



**Canal &
River Trust**

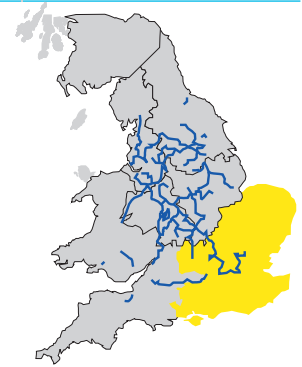
Making life better by water

2021 Youth Impact Report

London & South East



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Youth engagement activities in London & South East

During 2021, youth engagement activities in London & the South East delivered the following:

 **2,284**
young people engaged in participatory activities and events

 **40**
young volunteers

 **100**
youth social action hours

 **7,005**
young people engaged through Explorers / STEM

 **2,980**
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

- Arcadis
- Archimake
- Camden Borough Council – Outdoor Learning
- Daniel's Den
- Edward Wilson School
- Electra Milton Keynes Community Boat
- Enact Youth Club
- Ferry Lane School
- Harbinger Primary School
- Phoenix Canoe Club
- Prince of Wales School
- Raynham Primary School
- Spotlight Youth Centre
- STEM Learning
- US Embassy
- Westminster University
- Wykeham School



Primary school pupils influence decision making

The Trust is currently working with London Borough of Ealing to look at the long-term development of a site in Norwood Green that runs alongside the Grand Union Canal.

Colleagues from the Trust worked with a targeted group of pupils from Norwood Green Junior School to gain a unique insight into how they would like the site to be used.

Rather than undertake a survey or a focus group, the pupils were invited to take part in a specially tailored weekly Explorers scheme over five weeks. During this time the pupils took part in a number of activities including water safety, STEM, a history workshop, and two site visits to the Trust floating classroom.



Whilst completing the tasks, Trust colleagues were able to engage with the young people and gain insight that would have been impossible to acquire using more traditional research methods.

The information gathered has been collated into a comprehensive proposal to adopt a local stretch of the canal that will provide health and wellbeing benefits for all aspects of the community – including other young people!



Boosting the health and wellbeing opportunities of young people in East London's Tower Hamlets

Young people in Tower Hamlets, East London had the opportunity to create and fund their own health and wellbeing projects via the Trust's innovative Youth Grant Makers scheme.

Tower Hamlets contains some of the most deprived communities in the country and this directly results in high levels of inequalities – particularly around employment and health and wellbeing.

Working with Spotlight – a creative Arts youth service in Tower Hamlets for young people aged 11-19 – the Trust funded a £5,000, eight-week project that encouraged young people to design health and wellbeing projects and access funding to bring them to life. By allowing young people to create their own projects, gaps in service provision could be identified and addressed.

The project provided young people with the opportunity to make key decisions and gain a range of key employability skills that they wouldn't traditionally get as part of their education – such as leadership, project managing and budgeting. By boosting individual CVs with new skills and developing new health and wellbeing activities, the Trust was able to improve the lives of young people and the communities they live in.



Nature on the doorstep workshop proves inspiring for Wykeham Primary School

In May, the Trust ran a mosaic design and education session with students from Wykeham Primary School in Brent.

The pupils learnt about nature on their doorstep and studied the eels in Grand Union Canal. The young group used their new knowledge to create mosaics in an arts workshop. The individual pieces were used collectively to provide inspiration that an artist could use in a public space on the River Brent.

The event was enthusiastically received by pupils and teachers alike.

"I learnt about eels and how they migrate in the water." (Year 6 student)

"I love learning about swans and want to show mummy where they live." (Year 6 student)

"It was great to work with the Canal & River Trust, it looks like the children learnt a lot about the animals in the water. We will organise a trip to the water in the summer to see the space." (Teacher)





Family wellbeing boat trips prove popular

Speaking with the families on their boat trips, Islington Boat Club (IBC) identified a need to support those with mental health issues.

They reported how being on the water had a positive impact and seeing changes to individual's behaviour within an hour of the trip.

The skipper of one boat trip noticed a passenger who was incredibly withdrawn at the start of the trip, with their head down. As time progressed this individual became completely absorbed by the trip, and by the end of the hour was making eye contact, chatting to the skipper and was keen to come back

for another trip. Another trip included a single parent and her young son who have no family or support networks in London and had been further isolated by the lockdown as they were unable to form a bubble with anyone. The trip gave them the confidence to sign up with IBC for future activities which will hopefully enable them to meet other families and young people.

The discussions the skippers had with the families on the trips reinforced with them the

positive impact that even a one-hour trip on the canal can have. Based on these findings IBC are looking at ways they can support adult mental health through their activities in the future. They are now in the process of looking for funding for a positive mental health project which will use the narrowboat as a tool to enrich the lives of people with mental health difficulties.

For more information on our youth & community engagement work
please email lucie.unsworth@canalrivertrust.org.uk



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