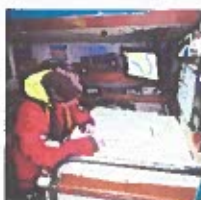


# Report for the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights

## At Sea with OYT Scotland



Over the 2023 sailing season, we have engaged with young people from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances across Scotland. We have delivered a total of 63 youth work voyages to groups from 23 of Scotland's 32 local authorities. These voyages included 4 Duke of Edinburgh voyages, 4 young carer voyages and 9 Employability voyages.

The young people chosen for these voyages were identified based on their risk of experiencing poorer outcomes due to their circumstances. These young people may be disadvantaged socially, economically or geographically; they may be care-experienced, young carers, experiencing adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse or bereavement, have additional support needs, a visual or hearing impairment. The young people who step aboard an OYT Scotland voyage are struggling in formal education settings and require additional, or more tailored, support to aid their development.

Our work is designed to enhance the lives of young people by empowering them with the practical and personal skills required to embrace new challenges and broaden their horizons. Most young people have no sailing experience prior to their voyage, and so the first real challenge comes with leaving home and stepping aboard.

During their time at sea, young people are encouraged to embrace all aspects of sailing including passage planning, sail and rope work, helming, as well as the domestic duties required to keep the boat clean and the crew of 18 well-fed.

Where traditional education settings are focused primarily on theoretical problems, the dynamic nature of sail training provides a sense of immediacy where tasks have a clear purpose and impact. Evidence has shown that this unique setting, coupled with the unpredictability of the sea, highlights young people's value both individually and as part of a team; it develops key interpersonal skills including respect, responsibility and effective communication; and it provides young people with a real sense of achievement.

Voyages also give young people the opportunity to work towards accredited educational and vocational qualifications. Young people can achieve their SQA Level 3 certificates in Numeracy, Working with Others and Communication; they can also achieve their RYA Start Yachting or RYA Competent Crew, depending on the duration of their voyage. For many participants, these will be the first qualifications they have achieved, and they will provide an invaluable basis upon which further achievements can be made in future.

## Our Assisted Berth Scheme

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Our Assisted Berth Scheme (ABS) exists to ensure that financial situation is not a barrier to accessing our transformative sail training voyages. Fundraised by OYT Scotland through a number of grants and donations, the scheme offers vital funding to young people most in need.

In an effort to reduce the obstacles young people face when trying to access youth work experiences, our scheme is guided by a set of criteria, however no individual is excluded from applying if they feel that their situation qualifies for a grant. The ABS will fund up to a maximum of 50% of the voyage fee, with the amount awarded being deducted from the applicants berth fee. No money is given directly to the applicant.

Over the 2023 period, a total of 173 young people benefited from ABS – an 11.6% increase on the year previous. With the Cost of Living Crisis and enduring impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the demand for transformative youth work experiences has been greater than ever.

The young people supported through ABS have come from a breadth of different groups including additional support needs schools, young carer groups, school employability groups and Cashback for Communities groups.

## The Impact of ABS



### Case Study: Clydeview Academy

Clydeview Academy is a secondary school serving a varied catchment, with many pupils in Deciles 1-3 of the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD).

In October 2023, a group of pupils stepped aboard Alba Venturer to pilot our new STEM voyage format. Over five days, and with a new, co-created STEM logbook, these pupils sailed a total of 120 nautical miles, reaching ports such as Rothesay, Troon and Tarbert.

### How did the voyage impact your group?

Our young people really stepped up and tackled challenges without externally questioning or verbally doubting their ability to achieve them. They may have had their concerns prior to the trip as to what was involved but they had no preconceptions about what the week might entail so they embraced being faced with a completely new way of working and learning. They automatically helped and encouraged one another as all aspects of the time on board relied on them working together. They gained insight and confidence into their own strengths and recognised the strengths of their crewmates - allowing them make team decisions based on knowledge rather than sticking within friendship groups.

For some young people, being away from home proved to be the biggest challenge of all, so working through that fear and emotion to realise that they could step away and be independent even for a short period of time is a huge achievement.

### **What difference has the Assisted Berth Scheme (ABS) made to the group?**

The chance to try out something completely different that would be out of reach for so many. We are all lead by the experiences, comfort zones and confidence of our parents/guardians/peers, so to be able to step outside that world as part of a safe, encouraging and learning environment is huge. Being able to be part of a group with our pupils and learn alongside them was also hugely enjoyable and humbling. Working as a crew on the sailing boat meant that we had to all trust, communicate openly and rely on one another.



### **Case Study: Orchard Brae School**

Orchard Brae School is an additional support needs school based in Aberdeen. This year, the school sent a group of pupils on an OYT Scotland youth work voyage, and the group relied on ABS to fund this experience.

### **How did the voyage impact your group?**

We watched confidence grow in all of the pupils. They were making sensible choices, interacting with new people and you could see the sense of pride in their achievements grow. On the first day back at school, two of the boys looked like they had grown a foot!

One of our boys is now in S4 and is confidently accessing work experience.

### **What difference has the Assisted Berth Scheme (ABS) made to the group?**

All of the pupils on the voyage came from low socio-economic backgrounds as well as having a range of additional support needs, carer responsibilities and behavioural challenges. We had to fundraise for the majority of our funding and parents contributed what they could. Without the ABS we would not be able to access these experiences and they are invaluable for our learners.

## **In Summary**

Thank you to the Trustees of the Worshipful Company of Shipwrights for continuing to show confidence in our work. With your support, we were able to assist 173 disadvantaged young people aboard our vessels for life-changing youth work experiences.

Your support has enabled these young people to develop their self-confidence, improve their mental and physical wellbeing, build their resilience and develop valuable practical skills. These qualities will allow them to go forward in life with the knowledge that they can truly achieve anything they put their minds to.

***Thank you!***