

## Climbing Pathways

**Aim:** To give young people an opportunity to try climbing, introduce them to the benefits of the sport and encourage them to continue participating.

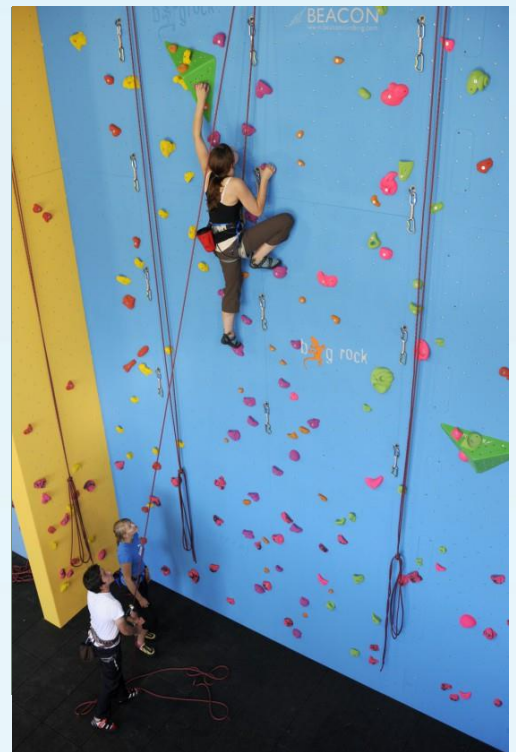
### Project summary

Sport England's insight work into the outdoor sector identified that young people aged between 14 and 25 were interested in taking part in climbing but were often put off by the cost and being unable to commit to regular sessions. The British Mountaineering Council (BMC) decided to target this age group by putting on free taster sessions that are flexible. It also aimed to deliver good coaching that will encourage young people to take up climbing. Coaches were encouraged to emphasise effort over attainment to participants and to build up people's confidence slowly.

Once participants were able to climb without guidance, they were encouraged to take advantage of the huge amount of personal development and professional opportunities available to them in climbing.

Climbing Pathways works in partnership with:

- Local County Sport Partnerships advertised the free tasters and gave connections.
- Charities, such as the Can Do project and Lifeline Equip, got groups of young people to the sessions.
- Climbing Walls gave good deals and free gear hire to young people who wanted to continue sessions
- DMM Climbing Equipment gave a huge amount of trade prices for some climbing gear.



## Impact

Over 100 people tried climbing and there was some success in getting people into climbing (although some of these were outside the target age group). About a third went to three indoor sessions and about 10% continued to climb on a more regular basis. The groups were from very diverse backgrounds. The Can Do project has formed its own links with the wall but the young people from the group do not have the resources to start going on a regular (more than once a month) basis.

## Further information

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Participants and leaders noted that people developed personally within the short time period of the project. Sandra Hardingham from the Can Do project described it as “really emotional to see the lads that struggle to engage with anything and have very low self-esteem realise they are actually good at something and grasp the opportunity”.

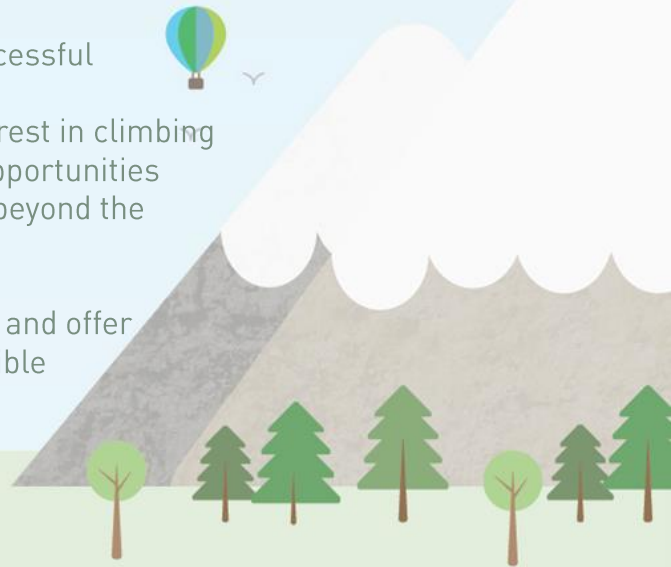
## Key learnings

- Stay in close contact with both the group and the key people at the activity centre to prevent misunderstandings and errors if people don't turn up.
- Every centre used had different pricing scales. This was a barrier to many and more research is needed into how the pricing at centres effects the uptake of new participants.
- Exit strategies are one of the trickiest aspects to cover. They vary from both the centres due to the available resources and potential outdoor opportunities nearby. The exit routes are also age related. A more structured way of getting people who have done a 'Mountain Training' qualification and want to consolidate sessions before assessment could be a huge help in delivering the workforce.

## Future plans

The BMC is keen to expand on some of the most successful parts of the projects:

- Creating a more robust view of how having an interest in climbing and outdoor activities can increase employment opportunities
- Giving climbing coaches a set of basic principles (beyond the general safety aspects) to aid taster sessions and increase retention.
- Conduct research related to pricing and retention, and offer findings to climbing centres to help them set sensible price rates and encourage people to participate in climbing.



## Key facts

Target audience	Young people aged 14-25
Setting	Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool
Length of the project	April and May 2016
Funding	Sport England
Number of participants	100 +