

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST IN SCOTLAND

OCTOBER 2017 – SEPTEMBER 2018



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THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST IN SCOTLAND

THE NEED FOR OUR WORK

We are increasingly concerned by the growing number of risks to young people's life chances; risks which reduce the likelihood that they will have a healthy, happy childhood, succeed at school and thrive as adults. The **attainment gap** between pupils from richer and poorer backgrounds continues, **mental health concerns** amongst young people are on the rise, and they report increasing levels of **loneliness**, despite being one of the best connected generations. Combined, these trends predict a worrying future for young people growing up in Scotland. **A future we believe can be different.**

Many of the factors known to influence young people's life chances are beyond their control. **Growing up in poverty** is one of the most significant; affecting **1 in 4** (24% or 240,000)¹ **children in Scotland** and severely reducing their chances of **doing well at school**², of making a positive **transition into the workplace**³ and of enjoying **good overall health and well-being**⁴. Not only this, but *where* they grow up is closely linked with their chances of getting on in life, with ex-industrial areas, isolated and rural areas and deprived inner-cities offering far poorer prospects for disadvantaged young people to progress in life⁵. Barriers to education for these young people are more deeply rooted than previously understood⁶.

Other factors have a strong influence on young people's quality of life, health and well-being. Notably, their changing lifestyles – with computer games, smartphones and a host of other technologies increasing the amount of time they spend in isolation from others and reducing the amount of time spent active and outdoors.

This has coincided with a rise in mental health issues amongst young people of all backgrounds, irrespective of their personal circumstances. A recent study⁷ shows they are becoming more stressed and anxious than previously recorded, with nearly **two thirds** reporting that they “always or “often” **feel stressed** and **just over half** reporting that they “always” or “often” **feel anxious**. Over a third **do not feel they have control over their lives**, despite having strong ambitions for the future.

A number of important strategies have been put in place in Scotland to tackle some of these issues, such as the **Pupil Equity Fund**⁸ which is additional funding made available to all schools to close the poverty related attainment gap, and the **Scottish Attainment Challenge**⁹ which targets specific areas of Scotland with even further funding. **Health and well-being** has also been at the heart of the **Curriculum for Excellence** for a number of years, but teachers increasingly lack the right training to address the rise in mental health concerns amongst pupils¹⁰.

1 IN 4

young people in Scotland live in poverty



poorer attainment



reduced life chances



In order to enable all young people to **flourish in life, continued investment is required**. Equipping young people with the essential social and emotional skills means that they can cope with **whatever life throws at them, take charge of their lives, and live life to the full. This is what we exist to do.**



THE YOUNG PEOPLE YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES US TO WORK WITH

In the last year¹¹, **73 donors** supported us in helping to transform the life chances of disadvantaged young people in Scotland. **£661,058** of bursary funding was donated, which enabled us to provide thousands of young people with an experience that helped shape their future aspirations, no matter what their circumstances.

Partnering with **156 schools** and **colleges** and **15 youth organisations**, we worked with **5,199 young people**. The majority live in deprived inner-cities such as **Glasgow, Dundee** and **Aberdeen** where, for many, opportunities to experience the outdoors are severely limited. A smaller proportion live in rural communities such as **Skye, the Highlands** and **Orkney** where social isolation is more prevalent and access to services and job opportunities can be more limited.

Many receive **Free Schools Meals** or **Pupil Equity funding**, which means that, without targeted support to access experiences like Outward Bound, it is significantly less likely that they will achieve the qualifications and develop the skills that will enable them to flourish in life and secure and sustain positive employment.

These pupils are typically selected by their teachers because they experience **low self-confidence** and self-esteem, shows signs of **stress or anxiety, poor engagement in their learning** or **poor social skills**. These worries and concerns have been identified by their teachers as factors that hold them back from achieving their potential.

In 2017-18 we worked with **23,379 young people** from across the UK. **77%** received a bursary.

5,199 (1 IN 5) were from Scotland.

THE OUTWARD BOUND EXPERIENCE

Outward Bound gives these young people a **different experience of challenge and achievement** – one they may never have felt before. It pushes them to the limits of what they think they're capable of and shows them that there is more in them than they think.

Their course takes place in **wilderness environments** that they may never have experienced before, nor even imagined existed. Away from school, where many feel **afraid of failure** and an overwhelming **pressure to succeed**, they're given the opportunity to go on a **real adventure**, to **take risks** and to **learn from their mistakes**.

The challenges start small – jumping into a loch or working together to scale a high wall. Gradually, the challenges increase to include canoeing, kayaking or rock climbing adventures, and culminate in an overnight expedition where they sleep out in tents or bothies. They're trusted to take responsibility for their kit and equipment, to think as a team rather than individuals, and to live alongside others who they have never met before.

Day by day, their confidence increases and where they would previously have given up in the face of something they're afraid to do or that seems too hard, **they realise that they can go further**.

By the end of the week, they've **discovered qualities they didn't know they had** – qualities they can be proud of and that can help them to live life more fully, especially during periods of difficulty. Instead of feeling **isolated** and afraid of **being judged by others**, they feel **valued and accepted for who they are**, and are often surprised to learn that they can make friends, especially with people they thought were different to them.



In the following sections of this report, we describe what young people experience at Outward Bound and then present two examples of the work we are able to do with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in Scotland as a result of the funding we receive. Both work on the principle of 'targeted provision' where Outward Bound plays a key role in improving the life chances of young people aged 13-14 and 15-19.



RAISING THE ASPIRATIONS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN DUNDEE

Dundee City Council programme, September 2018 – February 2019, Loch Eil

The life chances of disadvantaged young people growing up in Dundee are amongst some of the most limited in Scotland. The area has some of the poorest educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and the lowest numbers of school leavers in Scotland going onto higher education¹².

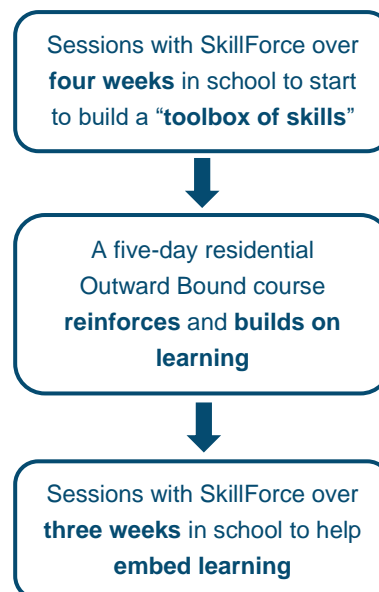
This programme aims to tackle these issues. Designed in response to the Scottish Attainment Challenge, it focuses on developing the social and emotional skills that underpin pupils' confidence and engagement in learning. Currently in its third year, the programme involves a partnership between The Outward Bound Trust, SkillForce¹³ and Dundee City Council, and works with **168 S2 pupils** (aged 13-14) from **eight schools** in **Dundee** each year. The aims of the programme are to:

- ✓ Increase pupils' **determination** to **set and achieve challenging goals**
- ✓ Develop pupils' **resilience** to **overcome setbacks**
- ✓ Improve pupils' **confidence** and **self-belief**
- ✓ Increase pupils' **social and life skills**, including their ability to **work with others**

SkillForce works with the pupils over four weeks prior to the residential course, helping them to develop a **"toolbox of skills"**, which include **listening, communication, confidence, trust** and **time-keeping**. This is then reinforced throughout the Outward Bound course, with further learning around **challenge** and **support, growth mindsets¹⁴, emotional bank accounts¹⁵, and personal responsibility**. SkillForce then work with the pupils again for three weeks to help reinforce learning from the residential course in the classroom.

168
pupils

from the most disadvantaged communities in Dundee



IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

A recent evaluation of the programme¹⁶ shows that it is making a significant difference to the pupils' resilience, ambitions and relationships with others, whilst performance data collected by one of the schools has also shown a positive impact on the pupils' progress in learning¹⁷.

The pupils tried activities such as **gorge walking, rock climbing, canoe rafting**, an **overnight expedition** and **wild camping** for the first time. As a result, they described discovering that they could **achieve more than they thought**, learning that other people are **kind and supportive** and realising that working with other people can be **fun and rewarding**. The biggest impact recorded was in their **interpersonal skills** – their confidence to **meet new people**, to **work with others in a team** and **communicate their ideas** – and their **aspiration** – their confidence to **set challenging goals** and to **overcome difficulties** in school.

"I learnt that I can actually do stuff I never thought I could." **Niall, age 13**

"I learnt that I am ready to challenge myself." **Freya, age 13**

*"I learnt that I can be **confident to do things** that I was really **afraid of** and try my best."* **Callum, age 13**

*"I learnt that it's **not that scary to try new stuff**. If ur [sic] scared u [sic] might end up liking it."* **Josh, age 14**

*"I learnt how to **get along more with others** and how to **find each other's strengths**."* **Ellie, age 13**

*"[Working with others] is good because you find out that you have **more things in common than you thought**."* **Jo, age 13**

*"I have learnt that **my ideas aren't always incorrect** and sometimes they can be **the solution to a problem** within the group."* **Georgia, age 13**

*"I learnt that if I **give myself a little nudge**, I can go a **little further**."* **Eilidh, age 15**

*"I learnt that I can **stay on task** and help others more than I thought. I have done everything I have been challenged with."* **Jack, age 13**

*"I can **achieve personal goals** when I push myself enough."* **Isla, age 13**

IMPROVED ASPIRATION



97% were more motivated to set learning goals that will challenge them

89% were more motivated to work hard to overcome difficulties they face in school



BETTER RELATIONSHIPS



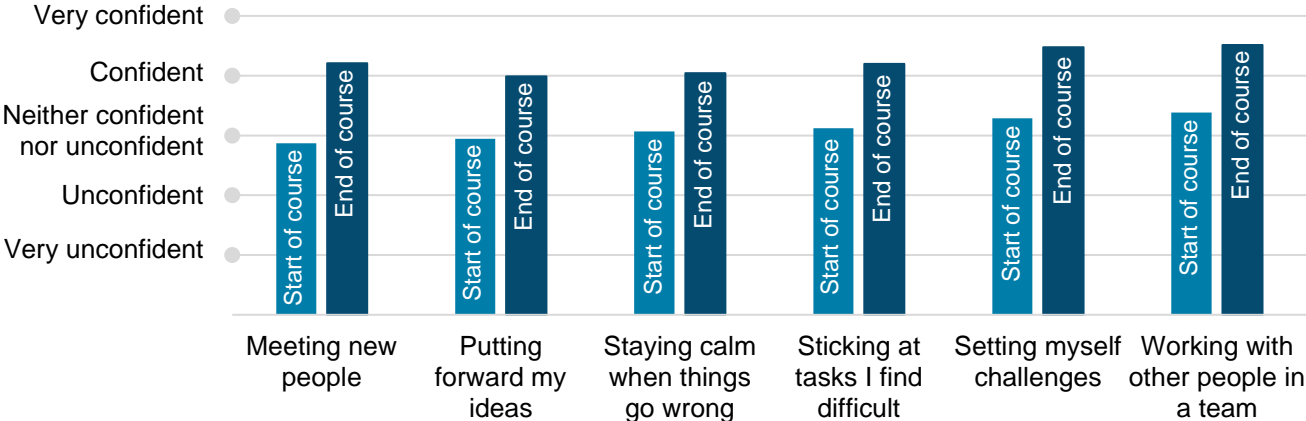
89% improved their interpersonal skills – **working with others** and **communicating ideas**

IMPROVED RESILIENCE



80% improved their self-management – **sticking at tasks** and **staying calm when things go wrong**

Figure 1: Increases in confidence recorded by pupils at the end of their Outward Bound course



The teachers who attended the courses also observed a significant improvement in the pupils' confidence, determination and relationships with others. All five teachers agreed that the pupils:

- ✓ realised they were **more capable than they thought**
- ✓ became more confident to **overcome challenges**
- ✓ developed their ability to **work collaboratively with others**

"For some, their confidence has been boosted massively! Some have increased in confidence in social situations, others will be more confident to try new things, and some will have the confidence to think more for themselves and be more decisive." **Kirsten Webster, Teacher, Morgan Academy**

"We have seen a massive change in the young people. Taking control, leading and being confident in undertaking new challenges." **Connor McCartney & Gregor Lesslie, Baldragon Academy**

"The young people are developing confidence to speak out in their group and to share what they need from them. They are engaging with new young people and are able to present information to them." **Leigh-Anne Crombie, Pupil Support Worker, Morgan Academy**

There is a clear pathway for the Outward Bound course to have a **positive impact on the pupils' learning back in school**, as the teachers and SkillForce staff can build on the **pupils' increased openness to trying things** they're unsure of, **pushing themselves further** when they feel challenged, particularly when preparing for exams, and **supporting each other** to achieve. The programme is recognised at a senior level, as shown by the following endorsement from Paul Clancy, Executive Director of Children and Families Service.

"We have been working in partnership with The Outward Bound Trust since 2016 to improve educational outcomes for pupils in all Dundee secondary schools. By targeting selected cohorts of pupils early in their school career to take part in the Outward Bound programme, we are working hard to provide these young people with opportunities to develop confidence, aspiration and a positive mindset to achieve the best educational outcomes.

The impact of our partnership with The Trust is now evident in the measured difference in the achievement of young people who participate in the programme. The investment by The Trust and Dundee City Council in the young people in Dundee is a positive step in addressing the inequalities that exist in the educational attainment of those who do not have the same social and financial support as their peers."

Paul Clancy, Executive Director of Children and Families Service, Dundee City Council



The following case study describes the impact that the programme has had on **Caroline**, a pupil from St. Paul's Academy who first took part in the programme in 2016, first from her teacher's perspective and then from her own.



*From taking part in the 5-day programme when she was in S2, **Caroline's confidence grew**, and she began to have **some kind of self-belief**. Her instructor recognised her potential and recommended her for the **8-day Leadership programme** which took place 15 months later. Once again, Caroline impressed everyone and was **recommended for the 19-day Skills for Life Award**. We managed to successfully secure funding for her to go as there was no way her family would be able to self-fund it.*

*Caroline will be the first person to tell you that, thanks to her experiences with Outward Bound, she is now **more self-assured, confident**, able to **speak out in a group** and **take the lead** in various situations. She is now a member of the **Police Cadets** and has ambitions to go on to Higher Education to do Forensics. She has also agreed to do a presentation in Dundee's City Chambers later this month; something she would have never even thought about doing 2 years ago. She has also **secured a better than predicted set of results at the end of S4**, achieving five National 5's (3 As, 1B & 1C).*

*I was very shy at the beginning, quiet and reserved. I found it hard not being in touch with my family at home. I didn't really have anyone to talk to because I didn't feel comfortable to open up, but that all changed after the 1st expedition and I soon realised that I could do it. On the expedition I learnt to **push myself, encourage others** and to '**put first things first**'. I am so proud of myself for not giving up. I focused on getting back to the centre, so I could ring home.*

*During the 1:1s with my instructor, I opened up and spoke about the way I view myself – it was negative and I needed to change it, so I set myself the following goals: **to go running more, help my mum** by supporting her with shopping and cleaning and **put more effort into my school work**. I am actually **looking forward to starting back at school and I want to do well, I want to be on time and take on more responsibility**.*

*The biggest thing for me was being away from home for three weeks, I can't believe I did it. **I've made friends with people from all over the world** and I've learnt that **I can believe in myself**. It was an amazing way to spend the Summer.*



SCOTLAND'S NEXT GENERATION & THE SKILLS FOR LIFE AWARD

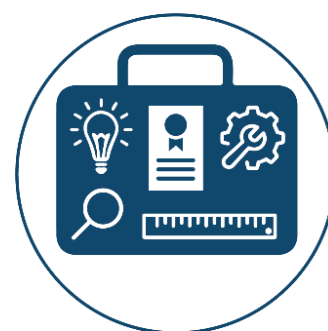
Scotland's Next Generation (SNG) is a project which targets **disadvantaged young people in Scotland** who, through circumstances beyond their control, **face multiple challenges** in life and do **not have the financial means** to access the same opportunities as their peers. **Young people aged 15-19** are referred to participate in the project through their **school, youth group or social care support**.

As a result of funding provided by **17 individuals**, **27 young people** were able to attend a 19-day Skills for Life Award course at our Loch Eil centre in 2018. The majority came from deprived communities in **Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow, Dundee** and **Kilmarnock** and face challenging home lives that limit the opportunities that are available to them: some are living in **foster care or kinship care**, or are **young carers** themselves; whilst others have recently experienced a **bereavement**. Some have a **learning disorder** such as Asperger's or suffer from extreme shyness and social anxiety. Each had a strong reason for wanting to take part in the Skills for Life Award course, from **learning new skills and strengthening their CV** to having some respite from a disruptive home life.

During the 19-day course, they were mixed in groups with young people from across the UK and from abroad and set a series of challenges that would test them to the limits of what they thought they were capable of. The two multi-day expeditions challenged them the most, one of which they planned and carried out themselves. By doing so, they were given a unique opportunity to put a wide range of skills into practice, from independence and self-reliance to collaboration and problem-solving.

In addition to 1:1 sessions with their instructor during the course, which helped them to set and work towards goals, they were each supported by a *Course Mentor* who met with them prior to their course to ensure that they were fully prepared, and again upon completion of the course to encourage them to make the most of their experience.

27
young people



IMPACT OF THE COURSE

Our ongoing evaluation of the Skills for Life Award course¹⁸ shows that it has a positive and lasting impact on the young people who participate, helping them to develop **new skills** and **build self-belief** that supports them as they prepare to move into **further or higher education, employment or training**.

In 2018, positive outcomes were recorded for the young people's **interpersonal skills** in particular, with **95% of participants showing an improvement** by the end of the course. Improvements were also recorded in their **resilience** and **emotional control**. The parents of participants also observed noticeable changes in them, in particular in their **self-management** – their **time-management**, ability to **seek feedback** from others and to **adapt to new situations**.



The following two case studies show the impact the course has had on individuals who were supported through Scotland's Next Generation in 2018.

*"I am **more organised**. I find that if I prepare my day I get **more done**. I was stunned at how much I could do in one day on the course. I remembered this and I've **actually finished my homework ready for starting back** [at school]. My workload in my final year seems more manageable because I know if I organise it well I will have time left over. I will **use this extra time to go to the gym** because it **makes me feel good about myself**. Since returning from the course I go walking a lot more, I am **more grateful** and I feel more at peace."*

Raksha, age 16, Glasgow



*“This experience has motivated me to work hard to get onto another level with me and my family as I’m currently disciplining myself in my studies to get into a top University such as Oxford and Cambridge. It has taught me that **no matter how hard life can try to beat you up and knock you down you can still move forward and achieve whatever wild and curious dreams come into your mind.**”*

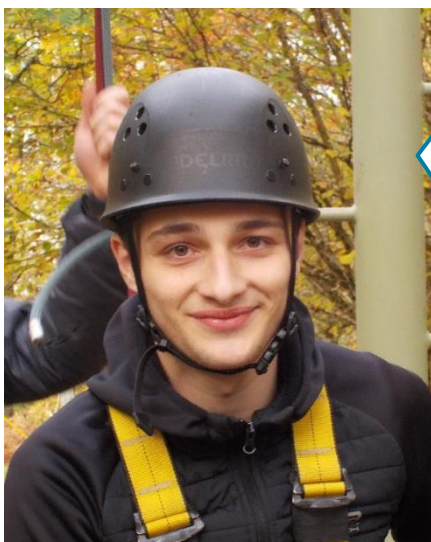
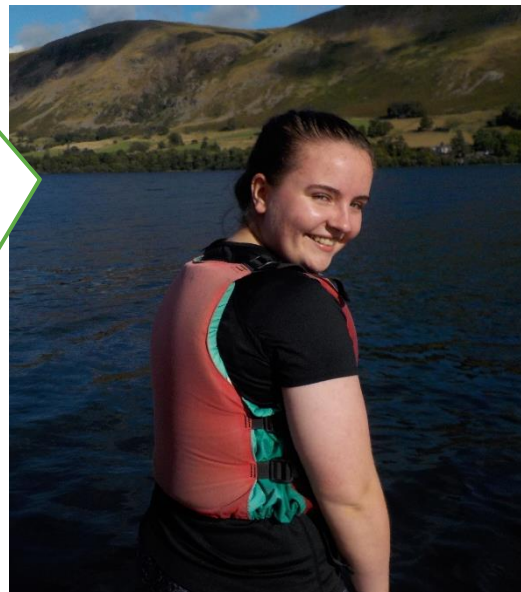
Josef, age 15, Glasgow



18 months on from the course, **97% of participants** agreed that they were **seeing positive results from applying what they learnt** during their course. The two testimonials below, provided 18 months on, are from young people who were funded through Scotland’s Next Generation.

*“The Skills for Life Award challenged my thinking in the way that it used adventurous activities and exposure to the natural environment to encourage participants to evaluate their mindset. This encouragement showed me that **even if I think I can’t do something, I shouldn’t let that doubt stop me from trying** because more often than not I **surprise myself and surpass my expectations.**”*

Marie, age 18



*“I’ve applied to the Police and I am on one of the last stages to pass before I can go to police college. Outward Bound has helped me with meeting new people and working as a group, so **going to complete my police tests and interviews I’ve felt more confident going into it** knowing I’ve had to go into challenges with people I’ve never met before and successfully completing them.”*

Callum, age 18

MESSAGES OF THANKS FROM THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR TEACHERS

The young people and teachers from schools across Scotland wished to express their thanks for the opportunity to attend Outward Bound as a result of the funding they received.

“Thank you for your generosity. This opportunity gave me the confidence to step out of my comfort zone and to believe in myself. In the end I felt accomplished, able to lead a group to success and proud of myself.” **Raza, 14, Bridge of Don Academy**

“Thank you for this opportunity. I would never have come to Loch Eil and be the better person I am without the funding.” **Omar, 14, St Machar Academy**

“Thank you very much for helping me to be able to overcome my fears and to make others feel better.” **Iona, 12, Mallaig Active Schools**

“I would like to say that this trip has been outstanding – the staff, the activities, the learning and everything. At first, I was worried about this trip but now, [having been to Outward Bound]; I have never been [happier] in my life. I have been encouraged to take part and now feel comfortable with trying new foods and trying new activities...Thank you.” **Henry, 13, Invergordon Academy**

“Thank you for this trip as it has opened my eyes for the future, and it did challenge me, but I got through it!” **Laura, 14, Dumfries Academy**

“The Skills for Life Course completely changed my quality of living and none of it would have been possible if it wasn’t for you. I can’t possibly articulate how grateful I am and how much the course meant to me and you are the reason I was there at all. You have helped me realise my potential, my beliefs and I can’t possibly ever repay you. I want you to know that what you have done will never be forgotten, it impacts my daily life and has made me a much happier person.” **Maryama, 16, Glasgow**

“I am very grateful for the once in a lifetime opportunity which I never dreamt of because if not for your generosity my mum would have never been able to afford to send me.” **Josef, 15, Glasgow**

“Thank you. These pupils get a lot out of the course, which helps them at home, school and with their friends. It would be inaccessible to many of them without your support.”

“This course provides an invaluable experience to young people who otherwise might not have the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities, stay away from home and visit a beautiful place in their country. Thank you.” **Sheena Amos, Teacher, Portree High School**

“Thank you for a wonderful week. Our pupils had such a fabulous experience developing social skills and will hopefully become future leaders.” **Teacher, Springburn Academy**

“Thank you very much for helping me provide this chance for the pupils. Being in a very deprived area they don’t get that chance to do these things without this funding, so thank you.” **June Potts, Teacher, Northfield Academy**

“Thank you – the students had a great week and have learned a wonderful range of skills. The Ambassadors were fantastic with the students and embraced all the activities.” **Teachers from Dumfries Academy**

LOOKING FORWARD

As the number of children and young people living in poverty continues to rise and the effects of this, along with other factors, on their future life chances become more widely understood, it is ever more critical that charities, funders, youth services and education providers work in partnership to create opportunities that will secure a more promising future for them.

At The Outward Bound Trust, our mission remains clear to transform the lives of as many young people as possible by equipping them with the skills to cope with whatever life throws at them and the aspiration to believe that, with the right attitude, they can achieve anything they want to in life. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of all of our supporters and it is our sincere wish that, with your continued support, we will be able to play our part in improving the life chances of many more thousands of young people in the future.



Pupils from Dumfries Academy prepare to camp out overnight

REFERENCES

- ¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/poverty-income-inequality-scotland-2015-18/>
- ² Education Endowment Foundation (2018). The Attainment Gap 2017.
- ³ Impetus (2019). Research Briefing 1: Establishing the Employment Gap.
- ⁴ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/statistics/mental-health-statistics-poverty>
- ⁵ Social Mobility Commission (2017). State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain.
- ⁶ Centre for Research on Families and Relationships (2017). Research briefing 91: “Can we put the ‘poverty of aspiration’ myth to bed now?”
- ⁷ Prince’s Trust Ebay Youth Index 2019
- ⁸ <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/Schools/Raisingeducationalattainment/pupilequityfund>
- ⁹ An agenda focused on achieving equality in education, in particular closing the poverty-related attainment gap <https://www.gov.scot/policies/schools/pupil-attainment/>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/news/70-scotlands-teachers-lack-training-address-mental-health-problems-schools>
- ¹¹ Between October 2017 and September 2018
- ¹² Social Mobility Commission (2017). State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain.
- ¹³ <https://www.skillforce.org/>
- ¹⁴ <https://mindsetonline.com/whatisit/about/>
- ¹⁵ A concept developed by Steven Covey in his book *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*.
- ¹⁶ The case study presents the evidence from an evaluation of two of the courses which involved four of the schools – Grove Academy, Braeview Academy, Baldragon Academy and Morgan Academy. 76 pupils completed a questionnaire at the end of the residential course. All pupil names have been changed. Names of visiting staff members have been included only where permission has been given to do so.
- ¹⁷ The Outward Bound Trust Social Impact Report 2017
- ¹⁸ The evaluation carried out involves pre and post-course questionnaires completed by participants and their parents. In 2018, 392 participants and 100 parents completed a pre and post-course survey. 18-month follow-up surveys were also completed by 34 participants who attended the Skills for Life Award course in 2017.

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