

Adventure For All Report 6 – 8th December 2024

Welcome to a short report on the Adventure for All Conference and Annual General Meeting

Adventure for All is a Specialist Sector Group within the Institute of Outdoor Learning. Established over 30 years ago by centres specialising in outdoor activities for people with disabilities, it has recently expanded its membership to foster knowledge sharing, encourage best practices, and promote greater access to the outdoors for all.

This year's event was graciously hosted at the White Hall Centre in Buxton and centred on the theme of enabling mainstream centres to become more accessible.

The proceedings of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), held on Sunday, can be found separately in the AGM minutes.

Summary

The conference proved to be a valuable and engaging experience, featuring a diverse range of intriguing subjects. A particularly notable observation was the clear progress made by mainstream centres in enhancing their accessibility.

Furthermore, the conference highlighted a heightened awareness of neurodiversity and a significant increase in the number of individuals with neurodevelopmental differences (ND) utilizing these centres.

The discussion also touched upon critical incidents, such as the Roadford Boating Incident, underscoring the paramount importance of robust training and risk management protocols within these settings.

Encouragingly, there were indications that centres are steadily recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, adopting a more proactive and outward-looking approach in their operations.

Friday Night

Hellos and Centre Introductions

This session provided an opportunity for centres and individuals to introduce themselves. The group comprised of a diverse range of participants, including those just beginning to explore accessibility and those with extensive experience in the field.



Saturday

Welcomes and kick off.



White Hall Centre Manager Dan Riley welcoming people to the centre

Programme

Neuro Diversity in the Outdoors

Master's student Bethany Golding delivered an excellent session on Neurodiversity and the Outdoors. The session included a particularly insightful section on the diverse sensory considerations that neurodivergent individuals may experience. These considerations, often taken for granted by neurotypical individuals, can significantly impact the outdoor experience for neurodivergent people, potentially causing stress or anxiety. One key example discussed was proprioception: the ability to sense movement, action, and location.



Ben Walmsley Head of Outdoor Learning Engagement and Delivery UK Youth shared in-depth insights into his experiences with his autistic son. His presentation offered a valuable form of training, combining both theoretical knowledge and personal lived experience to enrich the discussion.



Workshop.

What are the key Areas for improving access in centres?



A breakout workshop section requesting groups to discuss the following and feedback. The most pressing item to come through was the cost and how often a disabled person will visit a centre. There are concerns about investment when you might only get one person visit your centre

Radford Boat Incident

Session provided by Sean Day Calvert Trust Lake District CEO. The report included a summary of the tragic incident at Roadford Lake, where two disabled individuals lost their lives when a boat capsized. This incident highlighted serious shortcomings in preparation and a complete disregard for the safety and needs of the passengers. This stark example underscored the critical importance of robust procedures and appropriate training, particularly when providing support to individuals with complex needs that extend beyond typical service delivery.



Image of boat involved in Roadford Incident.

Centre Tour



It wasn't the best of weather indicated by the clothing. Spot Amandas cape but it would be a bit suspicious if a conference based on outdoor activities didn't go outside at some point. Here we are having a look at a Canoe Raft with a variety of different seating systems.



And back indoors. A visit into the centre climbing wall and a look at the Hoist system the centre uses for climbers who require full assistance.

Looking at Gear



A great session by Sam Litten Activities Manager Bendrigg Trust and Vicky Director Anyone Can with an in depth look at different mobile field hoists. They look big items but make a fundamental difference to people being able to access activities for example canoeing and camping in remote settings keeping people safe, dignified and comfortable.

Evening Meal

A huge thank you to the centre hospitality team for excellent meals through out the whole of the weekend. A really healthy balance of food and good options for vegetarians and vegans.

Neil Bentley Talk



Really enjoyable session from Neil. We can be very quick to put history behind us especially with the growth of climbing walls. It was incredible to see the level that Neil has climbed at which has essentially all passed under the radar. It's 24 years since he did Equilibrium (E10 7a), and it's only been repeated twice. Neil also talked about his recovery following being struck in the head by a rock on a climb on Marmolada.

Sunday Morning

Two Workshops

Instructing Blind Climbers



Des Barnett. Des is an MCI and has a generative eye condition. He is currently delivering a workshop on instructing/coaching blind climbers. This is an excellent piece of work meeting the demands of the sector for more tailored and specialist training.

Belaying from A Wheelchair



This session was prompted by reports of wheelchair users being denied the opportunity to belay in climbing walls. Many climbing walls have policies prohibiting seated belaying, which can inadvertently exclude wheelchair users.

Adventure for All (AFA) aims to collaborate with the Association of British Climbing Walls (ABC) to develop a statement that encourages individual assessments of a wheelchair user's ability to belay safely. This approach emphasizes individualized evaluations rather than blanket prohibitions based on the use of a wheelchair.

Following these workshops we proceeded with the Annual General Meeting

Close