London Youth

ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN THE OUTDOOR SECTOR

Report by Dr Dave Harvey

November 2025

Contents

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report, commissioned by London Youth, draws on sector employment surveys, national governing body qualification and apprenticeship data to establish a baseline for ethnic diversity within the instructor population of the UK outdoor centre sector. This forms part of London Youth's commitment to becoming an anti-racist organisation and to creating pathways for young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to enter the sector, recognising that over two-thirds of the young people on their programmes are young people of colour.

The study specifically focuses on ethnic diversity, while acknowledging its intersection with other facets of diversity. The report sits alongside additional London Youth research that considers the barriers to employment in the sector as part of the Diversity in the Outdoors pilot programme.

Key Findings

The research reveals an **overwhelmingly White workforce** across the outdoor centre sector. Approximately 96% of employees, managers, delivery staff, and apprentices are White, which is significantly higher than the England and Wales national figure of 82.3% White representation.

Minimal representation in leadership: People of colour are even less represented in management roles, with data indicating that management in centres is 97% White, and likely higher in reality due to small sample sizes.

Low diversity in qualifications: Most qualification achievements in paddle sports, hill walking, and climbing are approximately 96% White. However, slightly higher representation of people of colour is observed in entry-level qualifications.

Underrepresentation in apprenticeships: The Level 3 Outdoor Activity Instructor apprentices are 94.5% White, highlighting a considerable gap compared to national apprenticeship diversity data.

Disparities in participation and progression: Individuals from Black, Asian, and minority ethnic communities are less likely to access green spaces, participate in outdoor activities, or progress through higher-level outdoor sector qualifications. However, there are consistent differences in representation, with Asian individuals generally having a higher proportion than Black individuals in the sector, except for apprenticeships.

Inconsistent and limited data collection: Many organisations lack the systems, resources, or confidence to consistently gather and publish ethnic diversity data, with varying classification methods making sector-wide analysis difficult.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Achieving meaningful change in ethnic diversity within the outdoor centre sector requires **long-term, collective, and context-sensitive efforts** rather than quick fixes. While there is growing awareness and commitment to Equality, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EEDI) across the sector, a coordinated approach is essential. To address the current imbalances and build a more diverse workforce, the report recommends:

Developing a joint strategy: Organisations across the sector should collaborate to formulate a shared strategy focusing on sharing knowledge and engaging with community-provider projects, identifying effective mechanisms, success criteria, and multi-organisation structures. Employment depends not only on provider policies and practice but also opportunities for gaining experience and developing a love and enthusiasm for the outdoors.

Enhancing data capture and visibility: Implement regular assessments of data (every 3-5 years) and agree upon a consistent data reporting standard. This includes broadening data capture to include delivery staff and management demographics across organisations like the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC) and encouraging all National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and Apprenticeship providers to participate. Centres and providers should be encouraged to contribute to the RACE Report.

Promoting positive interventions: Initiatives such as apprenticeships, trainee programmes, and scholarships are crucial for sparking and sustaining change. Expanding access, participation and employment pathways necessitates sustained strategies, collaboration, and strong community leadership.

Future research: The report concludes that collective action, supported by improved data and transparency, is essential to broaden access, participation, and employment pathways within the outdoor sector for ethnically diverse communities. The report serves as a vital baseline to measure future progress towards a more ethnically diverse and inclusive outdoor centre sector.

1 Introduction

Careers in the outdoor centre sector often develop as a result of personal interest and participation in outdoor activities, the initial experiences of which, for many, happen at outdoor centres. For young people, as well as the personal and social benefits, their experience of working with outdoor instructors can serve as a catalyst for future career goals, and many outdoor centres across the UK run trainee or apprenticeship programmes that help young people gain access to the sector. However, the ethnic diversity of instructors in the UK outdoor centre sector has historically been limited. While there may be an overall sense of the level of ethnic representation amongst the instructing workforce, evidence is often anecdotal and there have, as yet, been few attempts to gather and present a sector wide baseline by which to gauge progress.

Since 2020, London Youth has been committed to becoming an anti-racist organisation. Over two-thirds of the young people they work with are young people of colour, and the opportunities provided through youth organisations play a critical role in broadening horizons and raising achievement. As part of their offer, London Youth run two outdoor centres, Hindleap Warren and Woodrow High House, both located close to London. This commissioned report forms part of an employability programme established by London Youth in 2025 that aims to create a pathway for young people from ethnically diverse backgrounds to enter the outdoor sector as instructors. It is situated in a social context of change and increasing awareness of EEDI in the outdoor sector.[1, 2] The findings presented here serve as a baseline to gauge future progress and are in no way intended to be critical of any organisation's current levels of diversity or EEDI strategy. Many organisations and individuals have willingly contributed to the report (see Appendix 5) and their help and support is gratefully acknowledged.

Structure of the report

Part 2 sets out the background and context in which the study is situated. Part 3 describes the approach taken to gathering the data and the results themselves. Part 4 provides a discussion of the findings and concludes with recommendations.

A note about diversity (*see also* Appendix 3 - Language)

'Diversity describes the myriad ways in which people differ, including the psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among all individuals, such as race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic status, religion, economic class, education, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, mental and physical ability, and learning styles.' (Anderson et al. 2021)[3]

This report focuses on ethnic diversity in the outdoor centre sector. It acknowledges that ethnicity is just one facet of diversity while, in reality, many factors intersect to influence how people are able to access the benefits associated with outdoor education.

'Ethnicity is multi-dimensional and subjective, with various ways in which a person may choose to define their ethnic group. This may include common ancestry, elements of culture, identity, religion, language and physical appearance. It is generally accepted that ethnic group does include all these aspects, and others, in combination.' (ONS, 2022)[4]

2 Background and context

2.1 Overview of the Outdoor Centre Sector in the UK

Outdoor education in the UK has its roots in the early 20th century, beginning with the rise of The Scout Association and the establishment of residential camps by some local authorities before the Second World War. Purpose-built outdoor education and activity centres began to appear in the late 1940s and 1950s, becoming an established part of the educational landscape. Their growth has always been closely linked to the wider political, economic, and social context of the time.[5,6]

Many of the earliest centres were deliberately located in mountainous or rural areas, reflecting a desire to give young people a contrast to urban life through challenging experiences in the outdoors, especially mountain, river and coast-based activities. Over time, other centres emerged closer to major population centres, offering self-contained programmes that rely less on the surrounding geography and more on structured on-site activities. Some of these centres play a significant role in the development of the sector workforce, as they annually recruit large numbers of staff that are new to the sector for seasonal instructor positions, who later move on to work elsewhere.

Outdoor centres are a particular form of outdoor learning / education provision, serving a wide range of audiences, shaped by their location and business model. Centres owned and run by local authorities, or centres connected to specific areas or organisations (e.g. schools or youth groups) often work primarily with groups from their particular community, reflecting their ethnic diversity. Others, particularly those drawing from a wider catchment, may serve a more varied client base. Day centres, mobile provision, voluntary groups such as the Scouts, Girlguiding and Cadets, youth groups, clubs, schools, colleges and universities, all offer additional ways to access experiences and potential places of employment in the sector, paid or voluntary.

The outdoor centre sector is substantial in terms of reach and economic value, though its exact size is hard to measure because of its diverse forms of operation. At peak times an estimated 70,000 people a day benefit for experiences delivered through permanent residential centres, temporary tented camps, and organisations using shared or hired facilities. [7] One indicator of scale comes from the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), which licenses all providers offering specified adventurous activities to under-18s. Although the data is now over a decade old, research in 2013 identified at least 1,899 organisations listed across various licensing schemes, membership lists, and accreditation databases.[8] More recent estimates from the Institute for Outdoor Learning, produced during the sector's

response to the COVID-19 pandemic, suggested that the sector supports over 15,000 jobs and contributes around £700 million to the UK economy. There is no register of instructors working in the sector but research into sector capacity carried out as part of the Residential Outdoor Education (Wales) Bill in 2023 suggests around 330 full time instructors and an additional 100 part time staff work across approximately 35 centres in Wales. Although currently impossible to quantify precisely, it is likely that across the UK the number of delivery staff is in the region of 2,000 fulltime and part time plus an unquantified number of freelancers.

The outdoor centres sit within a wider field of overlapping outdoor provision, and centre staff may move into different roles over time. Research carried out in 2014 identified almost 9,600 provider organisations, encompassing everything from individual sole traders to large organisations, and from informal community clubs to commercial facilities.[9]

The outdoor centre sector has faced significant pressures in recent years. The combined impacts of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, and ongoing economic challenges have affected the viability of many centres. Research conducted as part of this project has identified more than 20 centres that have closed permanently since 2020.

2.2 Sector Organisations

Within the sector, the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC) represents the leaders of 174 outdoor education centres, though many other providers and organisations in the sector are not members. Traditionally, AHOEC has had an education-focused membership, while centres with roots in the holiday activity market have been represented by the British Activity Providers Association (BAPA). In recent decades, the growth of the residential visits market has blurred these traditional boundaries, and membership has broadened to include a wider cross-section of providers. Meanwhile, many centres that were once subsidised by local authorities have had to shift to cost-recovery or surplus-making models to survive in a competitive marketplace.

Other sector organisations that play a role in the career pathways of most instructors are the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) who provide the various activity qualifications associated with activity delivery, the organisations providing apprenticeships, and the Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) who offer opportunities for professional accreditation and development.

2.3 Participation and access

For many children and young people, visits to outdoor centres through school or youth groups provide their first (and sometimes only) opportunities to try a range of outdoor activities. These early experiences can be highly impactful, supporting personal and social development in the short term and contributing to long-term

benefits such as improved physical and mental health, as well as enhanced economic wellbeing.[10]

For some, positive first encounters with the outdoors can spark a lifelong passion for recreation or even inspire a future career in the outdoor sector. However, sustaining this interest and building on those initial experiences can be particularly challenging for young people from ethnic minority backgrounds, a potential barrier to employment as a love for the outdoors is seen within the sector as an essential prerequisite for employment.[11]

Employers often look for evidence of outdoor interest through hobbies, clubs, societies, or voluntary work with scouts, guides, or similar organisations. Having opportunities to experience and develop these interests is therefore a crucial part of the career pathway, but research consistently shows that individuals from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities are among the least likely to access green spaces or participate in outdoor activities.[12,13,14] Opportunities to nurture any emerging interest are often fewer than for White peers, especially for those living in areas of deprivation. This is significant because data from England and Wales shows that Black and Asian people are disproportionately represented in the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods.[15]

In England and Wales, participation data also highlights that children and young people from Black and Asian backgrounds are less likely to take part in adventurous activities and water sports.[16] In Scotland, research shows that people of colour are among the least likely to engage with the outdoors.[17] These differences in participation are shaped by multiple, overlapping factors, including concerns about racism and the racialisation of green spaces, socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and historical experiences. A lack of visible ethnic representation within outdoor activities can further reinforce feelings of exclusion.[18] Cultural perspectives also influence how different communities value leisure and nature, which shapes the types of activities they engage in and how they experience them.[19] Similarly, perceptions of careers in the outdoor sector may differ, which can affect interest in pursuing such pathways.

2.4 Workforce and employment

Employment opportunities in the outdoor sector are considerable, the Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) identifying over 100 different roles.[20] Many of these roles can be found in outdoor centres, but the availability of jobs and opportunities for progression can vary significantly from centre to centre.

Because demand for outdoor activities tends to peak during the warmer months, many centres cannot operate at full capacity year-round. As a result, they typically employ a permanent core team supported by seasonal staff and freelance instructors, many of whom work for multiple providers. Seasonal staff may return the following year, move into different roles within the sector, or leave the sector altogether. Career progression opportunities are limited, as the number of permanent roles, and especially management roles, decreases at higher levels. Senior

managers, often promoted from within the sector, frequently remain in post until retirement.

Staff recruitment reflects this structure. Delivery staff (such as instructors) are usually recruited nationally, while domestic and support staff are more often drawn from the local community. However, prospective staff must be willing to travel to or live near the centre, which can present additional barriers to recruiting people of colour given that many centres are located in rural areas, often far from the main population centres where they live.[21]

Staff play a crucial role in shaping the quality and impact of the outdoor experience, particularly instructors, whose personal traits, behaviours, and attitudes strongly influence participants.[22] Research has highlighted the importance of role models, especially for people of colour: seeing leaders who look like them can be inspiring and demonstrate what is possible.[23,24]

However, increasing the representation of people of colour in these influential roles requires more individuals from ethnically diverse communities to both aspire to and have access to such opportunities. Positive interventions, such as apprenticeships, trainee programmes, and scholarships, can help spark and sustain change in what has historically been a predominantly White environment.[25,26] Measuring the effectiveness of these initiatives requires establishing a clear baseline, which is the focus of this research.

3 Method

The research was exploratory in nature, the aim being to identify what data exists and how it could be brought together to create an overall picture of ethnic diversity in the outdoor centre sector. Phase 1 sought to identify specific approaches and initiatives. Phase 2 involved internet searches for academic research, articles, reports and blogs related to ethnic diversity in the sector. Phase 3 then explored specific data relating to ethnic diversity in the sector. To support that process, researcher knowledge of the sector and organisational contacts were drawn upon to identify and gather data that was not in the public domain.

4 Findings

4.1 Sector approaches and initiatives

Increasing awareness of EEDI in the broader outdoor sector has led to a growing number of initiatives. While some are specifically outdoor learning sector related, others are more broadly concerned with access to the outdoors but intersect with the sector. The following represents a non-exhaustive selection of initiatives:

IOL Inclusivity in the Outdoors

The 2021 *Raising Our Game* webinar series explored Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the outdoors through 10 free webinars. Intended to initiate conversation, collaboration, and action within the Outdoor Learning community, it was delivered in partnership with Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL), Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres (AHOEC), MOSAIC Outdoors, The Outward Bound Trust, and University of Cumbria. The first nine webinars drew 1,348 live attendees and over 1,200 YouTube views.

Generation Green 1

Generation Green 1 was a £2.5 million project (2019-2022) funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and DEFRA that aimed to connect over 100,000 young people to nature and build a future green workforce. Delivered by the Access Unlimited coalition, it provided training, volunteering roles, and outdoor experiences to young people, particularly those from underserved communities, to foster environmental stewardship and well-being. Young people from areas of deprivation and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups were prioritised as part of the project.

Lindley Educational Trust and Ashton Youth Club

Ashton Youth Club (AYC) was set up by Lindley Educational Trust in 2011. Reaching some of the most disadvantaged, deprived and hardest to reach families in Tameside, the project has helped young people gain essential skills, experience and qualifications. For many, this leads to them becoming inspirational role models and young leaders, delivering Lindley's youth work, sports and outdoor activities.

YHA Outdoor Citizens

A free membership community hosted and administered by YHA (England & Wales), *Outdoor Citizens* is made up of over 100 small charities, not-for-profit groups and organisations that are working to support more people to access the outdoors. Funded by sector bodies including Natural England, Sport England and the YHA, Outdoor Citizens supports projects and activities aimed at increasing participation in the outdoors.[27]

Walking Together

The *Walk Together Pathway* is a National Trust-funded project to increase the representation of global majority ethnic groups in outdoor activities by training 100 new walk leaders from these communities over three years. By partnering with organizations like Mountain Training, Sport England, and community groups including Black2Nature, Bristol Steppin Sistas, Black Girls Hike and Muslim Hikers,

the project aims to build capacity within diverse groups, making the outdoors more welcoming and encouraging broader participation.

Championing National Parks for Everyone

Championing National Parks for Everyone is a The National Lottery Heritage Fund-funded project led by Peak District Mosaic. It aims to open up the Peak District National Park, North York Moors National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park to people from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds, while also creating clearer pathways into outdoor and environmental careers for those underrepresented in the sector.

The Outdoor Partnership (TOP)

TOP was established in North Wales in 2004 following research that highlighted a lack of local Welsh people working in the outdoor sector. Over the next twenty years, a strategy of developing community engagement with the outdoors has led to increased employment in the sector and the broadening of the scheme to cover the whole of Wales and parts of the UK. Many of the issues around underrepresentation and access to outdoor activities are pertinent to the challenges faced by people of colour.

Outdoors for All

Produced by 35 outdoor sector organisations, the *Outdoors for All* manifesto (2023) advocates for the expansion of responsible access to green and blue spaces across the United Kingdom, calling specifically for the development of a culture that addresses barriers to access for all. The subsequent establishment of the Outdoor Recreation and Access to Nature All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) has led to the publication of Outdoors For All: Recommendations to Government on Access to Nature in September 2025 which calls for government funding to support underrepresented community groups to access the natural environment.

Organisational approaches

Numerous organisations including employers, national governing bodies, sector charities and membership organisations have instigated their own EEDI strategies and approaches. Examples include the YHA, Outward Bound, Scouts and PGL.[28, 29, 30,31] Approaches include policy development, reviewing EEDI actions, appointing a person with specific responsibility for EEDI and actively promoting race inclusion and diversity. Some organisations (e.g. Paddle UK) have allocated specific funding to support engagement programmes through bursary schemes.[32]

London Youth Diversity in the Outdoors pilot programme

The programme, launched in February 2025, aims to pilot a pathway into the outdoor industry for young people of colour, beginning with residential experiences designed to inspire and engage them. Participants will receive ongoing mentorship and guidance throughout the project, with additional experiences and training, returning to the outdoor centre for work experience placements that introduce them to all aspects of outdoor instructing. This support will continue beyond the work experience phase, envisaged to lead into a structured and supported employment pathway. The programme also includes two research pieces, the one described in this report and another one focused on barriers and opportunities for young people of colour to enter the sector.

4.2 Research and literature

Overall, there is currently no overview of ethnic diversity in the outdoor centre sector. The Race Representation Index (see section 4.3) brings together high level data from publicly funded NGBs, and one of those, Paddle UK, reports publicly against their EEDI strategy.

A small number of blogs and academic journal and sector magazine articles focus on ethnicity in the sector (referenced in Section 2). These tend to highlight barriers and initiatives to overcome them rather than establishing a baseline.

Research into recreational participation in the outdoors is well developed however, with a large body of evidence highlighting the disparity of access between people of colour and those from White backgrounds (see Appendix 2).

4.3 Sector data

UK Census overview

The Office for National Statistics uses three different groupings (‘classifications’) of ethnic categories and recommends using the most appropriate one for specific research purposes (see Appendix 1). The data gathered from reports and shared by organisations for this research uses all three classifications, with some data being collected using one classification and then reported publicly using another. NGBs and Apprenticeships all collate using the 20a level (19 categories). Apprenticeships are reported nationally at the most aggregated 6a level (5 categories), while sector demographics are reported (e.g. by AHOEC) at the 8a level (7 categories). In addition, some datasets have slightly different categories - Mountain Training, for example uses the term White European only, and not White British. The lack of congruence between the different data sets has to be accounted for when arriving at a sector wide dataset. Data is therefore presented at the 6a level.

Census data summary for the UK

Table 2 shows the 2021 census data for the UK, showing the considerable difference between countries. England and Wales 81.7% White is the reference figure used by the RRI and therefore NGBs. National figures, however, can mask considerable regional variation, as shown in Chart 1, and these figures can in turn hide local variation**.** The population a centre or provider serves, and potentially its staff recruitment strategy, therefore indicates a need for a more nuanced consideration of ethnicity than the headline national figures might imply.

	Asian %	**Black %**	**Mixed %**	**White %**	**Other %**
England and Wales (2021)	9.25	4.04	2.88	81.71	2.1
Scotland (2022)	3.90	1.33	1.12	92.87	0.1
Northern Ireland (2021)		3.23		96.77	

Table 2. UK census (ethnicity)

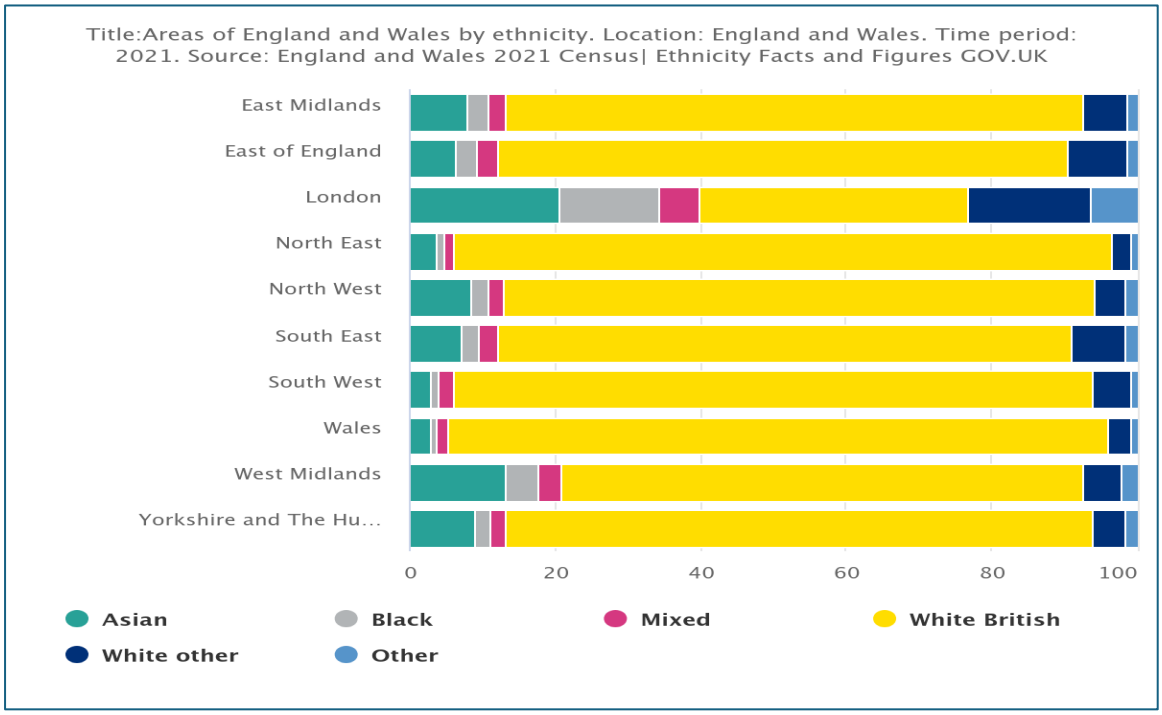

Chart 1. England and Wales ethnicity by region (Source: England and Wales 2021 Census, Gov.UK)

Publicly available data relating to the outdoor centre sector

Publicly available data relating to organisational diversity is variable.

Providers

Reporting of ethnic diversity employment and engagement levels in the outdoor sector is limited chiefly to summary statements in some charitable organisations' annual reports (see for example, the Scouts, Girlguiding and YHA). In their most recent reports, YHA report 21.4% employees from minority ethnic backgrounds (including White minority ethnic), the Scouts 3.8%.

National Governing Bodies (NGBs)

NGBs are at different stages of their journeys towards addressing diversity issues. Most publicly funded NGBs have (or are developing) a strategy and contribute to the Race Representation Index, but only Paddle UK reports publicly and comprehensively against that strategy. Their data is discussed in the results section below.

Apprenticeships

Aggregated national apprenticeship diversity data and data relating to specific apprenticeships is published by the UK Government.[33] Data for the Level 3 Outdoor Instructor Apprenticeship is discussed below.

Race Representation Index (RRI)

The Race Representation Index was established in 2021 by Sporting Equals, a charity supporting ethnically diverse communities, and the Sport Monitoring Advisory Panel to serve as a 'baseline barometer, evaluating publicly funded National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport on their advancements in the journey to greater race equality; specifically focusing on ethnic diversity and representation.' The RRI does not cover the whole workforce but focuses on senior decision making levels and athletes who enter elite pathways. It is designed to assess how the diversity data of NGBs aligns with national demographics and is completed voluntarily.

Engagement with the RRI demonstrates organisations commitment to change, and five outdoor sector-related NGBs have contributed to the survey: the Royal Yachting Association (RYA); the British Mountaineering Council (BMC); Paddle UK (formerly British Canoeing); the British Orienteering Federation (BOF); and British Cycling (BC) (formerly the British Cycling Federation). Organisations are graded according to how they compare with the national figure of 81.7% White representation – grade A is the highest level representing better than the national figure, grade F the lowest. Data for 2023/24 shows the lack of people of colour in coaching and leadership

positions (in line with the majority of NGBs) but a more positive direction of travel at board level.

	Board grades	Leadership	Coaches	Athletes	Officials	Overall
RYA	C	F	F	C	D	D
BMC	F	F	F	A	N/A	E
Paddle UK	B	F	F	F	F	E
BOF	D	F	F	F	N/A	E
BC	F	F	F	F	F	F

Table 1. RRI ratings for outdoor sector NGBs

While the RRI is a gauge for publicly funded NGBs it does not include other sector NGBs that do not fall into this category. Smaller NGBs, while offering training and qualifications, have a much smaller reach and resources, meaning more limited capacity to gather data.

The RACE report

The RACE Report is an annual UK publication that collects and analyses data on the racial and ethnic diversity of staff within the environmental, climate, and sustainability sectors to promote equity and inclusion. It encourages environmental charities and funders to become more transparent about workforce diversity, identifies barriers to representation for people of colour, and promotes actionable change to address these issues. A key principle behind the report is to drive transparency in order to create the impetus for change. Although not focused on outdoor learning sector organisations, the report itself, the methodology behind it and the organisations already involved offer a potential basis and support for developing strategy within the outdoor learning sector.

Additional sector data

The lack of publicly available data meant that it was necessary to make direct approaches to organisations and representative bodies. These included the AHOEC and selected large providers i.e. those with multiple centres but not part of the AHOEC, reached through network contacts. The AHOEC has recently surveyed its membership with a leadership and management focus, and this report draws on that survey. Additional provider data was amalgamated with the AHOEC data to create a single data set.

Lack of instructor related data suggested finding an alternative means of gauging diversity in the delivery workforce. As the Level 3 Outdoor Activity Instructor apprenticeship grows in popularity as an entry route to the sector, and as most staff working will engage with the qualification frameworks, apprenticeship providers and NGBs were invited to take part in the research. In addition, some data was publicly available through publications available on NGB websites.

In total, 17 organisations, including Apprenticeship providers, NGBs and employers were approached, of which 9 were able to supply data. Rather than constrain organisations to a pre-determined set of data, they were invited to supply what they had relating to the ethnic composition of their workforce. Analysis of what and how it was presented forms part of the research scope of this project. All data has been anonymised, and named organisations are quoted with their permission.

It should be noted that although many staff in the outdoor centre sector work on a self-employed freelance basis, the total number is unknown. Understanding the demographic makeup of this group would be desirable, but the lack of a representative body makes gathering data very difficult. Researcher capacity for this project necessitated leaving this group for the future.

Surveys requesting data relating to protected characteristics (e.g., ethnicity, gender, religion, disability, etc.) must by law include a 'prefer not to say' option, allowing respondents to maintain data privacy. Where data was supplied by organisations that included 'prefer not to say' and 'not specified', these were subtracted from the overall response total. Percentages were then calculated using the remaining total. Response rates are discussed in the text.

Limitations

Bringing data together from different sources raises questions about what comparisons can be made between them. Data may be gathered using different methodologies, in different contexts and with different aims. This report acknowledges these limitations, aiming to present an overview of what is available, and to use the data to create an overall sense of the current situation. The report concludes with recommendations for future data gathering and research.

4.4 Data supplied by organisations

Data was supplied by the AHOEC and other sector organisations. Table 3 shows percentages relating to supplied data i.e. where a workforce has been surveyed but only a limited number have responded, the percentage relates to those responses rather than the whole workforce. The AHOEC survey asked for ethnicity data relating to whole staff workforce and management but did not include specific instructor related data. A total of 43 centres were represented in the response, 25% of the total number represented by the full membership. 9 centres were in Wales, but only 2 centres in Scotland, and none in Northern Ireland.

Due to the low response rate and the gaps in the data regarding instructors from the AHOEC survey, approaches were made to several other organisations not included in the AHOEC dataset. **Table 3** combines the data as follows:

- 'Centre staff' includes a total of 61 centres and data for 2292 employees.
- 'Centre managers' data represents 43 centres and 188 managers.
- 'Delivery staff' total 185 from 6 centres.

- ‘Level 3 Apprentices’ relates to 170 apprentices, approximately 50% of the total number of Level 3 Outdoor Activity Instructor apprentice starts in 2023/24. [Data supplied by Channel Training.]

	Asian %	Black %	Mixed %	White %	Other %
Centre staff	1.83	0.26	1.53	95.86	0.52
Centre managers	1.60	1.06	0.00	97.34	0.00
Delivery staff	0.58	0.00	1.73	97.11	0.58
Level 3 Outdoor Instructor Apprentices (England only)	0.50	1.51	3.52	94.47	0.00

Table 3. Outdoor centre workforce

Whole staff

People from White backgrounds dominate the outdoor centre staff workforce, only 3.62% of staff being of Asian, Black or Mixed heritage.

Delivery

Based on the gathered data, activity delivery staff are 97.11% White. This figure should be treated with a degree of caution as the sample size is relatively small when compared with the overall estimated workforce (173 compared with an estimated 2,000). Small numbers can have a relatively big effect on overall percentages in a small sample but may not account for the true picture if extrapolated to reflect the whole sector

Management

Management in centres is 97.34% White. The data for management represents 43 centres with a total of 188 managers and as with the delivery staff, needs to be treated with caution for a number of reasons. The survey left interpretation of the term ‘manager’ open to the respondent so may include all levels of management and any role where there is judged to be responsibility for other staff. Many managers will also deliver activities as part of their role, so there is the possibility of double counting some staff if data is amalgamated. Centres also operate on different models, meaning that some may include youth provision or be part of a wider offer. A manager could therefore be part of the organisation but more closely aligned with, for example, youth provision than what might be considered traditional outdoor education centre (OEC) programmes.

The number of responses from centres is low, and the numbers of managers are low when compared with the overall workforce. A small number of managers from ethnically diverse backgrounds can therefore have a disproportionate effect on the overall percentage. For example, removing one centre that has three of the total

number of 5 Black, Asian or Mixed heritage managers reported in the AHOEC survey means the percentage of White managers across the sector rises to 99%.

Apprentices

Level 3 apprentices are 94.5% White. There are clear differences between the national level data for apprenticeships in general (84.7% White) and the Level 3 Outdoor Activity Instructor. The figure gives an indication of the incoming workforce and shows that as with delivery and management staff in the sector, people of colour are underrepresented.

Qualifications

Data from Mountain Training UK (MTUK) was supplied in periods, the most recent of which was 2021-2024. Paddle UK data was available for each year but this research adopts the same timeframe to bring it into line with MTUK.

Paddle sport

Paddle UK is the NGB for paddle sports in the UK. The British Canoeing Awarding Body is the independent qualifications and training body for Paddle UK and responsible for all qualification training and assessment. BCAB gather diversity data at the point of registration for qualification courses, and Paddle UK have a well-established EEDI strategy that they report publicly against on an annual basis.[34] Ethnicity data is provided voluntarily, which for the period 2021-2024 is available for 31,835 course candidates, 59% of the total number of registrations.

Paddle UK offer a large number of coaching and leadership courses that cover many different aspects of paddle based water sports. The entry level qualification is the ‘Paddlesport Instructor’, data for which is included with the overall data in **Table 4**. 75% of candidates supplied ethnicity data for the qualification, out of a total of 7,655 registrations.

Paddle UK courses are available worldwide, and the data includes registrations from outside the UK. 94.5% of all course registrations, and 96% of Paddlesport Instructor registrations, are in the UK. Interpretation of the data in Table 4 must take this into account.

	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other
All paddle sport course registrations	0.56	0.2	2.08	96.43	2.02
Paddle sport Instructor registrations	1.44	0.51	2.68	94.91	0.47

Table 4. Paddle sport course registrations and Instructor registrations

Of those who identified their ethnicity, 96.43% are White. The percentage of White candidates is lower though for the Paddlesport Instructor qualification. More advanced qualifications have a higher percentage of White candidates.

Hill walking and Climbing

Mountain Training UK and Ireland (MTUKI) are the independent bodies that sit within the British Mountaineering Council, responsible for the administration of walking, climbing and mountaineering qualifications in the UK. They have been gathering diversity data since 2015 and are developing a new EEDI strategy due for publication in 2025/26.

Ethnicity data is gathered as a requirement at the point of registration. Over the four-year data period a total of 19,650 candidates undertook qualification training courses and further 11,557 passed assessments. 90% of candidates submitted ethnicity data.

Data provided for this project shows similar proportions of White candidates to paddle sport qualifications, with the lower level qualifications have higher representation form Asian, Black and Mixed heritage candidates.

The numbers of people from different ethnicities accessing the various qualifications are worth further consideration (See Table A4, Appendix 4). The most ethnically diverse qualifications are the Lowland Leader, Indoor Climbing Assistant and Climbing Wall Instructor. The least diverse are the higher level qualifications, specifically the International Mountain Leader, Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor and Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor.

Training	Asian	Black	Mixed	White	Other
All qualifications	1.90	0.53	1.83	95.06	0.68
Lowland Leader	2.14	1.28	1.86	93.78	0.94
Climbing Wall Instructor	2.42	0.54	2.71	93.43	0.90
Assessment	**Asian**	**Black**	**Mixed**	**White**	**Other**
All qualifications	1.31	0.27	1.79	96.09	0.54
Lowland Leader	1.18	0.45	1.22	96.51	0.63
Climbing Wall Instructor	1.57	0.44	2.70	94.45	0.84

Table 5. Mountain Training UK - qualification training and assessment

As with the other datasets, caveats apply to any conclusions. The ‘All qualifications’ data offers an overview of all the qualifications including training and assessments and serves as a baseline comparison for future data sets and between MTUKI and Paddle UK data. However, the four year data period means that some people may access multiple qualifications, potentially completing registration, training and assessment in the period and then moving on to a different qualification. An

individual will only qualify for each category once though, so a ‘snapshot’ focused on particular awards can provide a more nuanced picture.

The data highlights the disparity in progression rates between White candidates and people of colour. For those who have completed their training, only 30% of Black, Asian and Mixed heritage candidates complete their assessment for the Lowland Leader qualification compared with 59% of White candidates. The figures for the Mountain Leader qualification show similar disparity, with 29% Black, Asian and Mixed heritage candidates completing the qualification compared with 54% who are White. People of colour are better represented through the Climbing Wall Instructor qualification though, where 48% complete their assessment compared with 58% from White backgrounds.

5 Discussion

5.1 Ethnic representation in the outdoor sector

Collectively, the data shows an overwhelmingly White sector. There is a high level of consistency between the various figures showing that, on average, 96.2% of employees, delivery staff, apprentices, and managers in the outdoor centre sector are White, a considerable distance from the England and Wales figure of 81.7% used as a benchmark in the RRI. The data also shows management and delivery staff as similar percentages (averaging 97.2%) but as outlined in the results section, the management figure for people of colour is likely to be even lower. The additional qualification data confirms the data from the centre employer surveys. The overall percentage of qualifications achieved by White candidates in paddle sports (96.4%), and hill and walking activities are similar (96.1%).

There are signs of change though when considering Apprenticeship starts and foundational qualification training course. 5.5% of apprentices, 5.1% of Paddlesport Instructors, 6.2% of Lowland Leaders and 6.6% of Climbing Wall Instructors are either Asian, Black or from minority ethnic backgrounds.

5.2 Employment pathways

The workforce data highlights the existing career structure that exists in the outdoor centre sector. Delivery staff and management are largely White, recruitment being influenced by organisational need, business model and recruitment strategy, elements that are culturally and historically embedded within the sector. Jobs are often advertised nationally, and qualification pathways, developed over decades, are founded on a set of principles that necessarily emphasise experience and skills.

As employees progress within the sector, the number of available jobs becomes significantly less. The career structure and culture of promoting from within means that unless there is a pool of people from ethnically diverse backgrounds who are motivated to progress and have the necessary skills, qualifications and experience,

the limited number of opportunities will likely continue to be filled by candidates of White ethnicity.

The positive direction of travel for Apprenticeship starts is encouraging, but sector expectations show how important childhood experiences and opportunities to develop a love of the outdoors are as precursors of successful employment in the sector. Recreational participation data, however, shows the disparity that exists between people of colour and White people in relation to access to the natural environment and outdoor activities. The pathway to employment is not one that can therefore be seen in isolation, as it involves an appreciation of recreational as well as employment opportunities.

5.3 Qualifications

Building on personal experience, gaining qualifications forms a necessary part of a career in the outdoor sector. While the data from MTUK and Paddle UK shows training and qualifications are predominantly accessed by those of White ethnicity, there are some differences evident amongst the qualifications and the data supports a picture of emerging engagement of people of colour with the qualification pathway. Paddle sport, for example, is over 96% White overall, a similar figure to those assessed to lead climbing and walking activities, but within the broader categories there are some small differences.

Early career qualifications indicate a higher level of representation from people of colour, yet the total number being trained and assessed raises a question around employment pathways. Although ethnicity data for Black, Asian and Mixed heritage people employed in centres is incomplete, the data suggests that there are considerably less people of colour working as instructors than there are registering, training and being assessed. As the Sport England research indicating a sector of 9,600 providers shows, other avenues of employment (both paid and voluntary) are available and apparently being accessed. Broadening the scope of sector employment analysis and initiatives beyond outdoor centres would seem to be a useful line of future research enquiry.

All qualification assessment requires logged experience in the relevant environments, access to which is obviously a critical factor. The lack of diversity evident in the higher level mountain-based qualifications (e.g. the winter and international qualifications – see Appendix 4) suggests that people of colour are not accessing these activities. This is perhaps unsurprising, as they demand more commitment, experience and often additional resources and time to complete in more remote or challenging environments, all factors that intersect with a wide range of cultural and logistical barriers. Building on the need to support access to recreational outdoor activities in general, interventions that address barriers to participation and enable experience to be gained at all levels would seem to be a critical part of the route to qualification and, ultimately, employment.

Where access is more limited, progression is less likely. It is likely that there is a connection between accessibility and opportunity to engage in activities and between

training and achieving qualifications. However, further research would be needed to better understand the relationship.

5.4 Organisational engagement and variable data

The data that is publicly available varies in depth and scope. Very few organisations in the sector publicly report on ethnic diversity, although this is changing as more organisations implement EEDI strategies. Outdoor centres, the core focus of this report, operate with numerous business models. They may be small independent commercial or charity businesses, local authority owned and run, or large scale commercial organisations operating across the UK and abroad. Demographic data may be collected as part of recruitment processes or through voluntary surveys conducted at a later date.

NGB data collection is also variable, even among the publicly funded NGBs quoted in this report. MTUKI, for example, collect data at Classification 20a, although the use of White European is broader than White British. MTUKI currently do not report publicly although they are willing to share data on request. Paddle UK collect at 20a level and report publicly at an 8a category level. Apprenticeship demographics are recorded at registration at the higher classification level but reported on the government website at 6a level. Consequently, there is no consistent approach across all organisations to the classification systems being used, meaning that for this report amalgamated data has adopted the broadest categories.

The reporting period adds a further complication to the process. Annual reporting provides a detailed view of particular areas of focus but risks creating a false impression as particular initiatives take effect. The multi-year reporting period offers an alternative approach as it flattens potential data ‘spikes’, but limits reporting to longer periods. One possible solution could be to adopt a rolling average approach, based around an agreed time period (e.g. 3-5 years).

How data is classified and reported matters. The term ‘ethnic minority’ can include white communities/groups, therefore the focus of the analysis needs to be clear. With a focus specifically on people of colour, adopting the 6a classification brings all white ethnicities under the single heading of ‘White’. At this level, though, more granular understanding of different ethnicities within the broader categories of Black, Asian, Mixed and Other, as well as White, is lost.

Not all organisations are prioritising data collection about diversity. Prior to compiling this report, discussions were held with several NGBs and providers who were unable to provide any data surrounding cultural and ethnic diversity as they had not gathered this information at the time. The growing awareness of EEDI in the sector, how organisations perceive their own performance, and how they believe others will judge them can also lead to some organisations being reluctant to release data into the public sphere. Organisations will need to invest in resources and commit to transparency if the sector is to gain a true picture of ethnic and broader diversity and assess the impact of initiatives.

5.5 Implementing change

Although this report primarily considers sector structures rather than participant perspectives, it is important to consider both together. Research highlights the value participants place on instructor role models, especially those from ethnically diverse backgrounds, while providers recognise an ambition for their workforces to reflect the diversity of their clients.[35, 36] At a sector level, initiatives such as the RRI, along with the organisational strategies of NGBs and national organisations, demonstrate a desire to address the current imbalance through participation, qualifications or employment. High level benchmarks such as the 18.3% Black, Asian and Mixed heritage figure provide a suitable benchmark for national organisations.

Developing a culturally diverse workforce in smaller organisations, however, is challenging. Employers may be far from the ethnically diverse population centres and only have small staff teams, meaning that recruitment opportunities are limited in number and scope. Centres may also have no direct connection with a particular community, further limiting their ability to influence who applies for jobs. The various business models that centres run also mean that apprenticeships and traineeships can be limited in number or non-existent. Providers may have a desire to be more diverse, but the means to do so can seem to be operationally unachievable.

Geography plays a potentially significant role in recruitment. The location of centres in the more mountainous areas of the UK coincides with typically low levels of ethnic diversity amongst the population, and may be significantly different to the home areas of their client groups: Cumbria, for example, home to over 20 centres and numerous other providers that serve the populations of North West and North East England, has a population that is 97.6% White,[37] while the North Wales counties of Gwynedd, Anglesey and Conwy, another area with a high number of centres and providers serving North Wales, the North West and Midlands populations, are 96.9%, 93.8% and 98.1% White respectively.[38,39,40] Recruiting locally can therefore be very challenging.

For centres committed to inclusive recruitment, it may be necessary to reach beyond the local population and for them to examine existing practices and identify alternative strategies. The data shows that more people of colour have qualifications than are working in outdoor centres, so the issue does not appear to be one of a lack of available candidates. Where centres and providers advertise can have an impact on the number of applicants from diverse communities. Youth Employment UK recommend using a range of channels to advertise and CIPD also offer guidance on recruiting from ethnically diverse communities. Where successful recruitment does occur, local conditions, in-centre practices and culture, the language used by staff and their cultural awareness may unintentionally create what is perceived to be an unwelcoming environment, ultimately resulting in a staff member resigning their position. Effective diversity practices need to go beyond policy statements and must be enacted throughout the organisation.[41]

All providers can take steps to influence the wider picture, and the RACE Report offers a set of actions that employers can implement. Recruitment, however, is not just an employer issue but intersects with the person's identity and background and

societal, cultural and geographical factors. Some providers may be better placed to effect change than others, and where centres and providers do have the capacity to develop community relationships and attract and grow new employees from ethnically diverse backgrounds, the sector as a whole can benefit.

The established staffing structures in centres, along with the current inequitable access to natural environments and outdoor activities in ethnically diverse communities, indicate that change will be gradual. Expanding access, participation, and employment pathways therefore requires long-term strategies, collaboration, and strong community leadership. Outdoor centres can play a significant role in broadening horizons and supporting pathways to employment and wellbeing. These experiences are most effective when they form part of a continuous progression of opportunities, reinforcing the idea that a collective, sector-wide approach will be the most productive.

5.6 Summary

Although sector diversity figures on their own can provide a baseline against which to assess progress, they indicate the complexity involved in achieving it. Improving diversity in outdoor sector employment depends on understanding the wider contextual issues as well as addressing systemic barriers across participation, qualification access, recruitment practices, and organisational culture. Sustainable progress will rely on shared responsibility, transparency, and inclusive pathways from participation to professional employment.

Employment Pathways

- Longstanding recruitment practices, qualification systems and promotion structures that favour those already within the sector intersect with cultural and geographic barriers to create an outdoor centre workforce that is predominantly White.
- Career progression opportunities narrow at higher levels, limiting diversity further unless more people from ethnically diverse backgrounds are supported to enter and progress.
- Apprenticeship data shows positive signs of change, but disparities in early outdoor access and participation continue to affect who can pursue these careers.
- Employment pathways are closely linked to recreational access. Diversity in the workforce depends on diversity in participation from an early stage.

Qualifications

- Outdoor qualifications (e.g. via Mountain Training and Paddle UK) remain overwhelmingly White, though there are signs of growing engagement from people of colour, particularly at entry levels.

- A gap exists between those from diverse backgrounds training for qualifications and those actually employed as instructors.
- Access to training environments (especially for advanced qualifications) is a key barrier, as these require time, resources, and exposure to remote settings that are less accessible to some groups.
- Broader research into employment beyond outdoor centres is needed to capture the full picture of diversity in the sector.

Organisational Engagement & Data

- Data collection on ethnicity across organisations is inconsistent and incomplete, with few organisations publicly reporting diversity data.
- Classification systems vary (e.g. 6a, 8a, 20a categories), making comparison difficult and limiting detailed analysis of different ethnic groups.
- Some organisations are reluctant to share diversity data due to reputational concerns or lack of capacity, highlighting the need for greater transparency and standardisation in reporting.

Implementing Change

- Participants value diverse role models, and providers want staff teams that reflect the diversity of their clients.
- While national initiatives (like the RRI) and NGB strategies aim to improve diversity, smaller or rural centres face greater challenges due to geography, small staff teams, and limited local ethnic diversity.
- The location of outdoor centres (e.g. in Cumbria or North Wales) often means limited access to diverse talent pools.
- Centres may need to advertise more widely, review recruitment practices, and foster inclusive workplace cultures to attract and retain diverse staff.
- Data suggests the issue is not a lack of qualified people of colour but barriers in recruitment and retention.
- Meaningful change requires long-term collaboration, community partnerships, and sector-wide commitment to equity and inclusion.

6 Conclusion and recommendations

The outdoor centre sector is overwhelmingly White. Limited access to recreational outdoor activity and structural barriers results in low ethnic diversity in the outdoor centre workforce, particularly in leadership and higher-level qualifications.

Workforce diversity in outdoor centres is influenced by numerous intersecting factors that involve potential employees' perspectives as well as providers'. Meaningful change therefore requires long-term, collective, and context-sensitive efforts rather than quick fixes.

While awareness and commitment to EEDI are growing, inconsistent classification, limited data collection capacity and visibility make it difficult to fully understand or act on ethnic diversity in the outdoor sector. A sector-wide, coordinated approach is needed.

Strategy development

1. There is a significant opportunity for organisations from across the sector to come together to formulate a joint strategy to address the lack of diversity in the sector. Initial efforts should explore suitable mechanisms to achieve this, develop success criteria and potential sources of support and guidance from outside the sector, and identify pathways most likely to lead to success.
2. Sharing knowledge and experience from existing projects and initiatives, focusing on projects that connect local communities with providers.

Data capture and visibility

The RACE Report shows how the survey process and making progress visible through published reports can act as a stimulus for change. In order to achieve this in the outdoor sector, a collaborative approach could consider:

1. Encouraging organisations to sign up to the RACE Report.
2. Agreeing and adopting a minimum data reporting standard. The simplest strategy is to use classification 6a, although different organisations will collect at more granular level i.e. 20a)
3. Producing a regular assessment of data to capture progress, every 3 to 5 years.
4. Amalgamating AHOEC data with other organisations.
5. Encouraging other organisations with different reach to be involved (for example IOL, the Outdoor Alliance in Wales, the Mountain Training Association and the Association of Mountaineering Instructors).
6. Encouraging all NGBs and Apprenticeship providers to engage.
7. Encouraging organisations to capture demographic data at the point of new membership or renewal.
8. Encouraging organisations (such as the AHOEC) to broaden the scope of data capture to include delivery staff as well as management and whole staff demographics. Roles should be defined for data capture purposes.

Appendix 1

Ethnic group classifications

https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/census2021dictionary/variablesbytopic/ethnicgroupnationalidentitylanguageandreligionvariablescensus2021/ethnicgroup/classifications

Classification 20a	
1	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Bangladeshi
2	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Chinese
3	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Indian
4	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Pakistani
5	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh: Other Asian
6	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: African
7	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Caribbean
8	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African: Other Black
9	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Asian
10	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black African
11	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: White and Black Caribbean
12	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups: Other Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
13	White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
14	White: Irish
15	White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller
16	White: Roma
17	White: Other White
18	Other ethnic group: Arab
19	Other ethnic group: Any other ethnic group

Classification 8a	
1	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh
2	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African
3	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
4	White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British
5	White: Irish
6	White: Gypsy or Irish Traveller, Roma or Other White
7	Other ethnic group

Classification 6a	
1	Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh
2	Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African
3	Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups
4	White
5	Other ethnic group

Appendix 2

Recreational participation in the outdoors: published research

- Natural England's *Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment* ran from 2009-2019, gathering almost 500,000 responses through adult and children-focused surveys.[42]
- Natural England's *People and Nature Survey* replaced the MENE survey in 2020. Adult and children and young people focused surveys are continuing to gather ethnicity data.[43]
- NatureScot's *Scotland's People and Nature Survey* from 2023.[44]
- The *People and Nature Survey Wales* from 2021.[45]
- The *People in the Outdoors Monitor for Northern Ireland* from 2021.[46]
- National Survey for Wales gathers data on participation in sport and recreation.[47]

A number of reports and surveys relate more specifically to outdoor activities:

- The current annual Active Lives Surveys (England) gathers data from children, young people and adults on participation in sport and recreation, including adventure/outdoor sports.[48]
- Sport England's 2015 report 'Getting Active Outdoors' report examined the demand and supply of outdoor provision in England, drawing on MENE ethnicity data as part of an overall assessment of engagement with the outdoors.[49]
- Your Movement Matters (2021) was a collaborative project run by Leeds Beckett University examining participation in outdoor pursuits. The report led to commitments from leading UK walking, climbing, and outdoor organisations to improve diversity and inclusion in outdoor and related indoor activities.[50]

Appendix 3

London Youth's Note on Language for Research

To ensure the language we use when speaking or writing about different population groups is appropriate, respectful and not biased, in 2024 London Youth had gone through a consultation process with our member youth organisations, young people from our Youth Board, team members and experts.

We found that there weren't any terms that were liked by all, but some terms were agreed on as the best we have at this time. We are continuing to have conversations about language and are reviewing terms periodically.

When discussing ethnicity, we use the most disaggregated term possible to describe people, rather than broad labels (e.g. people of Bangladeshi heritage).

If a broader term is needed, we use:

- 'People of Colour' or a 'person of colour', to refer to people of African, Asian, Arab, native American and those of other ethnicities who are not White.
- 'Black, Asian and/or minority ethnic communities' or 'Black, Asian and/or minoritised communities' as the latter recognises that individuals have been minoritised through social processes and better reflect the fact that ethnic groups that are minorities in the UK are majorities in the global population. These terms would also include people from White communities other than British, English, Welsh, Scottish, or Northern Irish.

Where we quote people or organisations who use other terms, we may use their words. Many organisations, including NVCO and some of our member organisations, have now shifted to use the term 'global majority' instead of the broader terms above.

If you have any thoughts about the language we use, please get in touch with our Learning team at hello@londonyouth.org.

Appendix 4

Trained	LL	HML	ML	WML	IML	ICA	CWI	CWDI	RCI	RCDI	MCI	WMCI	Total
Black	1.28	0.74	0.20	0.32	0.00		0.54	0.00	0.13	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.53
Asian	2.14	1.34	1.68	0.00	0.00		2.42	1.64	2.10	0.83	0.54	0.00	1.90
White	93.78	95.78	96.49	98.71	99.16		93.43	96.13	94.95	98.33	98.39	95.00	95.06
Mixed Race	1.86	1.21	1.20	0.65	0.84		2.71	1.99	2.32	0.83	0.54	2.50	1.83
Other	0.94	0.94	0.44	0.32	0.00		0.90	0.23	0.49	0.00	0.54	2.50	0.68
Assessed	**LL**	**HML**	**ML**	**WML**	**IML**	**ICA**	**CWI**	**CWDI**	**RCI**	**RCDI**	**MCI**	**WMCI**	**Total**
Black	0.46	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00	0.71	0.44	0.00	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.27
Asian	1.18	0.29	0.79	0.00	0.00	2.61	1.57	2.34	2.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.31
White	96.51	98.54	98.09	98.17	99.37	91.92	94.45	94.54	94.98	100.0	98.29	100.0	96.09
Mixed Race	1.22	0.44	0.83	0.61	0.63	4.04	2.70	2.92	2.51	0.00	0.85	0.00	1.79
Other	0.63	0.73	0.25	1.22	0.00	0.71	0.84	0.19	0.33	0.00	0.85	0.00	0.54

Table A4. Percentage MYUKI candidates by qualification who submitted ethnicity data, 2021-2024

Abbreviations:
LL Lowland Leader
HML Hill and Moorland Leader
ML Mountain Leder
WML Winter Mountain Leader
IML International Mountain Leader
ICA Indoor Climbing Assistant
CWI Climbing Wall Instructor
CWDI Climbing Wall Development Instructor
RCI Rock Climbing Instructor
RCDI Rock Climbing Development Instructor
MCI Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor
WMCI Winter Mountaineering and Climbing Instructor

Appendix 5

Acknowledgements

This report has been written by Dr Dave Harvey, funded by London Youth. The focus of this report necessarily highlights numerous complex issues and perspectives, and I am grateful for the support and contributions of friends and colleagues in shaping it and the discussions that have stemmed from the research process. Acknowledging my own experiences and potential biases has been, and continues to be, an important part of the journey and I wish to thank the following for their advice and guidance: Mohammed Dahlech, Maya Reggev, Dave Jackson, Travis Carter, Emma Atkins-Chafer, Dan Playford, Guy Laurie, Brian Kitson, Matt Smith, Nicola Jasieniecka, Aaran Northmore and Chris Whitehead.

The following organisations have contributed data and insight to this report:

- Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres
- JCA
- PGL Beyond
- Rock UK
- Outward Bound
- London Youth
- Paddle UK
- Mountain Training UK and Ireland
- Channel Training

Use of AI statement

Generative AI (ChatGPT) was used in the preparation of this report for the sole purpose of language improvement.

References

[1] Allin, L., Avner, Z. & Hayton, J.W. (2024) Examining the discursive production and deployment of diversity and inclusion in a UK-wide outdoor organisation, *Leisure Studies*, 43:5, 786-801
[2] Anderson, N., *et al* (2021) Inclusivity in the Outdoors. IOL.
[3] ibid
[4] ONS (2022) *Ethnic group, England and Wales: Census 2021.*
[5] Hempsall, C. (2019) 'Outdoor Adventure in the UK is a Male Privilege', *Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education*, 31(4), pp. 4–9.
[6] Ogilvie, K. C. (2013) *Roots and Wings: A History of Outdoor Education and Outdoor Learning in the UK*. Lyme Regis: Russell House.
[7] IOL (2020) *Outdoor Learning Covid-19 Impact Survey III: The Effects on Residential Outdoor Learning Providers*.
[8] Wood, C. and Pritchard, L. (2014) 'Using Accreditations and Memberships to Assess the Size of the Outdoor Sector', *Horizons (65)*, pp. 10–12.
[9] Gordon, K., Chester, M. and Denton, A. (2015) *Getting Active Outdoors: A study of Demography, Motivation, Participation and Provision in Outdoor Sport and Recreation in England*.
[10] Prince, H. E. (2020) 'The lasting impacts of outdoor adventure residential experiences on young people', Journal of Adventure Education & Outdoor Learning, pp. 1–16.
[11] IOL (n.d.) Working in outdoor learning.
[12] CPRE (2021) Access to nature in the English countryside
[13] 2024 Anti-racist Wales evidence report: ethnicity and access to greenspace
[14] IFF Research. (2023). People and Nature Survey Analysis. NECR500. Natural England.
[15] GOV.UK (2020) People living in deprived neighbourhoods.
[16] Ankers, E. and Kay, C (2021) *Your Movement Matters literature review*. Leeds Beckett University.
[17] Dr Kathryn Colley & Dr Katherine N. Irvine (2018) *Investigating use of the outdoors across adult population groups in Scotland.* The James Hutton Institute.
[18] Cutiss, Y. (2022) *Surfing and diversity*
[19] Rishbeth, C., Neal, S., French, M. and Snaith, B. (2022) *Included outside: Engaging people from ethnic minority backgrounds in nature*. Evidence Briefing, Natural England Technical Information Note, TIN185. Natural England, York.
[20] IOL (n.d.) Working in outdoor learning
[21]https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/ethnicity/bulletins/ethnicgroupenglandandwales/census2021
[22] Povilaitis, Victoria *et al*. (2019) Instructor Impacts on Outdoor Education Participant Outcomes: A Systematic Review. *Journal of outdoor recreation, education, and leadership* 11.3.pp. 222–238.
[23] Kay, C., Ankers, E., Bond, S. (2021) Your movement matters: climbing activities. Tier 2 Report. Leeds Beckett University.
[24] Wardle M. (2023) A Case Study of the experiences of ethnic diversity in leadership in an Outdoor Education Centre. Masters thesis. The Open University.
[25] O'Brien, K. (2020) 'If you can't see it, you can't be it', *Horizons* (90), pp. 18–21.
[26] Anderson, N., *et al* (2021) Inclusivity in the Outdoors. IOL.
[27] YHA Annual Report 2023/24

[28] ibid
[29] Outward Bound (2018) Diversity in the outdoors.
[30] Scouts annual report 2024/25
[31] PGL (2025) *PGL's approach to EDI*. AHOEC Conference presentation.
[32] Paddle UK (2024) #WePaddleTogether: The Annual Report
[33] GOV.UK (2025) Ethnicity facts and figures: Apprenticeship starts.
[34] https://paddleuk.org.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/
[35] Kay, C., Ankers, E., Bond, S. (2021) Your movement matters: climbing activities. Tier 2 Report. Leeds Beckett University.
[36] O'Brien, K. (2020) 'If you can't see it, you can't be it', *Horizons* (90), pp. 18–21.
[37] ONS (2023) How life has changed on the Isle of Anglesey: Census 2021
[38] ONS (2023) How life has changed in Gwynedd: Census 2021
[39] ONS (2023) How life has changed in in Conwy: Census 2021
[40] Plumplot (n.d) Cumbria county Census 2021
[41] Allin, L., Avner, Z. & Hayton, J.W. (2024) Examining the discursive production and deployment of diversity and inclusion in a UK-wide outdoor organisation, *Leisure Studies*, 43:5, 786-801
[42] https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/2248731
[43] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/people-and-nature-survey-for-england
[44] https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/land-and-sea-management/managing-access-and-recreation/increasing-participation/measuring-participation
[45] https://www.gov.wales/people-and-nature-survey-wales-april-2023-april-2024
[46] https://www.out-scape.com/pomni/
[47] https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/national-survey-for-wales/?lang=en
[48] Sport England Active Lives
[49] Gordon, K., Chester, M. and Denton, A. (2015) *Getting Active Outdoors: A study of Demography, Motivation, Participation and Provision in Outdoor Sport and Recreation in England*.
[50] https://www.mountain-training.org/about/what-we-do/research/your-movement-matters/

For more information, visit our website londonyouth.org

The Federation of London Youth Clubs (operating under the name London Youth)
is a registered charity: 303324.
Registered company limited by guarantee (England and Wales): 258577.
Registered office: London Youth, 47-49 Pitfield Street, London, N1 6DA.