



Press Release

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Generation Green project set to create new jobs, volunteer roles and apprenticeships to connect more than 100,000 young people to nature

Thousands of young people are to be given the opportunity to connect with nature through new jobs, training, volunteering roles, residentials and outdoor learning experiences thanks to the award of a c.£2.5 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant to a coalition of not-for-profit outdoor education providers.

The £2,543,602 grant has been awarded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund on behalf of the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to the Access Unlimited coalition which comprises YHA (England & Wales), The Outward Bound Trust, Scouts, Girlguiding, Field Studies Council and the 10 English National Parks.

The grant, which will be shared by the six coalition members will fund their ambitious Generation Green Project which will prioritise young people from BAME groups, disadvantaged backgrounds and coastal communities.

The 16-month project will enable the retention of 20 jobs, the creation of 10 new jobs, one paid internship, 30 Kickstart placements, 7 apprenticeships, and 659 skilled volunteer roles in the outdoor sector.

Generation Green capitalises on the combined reach of the coalition partners of more than two million young people. Together, Access Unlimited will provide more than 100,000 progressive opportunities throughout the project to connect young people to nature.

The environment workforce is one of least diverse workforces in England. From thousands of opportunities for light touch micro volunteering; to connecting some young people to nature and the outdoors for the first time, activities delivered through Generation Green will help create the spark for new groups of young people to see their career aspirations in the environment and outdoor learning sector

Generation Green will deliver against the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (25YEP) to sustain and build capacity in the sector. It is also the first step in government support for the recommendation in the Glover Review that every child should spend a night under the stars in a National Landscape.

Activities delivered by the Coalition, which include micro volunteering such as bug hotels and tree planting, self-guided learning, day visits and overnight experiences in National Parks and AONBs, as well as social action/citizen science projects, aim to inspire a love of nature in young people.

All coalition members remained operational throughout the pandemic providing outdoor learning experiences to young people, families and volunteers. This enabled them to create a roadmap for

the sector to re-open safely and securely. The learnings from this period will be used by the Access Unlimited members to deliver Generation Green activities.

The leading youth charity YHA (England & Wales) will lead the 15-strong coalition, which includes the 10 National Parks, in the delivery of Generation Green project which will commence in March 2021 and will be delivered throughout England.

YHA (England & Wales) has overall accountability for delivery of the project which will see each consortium members play to their strengths to deliver the practical aspects of the Generation Green project.

Following delivery of the project, The Outward Bound Trust will evaluate the project, producing a blueprint to support all outdoor education providers to re-establish their services post pandemic enabling them to reach out and connect more young people.

Throughout the pandemic the Access Unlimited coalition has lobbied the government to bring forward funding earmarked to support the measures to improve access and diversity outlined in Julian Glover's Landscapes Review, in order to support the survival of the outdoor sector during the crisis.

The Landscapes Review which was commissioned by DEFRA was published in September 2019. It was following the publication of the Review and YHA's 10-year strategy that the Access Unlimited Coalition was formed.

James Blake, Chief Executive of **YHA (England & Wales)** explained: "I am delighted at what Access Unlimited has achieved for the sector in a relatively short period. The award of the grant funding demonstrates the power of collective action.

"When developing YHA's new 10-year strategy we realised our scale of ambition to reach 5 million young people over the next five years was not something we could do alone; it was through partnership and collaboration. The development of Access Unlimited focused on bringing together our not-for-profit delivery partners to offer practical solutions to the fact that too many young people do not have access to connections or careers in nature.

"The steps we now all take together will deliver real opportunities to thousands of young people who have been impacted by the pandemic – many of whom faced lockdown without gardens or access to green spaces. It is a tremendously exciting and hugely positive end to an otherwise challenging year, not only for YHA but the outdoor education sector as a whole."

Fellow Access Unlimited coalition members commented:

Mark Castle, Chief Executive, **Field Studies Council** said: "Through Access Unlimited, the Field Studies Council (FSC) will inspire thousands of young people to access nature for the first time. We'll see their eyes widen and possibilities multiply for their future and the future of the natural environment. The FSC will enable secondary school students and young adults to access personal and professional learning through online and place-based courses about nature, including high quality biodiversity publications and residential experiences at our specialist field centres. The FSC is thrilled to offer unique access to nature with and for young people most in need of opportunities."

Trevor Beattie, Chief Executive of the South Downs National Park and who leads the education portfolio for **UK National Parks**, said: "It's very exciting to have been awarded this substantial funding, which will enable more young people than ever before to access, enjoy and learn about our wonderful National Parks.

"We know a significant proportion of children, almost 20 per cent, living in the most deprived areas of England never visit the natural environment at all – and this must change. As the nation's breathing spaces and with some of our most stunning and varied countryside, National Parks offer the perfect opportunity for young people to learn outside. Whether it be a school trip to a National Park or a volunteering day surveying wildlife, it's these kinds of experiences that can inspire a lifetime of caring for the environment.

“Outdoor learning experiences are also hugely beneficial for mental health and wellbeing and the pandemic has underlined the profound need for this kind of inspirational education provision.”

Nick Barrett, Chief Executive of **The Outward Bound Trust**, said: “Generation Green will help young people develop the resilience to meet the challenges caused by COVID-19 head on. Connection to, and immersion in, nature is vital to wellbeing. Adventure in nature helps build self belief and optimism.

“This funding will be transformational, not only in introducing thousands of young people to all that the outdoors has to offer, but in opening pathways to employment in the outdoor sector for disadvantaged and marginalised groups across the UK.

“Amongst other projects, The Outward Bound Trust will now be able to provide two specific programmes aimed at women and at young people from Black, Asian, Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. The aim of these projects is to support the development and opportunities for those from under-represented backgrounds, and so grow the diversity and number of role models in outdoor leadership and participation.

“In delivering Generation Green, the Access Unlimited coalition of charities will share best practice and work together for the collective good of young people, the environment and to expediate change following the pandemic.”

Matt Hyde, Chief Executive of the **Scouts** said: “Scouts have always valued and fought to protect our environment. Connecting young people with nature is part of our DNA. The Green Recovery Fund will help us train 8,000 young people to be Green Leaders in their local community, inspiring a generation to take the outdoors and all it has to offer seriously.”

Angela Salt, **Girlguiding CEO** said: “Getting back into the outdoors together will be important for our members when Covid restrictions allow. We’re really pleased to be part of the Access Unlimited coalition and a grateful joint recipient of this important funding. It will enable Girlguiding to boost our outdoors training for volunteers, widen access to our camp sites, and inspire more girls and young women to deepen their connection to nature and the outdoors. At a time when young people are facing many challenges, enabling adventures outdoors is vital to supporting their wellbeing.”

Ends.

Notes to editors

About The Green Recovery Challenge Fund

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund is a key part of Prime Minister’s 10 Point Plan to kick-start nature recovery and tackle climate change. The fund is being delivered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

In the first round of funding, Defra announced grants of between £62,000 and £3.8 million from a £40 million funding pot on 10 December 2020 to help create and retain thousands of green jobs. The second round of funding will open in early 2021

68 projects were awarded grants of between £62k and £3.8 million to kick-start a pipeline of nature-based projects while creating and retaining jobs.

Environment Minister, Rebecca Pow, said: “These projects will drive forward work across England to restore and transform our landscapes, boost nature and create green jobs, and will be a vital part of helping us to build back greener from coronavirus.

“I look forward to working with environmental organisations as these projects help address the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change, while creating and retaining jobs as part of the green recovery.”

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive, National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “Supporting our natural environment is one of the most valuable things we can do right now. All these projects are of huge benefit to our beautiful countryside and wildlife, but will also support jobs, health and wellbeing, which are vitally important as we begin to emerge from the coronavirus crisis.”

The government’s forthcoming [Environment Bill](#) puts the environment at the centre of policy making to ensure that we have a cleaner, greener and more resilient country for the next generation. The fund is supporting a range of nature

conservation and recovery and nature-based solutions projects, which will contribute towards government's wider [25 Year Environment Plan](#) commitments, including commitments to increase tree-planting across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by 2025.

The Green Recovery Challenge Fund grant awarded to Access Unlimited will fund the following:

YHA (England & Wales) - £637,350

YHA is the project lead and co-ordinator. It will also deliver a range of programme activities including 3,900 day and residential experiences for young people, as well as five apprenticeships and 30 work placements

Scouts - £378,770

Scouts will deliver young leader training, recruiting c8000 Green Champions to engage c33,000 young people in the programme. Scouts will deliver 1,000 two-night residential experiences and will develop white label activities and resources for use by other partners in their delivery and will be repurposing seven existing roles and skilling 45 volunteers to support the project's delivery.

Girlguiding - £378,770

Girlguiding will run a targeted communications campaign to engage girls from deprived and BAME communities. They will train 150 walking leaders and 400 other volunteers to support more girls to experience nature. Through Girlguiding c2500 girls will experience at least one night under the stars.

The Outward Bound Trust (OBT) - £306,428

OBT will deliver activities to 2,000 young people in schools, provide 225 immersive (4 - 18 night) residential experiences and leadership training opportunities for 12 BAME young people and 8 young women. OBT is the lead partner for the project's evaluation.

Field Studies Council (FSC) - £313,334

FSC will support virtual, home, school, and place-based learning for 6,000 young people and provide high quality publications for 5,000 participants. FSC will also deliver residential nature learning opportunities for 400 young people at its study centres and will be taking the programme into schools reaching 1,000 pupils.

10 English National Park Authorities - £591,409

Together the English NPAs will run collaborative day/residential experiences and social action volunteering projects in conjunction with YHA in the English National Parks. They will train 380 teachers, recruit 12 new rangers and 2 apprentices to support the project and will be providing accredited training to 74 volunteer leaders to support the delivery of project activities taking place in National Parks. Exmoor National Park will deliver a residential experience for 100 young people.

About Access Unlimited

The Access Unlimited Coalition was formed in December 2019 as a coalition of non-for-profit school residential and educational providers.

The coalition includes YHA (England & Wales), The Outward Bound Trust, Scouts, Girlguiding, Field Studies Council and the National Parks.

Its aim is to ensure that there are opportunities for every child and young person to access high quality learning and residential experiences in our National Parks and AONBs.

YHA (England & Wales), The Outward Bound Trust, Scouts, Girlguiding, Field Studies Council and the National Parks all opened within Government Guidance drawing on the guidance from across Hospitality, Youth Work, Sports and Recreation, Heritage and Education Sectors.

The Access Unlimited report detailing a roadmap to safely and securing reopening the outdoor education sector can be read at <http://tiny.cc/x5t4tz>

Discover more at <https://livemore.yha.org.uk/yha-news/access-unlimited-case-for-support>

About YHA (England & Wales)

YHA (England & Wales) is a leading youth charity with 90-year history of making travel and adventure accessible to all, especially young people.

Established in 1930, YHA's charitable object remains as relevant in 2020 as it was in 1930 – 'To help all, especially young people of limited means, to a greater knowledge, love and care of the countryside, and appreciation of the cultural values of towns and cities, particularly by providing youth hostels or other simple accommodation for them in their travels, and thus to promote their health, recreation and education.'

As part of YHA's 90th anniversary celebrations the charity has launched the Project90 fundraising appeal. Details of Project90 can be found at getinvolved.yha.org.uk/fundraising/appeals/project90/

YHA's charitable purpose is at the forefront of its new 10-year strategy - **Adventure. For the first time and a lifetime. Our 10 year strategy for connecting people and places.** It can be viewed and downloaded at yha.org.uk/about-yha/yha-strategy-2020

Operating more than 150 locations throughout England and Wales, YHA offers a unique range of affordable accommodation including youth hostels, camping and cabins in rural, coastal and city locations.

Many of YHA's sites are in stunning heritage properties: including a medieval castle (YHA St Briavels Castle); an Elizabethan manor house (YHA Wilderhope Manor); a Victorian mock gothic mansion (YHA Castleton at Losehill Hall) and a medieval friary (YHA Beverley Friary).

Through its social enterprise model, revenue from YHA's hostel accommodation is directed towards its social purpose.

YHA prides itself on providing affordable, contemporary accommodation and a life-enriching, social experience which differs from a hotel stay.

Since 2010 more than £40million has been invested in YHA's existing network of accommodation as well as the acquisition of new hostels. YHA's most recent hostel acquisitions include YHA Newcastle Central (November 2019) and YHA Liverpool Central (November 2019).

Through access to travel, heritage, culture, outdoors and nature, YHA aims to improve outcomes related to health, wellbeing and life chances for young people and families, particularly those with challenging lives.

YHA's partnerships are extensive and involve organisations and charities working at virtually every potential touchpoint in young people's lives from schools and colleges, Movement to Work, The Duke of Edinburgh Award, Family Holiday Association and School Journey Association, amongst many others.

YHA is a leading provider of residential school trips, with more than 80 Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) accredited sites — more than any other provider. Committed to quality outdoor education, YHA champions the national #BrilliantResidentials campaign.

YHA delivers measurable impact, nurturing young people's personal and social development through education, upskilling and work readiness schemes.

In 2019 – 2020

- **1,049,522** people stayed with YHA and **408,027** guests were aged under 26
- Over **150,000** young people accessed an affordable residential learning experience through their school or group
- **4,875 young people and families with challenging lives** received free or supported breaks
- **1,040 young people volunteered** with YHA

Further information can be found in YHA's latest impact review at <https://www.yha.org.uk/about-yha/impact>

In the current coronavirus crisis, YHA is repurposing a number of hostels to support the national fight against the disease. For example, YHA Bath, Manchester, Oxford, Bristol, Brighton and Cardiff have all been licensed to local councils temporarily to support the most vulnerable.

YHA reopened partially to guests in July 2020 with a mix of COVID secure hostels offering rooms, and opportunities to hire hostels exclusively for groups meeting the Government's restrictions. The network has had to close down in England during the current lockdown in November.

12 hostels will be fully open to families and individuals during the winter, and are available to book on www.yha.org.uk. These are: Ambleside, Keswick, Boggle Hole, York, Losehill Hall Castleton, Hartington Hall, South Downs, Snowdon Pen Y Pass, Brecon Beacons, Treyarnon Bay, London St Pancras and Cambridge.

Other hostels will be available for Exclusive Hire to groups that meet the Government's restrictions. These can be booked at <https://exclusive-hire.yha.org.uk>

YHA supports the Save Outdoor Education campaign which recognises the risks to the Outdoor Learning Sector posed by COVID generally but the Government's current ban on school residentials. Discover more at <https://ukoutdoors.org.uk/Save-Outdoor-Education>

To see the difference that YHA makes to the lives of young people and their families, visit YHA's [YouTube](#) channel.

Further information about YHA can be found at yha.org.uk

Follow YHA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#).

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