

# Police Scotland Youth Volunteers | Loch Eil Debrief



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**THE  
OUTWARD  
BOUND TRUST**





# Contents

- Overview of insights
- Objectives
- Pre-deployment
- Deployment
- Reflections
- Impact





# Overview of Insights



Volunteers overwhelmingly agreed that the Adventure and Challenge Award succeeded in its stated aims to increase their self-confidence, self-esteem, improve teamwork, communication skills, develop leadership skills and form lifelong friendships throughout the PSYV sponsored programme.

**97%** agree, overall, the deployment was good or very good and **92%** agree, having earned the SCQF Adventure & Challenge, they feel more empowered in their role as a PSYV and as an individual.

Through shared experiences and adventure, PSYV volunteers feel they have developed the foundations for positive behaviours and attitudes for the future.



# Objectives



Over 100 Police Scotland Youth Volunteers were deployed to Loch Eil, where they took part in a five-day residential delivered by the Outward-Bound Trust. During this time, they undertook the Adventure and Challenge award (SCQF level 5).

102 PSYV young people completed the Leadership, adventure & challenge-based course. Held in April 2024 for a 5-day period during school holidays, the course was open to all PSYV, specifically afforded to all youths aged 13 – 15 years, out with the exam timetable, and to those aged 16 – 17 years.

A post deployment debrief survey was circulated to volunteers, returning 79 respondents. Results were anonymous. The debrief aimed to learn more about the impact the trip had on volunteers; to allow them to openly feedback what worked well and what opportunities there were for future improvements. The debrief also served as an opportunity for reflection; for volunteers to consider any valuable skills learned, their experiences and achievements during their deployment. Quantitative and qualitative feedback will be outlined.

# Pre-Deployment



**94%** were satisfied with the application process for taking part.

**92%** agreed Police Scotland engaged and gave enough information during the application process.

**96%** agreed Police Scotland engaged and gave enough information during the departure phase.

Respondents valued the video call between coordinators, volunteers and parents, which gave further details and allowed for concerns and questions to be addressed.

**94%** agreed the mobile application BAND was effective for communicating and coordinating among users:

- Parents could ask questions and stay informed and in-the-loop
- Photos were shared and consolidated (over 4 thousand)
- Youth Volunteers could keep in touch



# Deployment



During the 5-day expedition the youths engaged in some of the following activities:

- Canoeing
- Orienteering
- Over-night expedition
- Rock Climbing
- Kayaking
- And much more!

Volunteers overwhelmingly agreed that the Adventure and Challenge Award succeeded in its stated aims to:

- Improve confidence to overcome new challenges – **97%**
- Develop skills in setting and achieving personal goals – **97%**
- Increase self-awareness and personal responsibility – **99%**
- Increase awareness of other people - **96%**
- Improve ability to work and communicate with other people – **97%**
- Increase concern for and awareness of the natural environment – **91%**

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# Deployment



Adventure activities and unstructured free time allowed the volunteers to connect and grow. Volunteers agreed that they feel more confident in doing the following things:

- **86%** Being the leader in a team.
- **92%** Putting forward ideas.
- **97%** Meeting new people.
- **96%** Working with other people in a team.
- **96%** Setting targets and goals.
- **92%** Sticking at difficult tasks.
- **96%** Getting things done on time.

*“Everyone got on super well and connected really quickly. The expedition was a good bonding experience for everyone. My favourite activity was definitely the crate stacking”*

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# Reflections



**97%** agree, overall, the deployment was good or very good. Volunteers valued the shared experience and finding things they had in common with each other, building a sense of belonging and respect.

Volunteers indicated that during the adventures in the outdoors, their teamworking skills such as communication, problem solving, and leadership were put into practice.

They appreciated being able to develop rapport and connections with fellow PSYV volunteers who are outwith their local group. At the end of their course, young people indicated feeling more able to express themselves and adapt to changing situations.

*“Being put in a group with people who were strangers from all over Scotland on Monday and becoming best friends with these strangers by Friday.”*



# Reflections



**92%** agree, having earned the SCQF Adventure & Challenge, they feel more empowered in their role as a PSYV and as an individual. They have a sense of achievement and self-confidence in their ability to lead and engage with people.

Respondents value the qualification as a way of evidencing their leadership and communication skills on college/university applications or for their CV. Many also feel inspired and motivated to volunteer more in the future. **94%** agree, based on their experience, they would be happy to assist in the development of future programmes and strategies aimed towards engaging young people and inspiring them to participate positively in their communities:

*"I plan on using it for future volunteering and career advancement as my goal is to join the police in the future"*

*"I will highlight it in any future applications to college and also school. I would like to apply to the police so I think it has shown me the perseverance I need for future and it has helped me grow myself too"*



# Impact

***"It'll seem intimidating when thinking about it, but it's easy when you're there"***

***"Do it. Don't think about it. You will regret not doing it. Whether it's just saying hi to someone else, or if it's to jump in the loch. It is worth it! You will meet so many new and amazing people."***

***"Going to Loch Eil with PSYV was one of the best experiences of my life, and I've made friends from all over Scotland for life."***

***"It's the best week you will ever experience, full of challenges and fun, connecting with new people and making friendships that will last forever."***

***"It's an amazing experience, one nobody should turn down, you meet so many new people and learn more about yourself and who you are"***

***"Meeting new people all across Scotland is an experience like never before. Life long memories will be passed down and new friendships are ones that could never be created elsewhere."***

The survey results indicate the adventurous activities, unstructured down-time and experience of being in nature helped build a sense of confidence, resilience and social skills in Police Scotland Youth Volunteers.

Open-text comments feedback the positive impact the experience has on their general wellbeing, their self-confidence, and their aspirations for the future. Volunteers feel they have made lifelong memories and connections with other volunteers.





# Impact – Case Study



The aim of the Outward-Bound course is to provide an opportunity for young people from all backgrounds to experience activities in wild, natural environments which will develop their confidence, their engagement with learning and improve their confidence in working with and building relationships with others.

One parent (who has been anonymised) shared their experience with PSYV coordinators of their child returning from the residential course:

*“She was absolutely buzzing when I picked her up on Friday, full of chat about her adventures and clearly had spent the week living her best life!”*

Her instructor had pulled her aside during an expedition to advise her about a 14-night summer adventure that he thought she would benefit from and was going to recommend her for. He also told her she could apply for funding. The young person wasted no time in applying and within 24 hours they had an email back confirming they had been successful and that they were awarded nearly 65% funding towards the cost of the 14-day Summit Adventure.

*“We’ve been a one parent family for such a long time and although we are lucky with my job there’s no way I could have afforded to pay...to do this without assistance. I’m honestly just so chuffed and feel really proud of her – que Mum tears!...as a parent, this residential has not only given but created a phenomenal opportunity for my child and for that I am truly grateful. She is going to have one incredible summer ahead of her!”*

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*The Loch Eil Outbound experience taught me that individually and as a team we can use the skills taught in everyday life and have provided a new outlook for me to grow and develop through life. It's a very fun experience with great core values and teaching and an experience that if you get the opportunity take it and give 110% and in 5 days you'll learn so much and have memories, friendships and skills to take through life.*”

*-Youth Volunteer*





# Appendix



- The PSYV survey was hosted on [Citizen Space](#) and disseminated via BAND.
- 79 out of the 102 young people who completed the course submitted a survey response, giving a 77% response rate.
- 104 PYSV volunteers attended Loch Eil, but 2 volunteers had to go home due to illness. 102 young people completed the Adventure and Challenge award (SCQF level 5).
- More information about Outward Bound Loch Eil programme is available: [Loch Eil, The Highlands \(outwardbound.org.uk\)](http://outwardbound.org.uk)
- All photographs featured in the pack were sourced from the PSYV Loch Eil BAND group.



# Appendix



**If you have questions about anything contained within this insight pack, please contact:**

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