



**THE
OUTWARD
BOUND TRUST**

THE NEXT *HORIZON*

**Outward Bound's
Strategic Framework
2024 - 2030**



A wide-angle photograph of a group of people kayaking on a large body of water. The kayakers are in the middle ground, moving across the water. The background features a large, forested hillside on the right and a clear blue sky. The foreground is blurred, showing green grass and a log.

“If you want to go far, go together.”

African Proverb.

WHY... *AND WHY NOW*

“

Get good grades, but no matter how hard you try, it may not be enough. Constantly post about your life, but beware, every mistake is recorded forever. Spend hours in front of the mirror, but don't be too high maintenance. Take care of yourself, but don't be selfish. Stay constantly connected to everyone and everything, but also keep it together. Stay informed, but don't have an opinion. Never harp on about issues that matter to you. Be perfect. Succeed. At all costs.

These are the everyday pressures I experienced as a young person. The 'cost' was losing pieces of me along the way. Thinking too much made my throat constrict. I could barely breathe, so I chose not to think. To recede into a world of social media, binge-watching, and YouTube while my teenage years slipped away, one 10-minute clip at a time. I felt like I was wasting my life.

Iqra, 22 years old.

”

Young people's lives are filled with pressures and challenges. They need the means to help them cope and thrive in this noisy and uncertain world – now and *in the future*.

Outward Bound provides opportunities for young people to seize the moment and empower them to discover and embrace their unique strengths through the power of adventure.

At Outward Bound, young people leave behind their everyday lives to experience unfamiliar environments and build new connections; they venture into a new world of endless opportunities. Through challenge and adventure, young people learn to thrive and grow. This is where they discover who they are and what they are truly capable of.

Afterwards, young people return to their world with a stronger sense of self-belief, confidence, and compassion. They're ready to embark on their journey towards continual personal growth for a better self, stronger communities, and a promising and brighter future for society.



“

Outward Bound helped me understand my place in the world and gave me compassion for myself and others. I went from doing the best I could with the coping mechanisms I had to a much broader toolkit. From binge-watching and doom-scrolling to taking walks, going to the gym, seeing my friends, and going rock climbing. From being told the world is our oyster to believing it really is.

Iqra, 22 years old.

”

OUR BELIEF

“We are all better than we know. If only we can be brought to realise this, we may never again be prepared to settle for anything less.”

Kurt Hahn, Co-founder,
Outward Bound

OUR MISSION

To inspire young people to realise their potential through learning and adventure in the outdoors.

OUR VISION

Outward Bound delivers inspirational outdoor learning that enables positive, purposeful change in tens of thousands of young people every year.

OUR CORE VALUES

We believe...

1. That we all have undiscovered potential.
2. In the power and intensity of learning through adventure.
3. In the balance between risk, reward and responsibility.
4. In compassion and respect for each other, and for our environment.
5. That all staff and participants should always feel valued and encouraged to be themselves.

OUTWARD BOUND'S DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

Our distinctive features enable impactful learning and adventure for young people.

We combine competent, compassionate staff with adventures in the natural environment and deliberate learning. These provide distinctive features (the three Ps) that are easy to identify in our work with young people.

THE THREE PS

- 1. Our people** are experienced educators who facilitate learning. They are also qualified and competent outdoor instructors.
- 2. Our places** involve real adventures in the natural environment. They are inspiring and offer unique and challenging experiences.
- 3. Our process** combines personal journeys, experiential learning, continuous reflection and reviewing, and transferable outcomes.



THE JOURNEY SO FAR...

THE CONTEXT FOR THE FUTURE

Like many heritage organisations, over its history, Outward Bound has ebbed and flowed. In recent times we have developed clarity of purpose, consistent quality of delivery and outcomes, and organisational confidence and resilience. And this despite the disruption of the recent global pandemic.

In recent years, Outward Bound has focused on ensuring that the impact on participants' lives is meaningful, tangible, and significant. We empower young people to discover their unique strengths, to be able to build and sustain positive relationships with others, and to develop pro-environmental behaviours.

In short, we help young people connect with themselves, with others, and with nature. *We lift young people up.*

We strive to work with a broad range of young people of school age and in the early stages of their careers, and we provide Charitable Funding where required. We have invested in research and evaluation to help inform our practice and to demonstrate to key stakeholders and supporters the value of our work for young people and society more generally.

We have developed and refined the way the organisation is run and governed. We have developed effective processes and systems, a clear focus on sustainability and ensuring the organisation is financially resilient. We have sought to maximise the number of young people we work with, and our six residential centres are substantially fully utilised. We have begun a journey to ensure we are a more diverse and inclusive workplace.

Implicit within this strategy, *The Next Horizon*, is that we sustain our current quality, consistency and scale, and build upon this platform of strength in the coming years. An explicit list of what we will continue to do is stated towards the end of this document.

This is our Strategic Foundation.



WHAT MAKES OUTWARD BOUND, *OUTWARD BOUND*

Outward Bound is one of the originators of learning through outdoor adventure. We work hard to always achieve the very best outcomes for young people.

- **Our adventures are wild** – in both the level of challenge and the environments in which we operate.
- **Our people inspire** (and create stretching experiences for participants at every opportunity.)
- **Our centres are high quality** – providing great food, a dynamic and inspiring environment and a safe space for young people to be themselves.
- **Our courses create memories for life** – personalised learning will be at the heart of every Outward Bound experience.



LOOKING FORWARD... *OUR VISION*

Now more than ever, society needs young people who are self-aware, confident and resilient, able to thrive and respond to the fast-moving digital, and often uncertain world. We know Outward Bound can equip young people with the skills and capabilities to realise their potential and positively contribute to their schools, workplaces and communities. Outward Bound has a moral imperative to reach as many young people as possible.

OUR VISION IS:

Outward Bound delivers inspirational outdoor learning that enables positive, purposeful change in tens of thousands of young people every year.

Building upon our proven model and strategic foundation, we have set ourselves the bold ambition to materially increase the number of young people we work with annually. We will be relentless in ensuring that every young person is inspired to do and be more as a result of their Outward Bound experience. We will actively collaborate with others to champion the right for young people to access transformational outdoor adventures.

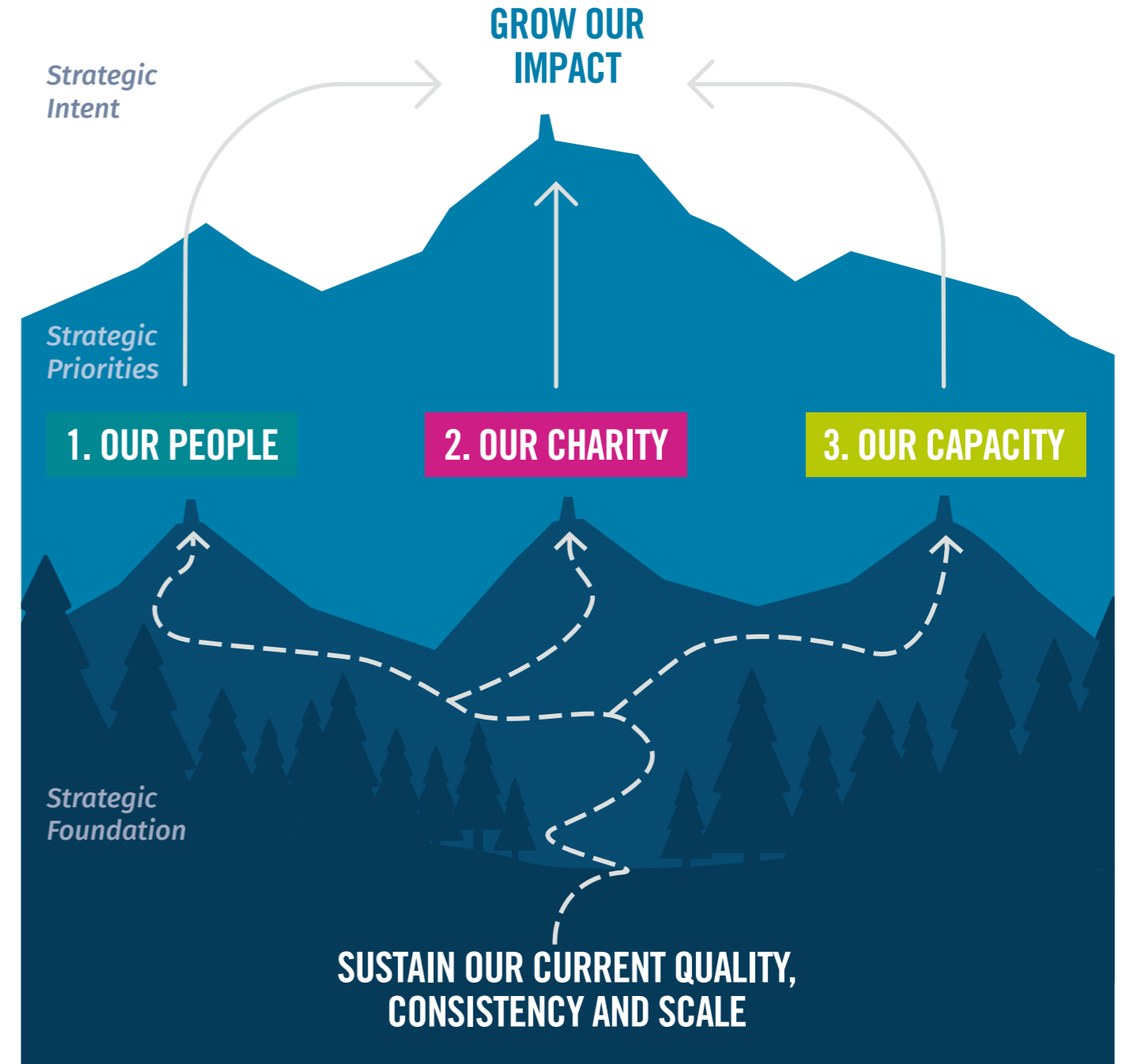
OUR STRATEGIC INTENT:

We will focus equally on ensuring that we sustain our strategic foundation and achieve our strategic intent so that we can grow our impact. To do so, we have identified three key enablers and our Strategic Priorities. The first two, our People and our Charity, contribute to both our strategic foundation and our strategic intent, and the third, our Capacity, enables the latter.

1. OUR PEOPLE Ensuring that people aspire to work for Outward Bound, our people are inspired in their work, and as we increase the number of participants, we grow our workforce.

2. OUR CHARITY Ensuring we are a modern, relevant and responsible charity.

3. OUR CAPACITY Growing our delivery capacity to enable us to work with more young people.



1. OUR PEOPLE

Outward Bound is all about people, where strong and supportive relationships are at the heart of everything we do, whether working with young people or their parents or with teachers, colleagues or donors.



To both sustain and increase the impact of our work, Outward Bound needs to inspire and enable staff to give their best and to be an organisation people aspire to join and stay with. We are determined to make greater progress in developing a staff team which increasingly reflects the backgrounds and identities of the young people we serve.

As we increase our capacity we will actively create opportunities for current staff to grow and develop, and we will seek to attract new staff with the skills and experience needed to realise our ambitions. We aspire to provide a positive work culture where we support and challenge our people, where we reward staff fairly and where we work hard to ensure teams are consistently well managed and led. In return, we ask that staff are committed, perform at the highest standards and ultimately come to work every day to inspire young people to realise their potential.

Our ambition is for:

“A diverse and inclusive Outward Bound, where all staff are empowered, supported and challenged to develop and perform at their best.”

Within the lifetime of this strategy:

We will continue to make Outward Bound a great organisation to work for and an organisation people aspire to join:

- We will work to maintain the positive aspects of our organisational culture whilst recognising and addressing certain aspects that can be improved upon. In particular, we will seek to improve the lived experience of our support staff and focus on improving the consistency of management practice across the organisation.
- We will work harder to attract and retain a staff team which increasingly reflects the diversity of backgrounds and identities of the young people we work with.
- Creating and maintaining an inclusive culture which enables all staff at Outward Bound to feel valued and able to be themselves.

We will foster a culture of empowerment, where:

- We will encourage our people to think for themselves and take initiative.
- We will champion people who initiate positive change and role model our Ways of Working (WOW) together, committing to an annual WOW Awards.

We will invest more purposefully in the training, development and leadership of our people, in particular:

- We will improve the consistency and quality of induction for all staff.
- We will offer training and development opportunities to develop in-role or progress to the next level.
- We will ensure our managers have the knowledge, skills and confidence to consistently motivate, lead and manage their teams, providing targeted training as appropriate.

We will support each other, and we will bring challenge:

- We will ensure everyone understands our commitment to a culture of 'support and challenge'. We will ensure a strong culture of support, and that challenge is provided with kindness and in the interest of achieving our goals.

We have a devolved HR model that relies upon the confidence and skills of our managers across the organisation and which is supported by a small central team. To ensure greater consistency across the organisation, we will further invest in training and development of managers, and we will ensure the central team is more appropriately resourced.



2. OUR CHARITY



Outward Bound is a charity with a long and proud heritage. We must protect what makes Outward Bound special while ensuring that we move with the times, live up to our organisational responsibilities, and stand for what we believe in.

Within the lifetime of this strategy

We will respond to young people's needs – we will be a modern 'young person informed' charity, understanding the context of their lives.

- We will build on the various ways we are currently informed by the needs and voices of young people to create a more coherent approach and ensure that our beneficiaries are at the heart of what we do and help shape the future of Outward Bound.

We will strive to ensure every aspect of the Outward Bound experience is modern, vibrant and inclusive.

- Every aspect of the Outward Bound experience should respond to the needs of young people from all backgrounds. From the first moment young people hear about Outward Bound to all aspects of their course, we will seek to ensure the 'customer' journey for young people and accompanying staff (teachers, youth workers, early career trainers) from diverse backgrounds is engaging, inspiring and where appropriate, supported by technology.

We will actively respond to global environmental challenges by helping participants develop pro-environmental behaviours, ensuring that we are taking action in the local landscapes within which we operate, and seeking to reduce the environmental impact of our procurement decisions.

- We will continue to strengthen the environmental content within our course delivery and improve our environmental performance through implementing the Outward Bound International Environmental Charter and following our Net Zero roadmap towards our 2035 goal.

We will be deliberate about who we work with to ensure we maximise our impact whilst balancing financial sustainability.

- As a charity our purpose is to improve the lives of our beneficiaries and society. We will reflect on our impact evaluation and be considered in who we seek to work with.

We will actively collaborate with like-minded organisations and champion for young people to have the right to experience the power of the outdoors.

- We know our courses and experiences in the outdoors have a positive impact on wellbeing, resilience and confidence. We will proactively seek to work with others to make the case for greater numbers of young people to have the opportunity to benefit from Outward Bound and other experiences in the outdoors.

We will be a financially sound and sustainable charity.

- We will continue to prioritise the financial stability of the charity, achieve a sustainable surplus from our day-to-day activities ensuring we can continue to invest in our existing infrastructure and work with young people. We will generate and retain reserves that enable us to manage organisational risk.

We will unlock the potential of digital technology to increase our efficiency and effectiveness; enabling greater collaboration between staff, clients, donors, trustees and young people we work with.

- We have recently invested in replacing the digital system that supports course booking and allocation of resources. In the coming years, we will continue to develop the system and its adoption.



3. OUR CAPACITY

At the heart of our Strategic Intent, to grow our impact, is that we will materially increase the number of young people we work with annually. As the potential to work with more young people within our existing residential centres is limited, we will seek to extend capacity at existing sites where appropriate and develop new capacity.



We have learned over the past decade that acquiring and developing a new Outward Bound Centre is challenging. In the coming years, in addition to replicating our current model of delivery, we will seek ways to innovate and develop new capacity through partnership.

The exact nature of growth will be reactive to the available funding and opportunities that we identify. Within the lifetime of this strategy, we commit to exploring the following to realise our ambition:

- Maximise the number of young people we work with in our existing centres.
- Increase the number of courses we can deliver in wilderness areas by extending our Eskdale Centre and/or opening a new Outward Bound centre.
- Piloting and developing a non-residential capability that focuses on reaching young people currently unlikely to attend an Outward Bound residential.
- Build partnerships with like-minded organisations to develop additional residential capacity.
- Actively seeking other opportunities.

We will continue to:

- Improve and transform the lives of young people through the very best outdoor adventure learning and through a partnership approach to our relationships with schools, youth organisations and employers.
- Seek to ensure we maximise the number of young people we work with in our existing centres.
- Invest in the general upkeep and maintenance of existing centres, including having completed a redevelopment of our Aberdovey Centre.
- Ensure that as a UK charity, we take account of the variations between the three nations we operate within: England, Scotland and Wales, and that we respond to the unique opportunities in each.
- Play an active role in the work of Outward Bound International, contributing to the development of Outward Bound globally, and creating opportunities for our staff to benefit from and develop through engagement with the network.
- Invest in evaluation to ensure we can demonstrate the beneficial impact of Outward Bound and use research and evaluation to inform the development of our work.

We will not:

- Work with young people with aggressive or addictive behaviours or develop programmes where we do not have the skills or resources to deliver high-quality outcomes in a safe environment.
- Run courses and programmes overseas.
- Run activity programmes aimed at making people better climbers, canoeists, or sailors.





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THE NEXT *HORIZON*

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Email us at enquiries@outwardbound.org.uk
or visit outwardbound.org.uk

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST

HEAD OFFICE

Hackthorpe Hall, Hackthorpe, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 2HX
T: 01931 740000 | E: enquiries@outwardbound.org.uk

LONDON

4th Floor, 207 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XD
T: 0203 301 6481 | E: fundraising@outwardbound.org.uk

GLASGOW

Robertson House, 152 Bath Street, Glasgow G2 4TB
T: 0141 413 0244 | E: enquiriesscotland@outwardbound.org.uk

CENTRES

Aberdovey, Snowdonia, Wales
Ogwen Cottage, Snowdonia, Wales
Eskdale, The Lake District, England
Howtown, The Lake District, England
Ullswater, The Lake District, England
Loch Eil, The Highlands, Scotland