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OUTDOOR PARTNERSHIP

# THE OUTDOOR PARTNERSHIP SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

2024- 2025



SOCIAL VALUE CYMRU



# Foreword



We are delighted to be able to introduce our first Social Impact Report. Over the years we have invested in several evaluations of various projects to demonstrate the impact of our work. We've also invested time and resources to develop an impact management framework which allows us to measure the value of what we do, as well as ensuring that our stakeholders (participants and beneficiaries) are at the heart of our decision-making processes.

- We know that outdoor activities can enhance people's lives, and we are passionate about ensuring that we reduce any barriers for people to enjoy the benefits that derive from being active outdoors. Listening to our stakeholders is a priority and social value allows us to do just that. It helps us understand what we've done well, but most importantly where we can improve and what matters to them so we can look at our direction for the future.

Over the last twelve months we have been able to develop a Social Value Strategy, upskill our entire staff team with social value training, as well as introduce a social value toolkit for our staff team and establish a social value working group.

We will continue to work closely with Social Value Cymru to embed social value within our charity and ensure the priorities within our Social Value Strategy are implemented.

**Tracey Evans**  
**Chief Executive Officer**



# Social Return on Investment →

## Community Cohesion

**5,364**

individuals attended taster sessions in the community



All individuals who attended the taster sessions had an **increased understanding and awareness of how to participate in outdoor activities**

## Health and Well-being

**1,213**

individuals attended health and well-being projects.

**61%**

of individuals noted improvements in their **mental well-being**.

**63%**

of individuals reported improvements in their **physical health**.

**55%**

of individuals felt **less isolated**.



## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

**10,301**

interactions provided through Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes.

**50%**

of individuals narrated improvements in their **mental well-being**.

**39%**

of individuals described improvements in their **physical health**.

**27%**

of individuals shared they felt more **empowered to take on new challenges**.



## Pathways to Employment

**223**

individuals attended the Pathways to Employment programme

**42%**

of individuals reported improvements in their **mental well-being**.

**32%**

of individuals felt more **independent**.



Individuals also reported improvements in their **physical health**, and many felt **less isolated**.

## Volunteering

**27**

volunteer ambassadors recruited through TOP projects.



**100%**

of volunteers feel **more positive about the future**.

**91%**

of volunteers feel their **physical health has improved**.

**83%**

of volunteers feel **more confident in their own abilities**.

**75%**

of volunteers feel **more confident to support and lead groups**.



## Club Development

**88**

clubs have received support from the Local Development Officers.

**70%**

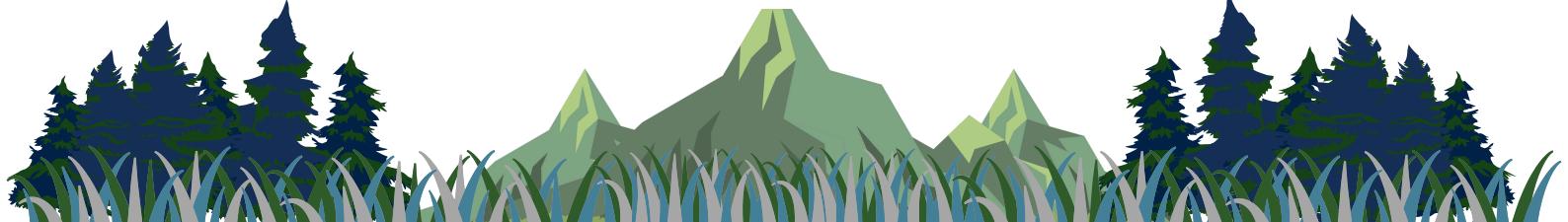
of clubs stated they had **increased their capacity** due to the support received

**65%**

of clubs stated they were **more inclusive**.

**65%**

of clubs stated they were **more financially viable**.



# Social Value

Everything we do will have an impact on people, but how do we know that we are creating a positive change in people's lives? Social Value is a framework of principles that allows us to measure our impact and focuses on people's well-being and understanding what's most important to them. By listening to our stakeholder we can account for the value that we create but also ensure that our resources are allocated to where we can have the biggest impact.

Taking a more holistic approach to impact measurement means that positive, negative, intended and unintended changes can be accounted for – and ultimately when these are compared to the relative costs of their creation, the Social Return on Investment is identified.

## The 8 principles of Social Value

### 1. Involve stakeholders

Inform what gets measured and how this is measured and valued in an account of social value by involving stakeholders

### 2. Understand what changes

Articulate how change is created and evaluate this through evidence gathered, recognising positive and negative changes as well as those that are intended and unintended.

### 3. Value the things that matter

Making decisions about allocating resources between different options needs to recognise the values of stakeholders. Value refers to the relative importance of different outcomes. It is informed by stakeholders' preferences.

### 4. Only include what is material

Determine what information and evidence must be included in the accounts to give a true and fair picture, such that stakeholders can draw reasonable conclusions about impact.

### 5. Do not over-claim

Only claim the value that activities are responsible for creating. Counterfactual allows us to consider what could happen without the intervention, and much research has been done on this previously and therefore we ensure appropriate rates are included to avoid over-claiming. Attribution allows us to consider the contribution of others, and The Outdoor Partnership works in partnership with various organisations and therefore some of the value has been attributed to them.

### 6. Be transparent

Demonstrate the basis on which the analysis may be considered accurate and honest and show that it will be reported to and discussed with stakeholders.

### 7. Verify the result

Ensure appropriate independent assurance. The Outdoor Partnership commission Social Value Cymru to verify the result and provide external assurance and recommendations for improving impact.

### 8. Be responsive

Pursue optimum Social Value based on decision making that is timely and supported by appropriate accounting and reporting.

# Pathways to Employment

The Pathways to Employment Programme is aimed at people who are accessing outdoor activities for the first time or looking to develop their personal and/or professional skills, leading to a more active lifestyle, volunteering and employment.

**Social Value**  
**£84,234**

## Case study – Trainee scheme

EW has been an active participant in our Trainee Scheme for several years, a program based in North Wales that helps local young people gain outdoor qualifications to enhance their career prospects and promote more Welsh-speaking outdoor instructors in the industry. Additionally, EW has engaged in our Women and Girls Sailing program, New Horizons, where she earned qualifications such as the RYA Essential Navigation, VHF, Powerboating Level 2, start yachting and Competent Crew certifications. EW also achieved her CWDI with funding from outdoor partnership and has completed CPD in coaching children, physical training 1 and FUNdas 1,2&3.

Currently, EW is gaining experience towards her RCI qualification through the Trainee Scheme while employed at Beacon Climbing Centre and has been teaching NICAS for three years up to level 4, which she says has inspired her to go on to Foundation coach and development coach - she has done the training for both and is currently awaiting assessment dates. She has also completed her Mountain Leader certification and is employed as an ML instructor, leading a series of Women and Girls Mindfulness and Wellness walks organised by The Outdoor Partnership and Pen y Bryn Outdoor Learning.



As well as supporting with qualifications and a career path, EW says that TOP provided her access to an invaluable networking group to consolidate on qualifications with English and Welsh speaking instructors based in NW, and has supported her to find other young women her age in the outdoor sector. It has massively improved her mental health and quality of life.

EW's involvement in TOP's schemes demonstrates the power of specialised programs in providing young people with qualifications and experience that lead to sustainable careers. These schemes are aimed at addressing the gender gap in outdoor activities and increasing the number of Welsh-speaking instructors in the industry.

# Community Cohesion

Our community cohesion strand of work covers two main areas. Our Development Officers works closely with local clubs in their areas to offer support around various matters such as funding, policies and inclusivity. In partnership with local providers and clubs also we aim to inspire thousands of children, young people and adults to get involved in the outdoors by providing a programme of taster sessions and events that allows them to experience the outdoors.

Social

Value

£131,418

## Case Study – Talgarth Refugee Sports Day

The Outdoor Partnership supported the Bronlllys Wellbeing Community Land Trust Ltd and Hay, Brecon & Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees by providing outdoor adventurous activity taster sessions at their annual Refugees Sports Day on Sunday 15th September 2024. The Day took place at Ysgol Mynydd Du in Talgarth and offered several activities and sports which both local families and local refugees supported by Hay, Brecon & Talgarth Sanctuary for Refugees could take part in free of charge.

The day was all about community cohesion, with the emphasis on inclusion and joint participation in activities, encourage positive interactions between groups from different cultural backgrounds, coming together in meaningful activity, where the activity is the medium for communication and shared experience.

The outdoor activities offered were archery and the climbing tower, which provided a new experience for many who had not had the opportunity to try these activities before. The fund also enabled 2 of the volunteers from BWCLT Ltd. to attend an Outdoor First Aid Course so they were able to provide First Aid support on the day and for future events. The day was a huge success, with over 80 people taking part in activities and a real buzz about it, especially the chance to see some new activities which hadn't been at the sports day before.

“Thank you very much to those who organised the event. We all really enjoyed it. We all felt very needed and important yesterday. I really love such meetings. It is very difficult to remain so humane and responsive in these difficult times.”



# Health and Well-being

The Health and Wellbeing programme brings together a collaboration of partners from the outdoor and health sectors to increase physical activity levels, improve mental and physical health and provide links with local community clubs and groups enabling people to lead independent long term active lifestyles. This project is building on the growing field of research prescribing people activities for their health rather than medication and is known as social prescribing.

Social  
Value

£1,970,676

## Case study – The Small Steps Project in Northern Ireland

The Small Steps Project was funded by the PHA through the Developing Healthy Communities Fund. We identified a need for some nature based outdoor activities for adults with disabilities and health conditions through work done with the South Eastern Trust DisAbility HUB service. It was a health and well-being project to help participants to improve their mental health through outdoor activities. We targeted members from the DisAbility HUB but also worked with other groups such as Bolster Community who work with adults with Autism and learning disabilities, the RNIB and mental health groups.

We worked with providers such as Tollymore NOC, Mountaineering Ireland, Disability Sport and Field Studies Ireland to deliver the following sessions;

- Wellbeing walks
- Nature Mindfulness
- Climbing,
- Cycling
- Bushcraft.



Over the Project we had 42 people engaging in activities.

The event project was completed with a final Mindfulness session and lunch. The project was a pilot programme to see what type of activities would be of interest and could be made accessible for all participants. There was lots of good learning as to what venues and activities are most suitable for participants with additional needs.



The sessions organised by the Outdoor Partnership have really benefited our members - they have enjoyed getting out and trying some new activities. They have loved meeting new people and taking part in the sessions which have helped improve their wellbeing. We have noticed improvements in their confidence, improved mood and developments in their social and team working skills. The sessions have also benefited their physical health.



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We believe that everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits of being in the outdoors. We have a range of projects that aims to support those who have traditionally been underrepresented in the outdoors and has faced barriers to take part in outdoor activities. These projects include This Girls Adventure, Inclusive Adventure, Welsh Language projects, and Young Carers Adventure Programme.

**Social Value**  
**£6,024,299**

## Case study – Festival of Water in Cumbria

The project successfully engaged over 86 women in sailing, canoeing, and wild swimming, with an additional 60 women participating in our Festival of Water Day. This event also provided 10 families with a two-year membership to the local canoe club.

Hill skills walks created 120 opportunities for women to develop outdoor skills, boosting confidence and community connection. Our community forest skills sessions engaged 20 women, opening pathways for volunteering. Additionally, six women completed Lowland Leader Training, demonstrating commitment to outdoor leadership, while 12 women earned a 16-hour Outdoor First Aid certification, enhancing safety and supporting local clubs and women's walks.

These achievements were driven by strong community engagement, structured programming, and dedicated partner support.

Over half of the participants were over 50, with one 77-year-old completing our SUP safer course. Most had never tried water activities before, with sailing perceived as the least accessible. Providing these opportunities fostered inclusion, skill development, and empowerment in outdoor activities traditionally seen as inaccessible to women.



## Linda's story

My name is Linda Shields, I am 75 years old. I am married with one daughter, 3 grandchildren and six great grandchildren. I used to be a fit person for my age, I walked on the high fells, cycled, went to the gym and loved to swim. I lost a lot of confidence during Covid, My mother died and I couldn't look after her due to my husband having Myeloma. I was told not to walk with friends but just to walk in the garden. This impacted on me. I had two falls during Covid and fractured my ankle. Some of my friends wouldn't walk with me, when I asked why not I was told it was due to my injuries. I wasn't the only one who had fallen and broken a bone!

My arthritis had become a lot worse due to not moving about. My movement and confidence has improved a lot, since getting out on the fells again. I am a lot happier". I am sleeping much better too. Fell walking is the one thing that has kept me sane during all the years of being a carer to my parents and husband. Getting the confidence to go out on the fells again, map reading, planning walks etc and meeting new people has helped me so much. I was feeling lonely after Covid but now I have new friends to walk with.

"I am a much happier and relaxed person. My stress levels have decreased resulting in me enjoying life."



# Volunteering

Our volunteering programmes is open to anyone wishing to volunteer in the outdoor sector and we can advise and support volunteers looking for opportunities to help out within their local community. Our main volunteering programmes includes Volunteer Ambassadors, Club Volunteering and Coach Education, Caru Eryri focuses on upskilling and empowering new and existing volunteers in local clubs and communities. We work alongside other organisations to co-ordinate volunteer experiences, and share information on various volunteering opportunities.

**Social Value**  
**£126,597**

## Case study - Volunteer Ambassadors: Caitlin Longden

Caitlin joined the team as a Volunteer Ambassador in July 2024. A student at Prifysgol Cymru Y Drindod Dewi Sant, Caitlin studies Adventure Film Making and is keen to use these skills to help us document the work of the different programmes run by The Outdoor Partnership. Working closely with the Swansea Bay regional development officer, Caitlin has learnt about the various TOP projects running in the area, and worked out which would be best suited to document.

Caitlin has worked with the team to film:

- Interviews for This Girls Adventure to support further grant applications
- Official photographer for the Inclusive Climbing Festival
- Joined an Amser residential trip to create a film about the experiences of the young carers hiking up Yr Wyddfa for the first time
- Joined forces with another Volunteer Ambassador, Hannah, who wanted to create a video about her role as a coach in Welshpool Canoe Club, and how they have embraced and encouraged autistic paddlers, both to join the club, and develop on the coaching pathway.



Caitlin is also a skilled photographer. As part of the Moondance project, TOP were able to employ Caitlin to hold Photography workshops within the walking therapy programme, allowing us to incorporate different aspects to the programme. This means we could appeal to a different audience, using photography as a tool to engage people in the outdoors. It also allowed Caitlin to develop professionally, earning money from her skills, and gaining support in setting herself up as an independent specialist provider. She has since also been offered more paid opportunities from a small business and another TOP regional development officer to create films for their commercial business and a different TOP project. As she is now in her 3<sup>rd</sup> year at university, this will help her step into the working world, better experienced and with further skills. As reward for her volunteer ambassador role, Caitlin gained support from TOP to attend a Level 3 Bushcraft leader course, which she believes will align with her skills and interest, and help further in the role she wishes to pursue following finishing university this summer.

"What I enjoy about film making is being able to make connections with those I film and help communicate what the outdoors and their activity means to them. Rather than making quick content which people just flick through, working on projects such as filming The Way We Flow, with Hannah, gave me the opportunity to tell an engaging story and focus on a really positive experience, rather than rush through a quick glimpse of everything that goes on. The difference in the character of those featured in the film, when they were on the water, compared to when they were being interviewed, was really striking, and hopefully the film really captured this so that we can help show other autistic people that paddling and outdoor activity can be for them also. Working with Sioned, and other TOP members has allowed me to try different things, and as I hope to continue working in this field, has been a really valuable experience. I've gained help in organising paperwork and invoicing and it's helped me to make new contacts."

“

Caitlin has been a great asset to the TOP team, and really helpful to me especially. From helping out with stakeholder meetings when IT went wrong, to providing specialist skills for various programmes, and helping create content and photographing various events and sessions. Having Caitlins additional skills has meant we can diversify the audience we engage with and hopefully help different people into trying outdoor activities. It also means I can spend time focusing on other work, and she has been a fantastic contact between TOP and other students who we can continue to work with in the future.

Swansea Bay Development Officer

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# Club Development

Our Local Development Officers offers support to existing clubs as well as supporting the development of new clubs. This support will include good governance, recruiting and retaining volunteers, marketing, attaining funding as well as developing the interest in the activities across the United Kingdom.

Social  
Value

£1,671,386

## Case study - Climbing Club in West Cumbria

Expanding TOP's 'This Girl's Adventure' initiative into a women's climbing club in West Cumbria has addressed gender inequality in the outdoor sector. By providing a supportive environment led by highly qualified female instructors, the club empowers women to participate, learn, and grow through skill development programs, National Governing Body awards, and volunteering opportunities. Our consultation highlighted the need to improve access to outdoor activities for underrepresented groups. Through participation, volunteering, and employment programs, the project inspired over 50 women and girls to engage in indoor climbing for physical, social, and economic well-being. Regular climbing sessions have enhanced participants' health, fostered friendships, and created a sense of belonging. Additionally, the demand for female instructors has increased, supporting further skill development.

Providing the Indoor Climbing Wall Assistant course has raised aspirations and encouraged women to pursue coaching and leadership roles. Without funding, many would lack the opportunity or confidence to undertake formal qualifications. By earning these credentials, women serve as role models, inspiring future generations to participate. Working with local providers we delivered 6 - six weeklong beginners climbing courses and a follow up learn to lead course enabling 50 women to learn skills to become independent climbers. The women on the course were all signed off as competent climbers at the local climbing wall. Our instructors supported the community Climbing Club which has over 40 members. To ensure the project is sustainable 8 women were trained in the Indoor Climbing Wall Assistant course. A further four of these women have booked to undertake their climbing wall Instructor award. One woman has undertaken her mountain leader training. Through purchasing climbing equipment, we have been able to ensure the club is inclusive for beginners.

By creating a dedicated space for women, the initiative has challenged traditional gender stereotypes in climbing. It has also provided leadership opportunities, enabling women to lead sessions, gain formal qualifications, and build an inclusive climbing club. The growing demand for climbing facilities highlights the need for collaboration with West Lakes Wall to expand access.



First of all, thank you so much for the opportunity to participate in this event. Five years ago I never dreamed I would ever become a climber in my sixties, let alone become an AMI qualified Indoor Climbing Assistant! The qualification will hopefully allow me to assist in supporting climbing groups in my role as a volunteer for a Cumbrian charitable organisation, but also with any other groups where instructors I already know may need an extra pair of hands.



# Plans for the future to maximise impact

This report demonstrates the positive impact The Outdoor Partnership has in the lives of people across the United Kingdom. We have invested much resources to demonstrate our social value but most importantly to develop an impact management system that allows us to look at how we can maximise impact within communities.

- **Recommendations and priorities for social value management in 2025/2026 includes:**

- ▶ Look to increase the sample of pre and post surveys we collect
- ▶ Explore the social value of our Adventure Learning programme
- ▶ Further explore the impact of our various programmes under the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programme by looking in greater detail at the various subgroups
- ▶ Continue to deliver our services across the area
- ▶ Continue to work with local providers and clubs to improve the well-being of communities by ensuring access to the outdoors and reducing barriers

The social value has been independently reviewed by [Social Value Cymru](#). In preparing this report appropriate estimations has been made based on data collected from stakeholders and using financial proxies. To view the full value map please contact us.

Data sources:  
[Global Value Exchange](#)  
[GOV.UK](#)

For further information about our other social value evaluations, please visit our [website](#).

