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SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE

TO BE CONFIDENT,
INDEPENDENT, AND SECURE
IN THEMSELVES



A young person who is sure of themselves and their capabilities, who feels able to face and overcome feelings of stress, overwhelm and anxiety, will be more likely to be able to navigate through the daily noise and pressures. They will feel empowered to choose their own path, become who they want to be, and achieve their potential.



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For young people, especially those who have had a tough start in life, the opportunity to develop fundamental social and emotional skills positively influences their outlook on life, and means they are more likely to be able to face and overcome uncertainty and fear during the hardest of times.

Social and emotional skills are learned and developed through experiences that challenge, provide contrast and which give an opportunity to experience a sense of achievement.

Finances, culture, health and social factors can prevent young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), have additional support needs or who are from an ethnic minority background from accessing opportunities. They often find themselves in a cycle of low educational and employment outcomes*, low aspiration, low levels of confidence and happiness⁹ and ultimately, poor wellbeing.

*By the age of 40, the average UK employee with a degree earns twice as much as someone qualified to GCSE level or below, as highlighted by the Institute for Fiscal Studies^[13].



Here in the North West, we lack social mobility, and what Outward Bound helps to do is widen aspirations. What it does more explicitly is provide the opportunity to see things and experiences that pupils didn't know existed, whether that's seeing a specific career path through an interaction with one of the instructors, or from the environment itself – they recognise places where they might want to go.

Secondary School Assistant Headteacher, North West.

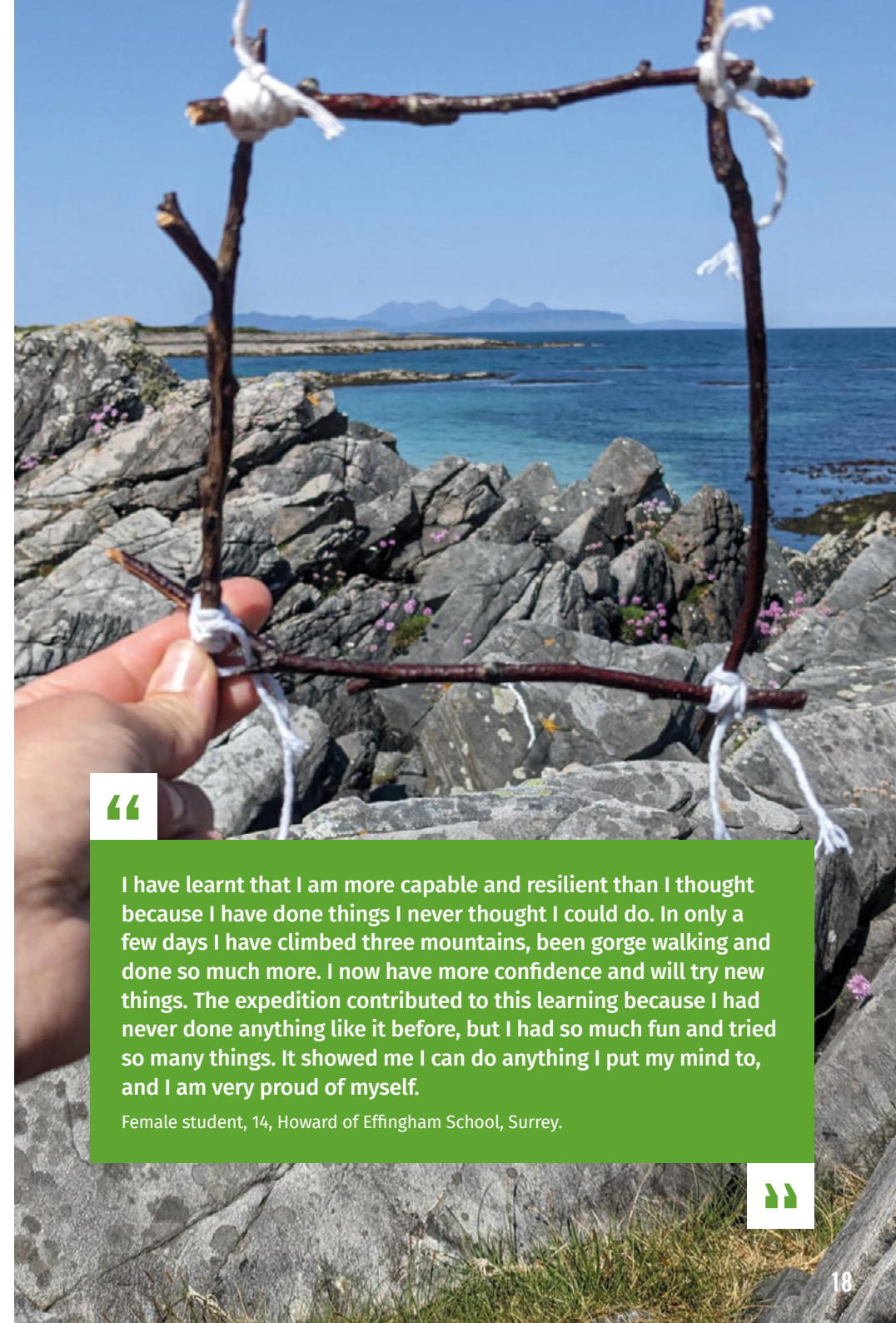


The wild, natural environments at Outward Bound provide a contrast to a young person's norm. This captures their attention, inspires a curiosity, a sense of adventure and provides them with tangible learning experiences.

Whilst on their course, young people think for themselves, take on responsibility and make decisions. Being trusted to lead their team, look after kit or paddle their own canoe provides young people with a feeling of control which is important for developing independence, responsibility and agency. These experiences help shape how a young person, regardless of their age or background, begins to think about themselves and their capabilities. It nurtures a different mindset, outlook and sense of what is possible for them.

Our evaluations carried out at an organisational level using Outward Bound International's Outcome Survey³ indicate that young people improve their self-confidence after taking part in one of our courses.

Figure 12.



I have learnt that I am more capable and resilient than I thought because I have done things I never thought I could do. In only a few days I have climbed three mountains, been gorge walking and done so much more. I now have more confidence and will try new things. The expedition contributed to this learning because I had never done anything like it before, but I had so much fun and tried so many things. It showed me I can do anything I put my mind to, and I am very proud of myself.

Female student, 14, Howard of Effingham School, Surrey.



Transition from primary school to secondary school

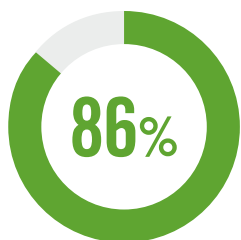
For a young person about to transition from primary to secondary school, to new places, with new people and heightened expectations placed upon them by others, the move can feel unsettling and often stressful with many unknowns.

Travelling away from home, being responsible for their belongings and making decisions are among many of the first-time experiences a young person will have at Outward Bound. It builds an individual's sense of independence and confidence. They return to school from Outward Bound with a new awareness of what they are capable of and feel more self-assured. They can think and make decisions by themselves, find it easier to express their feelings and feel more prepared and excited to try new things as they transition to the next stage in their education.

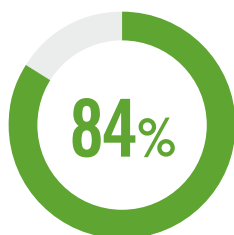


At the end of their course. **PRIMARY PUPILS...**

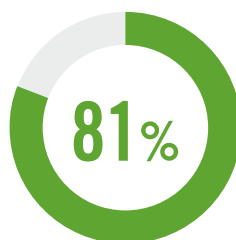
Figure 3.



Had learned to look after themselves.
N=2190.



Had achieved things they thought they couldn't do. N=2168.



Had found they could do things on their own. N=2170.



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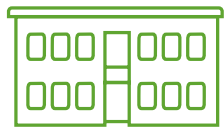
When they've got to dress themselves, get the kit organised and make sure things go back, get checked off. Those things, I think, are quite a difficult thing for them to do. Because they're not independent, everything is done for them at home for the large majority. So that is a real thing to learn and they have no choice – if you have to do it yourself, you'll get on with it.

Joanne Ramsbottom, Headteacher, Daisyfield Primary School, Blackburn.

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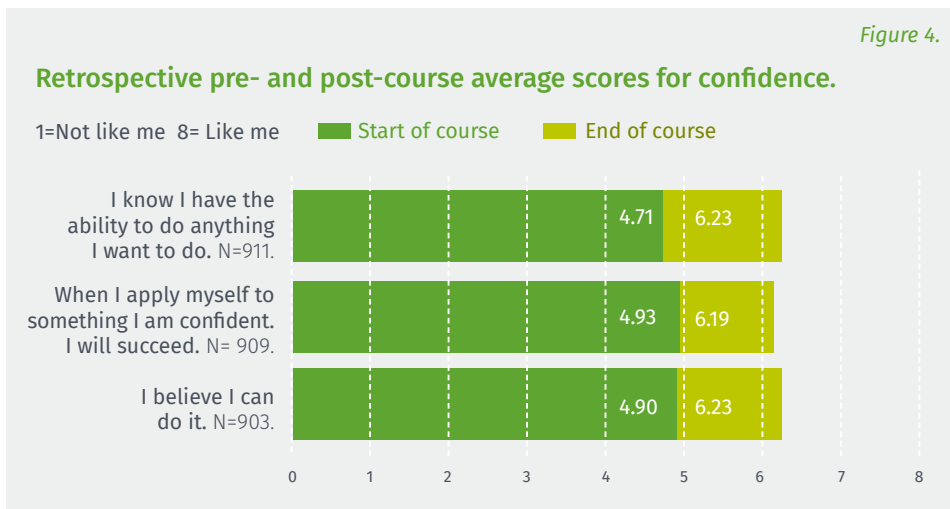
Through secondary school and onto further education

As a young person progresses through their secondary education, each encounter and experience influences their sense of identity – who they are and what they can do and how they think others perceive them. Being exposed to situations at Outward Bound that encourage them to step outside their comfort zones and social circles challenges their sense of self and builds an awareness of their capabilities. They learn what it feels like to face a difficult situation, experience failure, pick themselves up, try again and succeed. This shifts their mindsets, and instead of fearing new situations, they become more motivated to set goals for themselves and develop a more positive approach to the unknown. Through tangible experiences, they learn what it means to be responsible and develop organisation and time-management skills. This prepares them for future decisions and their transition to further education and into their careers.



At the end of their course. SECONDARY PUPILS...

Figure 4.



[At Outward Bound] I developed my organisational skills and learnt about self-responsibility. As my exams are coming up, I need to be self-motivated and responsible for my own revision which I struggle with.

Five-day course participant, 15, North West of England.



At the end of their course, young people reported feeling more motivated to:

Figure 6.



Stepping up from education and into the workplace

For a young person starting out in their career, the workplace can feel intimidating and unfamiliar. Under the demands of an employer, an individual may easily begin to doubt their capabilities, lack confidence or feel overwhelmed at the responsibility of challenging tasks or situations. At Outward Bound, we work with over 4,000 apprentices and graduates every year, helping them to develop the skills and behaviours to set them up for a fulfilling career.

Participating in an Outward Bound apprentice or graduate programme helps bridge the gap between education and work. Through teamwork, problem solving and physical challenges, their self-confidence and sense of belief develops. Company values, culture and working behaviours are applied to real circumstances and young people return to the workplace with an increased understanding of what is expected of them and sense of value that they can bring to the company. Investing in the development and wellbeing of employees early on in their career has been shown to not only help prepare the individual for the workplace, but positively impacts workforce engagement and performance overall¹⁴.



Outward Bound made me feel quite important, Dounreay sent us away on this course to develop us as people. It was to get us to where we needed to be, it made you feel like you're important, they're involving you in everything. Managers before and afterwards, they checked-in with you, to see how the course went, they take an interest in how you got on and how you found it. This just pushes me more to do my best and that they're proud of me, so I should make them proud.

Neave Anderson, 22, Dounreay, speaking in 2022, four years after her apprentice course.



The programme helps encourage you to take up leadership roles where I may have normally shied away. I think this helps people who aren't normally confident to take up these types of roles to gain experience and build an awareness of strengths and weakness, without it being in a situation with business consequences.

Male Participant, Airbus Graduate programme, 2023.



At the end of their course.
GRADUATES...

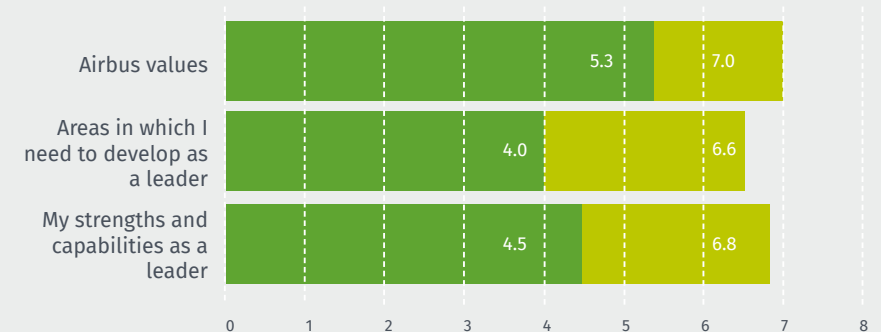
AIRBUS GRADUATES

Figure 7.

Average scores: Awareness of the following, at the start of Outward Bound, compared to after the course. N=41.

1 = poor 8 = excellent

Start of course End of course



CASE STUDY - ROLLS-ROYCE

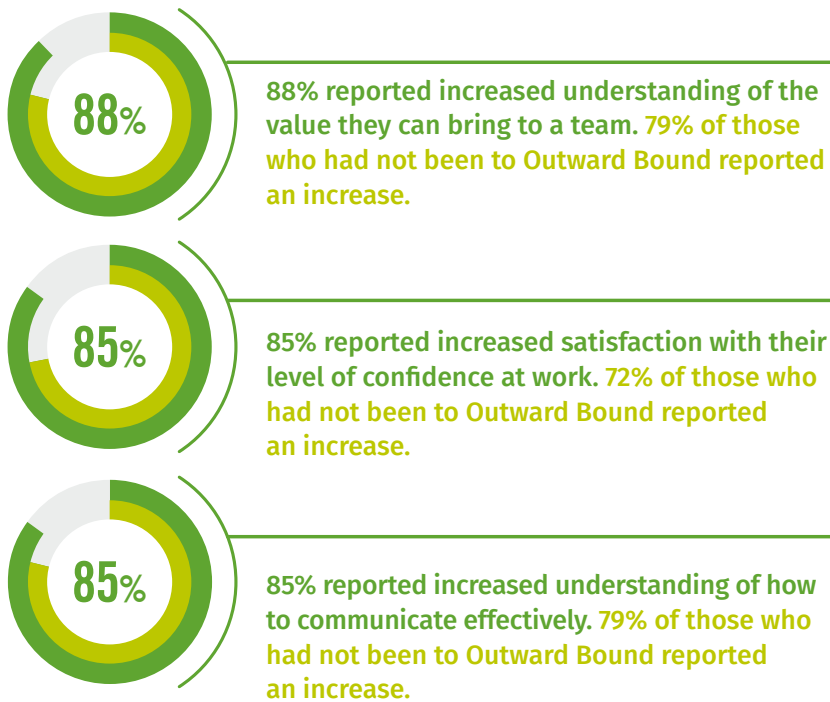
| APPRENTICES | FIVE-DAY COURSE | LAKE DISTRICT



Rolls-Royce and Outward Bound have worked in partnership to develop workplace skills and behaviours in Rolls-Royce apprentices since 2004.

Results from an evaluation showed that apprentices who had been to Outward Bound were more likely to report an increase in their understanding and satisfaction with their skills at work, than those who had not been to Outward Bound. N=72*.

Figure 8.



"Outward Bound allowed me to collaborate with others and use problem solving skills to master the art of simplicity. I wasn't in control of what was happening all of the time and I had to adapt to new situations allowing me to be agile. I had to take a leadership position and be bold by speaking up and taking responsibility for my actions and those of the team."

Female participant, Rolls-Royce, commenting in 2022, three years after her Outward Bound apprentice course.

*Percentages reflect those who reported an increased score up to 4 years on from the beginning of their apprenticeship, compared to before their apprenticeship (retrospective pre-apprenticeship scores). Full results of pre/post scores provided in research appendix.