



Building Futures Outdoors: MCR
Residentials 2025

Empowering Young Lives Through Outdoor Education: The Impact of Trades House Sponsorship

In summer 2025, Trades House funded residential outdoor education for young people in the MCR Pathways Programme across Glasgow schools. These fully funded opportunities offered more than a break from the city—they created transformative experiences that fostered resilience, confidence, and connection.

Outdoor education is a powerful driver of personal growth. Through adventure learning, teamwork, and immersion in nature, pupils developed essential skills such as problem-solving, leadership, and collaboration—abilities vital for success in school and beyond.

For many participants facing personal and educational challenges, the impact was profound. Time away from familiar environments allowed them to uncover new strengths, build self-belief, and experience a sense of achievement. The calming influence of nature also supported mental and physical wellbeing, easing stress and anxiety.

This report highlights the outcomes of these programmes and the lasting difference Trades House continues to make in the lives of Glasgow's young people.



The Collaboration



Strengthening Futures Through Collaboration

The partnership between Trades House, Blairvadach Outdoor Education Services (Glasgow City Council), and MCR Pathways has flourished in recent years, united by a shared mission: to enhance the life chances of young people across Glasgow.

Each organisation plays a vital role:

- **Trades House** provides essential funding to sustain the programme.
- **Blairvadach Outdoor Education Centre** delivers high-quality experiential learning.
- **MCR Pathways** connects with young people, encouraging their participation through trusted school-based coordinators. These trusted adults are often the key to unlocking a young person's confidence and willingness to take part. Without them, many would hesitate to attend.

Due to reduced summer holiday provision in 2025, the programme experienced a funding surplus. This unexpected opportunity opened up support for term time access to take part in the Glasgow Urban Adventure Award: **Glasgow Urban Adventure Award**¹



¹<https://www.blairvadach.org.uk/Pages/View/6>



*The Trades House
of Glasgow*



Who attended?



Personal and Social Development 5 Day Residential			Activity Days
	Pupils	Days	
Drumchapel High	8	5	40
Holyrood Secondary	8	5	40
Rosshall Academy	8	5	40
Smithcroft Secondary	15	4	60
St Margaret Marys Secondary	5	5	25
Castlemilk High	3	5	15
Sub Total	47	29	220
Glasgow Urban Adventure Award			Activity Days
	Pupil	Days	
Shawlands Academy	12	3	36
All Saints Secondary	4	3	12
Sub Total	16	6	48
Total	63	35	268

The Transformative Power of Blairvadach Residentials



A visit to Blairvadach Outdoor Education Centre is never just a trip away from school—it's a life-changing experience. Set against wild landscapes, these residentials give young people the chance to step into adventure, face challenges head-on, and discover strengths they never knew they had.

Here, learning goes far beyond the classroom. Pupils take responsibility not only for themselves but for one another. From organising equipment to preparing programmes, they learn independence, teamwork, and resilience in a setting that feels real and meaningful.

Living and working side by side creates friendships that last long after the trip ends. Shared laughter, problem-solving, and moments of courage—whether climbing a rock face, trying new food, or speaking up in a group—build trust and confidence. Each challenge overcome becomes a reminder that limits can be pushed and mistakes are simply stepping stones to growth.

Blairvadach also opens young eyes to the wider world. Discussions on climate change, biodiversity, and sustainability are woven into activities, sparking curiosity and responsibility for the future.

Every residential is a journey of discovery, where the curriculum comes alive and young people return not just as learners—but as confident, connected citizens ready to take on life's challenges.

Participant Feedback

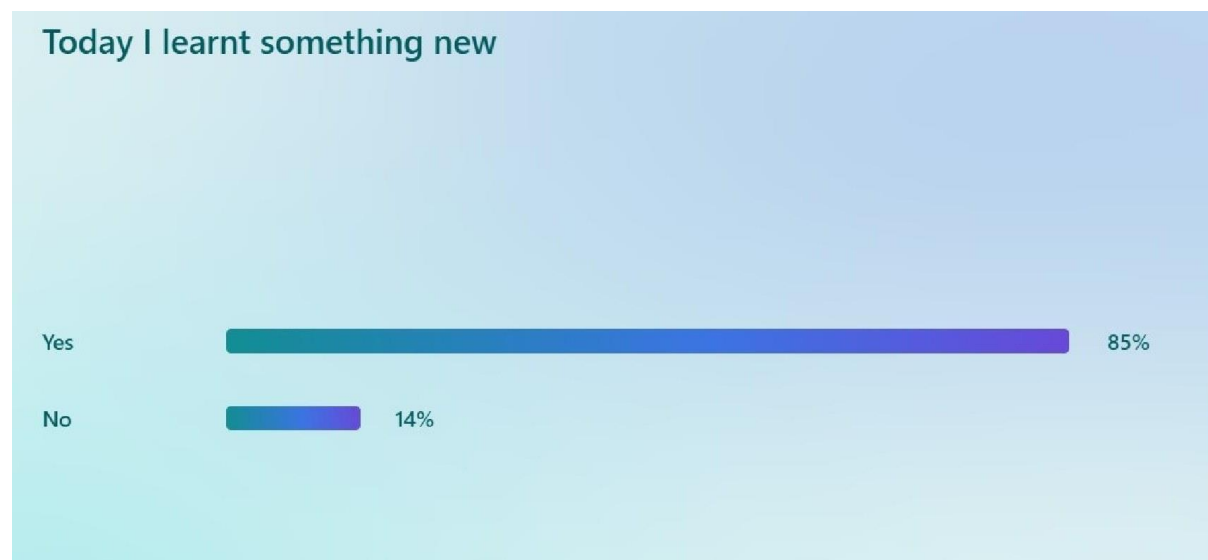


Participant Feedback:

Participants worked hard throughout their visit to manage the hazards that they encounter. They are encouraged to risk assess the situations for themselves and undertake challenge by choice. Click through the feedback.....



Out of the 220 days of activity over the summer, on average 86% of individuals learnt something new each day. It is usual to see high levels of new learning at the start of the experience and a decrease towards the end of a course.



Teamwork is key to school, workplace and wider community. The residential course strongly focuses on working together to accomplish tasks.

Today I encouraged someone in my team



Today I considered different points of view when decisions had to be made?

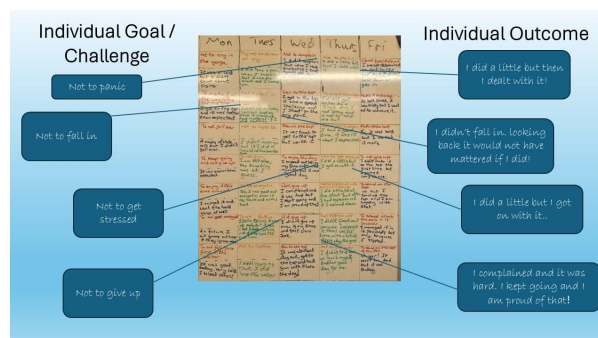


Group Feedback Sessions



Each day begins with the instructor and group co-creating their adventure plan. Rather than following a fixed schedule, activities are chosen collaboratively to reflect both personal and team goals. Participants also share their individual aims for the day, along with any challenges they anticipate, and discuss why these matter to them.

Working in small groups allows instructors to provide focused support, helping each young person work toward their goals and navigate obstacles with confidence. At the end of each day, the group reflects on their progress, celebrates achievements, and learns from any difficulties. By the end of the week, these experiences are reviewed collectively, connecting the skills and insights gained back to everyday life and highlighting the personal growth and teamwork developed throughout the residential. Click through the feedback.....



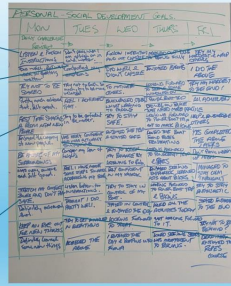
Individual Goal / Challenge

Listen and follow instructions

Don't panic when I am in cold water

First Time Sharing a room with people

Stretch my comfort zone and don't play it safe



Individual Outcome

I did well but could do better

Learned to control my emotions

Enjoyed the company of new people

Definitely achieved that!

Individual Goals



At the end of the experience individuals team members review their personal weekly goals.
Click Through.....

XXXX Goal: At Blairvadach I want to achieve new things and meet new people to be less awkward around. I want to push my comfort zone and try new things.

End of the week: I feel proud of myself for the very thing I have achieved. I definitely pushed my comfort zone.

XXXX Goal: At Blairvadach I want to achieve getting used to staying away from home with other people and get over my fear of heights.

End of week: I have tried loads of new foods! I showed great resilience throughout the week.

XXXX Goal: I want to achieve talking to people socially everyday. I want this trip to be the fullest it can be by pushing myself, building my confidence and having fun. I want to stop focusing on the negatives and keep positive. Approach the challenges with a smile on my face...period!

End of the week: The week has been much better than expected and I achieved much more than I thought I could. Loved the social aspect of making new friends.

Conclusion



Without doubt, these experiences would not be possible for this cohort of young people without the collaboration between Trades House Glasgow and Blairvadach Outdoor Education Centre.

The feedback within this report demonstrates that where planned and progressive residential outdoor education experiences are shared, they have a transformative impact on young people, significantly contributing to their personal and social development. Being removed from familiar environments, these experiences foster resilience and confidence as participants are challenged physically and mentally. They develop problem-solving and leadership skills through activities, building a sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy.

Socially, young people learn the importance of cooperation and communication, often working with peers they may not usually engage with. This encourages the formation of new friendships and stronger teamwork skills, boosting their ability to collaborate in school and other social settings. The sense of achievement gained from overcoming challenges in nature enhances self-esteem, while the exposure to new environments broadens horizons and aspirations. Overall, these experiences foster personal growth, build social bonds, and provide skills that help mitigate the challenges of their daily lives.

Special thanks to Duncan Tannahill from Trades House Glasgow and the Glasgow MCR Pathways team for enabling the experiences. Without their tireless contribution, these young people would have missed out on a life changing experience.

A huge thank you to everyone for a successful programme during summer 2025!



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