



# IMPACT REPORT



TRANSFORMING  
YOUNG LIVES  
— SINCE 1922 —



# FAITH

WE LOVE AND TRUST GOD. WE PUT HIM CENTRE OF ALL THAT WE DO.

# SERVICE

WE TREAT OUR CUSTOMERS AS GUESTS. AS CHRISTIANS WE AREN'T EXCLUSIVE, INTOLERANT OR THINK WE ARE BETTER THAN ANYONE ELSE.

# INTEGRITY

WE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO BE HONEST WITH EVERYONE, ALL OF THE TIME.

# EXCELLENCE

WE ALWAYS STRIVE TO DO OUR VERY BEST IN EVERYTHING WE DO.



# OUR VALUES

# ADVENTURE

WE LOVE THE OUTDOORS AND SEE LIFE AND FAITH AS AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY OF LEARNING.

# SAFETY

WE HAVE A SAFETY CULTURE THAT RUNS RIGHT THROUGH OUR ORGANISATION.

# RELATIONSHIPS

PEOPLE ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO US. WE GENUINELY VALUE RELATIONSHIPS.

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>WELCOME FROM OUR CEO</b>	<b>PG 4—5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>OUR HISTORY</b>	<b>PG 6—7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>WHO WE ARE</b>	<b>PG 8—9</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>WHAT WE DO</b>	<b>PG 10—17</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES</b>	<b>PG 18—19</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>WHO WE WORK WITH</b>	<b>PG 20—27</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>RAISING A GENERATION OF YOUNG LEADERS</b>	<b>PG 28—29</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>WHERE ARE WE GOING?</b>	<b>PG 30—31</b>





**We have seen our Year 5 cohort thoroughly enjoy a fantastic trip where they learned valuable skills and developed their sense of independence, communication skills and team work.**

Emily Ingram, Atwood Primary School

## WELCOME FROM OUR CEO

Rock UK has a long history in creating memorable outdoor adventures for young people.

As times have changed our organisation has grown, we have been challenged and we challenge ourselves to see how our work has made an impact on the lives of young people across the UK.

Over our 100 year history our name may have changed - from **Belgrave Trust** including **Climping Camp**, to **Barnabas Trust/Barnabas Adventure Centres** to **Rock UK** - but our mission has remained the same.

**We want to transform the lives of young people and ensure that no child misses out on an adventure with Rock UK.**

There is still some work to do in terms of how and when we measure our impact, but we have made good progress in collecting both data and anecdotal evidence from teachers, groups leaders, parents and young people.

Our Impact Report will start by sharing information about Rock UK as an organisation, who we work with and where we have come from.

We will then work through some of the societal challenges that are facing young people in our country today. The cost of living crisis alone has plunged over 4.3 million children into poverty, creating a ripple effect of problems from bullying to mental health challenges.

Our report then aims to bring together recent evidence from a range of sources to demonstrate how we address these challenges and the difference that a Rock UK outdoor adventure can make to the lives of young people and the wider communities in which we operate.

Finally we will look at our future and how we can make improvements for future reports.



**Malcolm Maclean,**  
*Chief Executive, Rock UK Adventures.*





# CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF ADVENTURE

2022

## OUR HISTORY

In 2022 we celebrated our centenary, a milestone event in our journey.

Since 1922 we have been pioneers of affordable outdoor residential trips and, although the adventures might have changed, our mission stays the same.

**We have 100 years experience in providing young people with a safe haven, a place to learn, a place to grow. Developing young people and faith are in our DNA.**

As we look back throughout our history, you can see how far we have come. What started as a trip to the seaside with Sunday school teachers is now a charitable organisation with four outdoor adventure centres across the UK.

1922



# FRONTIER CENTRE WHITHAUGH PARK







# CARROTY WOOD SUMMIT CENTRE

# 3

# WHO WE ARE

## MISSION:

**Rock UK are Christians passionate about developing young people, bringing adventure into learning and using the outdoors to transform lives.**

Rock UK is a Christian Charity with over 100 years of experience in transforming the lives of young people through outdoor adventure.

Our faith gives us a strong foundation of Christian values that we can share with young people such as empathy, respect, courage and trust. They all form part of the Rock UK adventure experience.

We truly believe that 'no child should miss out'. Everyone should have access to an exhilarating outdoor adventure where they can learn and grow.

## VALUES:

Our values are rooted in Faith, Learning and Adventure.

**We welcome everyone from all faiths and none.**

**Each adventure that we deliver is designed to support learning, create unforgettable memories and transform lives.**

**The values that bring our team together are grounded in faith but are also part of life. To be respectful, to show empathy and be inclusive.**



# FAITH

We love and trust God. We put faith centre of all that we do.

# SERVICE



We treat our customers as guests. As Christians we aren't exclusive, intolerant or think we are better than anyone else.

# INTEGRITY

We make every effort to be honest with everyone, all of the time.



# EXCELLENCE

We always strive to do our very best in everything we do.



# ADVENTURE

We love the outdoors and see life and faith as an adventurous journey of learning.



# SAFETY

We have a safety-culture that runs right through our organisation

# RELATIONSHIPS

People are very important to us. We genuinely value relationships.



# 4

# WHAT WE DO



At each of our four adventure centres across the UK, we provide a safe environment where young people can grow in confidence, face their fears, build life-long friendships and learn more about their own spiritual, mental and physical capabilities.

We provide flexible residential trips to schools which take place over three or five days. Each trip is tailor-made with a choice of over 40 instructed activities which can be linked to learning outcomes within the school curriculum. Throughout the school holidays, our centres run holiday clubs or taster sessions.

Each activity is designed to get participants out of their comfort zone and stretch their limits so that they can build their resilience, gain confidence and create an unforgettable adventure.

Our unique outdoor spaces are available for groups to use throughout their stay. We give groups the time and space to spend together so that they can get to know each other better, form stronger bonds and build friendships that will last a lifetime.




## USING ADVENTURE TO TRANSFORM YOUNG LIVES

We take the time to listen to group leaders, the children and parents so that we can monitor our impact and improve our delivery. Making a visit to Rock UK a memorable experience that makes a difference to the lives of young people is at the heart of everything we do.



**The bursary enabled the young people to attend and take part in all the activities. Due to family financial concerns these young people regularly miss out on the opportunities afforded to other young people.**



Group Leader



**Adventure is our vehicle to drive change in young people to help them grow and develop.**



Malcolm Maclean, *CEO Rock UK*

# 4

# WHAT WE DO

## OUR APPROACH

The Rock UK approach to transforming young lives is grounded in Faith, Learning and Adventure. Our Faith is what motivates us to keep on transforming young lives through outdoor adventure. We continue to learn and to provide learning with each outdoor residential that takes place. Adventure is our vehicle to drive change in young people and to help them grown and develop.


## DELIVERING ADVENTURES WITH CARE

Our team of instructors are responsible for leading and facilitating a wide range of activities both on site and off site. As the face of Rock UK it is their enthusiasm, consideration and skill that inspires confidence in young people to take part.


They take their time to get to know each individual, their names, where they have come from, their strengths and weaknesses, so that they can understand when to challenge them and when to stop.

The feedback we receive from both young people and their group leaders demonstrates the difference our approach makes to our visitors.

We invest in both their technical and personal development so that they can deliver activities safely and provide pastoral care to each of our visitors.



**The activities are a good mix, led by competent instructors who engage the children well...Jesse Grey is not a church school, yet benefitted from the very evident Christian values and ethos that came across in the actions of the staff in their approach to everything.**



Headteacher





**We were incredibly impressed with Lauren because of how she adapted the activities to support our children's needs.**

# 4

# WHAT WE DO

## MAKING LEARNING FUN

Learning should be fun. It should be enjoyable. When learning is fun and engaging people are more likely to retain the information. Our activities create thrilling, memorable moments. Alongside the established sporting and adventure activities are a carefully curated programme of team and confidence building activities, which bring each group together and push individuals to achieve more than they thought was possible. Throughout our activities the team give young people the opportunity for reflection.

**I want to try other new things now I know that there is nothing to be frightened about. The instructors were great and they really helped me to do it.**

Young Person



**The importance of learning outdoors can not be overstated ... To those who struggle to engage in the traditional classroom environment, it offers means to engage with education, rather than merely endure it**

Robin Millar, MP

*Chairman, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Outdoor Learning*



# 4

# WHAT WE DO

## ADVENTURES ARE OUR VEHICLE TO TRANSFORM LIVES

Each outdoor adventure is built with the aim of transforming the lives of young people.

Studies have shown the benefits of spending time in the outdoors on health and wellbeing. In addition, outdoor residential trips which include an element of adventure have proved to be effective in reducing behavioural problems and improving psychological resilience.

Research has also shown a link between outdoor adventures, improved confidence and the creation of a smoother transition between school years.

We believe Rock UK supports young people to develop key life skills, impacting their personal development. While some of these are measurable, as you will read later on in our report, others are less quantifiable but just as vital.



**I was worried they were not going to enjoy it or do any of the activities but they came back smiling and on a high. I can't believe some of the things that they did - it doesn't sound like the same child.**



Parent



**The impact on her self-confidence was huge. She is a quiet girl in class and it was so lovely to hear her yelling encouragement (and orders) at the children in her team at the top of her voice!**



Teacher





# 5

# TRANSFORMING

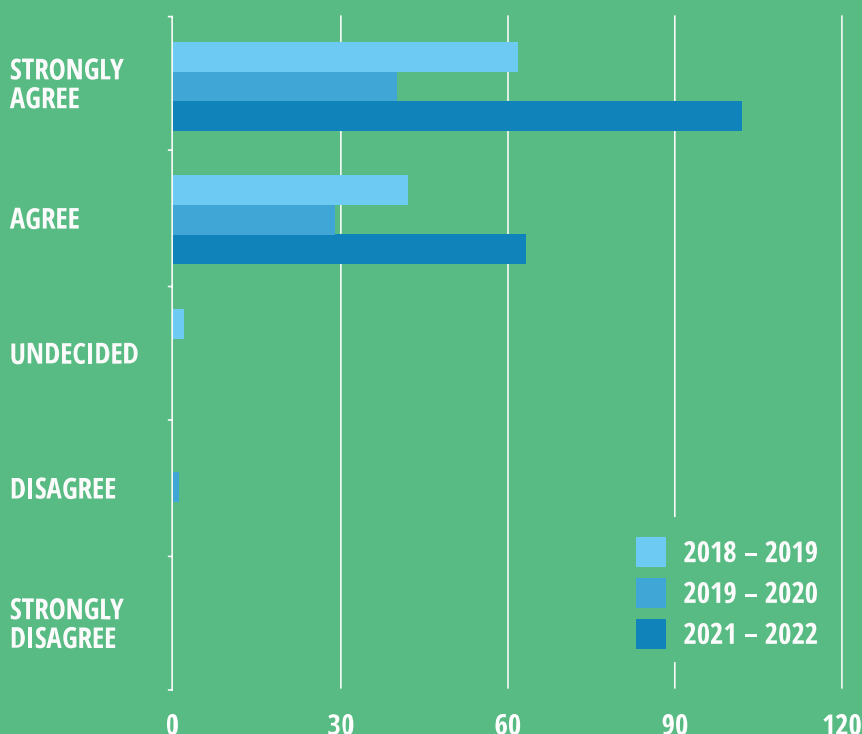
## BUILDING CONFIDENT KIDS

### IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH

As well as anecdotal evidence, we also gather data from teachers and groups leaders following each visit to one of our centres. The data below shows the responses of each group completed our post-visit survey.

Our three measures of impact are:

- Greater self - confidence
- Increased resilience
- Better ability to evaluate strengths and weaknesses

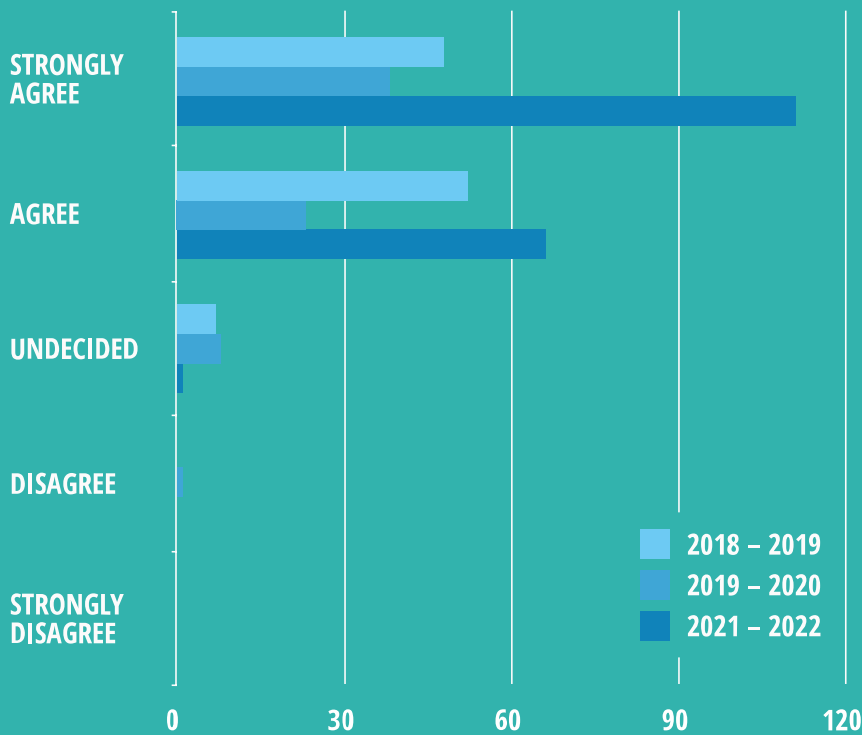


### GREATER SELF CONFIDENCE

Year on year, teachers 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that their students are more self-confident following an outdoor adventure with Rock UK.

In 2021/ 2022 every teacher chose these options: no-one disagreed or was undecided. This supports evidence from external research that outdoor adventures improves confidence in young people.

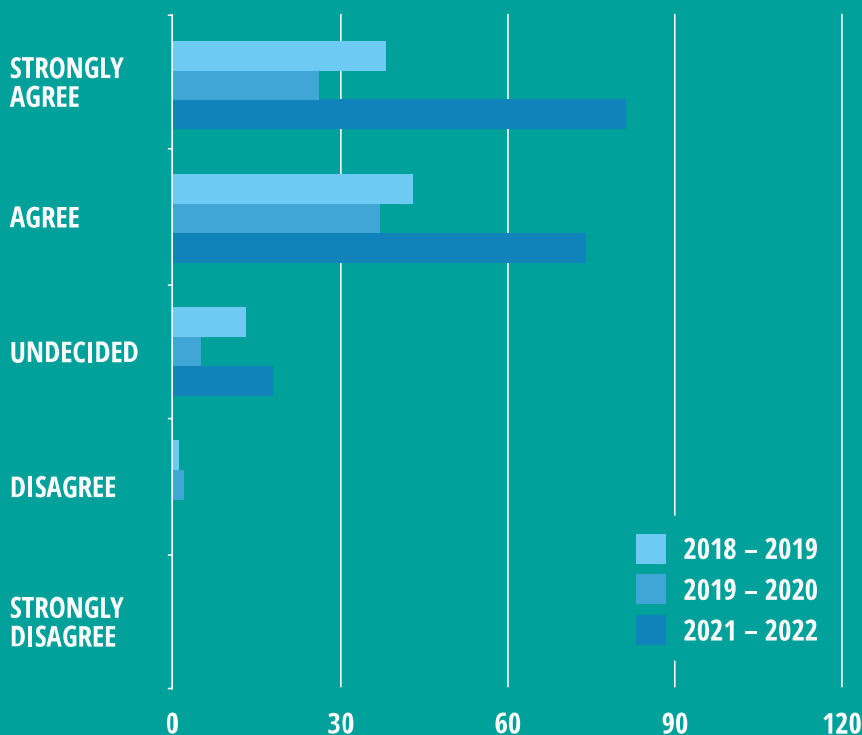




## GREATER RESILIENCE / PERSEVERANCE

Year on year, teachers 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that their students show greater resilience and perseverance following an outdoor adventure with Rock UK.

In our most recent full year results, there are fewer teachers that were undecided or disagreed.



## ABLE TO EVALUATE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Year on year, the majority of teachers 'Strongly Agree' or 'Agree' that their students have a better ability to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses following an outdoor adventure with Rock UK.

In our most recent full year results, there was only a small amount of teachers who remained undecided and no-one disagreed.

# 6

# WHO WE WORK —



While our focus is on transforming the lives of young people through outdoor adventure, we also welcome other groups to our centres including:

**CHURCH GROUPS**

**200**

bookings per year

**YOUTH GROUPS**

**309**

bookings per year



IN THE PAST YEAR  
WE'VE HAD A TOTAL OF  
**29,653**  
visitors!

## WHITHAUGH PARK

Scottish Borders

**5,237**

visitors

## SUMMIT CENTRE

South Wales

**4,635** visitors

## FRONTIER CENTRE

N.hamptonshire

**10,458**

visitors

## CARROTY WOOD

Kent

**9,323** visitors

# 6

# WHO WE WORK

## SUMMIT CENTRE

### CASE STUDY

## D'S STORY

**“He is non-verbal outside the family unit and rarely leaves the house so to find an activity that he enjoys, in a setting where he is comfortable was a big milestone.”**

(Amy, D's Mum)

D is a member of our climbing classes at our Rock UK Summit Centre in Wales and is currently working towards his Level 3 NICAS certificate. He also has a rare chromosomal condition called Duplication 7q11.23, and has also been diagnosed with autism, ADHD, hearing loss, elective mutism, severe anxiety and chronic pain through joint hypermobility syndrome. Here, D's mum, Amy, shares her family's experience of Rock UK and the impact that we have had on their lives.

We found Summit Centre through a special needs parent and children group where they had organised a taster session day which included archery and climbing.

D really enjoyed the climbing activity so we decided to start taking him regularly. As he suffers with chronic pain, I wasn't sure that he would keep going with it but he has remained determined.

We attend the NICAS classes as a family, with me supporting throughout the session and his brother also joining in the class. He is non-verbal outside the family unit and rarely leaves the house so to find an activity that he enjoys, in a setting where he is comfortable was a big milestone.

The instructors have been amazing in supporting him and helping him develop his climbing skills. From taking just a few steps the first time we went to now working towards his Level 3, the difference in his abilities has been incredible. The team have even found adjustments that can be made to his qualifications, so that he can achieve his certification.

Over time, both the instructor team and D's climbing partner have built up trust with him which is huge. It was a really emotional moment when he spoke in front of them for the first time and while it might only be one or two words, he continues to speak to them within the class. He now even feels comfortable enough with the instructors to tease them, he sometimes hides their equipment for fun!



**The impact that these sessions have had is massive. It has widened D's world, pushing him to meet and engage with other people. He has also lost weight which helps with his pain management. His school have even seen the benefit of the climbing sessions and are now funding them as part of his educational programme. It has made a real difference to and our family.**

*Amy, D's Mum*

# 6

# WHO WE WORK

FRONTIER CENTRE

## CASE STUDY

## JESSE GRAY PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Delivering a positive impact on both students and teachers

At Rock UK, we believe in the power of outdoor adventures. From building resilience and a sense of achievement to developing skills in communication and teamwork, a school residential trip is an opportunity to help develop students and create confident kids.

Chris stated, "Firstly, the site is large, natural and very well maintained, the access to safe, yet adventurous water sports is fantastic. The accommodation layout is perfect for multiclass groups due to the useful meeting room. The activities are a good mix, led by competent instructors who engage the children well. The food is fantastic, a good mix between being obviously child friendly but with a 'home cooked' feel.

Jesse Grey is not a Church school, yet benefited from the very evident Christian values and ethos that came across in the actions of the staff in their approach to everything. The fact that this is evident without being pointed out or labelled demonstrates the integrity of all those involved."

Chris also commented, "They are able to get to know each other better and get to know the pupils better. I now have a waiting list of teaching staff that want to come on the next trip.

Even with 60 pupils on the trip, plus staff, Rock UK created a really lovely family atmosphere where we had time to complete the activities, spend time with the children and if we wanted to, mix with other schools as well.

Thank you for such a great trip, the children have not stopped talking about it!

**As well as helping the children, this was also a great opportunity for the teaching staff to have time create a bond.**

*Chris, Headteacher of Jesse Grey Primary School*



### CASE STUDY

# LANGLEY HALL PRIMARY ACADEMY

**"...these adventures are a great opportunity for them to play, run, and enjoy themselves. But it's also about the bigger picture and seeing them build practical life skills. They get to experience things that they haven't done before."**

(Stella, Vice Principal)

Last year, Carroty Wood welcomed over 3,400 visitors, among these was Langley Hall Primary Academy who have been bringing groups from year one to year six to Carroty Wood for over 25 years. "The ethos of Carroty Wood is really aligned with the ethos of our school. There are obviously Christian values, but also outdoor learning, the environment and being outside. We very much believe in outdoor education to support the personal development of the children." Stella Kalamaj, Vice Principal of Lower School.

Langley Hall really value their trips to Carroty Wood. Here, Stella explains why they are so valuable.

"Firstly, these adventures are a great opportunity for them to play, run, and enjoy themselves. But it's also about the bigger picture and seeing them build practical life skills. They get to experience things that they haven't done before. That could be buying things from the tuck shop, working out the cost and the change to making their own meals. It could simply be about spending a night without their parent. These experiences help their personal development and help them to become a whole person.

We want them to build relationships. From friendships with their peers to better relationships with the staff. This is a great opportunity for everyone to get to know each other better and build teams.

Finally, we also want them to experience things they wouldn't usually be able to experience, from abseiling to raft building. The activities really help them to build teamwork, communication, mental agility and reasoning.

Most importantly, we want them to build memories."

**They play, they collaborate, they learn, they become independent, they become resilient. The rewards that you get are much bigger than you could ever imagine.**

Stella Kalamaj, *Vice Principal of Lower School*

# 6

# WHO WE WORK

## WHITHAUGH PARK

### CASE STUDY

## ALLENDALE YOUTH

**“We like the remoteness of the place - it’s a good digital detox.”**

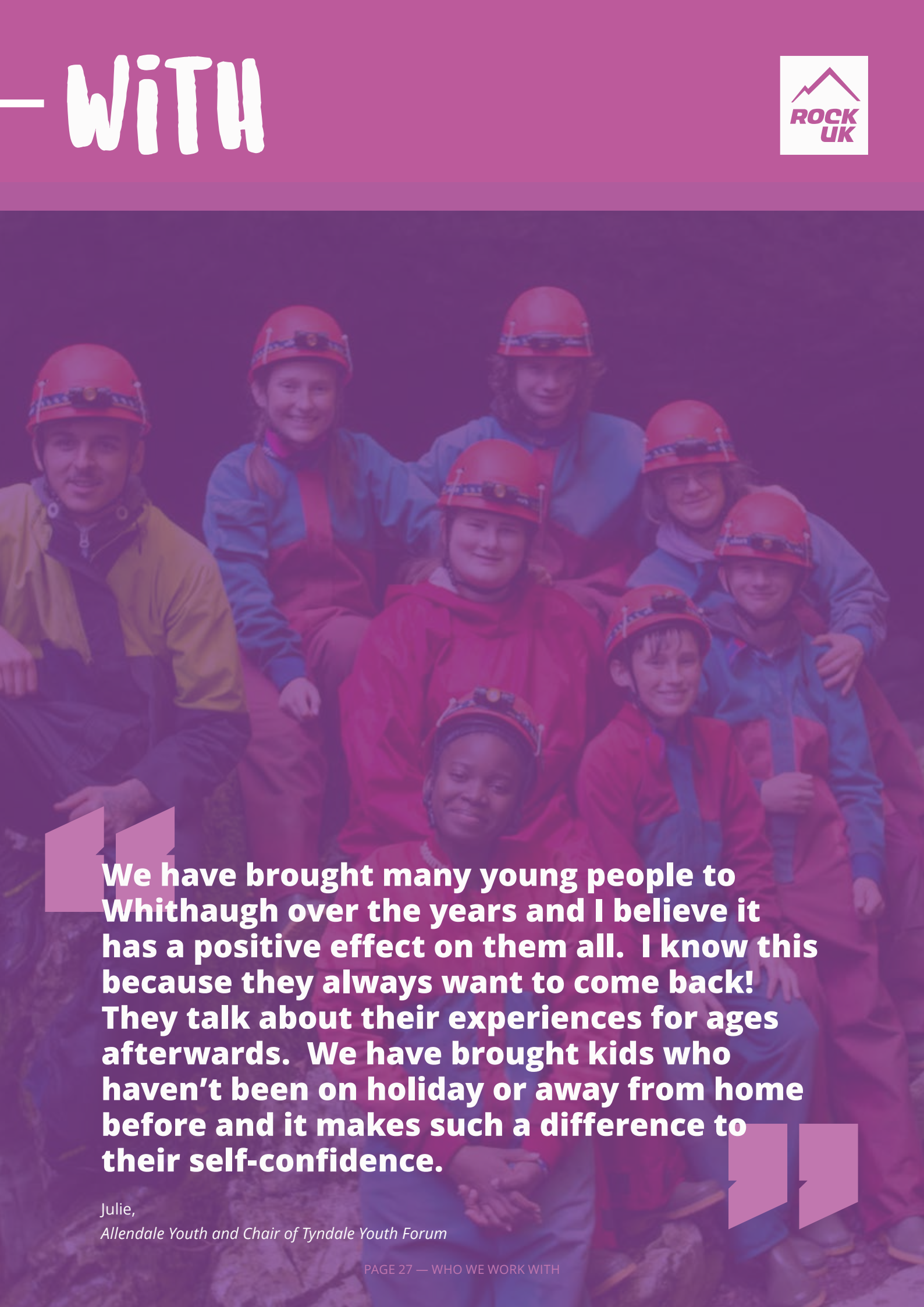
(Julie, Allendale Youth and Chair of Tyndale Youth Forum)

Whithaugh Park residential centre is situated in the unspoilt landscape of the Scottish Borders countryside and shares its surroundings with forests and rivers. As well as hosting school residential trips the centre is popular with youth groups. For many youth workers the youth residential is a highlight of the year offering an opportunity to get to know their young people on a deeper level, cementing friendships within the group.

“We have always found the location peaceful and beautiful. We like the remoteness of the place - it’s a good digital detox. We come at least once a year most years, some years we come two or three times with different age groups and with Tyndale Youth Forum. We usually choose the high ropes, mountain biking, archery, canoeing, kayaking and raft building. We like the wide game, love the pool and zip wire.”

Alongside the setting and the activities, what we pride ourselves on is the quality and warmth of our team. Rock UK invests a great deal in our Instructor Training Programme to ensure that our team are not only qualified but well supported to deliver outdoor adventures and Spotlight youth sessions. Spotlight sessions are designed to challenge young people to think about life outside of their normal environment. They consider issues such as decision making, friendship, self-esteem, communication, justice and trust, all from a Christian perspective of respect, tolerance and inclusivity.

“We like the safe feeling - the staff are always delightful and provide us with the best time.”

A group of approximately ten young people, mostly teenagers, are posed in a rocky outdoor setting. They are wearing red and blue climbing jackets and red helmets with headlamps. Some are sitting on the ground, while others are standing or sitting on rocks behind them. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred natural rock face.

**We have brought many young people to Whithaugh over the years and I believe it has a positive effect on them all. I know this because they always want to come back! They talk about their experiences for ages afterwards. We have brought kids who haven't been on holiday or away from home before and it makes such a difference to their self-confidence.**

Julie,  
*Allendale Youth and Chair of Tyndale Youth Forum*



# 7

# RAISING YOUNG

## YOUNG ADULTS IMPACT

Our Instructor Training Programme (ITP) has been running since 2011. This is a volunteer gap year where young people join our team and train to become an instructor. We provide food, accommodation and pastoral care to help them grow personally and spiritually. We also support our ITP team in gaining qualifications that will help them with their future career should they decide to stay with us or continue working in the outdoor adventure industry.

To date 119 people have successfully completed our ITP with a number of young adults staying with us to continue their career as part of the full time instructor team.



### SARAH'S STORY

Sarah joined Rock UK on our Instructor Training Programme. Four years after completing the programme, she is now the Lead Instructor at Whithaugh Park in the Scottish Borders.

**I love being able to give people their independence whether that's a visitor to our centre or one of our instructors. I believe in encouraging people to figure things out for themselves so that they can build their confidence.**

Sarah, Instructor

# LEADERS



## INTERNATIONAL IMPACT

### MISSION TO LESOTHO

As part of the second year of the ITP, our team are encouraged to go on a mission trip to Lesotho in Africa.

Here they work alongside local instructors at the outreach camp that has been created for orphan children who have become the heads of their household.

This is an opportunity to give these children some respite and teach them new skills across a range of activities.

Since we started 91 members of staff have taken this mission trip to Lesotho.

While no-one was able to make the trip in 2022 due to the pandemic and travel restrictions, these missions have restarted in 2023.



**I experienced a deep love and care and passion to show kindness and hope to these kids who have lost so much already in their lives. We played so many games, had a big water fight, which was when we started to see the individual kids' personalities shine through and many, if not all of their faces just full of pure joy.**

Livs Whitehouse, Instructor



# 8 WHERE ARE

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## 1. INCREASING BURSARY SUPPORT

### NO CHILD MISSES OUT

In order to achieve this vision we need a two pronged approach. Firstly, we are ensuring that all schools and youth groups are aware of this fund and how to access it. Secondly, we are actively seeking partnerships with trusts and foundations, corporate sponsors and individual supporters to provide the funding to meet the increasing demands we are facing.

## 2. INCREASED CAPACITY

We are aware that we currently can't meet demand for outdoor adventures in the peak season and are investigating ways we can increase our capacity both in physical spaces but also in providing high quality instruction for visitors.

## 3. INCREASING COMMUNITY IMPACT

At each of our four sites we are looking for ways we can increase our impact on the local community through the facilities we have available to bring transformation to young lives.

## 4. INCREASING OUR SUSTAINABILITY

We are aware of the need to assess our environmental impact for the benefit of future generations both in the UK and around the world. Our Christian faith encourages us to be good stewards of the natural environment. We have made progress installing solar panels on buildings at each site, but we know we can go further. We have become partners with A Rocha UK and are cultivating wildflower meadows, protecting local species and exploring ways to better heat and insulate our buildings.



# — WE GOING?



From the evidence that we have gathered for our Impact Report, we can see that we are achieving positive results in impacting the lives of young people.

We've heard from recent visitors through to visitors who attended in years gone by as part of our centenary celebrations. This demonstrates the long term impact that we can have through outdoor adventures.

Taking account of the views of teachers, group leaders, parents and the young people that visit our centres has been important to us. We believe that the impact spreads wider than just the young person taking part in the adventure. It's been fantastic to hear how behaviour has changed at home or that new life skills are being put into practice.

There is always room for improvement and we've looked at ways in which we can further measure the impact of our work. This needs to include goals which we can work towards and more set units of measurements. With these in place, we hope that in the future we can provide more of a balance between data driven information and anecdotal evidence.

This is all part of a journey and we look forward to making more changes so that we measure our impact. This will in turn help us to improve on our delivery of memorable outdoor adventures so that we can continue to challenge, inspire and transform more young people lives.

# CAN YOU HELP?



The inspiring experiences and the needs of young people shared in this report are only made possible thanks to the generosity of our supporters. **We rely on donations to fund the growing number of young people who need to experience a Rock UK adventure and other important aspects of our work.** This includes the development of our centres, growing the skills of our instructors and increasing other areas of knowledge, training to ensure positive and safe outcomes, our sustainability and our understanding of our impact!

If we are to reach significantly more young people, we need the support and funding from people like you, who share our belief in the transformative power of getting young people outdoors to have an adventure.

**To find out how you can help, please contact Malcolm Maclean.**

Thank you

## Contact:

 Malcolm Maclean  
 01933 654 103

## OUR CENTRES

### WHITHAUGH PARK

Newcastleton, Scottish Borders, TD9 0TY

✉ [whithaugh@rockuk.org](mailto:whithaugh@rockuk.org)

### CARROTY WOOD

Higham Lane, Tonbridge, Kent, TN11 9QX

✉ [carroty@rockuk.org](mailto:carroty@rockuk.org)

### FRONTIER CENTRE

Addington Rd., Irthlingborough, N.hamptonshire, NN9 5UH, U.K.

✉ [frontier@rockuk.org](mailto:frontier@rockuk.org)

### SUMMIT CENTRE


The Old Drift Mine Trelewis, Treharris South Wales, CF46 6RD

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