learning Providers as the organisations responsible for collecting and submitting data; youth groups and youth group leaders with their own data collection requirements; and young people completing surveys, being observed by their group leader and providing demographic information. Therefore, a number of protocols and principles were put in place to ensure that sensitive, personal data was anonymised and was only accessible to named individuals. These are summarised below.

Young people's demographic data collected and stored on the Outdoor Learning Provider Tracker: Providers were only required to capture young people's initials and the date of their visit (to ensure that data could be matched and disaggregated across the evaluation tools); the Tracker was unique to each Provider and only named internal and external staff had access to the data in UK Youth's secure SharePoint area; all young person's data was anonymised for analysis. It was not mandatory for Providers to collect demographic data for all young people, but it was encouraged. For particular 'barriers' (e.g. LGBTQ+) we discussed with Providers the sensitive nature of this data, particularly with under 16s and were clear that it was optional for young people and youth groups to provide this information.

All of the evaluation tools were designed and deployed in line with UK Youth's Privacy Policy.³⁰ The Young Person's Survey and Youth Group Leader Observation form were developed from sector-recognised tools developed collaboratively by the now closed YMCA George Williams College (previously the Centre for Youth Impact). While these tools were not explicitly designed for a) outdoor learning settings nor b) low-dosage, short-duration experiences of the type delivered on AAfH 2024/25, the programme presented an opportunity to collect a large quantity of socio-emotional skills data from a diverse sample, and use this insight to learn about the efficacy and acceptability of these tools in outdoor learning settings. We discuss process learning in relation to the evaluation approach taken on AAfH 2024/25 at Annex A, p.53.

During the project set up, we heard from some Outdoor Learning Providers that the evaluation tools that explore young people's socio-emotional skills (SES) were not suitable for young people with various accessibility requirements. To mitigate this we provided guidance around word selection for the various domain area questions, and reassured Providers that we were not asking them, or attending group leaders, to do anything that made them or the young people feel uncomfortable. To ensure the evaluation remained inclusive and flexible, while trying to gather rich and insightful data, we opted for proportionate sample sizes: Outdoor Learning Providers and Group Leaders had the flexibility to select which 10% of participating young people completed pre/post surveys and which young person was observed for pre/post surveys.

³⁰ UK Youth, [Privacy Policy](#).

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Adventures Away from Home



UK Youth is the UK's leading youth work charity with a vision that all young people are equipped to thrive and empowered to contribute at every stage of their lives. With an open network of more than 9,000 youth organisations and nation partners, we are focused on unlocking youth work for all young people.

As a national voice for the youth sector, UK Youth advocates for the vital role youth work plays in transforming young people's lives. Proven to be life-changing and life-saving, youth work offers the support and opportunity that young people need now more than ever.

Our approach spans four core themes; outdoor learning and physical literacy, social action, mental health, and employability, through which we deliver innovative programmes that collectively reached over 120,000 young people last year. Many of our outdoor learning initiatives are directly delivered through Avon Tyrrell, our dedicated Outdoor Centre in the New Forest.

As leaders in outdoor learning youth work, we understand the value and power of outdoor learning to engage young people facing the most significant barriers to participation. Through inclusive activities that promote movement and physical literacy, we can deliver meaningful personal, social and educational outcomes and help young people develop essential life skills.

UK Youth are committed to working collaboratively to deliver innovative youth services, grow effective practice and campaign to increase support for youth work.

UK YOUTH

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