

The Outdoor Partnership Case Study – Supporting Young Carers from Caerphilly and Cameron’s Experience.

Background

Since 2023, we have been supporting young carers across Wales to access a variety of outdoor activities as a fun and meaningful respite offer. In the Caerphilly region, we established partnerships with the Young Carers Service, Families First and the Local Authority run outdoor education provision – Caerphilly Adventures to develop offers for young carers.



Activity

Through consultation with young carers groups (including young people, parents and staff) and the linked services in the Caerphilly region, we developed a progressive offer of adventure respite that provided young carers with:

1. Sessions on their doorstep – such as adventure walks at Cwmcarn, paddling at pen-y-fan pond and e-mountain biking in Risca.
2. Day trips further away – eg. surfing at Porthcawl, caving in the Bannau Brycheiniog.
3. Residential trips to North Wales – climbing Yr Wyddfa/Snowdon.
4. Residential sailing trips – To Plas Menai and Cardiff Bay
5. Winter residential trip to North Wales – to climb Yr Wyddfa in the snow.

All of these activities have been delivered in partnership with Caerphilly Adventures. Having consistent instructors who were building rapport with the young carers has been fundamental in being able to develop the activities and support the participants to



access more committing adventures. For example, starting with a local hill walk up Twmbarlwm on the young carer's doorstep, led to summiting Yr Wyddfa and then going back in winter conditions to experience the mountain again at a different time of year.

In October 2025 our Carers lead within The Outdoor Partnership organised a Carer Awareness training session with Investors in Carers for our partners, voluntary clubs and providers to attend. The head of Caerphilly Adventures attended the training to gain better insight into how they can support unpaid carers across all of their provision.

Feedback / outcomes



The ongoing development of carers programmes has enabled us to provide progressive opportunities for young carers to engage in an activity that contributes to improved mental health and wellbeing while providing essential respite from their caring roles.

Structuring the programme in this way has also upskilled many of the young carers who have attended multiple

activities to be able to participate in outdoor activity safely and independently.

Cameron, a young carer has attended the majority of sessions that we have run over the last 2 years. Cameron lives in Aberbargoed with his family and supports in the care of his siblings in the home.

Development Officer Observations: Throughout Cameron's engagement with us, he has progressed through his final years of secondary school and entered post-16 education.

Cameron has always presented as a kind and caring young person who has shown gratitude for the experiences that we have worked to provide. During this time, I have observed Cameron develop from a kind and supportive young man to a role model and peer mentor for the younger carers who are accessing the programme.

Cameron has recently progressed onto college and enrolled in a Public Services course where he is able to further develop his leadership and mentoring skills. During our last residential trip to North Wales, Cameron offered to support some of the younger participants in reaching the summit of Yr Wyddfa/Snowdon. This was significant as there



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were poor weather conditions on the day, and most carers opted to go down the mountain with 1 of the instructors. Although Cameron had already been to the top on a previous trip, he volunteered himself to go with the other instructor and support his peers in getting to the summit safely. This demonstrates to me his nurturing and supportive nature and his maturity and awareness of how he can positively support others.

Cameron's views – Two years into the project, we interviewed Cameron online to find out more about his experiences.

Cameron informed us that he found out about the sessions via an online young carers Facebook group. He went on to tell us that the February trip to North Wales was one of his favourites.

Throughout the conversation, Cameron told us how much he had fallen in love with North Wales, the mountains and the peace and quiet. He explained how he didn't know any of the other young people before the trip, but he made new friends that he enjoyed being around and has since kept in touch with.

Other highlights of the trip for Cameron were being able to learn some camera skills. We were joined on the February trip by a film maker who documented the adventure:



<https://youtu.be/Q3GkE12VEBk?si=kCkzaXO8gQY5XQu8>

Cameron equally enjoyed the down time as much as the outdoor activities themselves, highlighting access to a games room, hot chocolate after a long day on the mountain and the food at the centre.

We then went on to discuss future plans with Cameron and there was an emphasis on exploring new places. These included more urban areas such as Caernarfon Castle, different mountains including Scafell Pike and going to Scotland to explore the highlands and Ben Nevis.

Cameron expressed that this had given him the drive and inspiration for where he would like to go in the future. Expressing again that this programme has highlighted new places



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that he would like to visit. Cameron communicated that he noticed the difference between his home in South Wales and the areas of Eryri in North Wales that he explored during the trip. Commenting on the mountainous and quiet nature of North Wales compared to the densely populated South Wales valleys where Cameron has grown up.

He also expressed an interest in a longer trip. Previously the trips have been three days and two nights away from home, so we discussed organising a longer trip to accommodate going further afield to North England or Scotland.

We briefly discussed Cameron's caring role. Cameron described his home as sometimes being "wild" and that these trips offered him a much needed break and that he feels calmer upon returning home.

Conclusion

Cameron is glad he chose to enrol in Public Services to continue to access outdoor activity and would like to continue to support the young carers adventure respite trips as a volunteer when he turns 18.

Development Officer Conclusion

The Outdoor Partnership will continue to support unpaid carers in accessing outdoor activity to improve their quality of life. The programme in Caerphilly and Cameron's experiences highlight the power of adventure and the value that these projects have on young people in pursuing meaningful experiences that have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing, giving them tools to deal with the challenges life presents.

We will take Cameron's feedback onboard when planning our trips for 2026/2027.