

# Outdoor Alliance Wales Manifesto 2021





# Delivering sustainable outdoor recreation and learning for a resilient and healthy Wales

Wales is a world class outdoor recreation and learning destination due to its outstanding natural resources and highly skilled workforce. This 2021 manifesto sets out the actions that can add important value to Welsh Government's cross-sector policies to build a healthy, resilient and aspirational nation.





**Outdoor Alliance Wales** is the single coalition which represents the shared values for the whole of the outdoor recreation, learning and adventure activity sector in Wales. The 40+ member organisations of Outdoor Alliance Wales not only function independently but also share their common values in a way that makes a strategic contribution to Wales': economic development; health & well-being; community cohesion; culture & heritage; education, rural & environmental protection & development; employment & training; tourism; competitive & recreational sport & activity.

The diverse nature of the outdoor sector and its workforce in Wales is evolving apace, adapting to the changing needs of 21st century requirements and expectations. The importance and relevance of Outdoor Alliance Wales has been brought into sharp focus by the COVID-19 pandemic where the interconnection of sectors that the outdoor sector impacts upon has been clearly visible. Wales' outdoor sector workforce is committed to meeting increased challenges but requires resourcing and recognition as professional outdoor practitioners.

## Key Asks

Outdoor Alliance Wales is committed to a healthy, thriving planet cycle of more people spending more time outdoors and connecting with nature. Outdoor recreation and learning should be an essential component of Welsh Government policy; contributing to the achievement of Wales' seven Well-being and Future Generation Goals.



# Health & Well-being

Wales' competent outdoor professional workforce already has the ability to deliver, in partnership with other organisations, substantial financial benefits to Wales by giving every GP, community practitioner and social care professional access to the assured resources they need to deliver change.

Nearly 1.5m Adults (60%) are overweight or obese and this is projected to raise to 64% by 2030<sup>1</sup>. Diabetes treatment takes 10% of the Wales NHS budget; 80% of that spend is on Type 2, which is avoidable, and reversible<sup>2</sup>.

We call for a health & well-being commitment to:

- **Maximise** the contribution that green and social prescribing can contribute to the well-being of Wales, so that maintenance of healthy lives and prevention of illness are fully embedded into Public Service Boards and Health Board well-being plans.
- **Establish** specific budgets to develop social prescribing that can be accessed by the outdoor sector in Wales to enable the sector to collaborate with Public Health Wales and the NHS to improve health and well-being for the people of Wales.
- **Increase** provision of activities to enable equitable access across Wales to outdoor recreation and learning, particularly facilities and services that impact upon areas of deprivation, older people and those with disabilities.
- **Encourage** participation in Wales' outdoors and create generational change through the delivery of engaging and enjoyable early intervention programmes delivered locally, regionally and nationally. These initiatives will, in turn, lead to adults choosing outdoor and adventurous activities as an integral part of their lifestyle.

# Education & Lifelong Learning

Education in its broadest sense is not just about delivering a curriculum. It is about giving children and adults the chance to extend their life skills and confidence, fostering resilience, and sense of responsibility. Outdoor opportunities and activities can expand horizons beyond the traditional learning environments. There is no doubt that when effectively integrated into a well-planned pre or post-16 learning programme, outdoor learning experiences can have a positive impact on attainment; Wales' next generation is tomorrow's workforce.

Fewer than 25% of children regularly use their local green space, compared to over half of all adults when they were children and less than 10% of children regularly play in wild places, compared to almost half a generation ago. With 82% of children agreeing that being in nature made them happy and 85% of children wanting to take part in countryside activities through formal education, only 47% actually do<sup>3</sup>.

We call for an education and lifelong learning commitment to:

- **Ensure** that outdoor learning continues as an integral part of the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales, recognising its role in optimising the potential of young people by stimulating personal and social development.
- **Encourage** schools, colleges and universities in Wales to engage with outdoor professionals to deliver outdoor learning across the curriculum.
- **Invest** in a national programme for Wales to up-skill teaching professionals in using the outdoors as a learning environment to support their delivery of the curriculum.
- **Guarantee** that every primary and secondary school pupil in Wales can benefit from at least one, week-long residential visit to an outdoor centre.



# Environment & Culture

The protection and management of a high quality landscape, environment and culture in Wales is intrinsic to a buoyant outdoor recreation sector. The outdoor sector has a role to play in both minimising the impact of its own activities and in working with Welsh Government and other land users, owners and managers to protect the environment, mitigate climate change and the loss of biodiversity.

Equitable access enabling appreciation of the special qualities of Wales' countryside and coast is vital to address the increasing disconnect between the population of Wales and its environment. Many of our nation's children are missing out on the pure joy of connection with the natural world; and as a result, as adults they lack an understanding of the importance of nature to human society.

Wales has a high quality and predominantly rural landscape. 78% of Wales' total land area is used as farmland and agriculture and 26% is designated as protected landscapes (21 of the 48 sites in UK)<sup>4</sup>

We call for an environment and culture commitment to:

- **Ensure** the legal framework provides for equitable access to land and water and that Welsh Government finances the protection of the natural environment in all policy areas.
- **Ensure** that access reform in Wales enhances opportunities for all people to be able to access our coastline and countryside, including our rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs; caves & mines.
- **Invest** in expanded warden services to Wales' publicly owned sites, to facilitate engagement with the natural world and foster responsible outdoor recreation and environmental stewardship.
- **Support** Wales' Designated Landscape legislation to ensure it protects the special qualities of our protected landscapes.
- **Recognise** the value of formal consultation with Outdoor Alliance Wales, whose members have a commitment to sustainability of the wider environment.



The economy surrounding outdoor activities caters for the internal (Wales), UK and international markets. These provide employment and economic prosperity and are particularly important in areas that are economically deprived and reliant on tourism. Activity tourism is a high-value tourist activity; the outdoor activity economy contributes to mitigating the negative effects of poverty and inequality, builds resilience, community cohesion and overall well-being for future generations.

Tourism economies in Wales' National Parks attract over 12 million visitors a year spending an estimated one billion pounds on goods and services<sup>5</sup>. The outdoor sector contributes £481m (10%) to Wales' tourism economy alone with an added value contribution of £304m and a professional workforce of over 8000 FTE jobs<sup>6</sup>. Every £1.00 of public money spent on green space levers in £4.20 of private sector investment. Walking, alone, contributes £562m of additional demand in the Welsh economy and around 11,980-person years of employment<sup>5</sup>. Wales' National Parks account for over half a billion pounds of Wales' GVA representing 1.2% of the total Welsh economy<sup>5</sup>.



We call for an economy commitment to:

- **Update** the 2014 research into the value of the outdoor sector in Wales to show its current economic and social value.
- **Ensure** that Welsh Government policies acknowledge, encourage and support the capabilities of Wales' outdoor professional workforce to develop the thriving rural economy of Wales.
- **Provide** ongoing packages of support for Wales' outdoor sector affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Ensure** ongoing co-investment by national agencies to reflect localised needs in Wales' rural economy.
- **Support** the development of a Skills Action Plan for the outdoor sector in Wales to provide opportunities for existing Welsh businesses and start-ups to improve their business skills.
- **Support** bi-lingual development pathways which allow and enable young people from all backgrounds of Wales to enter the outdoor industry and access employer-backed fit-for-purpose outdoor sector related apprenticeships.
- **Work** with Outdoor Alliance Wales to celebrate the breadth and diversity of the outdoor sector in Wales as a visitor destination.



# Why Wales needs the expertise of Outdoor Alliance Wales

Outdoor Alliance Wales is made up of 40+ organisations, all of whom are actively involved in elevating the status of the outdoor sector within Wales and in doing so are able to reach, influence and empower a network of likeminded people to work more closely together to address key issues in society.

Outdoor Alliance Wales:

- **Represents** the shared values of the outdoor sector.
- **Provides** a platform with which external sectors and organisations can engage.
- **Facilitates** knowledge sharing and acts as an advisory forum on issues and opportunities in the outdoor sector.
- **Represents** members that innovate new ways to support the health and well-being of our nation whilst being considerate to protecting and enhancing the nation's basic resources – the natural environment.

Outdoor Alliance Wales seeks to work closely with Welsh Government to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from the outstanding landscape and nature of Wales.





## Outdoor Alliance Wales members supporting this manifesto

[Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee](#) / [Adventure UK](#) / [Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres](#) / [Association of Mountaineering Instructors](#) / [Bike Park Wales](#) / [British Activity Providers Association](#) / [British Caving Association QMC](#) / [British Horse Society Cymru](#) / [British Mountaineering Council](#) / [British Mountain Guides](#) / [Cambrian Caving Council](#) / [Canoe Wales](#) / [Cardiff Metropolitan University](#) / [Cycling UK](#) / [Field Studies Council](#) / [Glandwr Cymru Canal & River Trust](#) / [Institute for Outdoor Learning](#) / [Mountain Training Cymru](#) / [National Coasteering Charter](#) / [National Trust Cymru](#) / [North & South Wales Mountain Rescue Association](#) / [OpenMTB](#) / [Open Spaces Society](#) / [Outdoor Education Advisors' Panel Cymru](#) / [Outdoor Industries Association](#) / [Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum](#) / [Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group](#) / [Plas Menai](#) / [Plas y Brenin](#) / [Royal National Lifeboat Institution](#) / [Royal Yachting Association Cymru Wales](#) / [Ramblers Cymru](#) / [Snowdonia-Active](#) / [South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group](#) / [Swim Wales](#) / [The Outdoor Partnership](#) / [Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation](#) / [Wales Council for Outdoor Learning](#) / [Water Skills Academy](#) / [Welsh Cycling](#) / [Welsh Sports Association](#) / [Welsh Triathlon Cymru](#)

## References

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