

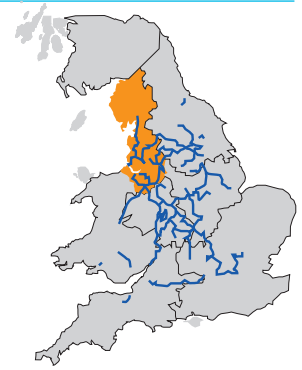


**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water


2021 Youth Impact Report North West






Youth engagement activities in the North West

During 2021, youth engagement activities in the North West delivered the following:

 **12,261** young people engaged in participatory activities and events

 **153** young volunteers

 **2,460** youth social action hours

 **13,697** young people engaged through Explorers / STEM

 **4,967** children & young people attending water safety sessions

All figures are approximate due to the nature of data collection at events and a current changeover of systems.

Partners worked with

Action For Conservation
Blackburn Youth Zone
Catch-22
Chester Zoo (Cheshire Corridor Project)
Everton In The Community
Falinge Park High School
IMO Charity
Leonard Can Do Cheshire – Oakwood
Leonard Can Do Cheshire – Tameside College
Manchester Metropolitan University
Parkview Community School (Primary)
Preston United
Sanctuary Housing Group, Hoole, Chester
The Skill Mill
Water Adventure Centre, Manchester



Former criminal justice service trainees gain support from the Trust

Trainees from the Skill Mill in Rochdale are working with the Trust and the Green Recovery Challenge Fund project in Greater Manchester.

The Skill Mill is a multi-award-winning social enterprise which provides employment opportunities for young people aged between 16 and 18. They employ ex-offenders, which actively reduces reoffending whilst increasing engagement, participation, employability, and educational levels of the young people to increase their life chances.

A group of four young people are working with the Trust's

Project Co-ordinators for two days a week over four months. All the young people in the programme are currently looking for work or planning to re-enter education and have had extensive contact with the criminal justice system.

Working with the Trust they are gaining skills and confidence through completing hands-on practical tasks and contributing to a green recovery across Manchester.

Active partnership creates paddle board opportunities for over 300 young people in Pennine Lancashire

Like most organisations, the Trust was severely affected by the pandemic – particularly with regards to the delivery of events and activities for young people.

This was equally true for a number of the Trust’s partners. The cancelled programmes meant that many staff had to be furloughed and even when restrictions were partially lifted,



Pennine Lancashire

Pennine Lancashire was an area that was particularly badly affected by the pandemic. It saw some of the highest death and case rates in the country and high levels of restrictions were in place throughout. As a socially and economically deprived area, it presented many challenges for local children and young people; issues that were made significantly worse through a lack of activities and opportunities to take part in.

the lack of available resources and personnel meant it was difficult to quickly pivot to a pre-pandemic delivery model.

This issue was identified by Sport England who established the Tackling Inequalities Fund (TIF) to help community groups and not-for-profit organisations remain connected with their members and keep them physically active throughout the pandemic. The Trust applied to become an Active Partner of Sport England to support the distribution of TIF and £145,000 of funding was granted for distribution across Pennine Lancashire.

Through TIF, the Trust funded three youth projects across Blackburn to provide introductory paddle sessions to more than 300 young people (many from ethnically diverse communities) who were able to take part in activities that wouldn’t otherwise have been possible and train 12 new instructors to make the projects sustainable.

Three youth projects (IMO Charity, Preston United and Blackburn Youth Zone) have since come together to collaboratively create a major legacy paddle sport project which will see the purchase of paddle boards, ‘sit on top’ kayaks and an additional 12 instructors trained across the three organisations. This will mean that weekly sessions can be delivered to over 100 young people each week.





Young Rangers give nature a helping hand

Over six weeks in the summer, an intrepid group of young people kicked off the the Trust's Young Ranger programme by undertaking a number of ecological and habitat studies around the Anderton Boat Lift in Cheshire.

The group of 12-16 year-olds were made up of home-educated children and those who had just finished their GCSEs. Their tasks included planting a new wildflower meadow, studying flora and fauna in an existing meadow, creating new habitats ('bug hotels' & 'frog and toad abodes') and building a pond.

At the end of one session, the group were shown videos of the wildlife that cameras (set up in a previous session) had captured. Many of the participants were amazed as footage of foxes, badgers and rabbits were shown that were recorded just metres away from where they were stood.

The final task for the group was to give their honest feedback. Every one of them gave a big thumbs up. "I loved it" said one, and when asked which was the best part of the session another loudly proclaimed: "All of it!"



Anderton
Boat Lift
Cheshire



The Trust launches first Youth Social Prescribing project

The Trust teamed up with a women and children's support organisation to run a 12-week Youth Social Prescribing project. The programme was co-created by the young participants who collectively shaped the programme and made the decisions on what activities will take place.

This was the Trust's first youth social prescribing project, and it built on a successful model that has been used to develop programmes for adults across the country. Working closely with link workers, partners, funding organisations and local CCGs (Clinical Commissioning Groups), this multi-agency approach enables the strengths of a number of organisations to be utilised to offer community-based opportunities that might not be otherwise possible.

The mental health of many young people has been particularly affected by the pandemic. Those with existing conditions have seen them get

worse, whilst many more have developed new symptoms in the last 18 months. Isolation and social inactivity have caused many to suffer low mood, low confidence, and withdrawal effects. Left unaddressed these issues can quickly spiral – but by developing Youth Social Prescribing projects the Trust can provide a series of activities that can boost wellbeing and help young people improve their mental health.

The Trust has prepared a varied menu of activities including planting, walking, painting and/or taking part in water-based sports such as paddle boarding.

What is Social Prescribing?

Social Prescribing is where non-clinical services are issued by GPs or practice nurses (exercise, taking part in activities etc) to support an individual's health & wellbeing. It can be used to support a range of social, emotional or practical needs including mental health – an issue with young people that has been made significantly worse with the Covid-19 pandemic.

Young people improving deprived communities

Falinge Park High School in Rochdale is a multi-ethnic school with a catchment that includes some of the most deprived areas in Greater Manchester.

A group of students have been working with the Trust to create a new wildlife garden at Lock 52 on the Rochdale Canal. The young people have created a plan for the garden, cleared vegetation and taken part in wildflower planting and habitat creation.

This has been a valuable experience for the participants. Prior to starting the project most said that they spent a lot of their free time indoors. Now, following the project, they all agreed that they would definitely keep visiting the site and spend more time outside.



For more information on our youth & community engagement work
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