



HOW SEA CADETS HELPS YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY:

A summary of the evidence

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1. Introduction

Sea Cadets commissioned New Philanthropy Capital (NPC) to compile and analyse existing evidence on the effectiveness of the Sea Cadets' approach and report on the organisation's impact. We have drawn together and analysed a number of sources—the Outcomes and Measurement Framework developed by NPC with the Sea Cadets in 2015, quantitative findings from three surveys (of cadets, parents and volunteers, also conducted by NPC in 2017), qualitative research with Sea Cadets and volunteers at eight different units by researcher Sam Mountford,¹ the Sea Cadets exit survey and analysis of the charities' in-house data by Dr Will Parry in 2016 (see Appendix A for a full description of methodologies).

This report brings together the learning from this research to examine the impact Sea Cadets is having on young people and identify areas where the organisation can learn and improve what it does.

SUMMARY

Context

- Sea Cadets engages young people aged 10-18 from all backgrounds, but there is good evidence to suggest that it reaches young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Sea Cadets aims to help young people achieve in education, employment and in longer-term mental and physical wellbeing and community engagement. These aims bring challenges; for example, children entitled to free school meals are nearly half as likely to get five good GCSEs as their better-off peers, which has a knock-on effect on their future employment and earning prospects.²
- Sea Cadets aims to address these challenges by giving young people 'adventure that launches young people for life today', with the aim of helping teenagers 'develop into resilient, confident young people who can launch well in today's complex and sometimes overwhelming world and thrive in it.'
- The charity's outcomes framework (included on page 10) outlines the change the organisation wants to help young people make in terms of improving their life chances, and summarises the steps needed to get there.
- 'Purposeful activities' such as those offered by Sea Cadets has also been shown to have long-term benefits for young people, reducing social exclusion, increasing academic aspirations, establishing better relationships with parents and predicting young people's participation in their community later in life.
- There is also evidence to suggest that a structured disciplined environment – such as that provided by Sea Cadets – helps young people with behavioural challenges who have failed to engage with other services.

'Outputs'

- At any one time there are c.14,000 young people enrolled at around 400 Sea Cadet units across the UK, supported by c. 9,000 trained volunteers. Sea Cadets meet twice a week and there are a wide range of additional activities and training opportunities available outside of the unit and regular meetings.
- Sea Cadet enrolment data shows that cadets are aged between 10 and 18, with most between 11 and 15 years old, with numbers gradually reducing with increasing age. Just over one-third of cadets (36%) are female, but the proportion of girls is higher amongst older cadets than for those in younger age groups, suggesting better rates of retention amongst girls.
- Cadets are generally very satisfied with the experience, although that decreases slightly with age (in line with a similar decline in overall life satisfaction among this age group as measured through the NPC Wellbeing Measure - so it may partly be a function of that). Girls show similar levels of satisfaction to boys.

Evidence in support of the approach

- Participation in structured youth activities at uniformed youth clubs has been associated with positive outcomes for young people in previous research. However, the research also suggests young people who engage in these activities tend to come from more advantaged backgrounds. This suggests that if Sea Cadets continues to be effective at extending its reach to young people from all backgrounds then it will have greater positive impact.

- The peak age for entry to Sea Cadets is 10, although many join later. The peak age for leaving is 12, although many leave when they are older or younger. Girls are likely to leave later, and are also slightly more likely to join at later ages than boys. Recent research has indicated that 40% of Sea Cadets have been eligible for free-school-meals (which is a widely used proxy for socio-economic disadvantage), compared to an average of 31% of pupils in secondary schools in England.³
- The average (mean) time a young person stays engaged is 24 months (data up to the end of April 2017) and the median time is just over a year (13 months) – although when we take out the large number of young people who engage for fewer than three months, the median retention is 18 months. The difference between the mean and the median is explained by the cadets who stay involved for many years. Data shows that cadet retention is improving over time, suggesting the organisation is getting better at keeping young people engaged.
- Both qualitative and quantitative research shows Sea Cadets are enthusiastic about the opportunities Sea Cadets gives them to try new experiences and develop skills. Cadets seem particularly keen on water-based activities and the opportunity to go aboard Royal Navy ships. They also value the interactive, practical and varied way they are taught, which they often see as a contrast to their experience at school. Qualitative research also showed that some cadets valued the sense of family/community they get through regular cadet meetings and building positive relationships with staff/cadets.
- Many cadets enjoy their experience—our 2017 survey of cadets found that 76% strongly agreed Sea Cadets is 'enjoyable' and a further 18% 'somewhat agree'. In particular, they enjoy the opportunity to try new things, learn and socialise with others.
- Sea Cadets' basis in Royal Navy customs and traditions is a relatively less important part of the appeal for both cadets and parents than some other aspects – but is still highly valued (over half of parents and cadets strongly agree it is an important part of the appeal. Most of all cadets feel proud to be Sea Cadets and feel a sense of duty towards their unit.

Outcomes

The qualitative and quantitative evidence indicates that Sea Cadets is having success across its three key outcome areas – life skills, values and qualifications.

- **Life skills:** Cadets, parents and volunteers believe Sea Cadets delivers—88% of parents, 91% of volunteers and 72% of cadets think Sea Cadets will help young people develop skills for the future. The biggest change in skills observed by parents is self-confidence, with 61% of parents seeing a great improvement in their child's confidence, and a further 29% seeing a slight improvement because of Sea Cadets. Next, parents see changes in team working skills, motivation and commitment. Parents are less likely to see an effect on their children's 'honesty & integrity' and 'community involvement'. Cadets themselves see a significant change in their ability to work in a team (61% think this has 'greatly improved'), confidence (60%) and motivation (58%).
- **Values:** As with life skills, cadets, parents and volunteers all agree Sea Cadets is having an impact on young people's values – although cadets tend to be more enthusiastic than the other groups about the scale of the change. From our 2017 surveys we found around six in ten cadets (65%) reported that their 'sense of loyalty' has 'greatly improved' by coming to Sea Cadets, plus a further 24% who say it has slightly improved. Parents also report an improvement in 'loyalty', with 54% seeing a great improvement in their child and 29% a slight improvement.
- **Qualifications:** Cadets value the opportunity to gain qualifications at Sea Cadets. Seven in 10 (75%) believe Sea Cadets will help them 'a great deal' to gain qualifications and a further 20% 'a fair amount'. Qualifications are also seen by parents as one of the top three benefits of their child's involvement in Sea Cadets (alongside improving wellbeing and developing skills). A new BTEC Level 1 qualification in Teamwork and Personal Development was introduced in January 2016. Up to April 2017, 2,933 cadets had completed the qualification. Furthermore, in the year April 16 – April 17 a total of 44,973 qualifications were achieved by cadets (an average of around 3.2 per cadet).

Impact

- Longer-term, Sea Cadets aims to help young people improve their school attendance and engagement, have better post-16 outcomes, improved wellbeing, reduced problem behaviour and increased community participation. Both the quantitative and qualitative data we have suggests the organisation may be contributing to these impact areas. Young people themselves tend to be the most optimistic about the scale of change. They expect Sea Cadets to help them gain qualifications (75% 'a great deal'), develop

skills for later life (72% 'a great deal'), get a job (60% 'a great deal') and improve wellbeing and happiness (53% 'a great deal'). Volunteers feel less confident about Sea Cadets' potential for helping young people get jobs (only 27% say 'a great deal') but are more positive about skill development (60%), wellbeing (47%), and on qualifications (47%).

- Analysis of enrolment data against the Indices of Multiple Deprivation shows that Sea Cadets is engaging young people from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and therefore has the potential to improve social mobility if it is effective in retaining and achieving outcomes for those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. In support of this, the qualitative research indicated that the Sea Cadets environment can lead to young people creating strong friendships with other young people who may be from very different backgrounds.
- However, an area of learning to emerge from this analysis is how well Sea Cadets retains those from more deprived backgrounds, who tend to engage for less time overall. The median length of engagement since 2010 for the least deprived cadets is 471 days (1.29 years), whereas the most deprived cadets stay engaged for a median length of 318 days (0.87 years)—a 32% difference.
- Analysis of recent exit survey data shows a range of reasons why cadets leave—because they are too busy, because they feel bored, because they are not happy with their unit, or simply because they 'age out' at 18. To date, analysis of the survey does not show whether any reasons particularly apply to disadvantaged young people. This would be useful analysis for Sea Cadets to do in future.

Potential economic benefits of Sea Cadets

- Existing evidence for the economic benefits of Sea Cadets can be broadly grouped into four categories—the value of volunteering, the increased wellbeing of volunteers, the increased wellbeing of cadets, and the improvement in (non-cognitive) life skills for young people.
- A calculation of the number of volunteers multiplied by the average number of hours multiplied by the average hourly wage can give a simple indication of the estimated value of volunteering. Applying this formula for Sea Cadets, the estimated number of volunteers and number of volunteer hours (derived from survey responses) per year as follows:
 - Uniformed instructors: 3,890 volunteers average 670 hours per year = 2,609,000 hours
 - Civilian Instructor: 1,365 volunteers average 380 hours per year = 519,000 hours

- Unit Manager/Trustee: 2,059 average 343 hours per year = 706,000 hours
- Other: 913 volunteers average 359 hours per year = 328,000

- Giving a total of c. 4,162,000 hours volunteered. The median hourly wage is £13.08.⁴ Based on these assumptions, the estimated value of people who volunteer for Sea Cadets is £54,439,000 per year.
- For the volunteers themselves, evidence suggests volunteering has benefits across mental wellbeing, physical health and skills and employability. The evidence on the impact of volunteering on employability is mixed and not all types of volunteering will necessarily lead to better employment outcomes. However, nearly all managers believe that workplace skills can be gained from volunteering. And volunteering can help develop confidence and self-esteem, factors which have been linked to workplace benefits, such as efficient problem-solving.
- Economists have developed ways to estimate the value of changes in subjective wellbeing by using large UK survey data to identify a) the effect of life-factors on subjective wellbeing, and b) the value of increased income on subjective wellbeing. Using this approach, the Housing Association Charitable Trust estimated that going to youth clubs results in an improvement in subjective wellbeing equivalent to an increase in income of £2,300 per year.⁵ As such across the 14,000 cadets, one estimate of the value of participating in Sea Cadets on participants' wellbeing is, therefore, £32,200,000, but this is highly hypothetical particularly as we know not all 14,000 cadets engage to the same extent. Another way to look at this is to consider total MSSC expenditure; reported in 2016-17 as £16,799,000.⁶ To 'break even' on this budget, Sea Cadets would need to achieve value equivalent to £2,300 for c.7,300 cadets (roughly half the number who currently receive the service).



2. Context

SNAPSHOT

Young people who engage in Sea Cadets come from a wide range of backgrounds, including disadvantaged backgrounds, and may face multiple challenges.

For example, children on free school meals are nearly half as likely to get five good GCSEs as their better-off peers, having a knock-on effect on their future employment and earning prospects.

YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE UK

Sea Cadets engages young people between the ages of 10 and 18 across the country. Sea Cadets is open to all including young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds, who often face greater challenges:

— **In education and skill development:** Although the UK is one of the wealthiest nations in the world, many young people still struggle, particularly those from more deprived backgrounds. The Fair Education Alliance explains that the achievement gap between poorer children and their more well-off peers starts long before primary school and tends to widen as children get older.⁷ In England, poorer children are more likely to attend weaker schools, and children eligible for free school meals are nearly half as likely to get five good GCSEs as their better-off peers. Fewer than one in six get two or more A levels.⁸ And government figures show that only 22% of young people eligible for free school meals entered higher education in the 2013/14 academic year, compared to 39% of more well-off young people.⁹ Problems in education lead to long-lasting challenges. For example, the Impetus PEF Youth Jobs Index 2016 found that for those who fail to achieve GCSEs (or equivalent), the risk of being NEET (not in employment, education or training) doubles.¹⁰

— **In employment:** Young people are disproportionately more likely to experience unemployment than the general population, which also brings long-lasting consequences. A young person who suffers spells of unemployment is likely to earn substantially less over their lifetime, is more likely to rely on state benefits, and has a greater chance of experiencing depression in early adulthood. The 1970 British Birth Cohort Study of 1999 showed that young men who were NEET between 16 and 18 were four times more likely to

be unemployed later in life, five times more likely to have a criminal record, and three times more likely to suffer depression than peers. Unemployment among young people is affected by multiple factors – problems in education (as outlined above), but also gaps in key hard and soft skills, lack of guidance/loss of careers advice services (such as the now-closed Connexions service), and lack of suitable work experience opportunities. A UKCES study published in 2015 highlights that although youth unemployment is falling, it remains high at around 17% (compared to 6% for the population overall).¹¹

— **In wellbeing:** Modern life presents challenges to young people's health and wellbeing, both physical and mental. Physically, poor dietary choices and insufficient exercise has led to experts warning of an 'epidemic' in obesity among young people and adults. In 2014/15, more than one in five reception-aged children were measured as overweight or obese, with children from deprived areas twice as likely to be obese as their more well-off peers.¹² This has potentially serious implications for young people, with obesity often lasting throughout lifetimes and leading to serious conditions, including type 2 diabetes, coronary heart disease, stroke and some types of cancer. The most severe mental health problems also often begin in early childhood, and research shows that half of lifelong mental health problems have developed by the age of 14, 75% by age 24.¹³ Even for young people without a diagnosed mental health condition, life can be challenging for young people. The shocking Macquarie Youth Index published in 2017 by Prince's Trust found that more than a quarter of young people (28%) do not feel in control of their lives, more than a third (36%) do not feel in control of their employment prospects, and more than one in 10 (16%) feel their life will amount to nothing, no matter how hard they try.¹⁴



3. Sea Cadets approach

SNAPSHOT

Sea Cadets offers a range of opportunities and activities to 14,000 young people across the UK, supported by 9,000 trained volunteers.

Participation in uniformed youth clubs and structured youth activities is associated with positive outcomes for young people. However, research (based on historical data, and not only from Sea Cadets) suggests young people who engage tend to come from more advantaged backgrounds. As such, Sea Cadets has the potential to achieve greater impact than other uniformed groups as it can reach more disadvantaged communities.

Through **‘adventure that launches young people for life today’**, Sea Cadets aims to help teenagers **‘develop into resilient, confident young people who can launch well in today’s complex and sometimes overwhelming world. And thrive in it.’**

Sea Cadets’ outcomes framework details the charity’s approach.

WHAT SEA CADETS DOES

Sea Cadets is a structured youth development charity working with c.14,000 young people and 9,000 volunteers at any one time. Sea Cadets usually meet twice a week for around two to three hours. The charity also offers a range of water and land-based activities and opportunities for young people and volunteers, all underpinned by a nautical ethos and water activities based on the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy. This includes the opportunity to attend courses, camps, competitions and events, take part in offshore voyages and overseas adventures, chances to work for and gain qualifications and to develop life skills, underpinned by adventure and friendship.

SEA CADETS’ AIMS

Sea Cadets describes its aims as follows:

‘Through a different kind of adventure, Sea Cadets helps teenagers to develop into resilient, confident young people who can launch well in today’s complex and often overwhelming world. And thrive in it. Whatever they want to do when they leave school.’

The experiences the charity offer help young people to become someone who can talk to anyone. Give new things a go, even if it’s a bit scary. Often new ways of thinking and acting come out of the kind of adventures young people have at Sea Cadets, which help equip them for the world as it is now. Like power-boating, learning how to save a life, sailing a tall-ship, catering for a crew, kayaking and coasteering, even weather-forecasting and engineering.

We aim to ensure that as a result of the experiences they have here, Sea Cadets find it becomes easier to do better at school, to stand out when it comes to getting onto a course and finding a job.’

In their own words, Sea Cadets aims to:

- “Help young people become more **confident**, setting them up to enjoy life and get through challenges, feeling confident in new situations, able to ask for help when they need it, and come across well when meeting new people.
- To **feel more in charge of themselves**, feeling clearer about what they want to get from life and being better equipped to make a good impression in interviews.
- To, be **comfortable speaking to anyone**, be a **brilliant team player, skilled, someone with positive habits and thinking**.
- To help young people become **adaptable**, able to listen to instruction and take feedback, and **motivated**, getting into the habit of working a challenge through and finding the best way”.

The charity has over 160 years’ experience of working with young people and acknowledges and sees both the strength and boundaries of what we do – we want young people to have the best of everything before they come to us but we will help them balance, tackle or overcome whatever challenges and troubles they bring with them to Sea Cadets by developing their key skills.

We want to ensure that they get the most out of everything they learn from cadets. What's special about Sea Cadets is the intense effort we put into working with young people, the structure we offer through tradition and customs of the Royal Navy, which some love and really can't do without. And part of what makes us unique is we wouldn't be Sea Cadets if we weren't on the water. We have always been about this, and over time it is something where we have been able to have a positive impact. We believe this is because of our unique perspective and values and because we are rooted in community life.

OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK

Sea Cadets' outcomes framework outlines the theoretical basis for Sea Cadets based on the charity's strategy and other evidence. It explains the change the charity wants to make for young people in terms of improving their life chances, and outlines the steps needed to get there.

The components of the outcomes framework are:

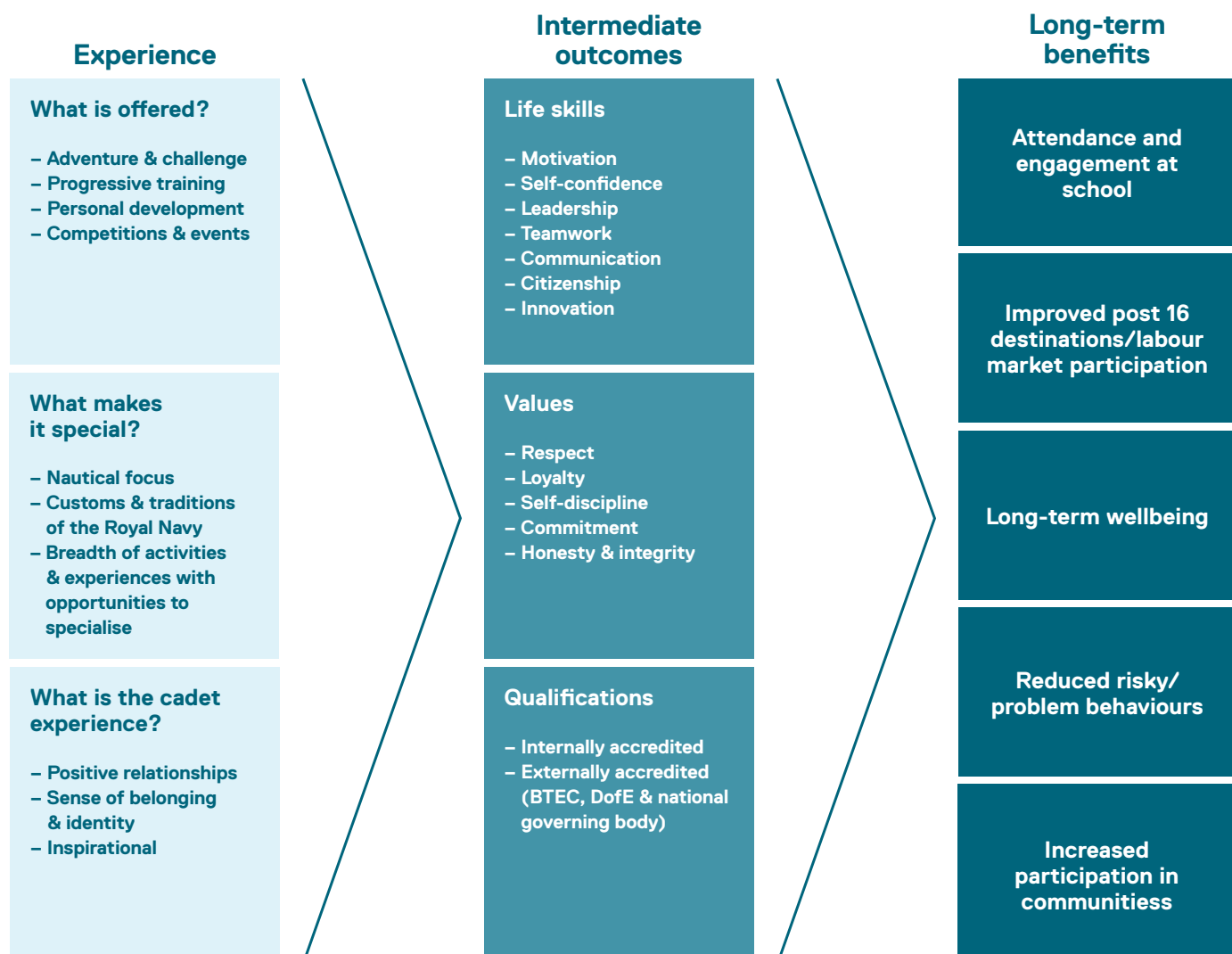
- **Inputs:** the things Sea Cadets does and how it does them – to achieve the organisation's intended outcomes for young people. For example, there

are ways in which Sea Cadets aims to be distinct from other youth groups, which may also enhance its outcomes and impact, such as the emphasis on water-based activities, the Sea Cadet values and the hierarchical structure.

- **Intermediate outcomes:** the skills and attributes that participating in Sea Cadets is intended to give young people. Intermediate outcomes are an integral step in achieving the organisation's long-term goals, and are an important part of the organisation's measurement framework.
- **Long-term goals:** the ultimate change Sea Cadets aims to make for young people.

Sea Cadets acknowledge they are not alone in sharing these outcomes for young people – and they have a shared interest with many organisations in improving young people's lives and experiences.

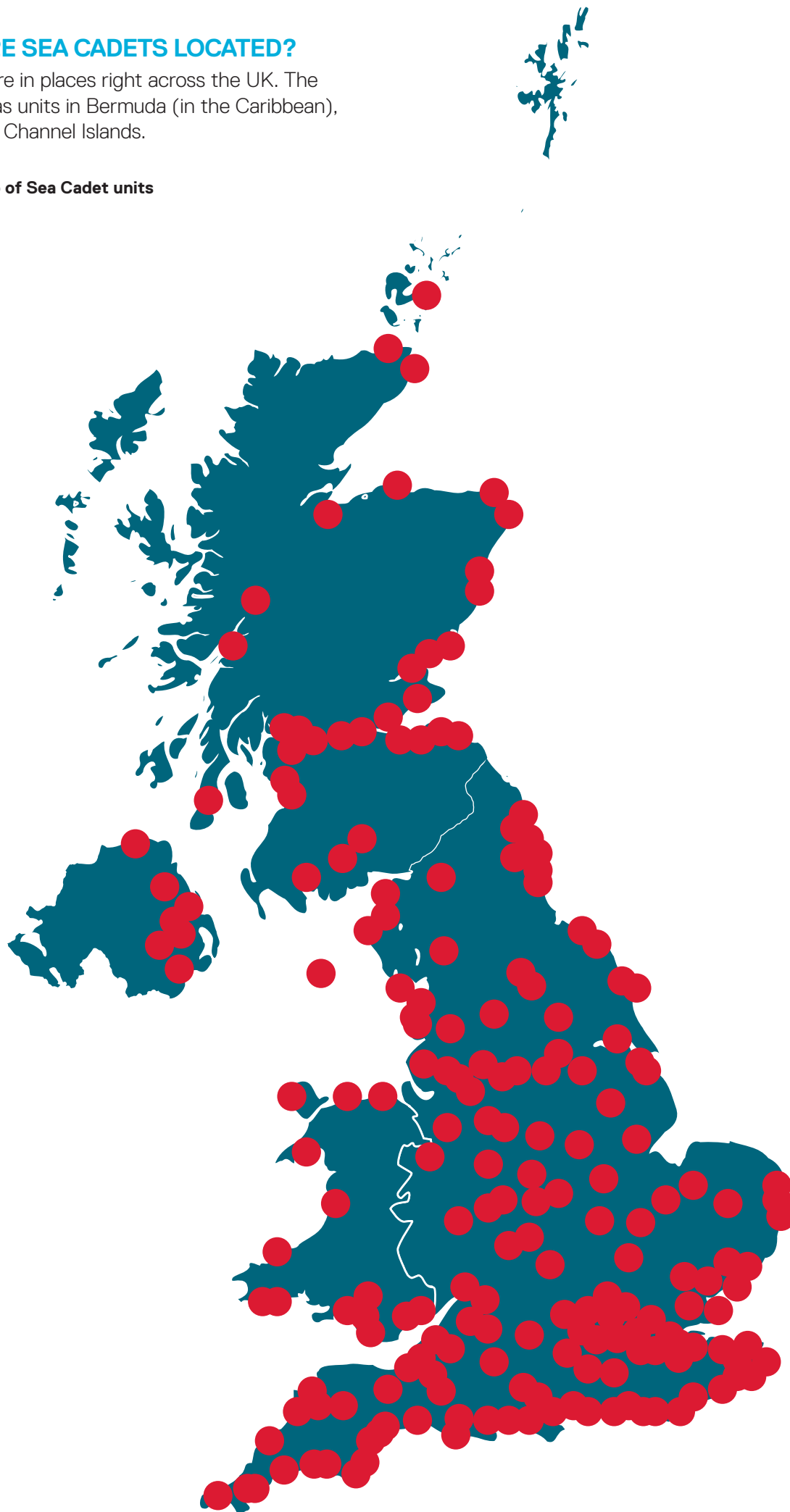
Figure 1: Outcomes framework for the Sea Cadets (NPC, 2015)



WHERE ARE SEA CADETS LOCATED?

Sea Cadet's are in places right across the UK. The charity also has units in Bermuda (in the Caribbean), Malta and the Channel Islands.

Figure 2: A map of Sea Cadet units





4. The evidence supporting Sea Cadets' approach

SNAPSHOT

Research has shown that participation in activities such as those offered by Sea Cadets can help young people reduce social exclusion, increase academic aspiration, establish better relationships with parents, and have a positive impact on young people's community participation.

There is also evidence to suggest that a structured, disciplined environment can provide benefits for 'hard to reach' young people with behavioural challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evidence of participation in and impact of youth activities

Research by Feinstein, Bynner and Duckworth published in 2005 concluded that structured youth activities have an association with positive outcomes for young people, but that young people who engage in these activities tend to come from more advantaged backgrounds. The research found that: 'good readers, high scorers on vocabulary measures, lack of internalising behaviour problems and young people doing homework after school were all more likely to be engaged in uniformed activities than other young people, as were those from high to medium income and high socio-economic status.'¹⁵ But for those young people who do engage, 'more structured activities represent better models of engagement with and between young people because there is a general focus on structured, joint activities towards a common goal... developmental opportunities that can significantly transform their life paths at key transitional moments'.¹⁶

This research therefore suggests that engagement in structured youth activities is associated with positive effects but there is a need to encourage those from less advantaged backgrounds to join and take part.

Two important limitations when considering the implications of this research for the Sea Cadets are the age of the study and the organisations included. The study was based on analysis of the 1970 cohort

study, and it is possible the profile of Sea Cadets has changed since that date. The study also includes all 'uniformed youth clubs', which will include Sea Cadets but will also include a larger number of scouts and guides, who may be from more affluent backgrounds than the Sea Cadets.

Nonetheless, the findings were echoed in mixed methods research by Moon and Twigg (2010) who found evidence of a positive relationship between Cadet Forces membership and a range of outcomes, including personal and social development, key skills, and employability. Around two thirds (64%) of cadets who were surveyed thought that being a cadet had increased their likelihood of finding a job, and well over half reported benefits for school work (57%) and their likelihood to progress to further or higher education (56%).¹⁷

Evidence of positive impact of the kinds of activities delivered by Sea Cadets

Sea Cadets aims to offer young people a varied and exciting range of positive activities at a substantially reduced cost to the recipient, which might be a particular benefit to young people from poorer socio-economic backgrounds that may not normally be able to access them.

Research shows that purposeful activities such as those offered by Sea Cadets can have long-term benefits for young people. Such activities can reduce social exclusion in adulthood,¹⁸ increase young peoples'

aspirations to go to college, encourage young people to establish better relations with parents, and predict young people's participation in their community throughout their later life.¹⁹ Evidence from the Audit Commission²⁰ concludes that 'sports and leisure can engage young people and attract those at highest risk of anti-social behaviour into more intensive developmental projects.' Preventative projects have also been argued to be highly cost-effective. A young person in the criminal justice system costs the taxpayer over £200,000 by the age of 16, but one given support to stay out of trouble costs less than £50,000.

Evidence supporting the positive benefits of experiences Sea Cadets provides

Sea Cadets aims to be more than a vehicle for training and learning. Specifically, it offers activity-based learning, which not only encourages young people to engage in the first place, but also aims to convey a range of other benefits that are supported by research. Extracurricular and community activities have been shown to improve self-esteem, school work, educational and occupational aspirations.²¹ Links to positive academic, behavioural and social-economic outcomes²² have also been shown, and research suggests that structured youth activity also helps young people develop initiative, including skills such as goal setting, problem-solving and time management.²³ These types of activities can have a strong effect on young people's attitudes, emotional capabilities and personal development,²⁴ and relationships with other adults (not teachers) have an impact on young people's motivation and agency at school.²⁵

Evidence supporting the positive impact of a structured, disciplined environment

Through its basis in the customs and ethos of the Royal Navy, Sea Cadets aims to create a structured, disciplined environment in which young people can learn and develop. As young people move through the formal hierarchy they may feel a sense of their own progression and development. The organisation's nautical focus is distinct from other youth groups and from schools and can bring a variety of benefits for young people, for example by encouraging high standards of behaviour.

While not exclusive to uniformed youth groups, the literature does indicate a correlation between sustained engagement in youth activities, and positive academic, occupational and civic outcomes, compared with shorter programmes of activity. This sustained engagement is a characteristic of membership-based schemes.²⁶ Feinstein and others (2005) suggest that the ability to work with young people over a continuous period is a possible factor in achieving longer-term effects²⁷ and Margo and Sodha (2007)

have analysed the 1970 British Cohort Study to show that membership of youth groups with a clear hierarchy, well-defined goals and regular meetings is correlated with young people's sense of belief in the ability to influence their future.²⁸ While Sea Cadets is available for all young people there is also evidence that a structured and disciplined environment, which demands close group work, has benefits for young people with behavioural challenges who have failed to engage with other services.²⁹

Research into the life paths of young adults has concluded that the processes which help young people build structure in their lives are important for successful transition to adulthood: 'successful mediation of these risks can bring long-term benefits ... where such provision is part of real engagement of the young people in activities with some objective'. This research concludes that contexts in which adolescents spend their out-of-school or leisure time are clearly important aspects of their pathway from childhood to adulthood. Provision of structured activities at this age can make a big difference to the life paths of adolescents. With the literature showing how youth work can also provide a route back into the mainstream for the most marginalised young people.

However, as noted by Bertram et al (2018)³⁰ the evidence base is not definitive about the impact of uniformed cadet forces. There is generally a reliance on softer and self-reported outcomes and causality is uncertain: the key unanswered question is whether those who volunteer to take part in uniformed youth activities are more positively orientated in the first place and therefore more likely to achieve positive outcomes regardless.

Evidence on the potential social integration impact of uniformed youth groups

Research by Youth United/ComRes (published June 2018) has sought to outline and demonstrate the potential benefits of uniformed youth groups on social integration. Qualitative research highlighted the ways in which this might happen:

- Creating new opportunities for different groups of young people to mix and get to know one another
- Creating a different type of atmosphere to school or college, in which young people can 'be themselves' without pressure or worry.
- The fact that young people tend to attend their groups for a sustained period of time, which helps to create a friendly and safe environment in which social interaction and mixing can take place.
- Uniforms which help young people to feel accepted and contribute to a sense of belonging and pride.

- Being part of a youth group might help young people to have broader horizons and feel connected to something that is bigger than themselves.

A survey conducted as part of the same research project compared young people who are members of uniformed youth organisations to those that are not and found that those who are were more likely to have had contact with different groups of young people and more likely to participate in social action. However, this survey covered members of all uniformed youth groups, so is at least as representative of major youth groups like scouts and guides (as per some of the other research described in this section).



5. Outputs

SNAPSHOT

The term “outputs” refers to the data on what Sea Cadets delivers and to whom

Sea Cadets reaches around 14,000 young people, in 400 units across the UK, and supported by 9,000 trained volunteers.

Cadets are aged between 10 and 18, but the charity’s data shows that most are aged 11-15. Just over a third (36%) are female.

There is good evidence that Sea Cadets recruits a higher proportion of young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

Not including the young people who engage with Sea Cadets for less than three months, the mean length of time a young person stays engaged with Sea Cadets is 24 months and the median length is a year and a half (18 months). This is improving over time, suggesting Sea Cadets is getting better at keeping young people engaged.

Many cadets enjoy their experience. NPC’s 2017 survey of cadets found that 76% strongly agreed that Sea Cadets is ‘enjoyable’ and a further 18% somewhat agree.

Survey research also shows that most cadets feel proud to be part of Sea Cadets and feel a sense of duty towards their unit. They also enjoy the opportunity to try new things, learn and socialise with others.

PROFILE OF CADETS

Sea Cadets reaches some 14,000 young people, in around 400 units across the UK. Cadets are aged between 10 and 18 and come from all backgrounds, but in many cases the organisation reaches the most disadvantaged and in need of help and for whom the greatest impact might be possible. These young people are supported by 9,000 trained volunteers, working in a range of uniformed and non-uniformed positions.

The “Westminster” database³¹ is the charity’s central source of information about cadet involvement and provides valuable insights into the profile of the cadets – their ages, the gender split, and the length of time young people remain engaged. Although the number of active cadets is around 14,000 (with some seasonal variation), the Westminster dataset includes data for around 70,000 young people going as far back as 1990 (although the system was not fully used until 2010).

Looking back over previous years shows that the number of active cadets has remained relatively constant over the past six years, with a slight increase from around 13,000 cadets in 2010 up to 14,000 today. This indicates that Sea Cadets is keeping its offer attractive and relevant for young people.

Age and gender split

From enrolment data, we know that cadets are aged between 10 and 18, with most being between 11 and 15 years old. Cadets tend to be towards the younger end of this age band, with numbers gradually reducing with age. Just over one-third (36%) of cadets are female and the age-related reduction in cadets is more pronounced for boys than for girls – in other words, the proportion of girls is higher for older cadets than for those in younger age groups.

Socio-economic profile

Analysis of the Cadets in Schools programme by Bertram et al (2018) linked a sample of RAF, Army and Sea Cadets to data from the National Pupil Database (NPD) to look at the free-school-meal status of cadets – which is a widely used proxy for socio-economic background. This found that 40% of cadets were entitled to free-school-meals compared to 31% in a group matched by other characteristics. However, this research needs to be treated with some caution as they apply only to cadets who are in the minority of Sea Cadet units that are in the Cadets in Schools programme, and the analysis suffered from a very high rate of attrition (93%); meaning that very few of the cadets sent for data linking were identified in the NPD.

However, the findings above do accord with in-house analysis conducted on the Sea Cadet Westminster database by Dr Will Parry in which cadet postcodes for cadets in England were linked to the English Indices of Deprivation.³² As the chart shows, in 2016 a higher number of cadets were recruited from households in more deprived areas. The limitation of this analysis is that postcode is not a perfect proxy for deprivation. Moreover, as we discuss in chapter 8, there is still a challenge of retaining those cadets from more disadvantaged backgrounds.

But despite their respective limitations these two sources of data do point towards the conclusion that Sea Cadets reaches a disproportionately more disadvantaged cohort than average.

Other issues in their lives

Our 2017 survey asked cadets whether they had ever experienced any issues/problems in their lives. The most selected answer was 'feeling anxious or lonely' – particularly amongst girls. Bullying/abuse and 'trouble at school' are also commonly cited problems, and slightly more consistent between girls and boys. This data gives us an indication that Sea Cadets is reaching young people with issues similar, if not greater, than those experienced in the wider population in the same age group.

Figure 3: Socio-economic profile of cadets in 2016 derived from home postcode (base 13,736 cadets whose postcodes could be matched)

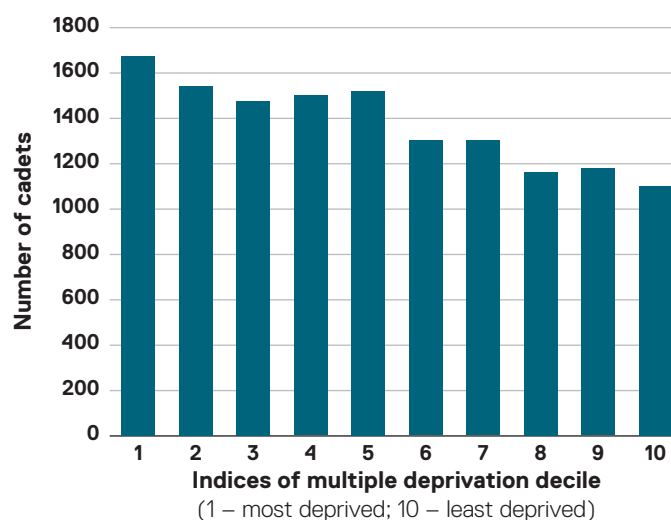
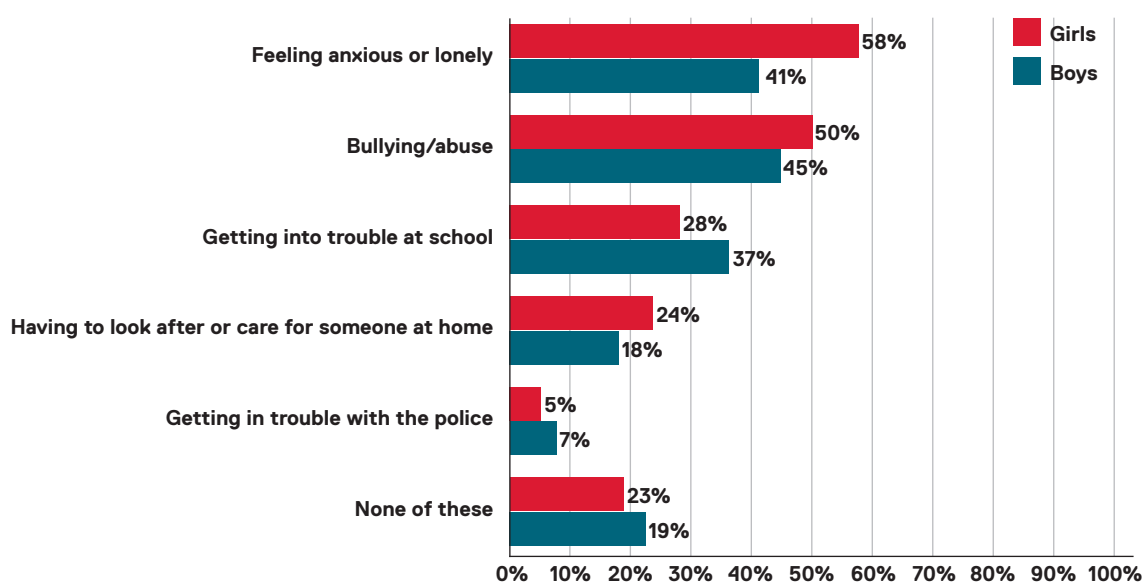


Figure 4: Cadets on whether they had ever experienced these issues (girl cadets = 1,058, boy cadets = 1,521)



OVERALL CADET SATISFACTION

Feedback from cadets supports this. Figure 5 below shows cadets' satisfaction with the Sea Cadet Corps from the 2017 survey. Half of cadets (53%) rated their satisfaction as either nine or 10 out of 10, and a further 32% rated their satisfaction as seven or eight out of 10.

Parents are even more likely to be satisfied with the experience Sea Cadets provides their child – two thirds (67%) rate the quality of their child's experience as nine or 10 out of 10, and 24% seven or eight out of 10. Volunteers report lower levels of satisfaction with Sea Cadets overall with only 48% giving a rating of nine or 10 out of 10. But while volunteers do see Sea Cadets as a good quality experience for both themselves and cadets, they are more likely to feel it is a higher quality experience for cadets (with 44% rating nine or 10 out of 10) than it is for themselves (with only 28% giving a top rating).

Figure 5: Extent to which different groups are satisfied with the Sea Cadets Corps overall (scale 1 – 10)

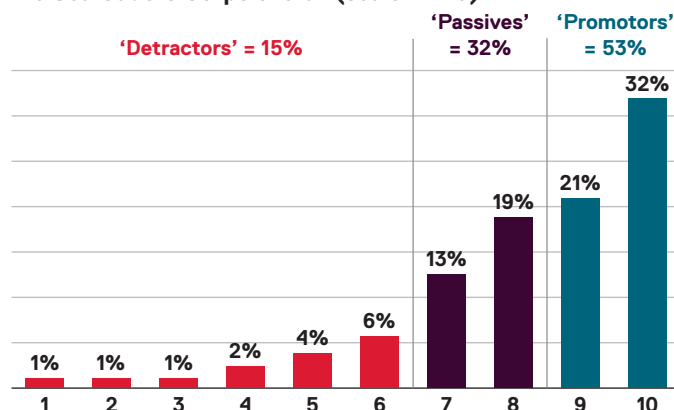


Figure 6: Extent to which different groups would recommend Sea Cadets to a friend or another young person (scale 1 – 10) (base 2,347 cadets, 2,622 parents, 2,871 volunteers)

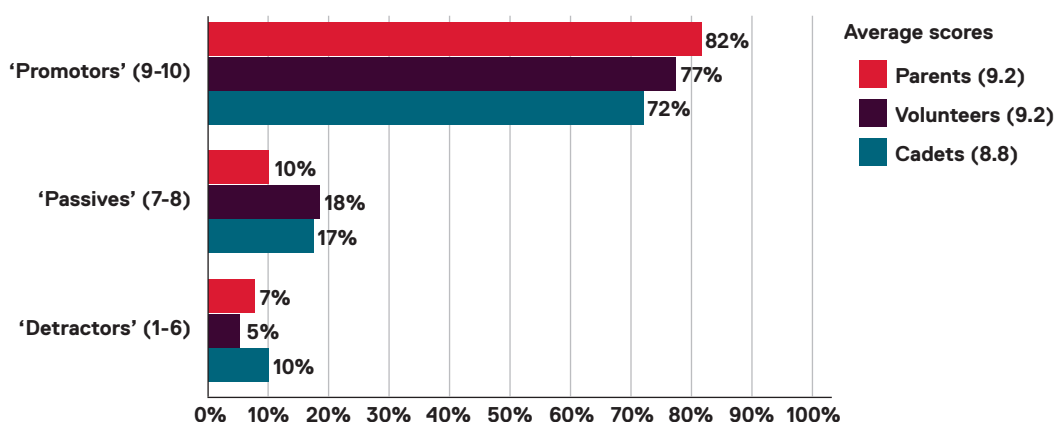
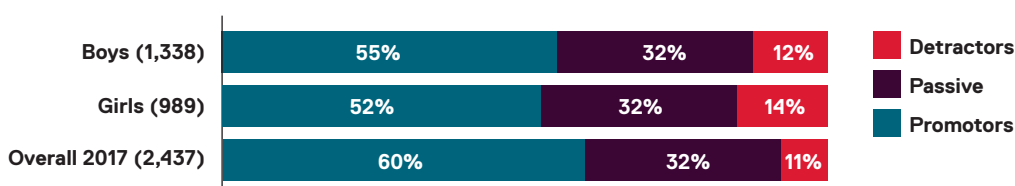


Figure 7: How satisfied are cadets with their experience of Sea Cadets, segmented by gender (base: 2,347 cadets)



All three groups (cadets, parents, volunteers) were asked whether they would recommend Sea Cadets to a friend/young person, using a standard one-10 scale. As shown in the chart below, in each group most respondents rated Sea Cadets in the top category of nine or 10 out of 10.

Satisfaction among cadets tends to decrease slightly with age, from an average of 8.8 out of ten between 10-12 years old to 8.1 at age 15. However, we know from other sources like the NPC Wellbeing Measure that overall life satisfaction among young people tends to decrease with age anyway (with the most rapid descent in satisfaction occurring between the ages of 13-14 for both boys and girls), so this could partly be related to this phenomenon. Nonetheless, Sea Cadets may still wish to consider how it can maintain its appeal amongst older young people.

Segmenting the data by gender (Figure 7) shows similar levels of satisfaction with Sea Cadets among boys and girls. This suggests that although Sea Cadets attracts fewer girls, those who do attend have a positive experience.

CADET RETENTION

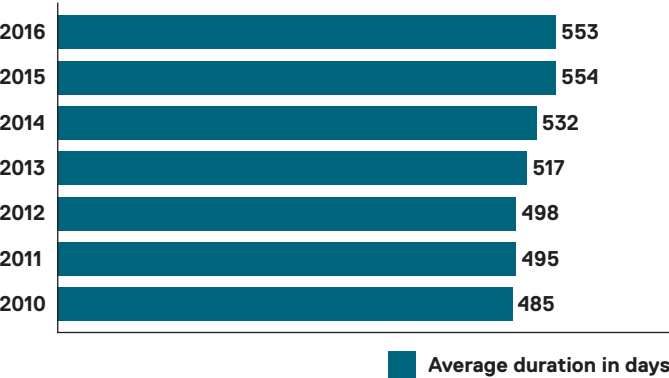
When Sea Cadets join and leave, and how long they stay involved

The peak age for entry into Sea Cadets is 10, although many cadets join when they are older than this. The peak age for leaving is 12, although many leave when they are older or younger than 12. Just as girls are likely to leave later (so the proportion of older cadets who are female is higher than for younger cadets), girls are slightly more likely to join cadets at later ages.

The average (mean) time that a young person stays in Sea Cadets is 24 months and the median time is just over a year (13 months).³³ However, this data is skewed by the 8% of young people who stay in the Sea Cadets for less than three months. If these are removed, the figures paint a more positive picture, with cadets typically remaining active for a median of 18 months.

The data also shows that total cadet numbers ARE gradually increasing and young people are staying longer – suggesting the organisation is getting better at keeping young people engaged. Excluding those who attended for three months or less, the median duration for a cadet in 2010 was 16 months (485 days), with cadets staying engaged on average slightly longer each subsequent year – a positive trend (see Figure 8).

Figure 8: Average duration (days) for Cadets by year discharged



Sea Cadets’ exit survey data illuminates some of the reasons cadets decide to leave although it is only completed by a minority of leavers.³⁴ The cadets who completed the exit survey generally enjoyed Sea Cadets, with 99% saying they enjoyed some part of the experience. Most popular was water-based activities (24%), followed by meeting new people (19%) and camping and activities in general (18%). Analysis of the ‘free text’ answers in the survey showed that around 50% of cadets mentioned ‘activities’, ‘learning’, ‘friends’ and ‘boating’ as aspects of Sea Cadets they enjoyed. Less popular are the Sea Cadets’ military connotations (just 5% say they enjoyed this the most) and shooting (3%).

When asked what they least enjoyed, 15% of cadets mentioned coursework and unit activities, while politics, staff and bullying were mentioned by 12% of cadets (although, encouragingly, this is down from 23% to 12% between 2015 and 2016). A general trend is that cadets found the winter months more boring as activities were limited to classroom-based lessons or drills, which they did not find as enjoyable as the summer activities.

Of those left in 2015-16, a third (34%) did so because they were too busy (with either a new job or school exams), and a further third (34%) said they were not happy at their unit. A similar number (33%) said they were bored.

But overall the picture is positive, with three-quarters (76%) of leavers saying they would recommend Sea Cadets to their friends and family, and nearly half (49%) saying they would consider volunteering with Sea Cadets in the next five years. Suggestions for improvements include better organisation and communication (19%), a greater range of courses and activities (19%) particularly indoor activities for the winter months, and more opportunities to progress (9%). Others commented that Sea Cadets needs to be publicised more, with one cadet commenting:

‘Get more involved in the community so it’s more well-known and stop cutting the courses people want to do.’

Initial engagement with cadets

The qualitative research looked at how young people found out about Sea Cadets, why they joined and their first impressions. Most commonly, young people learned about Sea Cadets because a member of their family was – or had been – a cadet themselves. Often this was an older sibling, although for young people who did not have family members in cadets, they may have learned via friends at school. One young woman from a unit in Tenby said:

‘My mum was a cadet, my auntie was a cadet, my uncle was a cadet, my brothers and sisters were cadets and when I was about five my mum brought me here to pick up my brother and it was presentation night. And I loved it. I was so intrigued, I was just sitting there watching.’ **Tenby, female, age range 16-18**

‘My friends said, oh I’ve found this really good club called Sea Cadets, and I said what’s that, and they said it’s where you learn to sail, shoot, march... and I went with them on the next Thursday and I really enjoyed it.’ **Buxton, male, age 14-16**

The qualitative research showed that cadets were motivated to join for two main reasons – because they wanted a fun, adventurous activity to do after school, or because they were planning for their future.

FEEDBACK ON THE SEA CADET EXPERIENCE

Nautical focus

The research suggests that cadets are excited and enthusiastic about the opportunities Sea Cadets gives them to try new experiences and develop skills—both on and off the water. Nearly all cadets surveyed (91%) agree that Sea Cadets had enabled them to ‘take part in a wide range of activities’, including 70% who strongly agree. A similar number (86%) agree that they feel ‘inspired by Sea Cadets’ (of whom 59% strongly agree).

In the qualitative research cadets frequently mentioned the wide range of different courses on offer, how much they enjoy attending, and how good value they are. Many cadets were particularly motivated by the prospect of being able to go out on water and showed enthusiasm for the range of water-based activities—powerboating, kayaking, sailing, windsurfing and more. Cadets were excited by the opportunity to go aboard Royal Navy ships, with young people enthusiastically talking about time they spent on board HMS Bulwark and Sea Cadets tall ship TS Royalist. A young woman from Buxton Sea Cadets said:

‘Whenever you don’t go on a course then it’s like everyone knows stuff and it’s like ‘What did you do?’ and ‘I went windsurfing!’ and it’s like ‘I didn’t get to do that!’.’ **Buxton, female, age 14-16**

But while most cadets consulted in the qualitative research had regular access to a local body of water, some felt other units may not be so lucky:

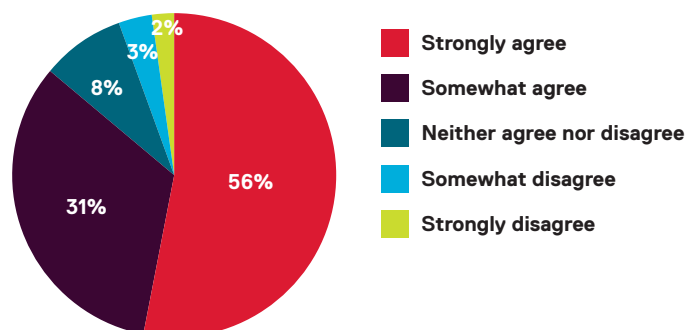
‘It’s 50% [of the appeal of Sea Cadets] because we have water we go out boating all the time, whereas units that don’t have it, they don’t know it, it’s

not really a thing that they do. Because we only have to walk three steps out there, it’s quite a predominant thing, particularly in the summer months.’

Kingston, female, age 16-18

Most units go boating with those not near water travelling to do so. Cadets can also access inshore boating courses and offshore voyages. In the year to 31 March 2017, 12,161 cadets took part in boating and did an average of around 32 hours boating per year.

Figure 9: Cadets on the extent to which they think adults at Sea Cadets are good role models (base: 2,579 cadets)



Cadets also spoke about the interactive, practical and varied way in which they are taught – in contrast with their experiences at school – and their appreciation for the volunteer staff, who they found supportive and respectful. The chart above (Figure 9) shows that 87% of Cadets think the adults at Sea Cadets are good role models (including 56% who strongly agree):

‘The instructors are really nice... you learn so much, but you also get to have fun. It’s not all WORK, look at this, write this down. Every night we’re playing a game, and sometimes we also get to go out on boats.’ **Oban, female, age 10-12**

‘When I was in school, the teachers would treat you as a class of kids. Whereas the staff down here, they’ve seen what I can do and what I can’t do, and they know my abilities, and they treat me with respect as a senior cadet.’

Leeds, male, age 16-18

Excitement and adventure

Nearly three-quarters (76%) feel strongly that Sea Cadets is enjoyable (and a further 18% somewhat agree). In addition to enjoying the opportunity to develop skills and try new experiences, a strong pull for many cadets seems to be social, with young people happy to mix with others in a structured setting. Cadets also say they enjoy being able to meet cadets from around the country through courses. One young woman spoke about how much she enjoyed her first night:

'I was really excited, and I remember coming down here when I was ten, and it was probably one of the best nights ever. It's fun and we all get on and we're all friends. And no one judges you here.'

Buxton, female, 14-16

Some cadets also mentioned that they have a competitive spirit, and that they enjoy the opportunity to learn new skills then test them out against other cadets:

'I've always been a competitive person and I've found it fun to do that kind of stuff, 'cos I wouldn't do it at school. First aid and stuff.' **Milton Keynes, male, age 12-14**

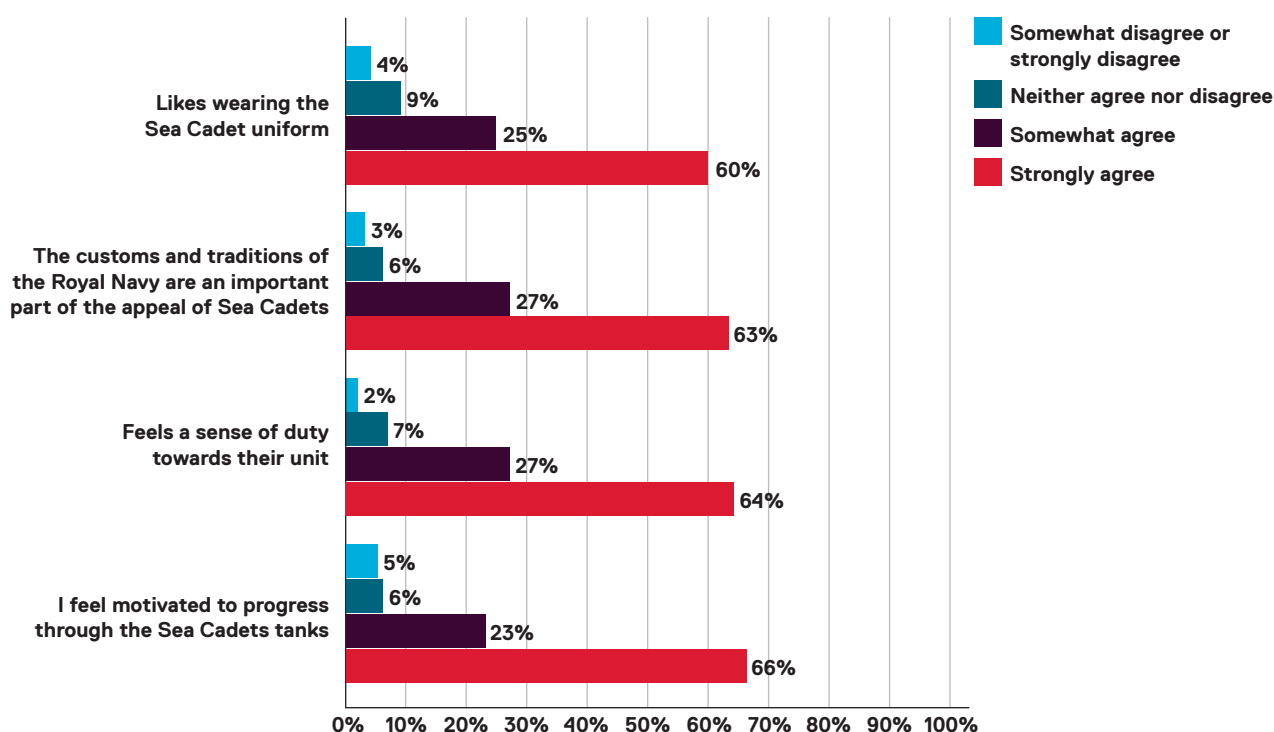
'I thought it would be a bit more like school but it's more interactive... you do more activities rather than just sitting down at a desk.' **Oban, female, age 10-12**

Based on the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy

A distinctive aspect of Sea Cadets, and something that underpins all its activities, is the nautical focus, which is embedded within the charity and based on the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy. The approaches to behaviour and discipline in cadet forces are distinct from other youth groups and from schools and bring a variety of benefits for young people. This ethos aims to encourage high standards of behaviour, which can help young people better engage in education and positively shape their future.³⁵

Parents and cadets generally like the fact that Sea Cadets is grounded in Royal Navy tradition, although this is less important to them than some other aspects of the cadets. The chart below (Figure 10) shows cadets' views on several aspects of Sea Cadets' traditions. This shows broadly positive views in all cases but shows that most of all young people feel motivated to progress through the ranks (66% strongly agree) and feel a sense of duty towards their unit (64%), the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy and the Sea Cadet uniform are slightly less important.

Figure 10: Sea Cadets' views on traditions (base: 2,579 cadets)



Six in 10 parents (56%) strongly agree with the statement 'the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy are an important part of the appeal of Sea Cadets for my child' (and a further 30% somewhat agree).

Young people consulted in the qualitative research often reported having initial concerns about Sea Cadets' approach to discipline, worrying that it would be overly strict. But cadets reported being pleasantly surprised when they came to appreciate or even enjoy Sea Cadets' approach:

'I thought it was going to be quite disciplined and strict, but it turned out to be quite fun and enjoyable.'

Milton Keynes, male, age 12-14



6. Outcomes

SNAPSHOT

Sea Cadets' three intermediate outcome areas are life skills, values and qualifications. And cadets, parents and volunteers all believe that Sea Cadets delivers across these outcome areas.

In terms of life skills, 88% of parents, 93% of volunteers and 72% of cadets think Sea Cadets will help young people develop skills for the future. According to parents, the biggest changes they observe are in their child's self-confidence (61% see a great improvement, 29% some improvement) and team working skills (62% see a great improvement).

Cadets, parents and volunteers all agree that Sea Cadets has an impact on young people's values, although cadets tend to be most enthusiastic about the scale of the change. Around six in 10 cadets (65%) report that their 'sense of loyalty' has improved through attending Sea Cadets. And this is corroborated by parents – 54% see a 'great improvement'.

Cadets value the opportunity to gain qualifications at Sea Cadets. Seven in 10 (75%) think Sea Cadets will help them 'a great deal' to gain qualifications, and a further 20% 'a fair amount'. Parents rank qualifications as one of the top three benefits of their child getting involved in Sea Cadets.

LIFE SKILLS

The Sea Cadets outcomes framework highlights 'motivation', 'self-confidence', 'leadership', 'teamwork', 'communication' and 'citizenship' as the main skills it aims to help young people develop. Because of the outcomes from the survey Sea Cadets now also seeks to develop 'initiative' as a life skill. Although this was not specifically surveyed, it is a consistent theme apparent across the research into the other life skills.

Both the quantitative and the qualitative evidence shows that Sea Cadets are having successes in these areas, with parents, volunteers and – crucially – the cadets themselves reporting positive changes because of their participation in cadets. The quantitative survey showed that almost all Sea Cadets – 94% – agree that through Sea Cadets they have learned things that will help them in the future, including 73% who strongly agree.

Motivation

Six in 10 Cadets (59%) identified 'putting all my energy into things' as something that had changed in them for the better because of joining Sea Cadets. About the same proportion (58%) said their 'motivation to take part in things' had greatly improved due to Sea Cadets, and a further 34% said it had slightly improved. This positive endorsement was echoed by parents, with 58% of parents saying their child's motivation to take part in things had been greatly improved by Sea

Cadets, and 30% seeing a slight improvement.

The qualitative research shows the sense of motivation young people had when they joined Sea Cadets, with young people frequently reporting that they felt Sea Cadets opened-up a world of possibilities. A young man from Milton Keynes said:

'I remember seeing all the badges you can get on the walls. I remember thinking, I'm never going to get all of those! I remember looking for the engineering ones and thinking, I'm going to try and achieve that. Looking at what I could do and set myself a little goal.'

Milton Keynes, male, age 16-18

Self-confidence

Nine in 10 Cadets surveyed (90%) thought their self-confidence and belief in their own abilities had improved as result of coming to Sea Cadets, including 60% who say it has greatly improved. This strong endorsement is echoed by cadets' parents, with 90% saying they had seen an increase in their child's self-confidence (including 61% seeing a great improvement). In fact, the quantitative research shows that parents view

increased confidence as the most striking change in their child because of participation in Sea Cadets.

When asked about things which have changed for the better in them because of joining Sea Cadets, 61% of young people chose 'feeling other people can count on me', 57% chose 'feeling I can overcome setbacks to conquer important challenges', and 49% chose 'feeling that a lot of things about me are good'. These statements all suggest an increase in confidence in the cadets.

The qualitative research with cadets themselves backs this up, reporting that although cadets frequently felt they were shy and lacking in confidence when they first joined their unit, 'the experience of being part of a supportive unit, the sense of being respected and regularly being exposed to new people and required to present oneself with confidence has all contributed to feeling much more at ease in any social situation.'

As a young man from the Buxton Sea Cadets put it:

'In my last years at primary school I got bullied a bit and lost confidence, even at school now people take the mick out of me because of the cadets, they think it's really weird and stupid, but the reason I come here is because I feel confident here, it's something I really enjoy. But Sea Cadets is like one big family.' **Buxton, male, age 14-16**

Volunteers agreed with this assessment, adding (in the qualitative research) that the nature of the challenges faced within Sea Cadets – designed to stretch young people, while being achievable – may be an added factor:

'The thing that you notice with them, because what we do faces them with relatively simple challenges, but they're challenges that if they don't succeed, they know about it, so it gives them terrific self-confidence... they'll come back after boating or whatever and you can see it in them... they'll go out slightly tremulous, nervy but they'll come back absolutely full of themselves, and you can see the change in them.'

Volunteer, Oban

Closely connected to self-confidence is an increase in the cadets' feelings of independence, which is a theme emerging through the qualitative research. The young people consulted during the research felt they had a greater sense of independence than their peers, particularly those who had been on residential courses and visits away from home:

'Cadets also gives you some responsibility—in that, I had to get, on my own, from Tenby to Greenock [to get on Royalist]—it was a 12 hour train journey. My parents wouldn't necessarily have let me do that if it wasn't for Sea Cadets. When I found I was on my own for the whole journey I was dreading it, but I loved it. I got chatting to some great people that I wouldn't have met if I wasn't travelling on my own... so now, for example, say a group of us were going with friends our own age from school, our own age group, and we had to get a train to Cardiff, that's nothing now.' **Tenby, age 16-18**

This suggests involvement in Sea Cadets gives young people the confidence to deal with new and daunting situations by themselves—a useful skill for adult life.

Leadership

An improvement in leadership skills came out strongly during the qualitative research, and is backed up by the findings of the quantitative surveys. The opportunities presented by Sea Cadets for young people to take charge of their peers and learn how to instruct others in a way which is effective, authoritative, respectful and inspiring is valued by cadets. The quantitative research shows that almost all Sea Cadets (92%) agree that being a cadet gives them the opportunity to take responsibility for things (including 66% who strongly agree). Over eight out of 10 (83%) agree that Sea Cadets gives them the opportunity to oversee groups (including 54% who strongly agree). These opportunities have tangible benefits for young people in terms of confidence and skills for the future:

'You don't realise how much you've gained confidence in just teaching a lesson. You wouldn't be able to stand in front of a class of 30 people and teach

a lesson before joining Sea Cadets because you wouldn't know what to do. But now you can stand up, you can get them to speak, you can do icebreakers and all that stuff.' **Male, Leeds, age 16-18**

Cadets view leadership as an important skill for later life, but they also mentioned that their improved leadership skills are already coming in useful at school or elsewhere:

'I've used it at school. In computer science we're making an app and it helped me with my leadership, confidence and anything. I'm working in a group of six, and I was voted the leader.' **Milton Keynes, age 12-14**

Team work

One of the biggest changes young people saw in themselves is their ability to work with others in a team, with 92% saying this skill improved (either 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount') by coming to Sea Cadets. Parents also reported this very positively, with 90% of parents seeing an improvement in their child's team-working skills (of whom 62% reported a great improvement). Among Sea Cadets itself, young people report positively about the way they work together, with nearly six in 10 (58%) strongly agreeing that 'in Sea Cadets we work well as a team' and a further 32% saying they 'somewhat agree'.

The qualitative research does not explicitly mention team-working but makes clear the benefits Sea Cadets provides in terms of helping young people mix and communicate with others. The research also identified that young people feel Sea Cadets has improved their empathy towards others, encouraging them to look out for their younger peers and provide emotional support:

'We'll all go to the same school and we're in the older years. And some of the juniors are in years seven and eight, and if we see them upset we'll be like, are you ok? Come and find me.'

Female, Tenby, age 16-18

Communication

Nearly six in 10 (57%) cadets said their ability to communicate with young people and adults had 'greatly improved' as a result of coming to Sea Cadets, and a further 32% said it had 'slightly improved'. Sea Cadets also has an impact on young people's ability to listen—six in 10 (60%) cadets say their ability to listen to the views of others improved by joining.

In the qualitative research, cadets talked about the benefits of meeting and interacting with people from different backgrounds to themselves:

'Being able to socialise with people from all different backgrounds, all different people. Because at school you're only meeting people from the same area, all the same stuff. But say you go on a course and you meet people from Scotland, well I don't socialise with Scottish people on a regular basis. I think it gives you social skills, because you have to talk to people all the time.'

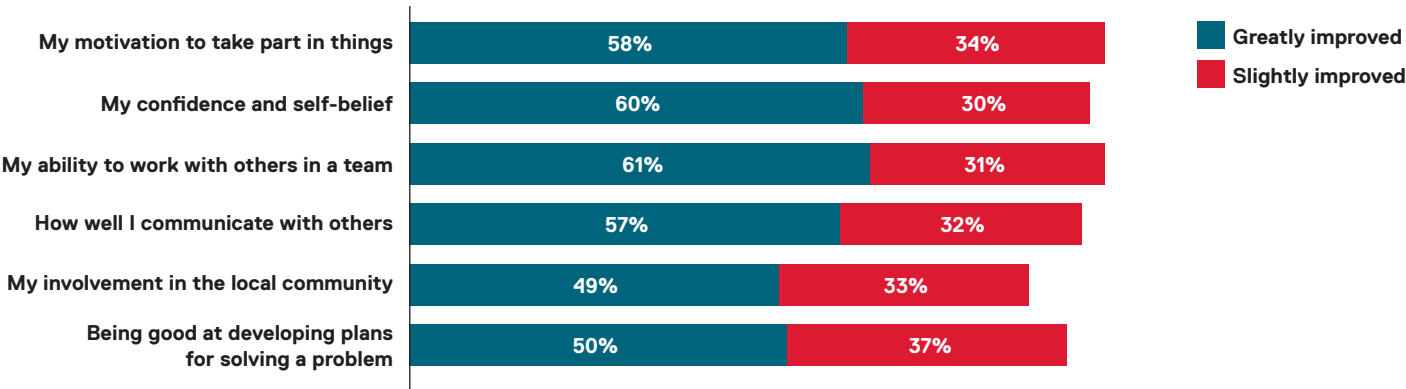
Kingston, age 16-18

Citizenship

Evidence for the impact of Sea Cadets on young people's sense of citizenship is still compelling, though is less strong than for some other outcomes. Nearly three-quarters (74%) felt that they are more likely to 'help other people' as a result of being in Sea Cadets and over half said it has made them more likely to 'stand up for things they believe are right' (64%) and 'feel part of my community' (60%).

However, impact on citizenship in terms of feeling part of their local community or wanting to make a difference did not emerge as a theme in the qualitative research.

Figure 11: Cadets on what they feel has changed for the better in them as a result of joining Sea Cadets (base: 2,400 cadets)



VALUES

For Sea Cadets, values run alongside life skills as a thread running through the charity. The five Sea Cadet values are:

- Respect
- Loyalty
- Self-discipline
- Commitment
- Honesty & integrity

The quantitative and qualitative research shows that Sea Cadets is having a positive impact on young people’s worldview and values, with positive feedback from both cadets and parents (although cadets tend to be more enthusiastic). Taking each in turn:

Respect

Parents still painted a reasonably positive picture of how their children’s levels of respect had been improved, with 47% seeing a great improvement in their child’s respect shown for others, and 33% seeing a slight improvement.

The qualitative research links Sea Cadets’ grounding in the customs and traditions of the Royal Navy to an increase in respect among young people. A young man from Tenby cadets said:

‘It matures you. It just changes you. When you speak to Sir you have to say Sir at the end of the sentence, rather than just saying please and thanks, ‘ta’. It makes you more polite and respectful.’

Tenby, male, age 12-14

Loyalty

There is evidence that Sea Cadets are loyal to one another, with strong bonds developing between young people in each unit—this was a very strong theme emerging from the qualitative research. The report notes: ‘[cadets] contrasted the way that they feel people are accepted as cadets, no matter what their social, cultural or educational background, with a much more judgemental social environment at school.’ Arguably, it is this social element and the strength of these friendships that keeps people coming back to cadets:

‘The camaraderie. It’s a brotherhood. Even if it’s a cadet force rather than the Royal Marines, you feel bound together. It’s just immense.’ Leeds, male, age 16-18

The quantitative research backs up these findings, with 64% feeling a strong sense of duty towards their unit (a further quarter – 27% – feel some sense of duty). Thinking about skills they have improved through coming to Sea Cadets, nearly nine in 10 (89%) said their sense of loyalty had improved (including six in 10 – 65% – who say it has greatly improved). As before, parents were less enthused but still positive about the benefits of Sea Cadets – 54% reported a great improvement in their child’s sense of loyalty and a further 29% saw a slight improvement.

Self-discipline

Despite worries that Sea Cadets would be overly disciplined and strict, cadets frequently reflected during the qualitative research that the expectations placed on them as a cadet had made them more disciplined and organised.

‘I’m more organised. Which wasn’t occurring before this. I feel better when I’m organised. Before I came to cadets my room would be untidy... but I feel better when I’ve done things right.’

Leeds, male, age 16-18

The qualitative research found a close link between self-discipline and the pride many cadets found in wearing the uniform and looking smart, and that this formed a key part of the cadets’ identity:

‘It’s like... boots are shiny, that takes time and patience to do. Cadets installs that patience. It gives you more patience in life.’ **Leeds, age 16-18**

Parents echoed this view. The parent of one cadet consulted during the quantitative research mentioned that a change they had noticed because of their child’s time in Sea Cadets is:

‘Ironing of uniform and polishing shoes without being asked.’ **Parent of Sea Cadet**

Nearly six in 10 (56%) cadets say their ‘willingness to work hard’ has been greatly improved by coming to Sea Cadets, and a further 30% say it has slightly improved. Overall, parents agree, but are more modest about the scale of the change they feel has taken place – 47% say they have seen a great improvement in their child’s willingness to work hard, and 35% a slight improvement.

Commitment

Young people feel committed to Sea Cadets— just under three-quarters (72%) strongly so, and a further 21% ‘somewhat’ committed. As highlighted earlier, nearly two thirds (57%) say Sea Cadets means they now feel they can ‘overcome setbacks to conquer important challenges’—suggesting involvement in cadets gives young people the grit and determination they need to persevere, even when things go wrong.

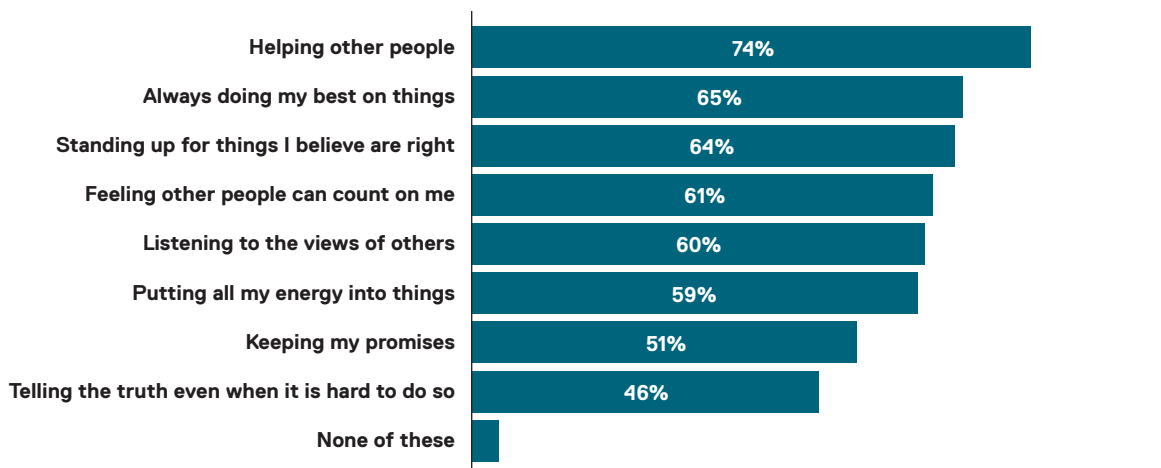
Commitment was not identified as a theme during the qualitative research, but young people often reported an improvement in their attention to schoolwork and in their general focus. The quantitative survey shows that parents also see a positive change, with 58% reporting a great improvement in their child’s motivation to take part in things since their participation in Sea Cadets, and a third (30%) seeing a slight improvement.

Honesty & integrity

Young people feel Sea Cadets makes rather less of a difference to their honesty than to other skills and traits. But still, around half (46%) say they feel their ability to ‘tell the truth even when it is hard to do’ has improved by coming to Sea Cadets. Parents agree, with four in 10 (43%) parents seeing a great improvement in their child’s honesty and integrity through their participation in Sea Cadets, and a further 29% seeing a slight improvement. Part of the explanation for this lower score is that our question implies they were not completely honest before they joined cadets.

Thinking about longer-term positive changes in themselves because of Sea Cadets, 51% of young people chose ‘keeping my promises’ and 57% chose ‘feeling I can overcome setbacks to conquer important challenges’, which would indicate progress towards a sense of resilience is being achieved. Almost the same number (64%) say Sea Cadets has increased their likelihood of ‘standing up for things I believe are right.’

Figure 12: Cadets on the values they feel have changed for the better in them as a result of joining Sea Cadets (base: 2,400 cadets)



QUALIFICATIONS

The extent to which cadets gain qualifications is the most tangible and measurable outcome the Sea Cadets has. Qualifications offered may be externally accredited or may be Sea Cadets' own qualifications. Accredited qualifications include Royal Yachting Association qualifications in sailing, powerboating and navigation, St John's Ambulance qualifications in First Aid and qualifications accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management.

BTEC in Teamwork and Personal Development

A new BTEC Level 1 qualification in Teamwork and Personal Development was introduced in January 2016 at no cost to the cadet for all those achieving Ordinary Cadet or the equivalent rank in the Royal Marines Cadets. Up to May 2017 of 2,933 eligible cadets, 775 (48%) had achieved the BTEC Level 1 qualification and 851 were working towards it (52%).

Other qualifications achieved

In the year April 16 – April 17 a total of 44,973 qualifications were achieved by Cadets (an average of around 3.2 per cadet). A breakdown of qualifications achieved is shown in Table 1.

Unit level awards

Awards are also given to Sea Cadet units to recognise and celebrate the hard work of cadets, volunteers and staff, together with the quality, nature and extent of experience delivered. The Westminster data shows that for the calendar year 2016, 180 units had been awarded the top Burgee award and 154 units the Pennant. 18 units had been awarded a CSC Commendation. As of late 2016 the data showed that units awarded the Burgee award tend to have a slightly higher average duration (eg, cadets remain active for longer, on average) than units awarded a Pennant—with an average duration of 413 days for units with Burgee award compared to 377 days for units awarded a Pennant.

Cadet's views on qualifications

In the qualitative research, cadets highlighted first aid as something that they are very proud of and that they feel will be a useful skill for the future, including in the workplace.

'People who've done Advanced First Aid, they've got a nationally recognised qualification they can use in the workplace.' Kingston, male, age 16-18

Young people value the opportunity to gain qualifications through Sea Cadets. The quantitative research showed that this is seen as one of the most significant long-term benefits of involvement in Sea Cadets. Three-quarters (75%) believe Sea Cadets will help them 'a great deal' to gain qualifications and a further 20% feel it will help them 'a fair amount' (total: 95%). As outlined above, this is also seen by parents as one of the top three benefits of their children's involvement in Sea Cadets.

Table 1: Other qualifications achieved

QUALIFICATION	Number of cadets achieving this Apr 16 – Apr 17
Duke of Edinburgh Awards	714
BTECs	2,933
First Aid qualifications	6,762
Boating qualifications	18,667
Cadet Training Program (CTP) modules	5,054
Specialisation badges awarded	6,119
Nation Citizenship Service awards	50
SCC proficiencies	4,674
Total	44,973

7. Impact

SNAPSHOT

Sea Cadets' longer-term aims focus on helping young people in education and beyond, with improved wellbeing, and improving participation in their communities.

Although cadets themselves tend to be more enthusiastic than parents or volunteers about the scale of the change, data suggests that the organisation is contributing to many of these impact areas.

Cadets expect Sea Cadets to help them gain qualifications (75% 'a great deal'), develop skills for later life (72% 'a great deal'), get a job (60% 'a great deal') and improve wellbeing and happiness (53% 'a great deal').

Analysis of the charity's enrolment data shows that Sea Cadets is engaging young people from a wide range of backgrounds and income brackets. We can assume that the organisation's impact cuts across demographic groups and therefore has the potential to improve social mobility, for example by facilitating strong friendships between young people of different backgrounds.

But the data also shows lower retention rates for more disadvantaged young people compared to their more advantaged peers. Since 2010, the most deprived cadets stayed engaged for an average of 318 days (0.87 years) compared to 471 days (1.29 years) for their better-off peers.

Introduction to impact

Sea Cadets has ambitious goals for the benefits it aims to have for young people longer-term. It seeks to help cadets improve their attendance and engagement in school, their post-16 destinations and labour market participation, and their long-term physical and mental health. The charity also aims to reduce risky or problem behaviours, and increase young people's participation in their communities.

As is common in 'impact measurement' the data available does not provide a full picture. For example, although young people are confident that Sea Cadets will improve their chances in the world of work (and feedback from parents backs this up), we do not have data showing the career paths young people choose, so do not know whether this expectation is eventually met.

However, the data we do have indicates a positive picture, showing that for the young people reached by Sea Cadets think that the organisation is contributing to impact across many of its long-term goals. These are explored in turn below, drawing on analysis of evidence from the qualitative and quantitative research.

What impact should Sea Cadets target?

Parents agree with the Sea Cadets' key priorities for their children. When asked what they feel are the most important longer-term benefits Sea Cadets should provide to young people, two of the top three areas identified by parents were: 'providing them with skills for later life' (88%) and 'helping them gain qualifications' (68%), which matches the key progress areas on Sea Cadets' outcomes framework (see Figure 13). Also, important to parents is 'improving their happiness and wellbeing' (71%). Volunteers also broadly share the priorities of parents in terms of longer-term benefits for young people.

What are the indications of impact?

Cadets themselves seem confident the charity will deliver— 75% agree a 'great deal' that Sea Cadets will help them gain qualifications, 72% that it will provide them with skills for later life, and 53% believe the charity will improve their happiness and wellbeing.

Volunteers are somewhat less positive than cadets about the potential impact of Sea Cadets, but still broadly positive. The chart below (Figure 10) compares the extent to which cadets think Sea Cadets will give them various long-term benefits with the views of volunteers about the extent to which those benefits are achieved.

Figure 13: Views of parents and volunteers on the most important longer-term benefits Sea Cadets should provide to young people (base: 3,604 volunteers & 2,755 parents)

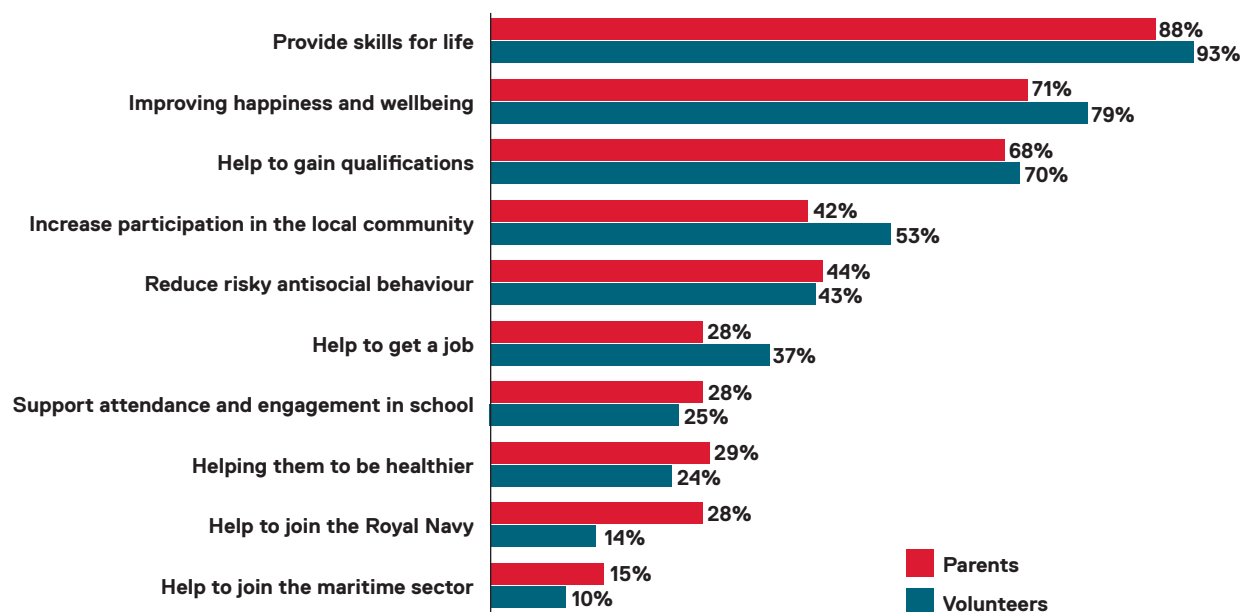
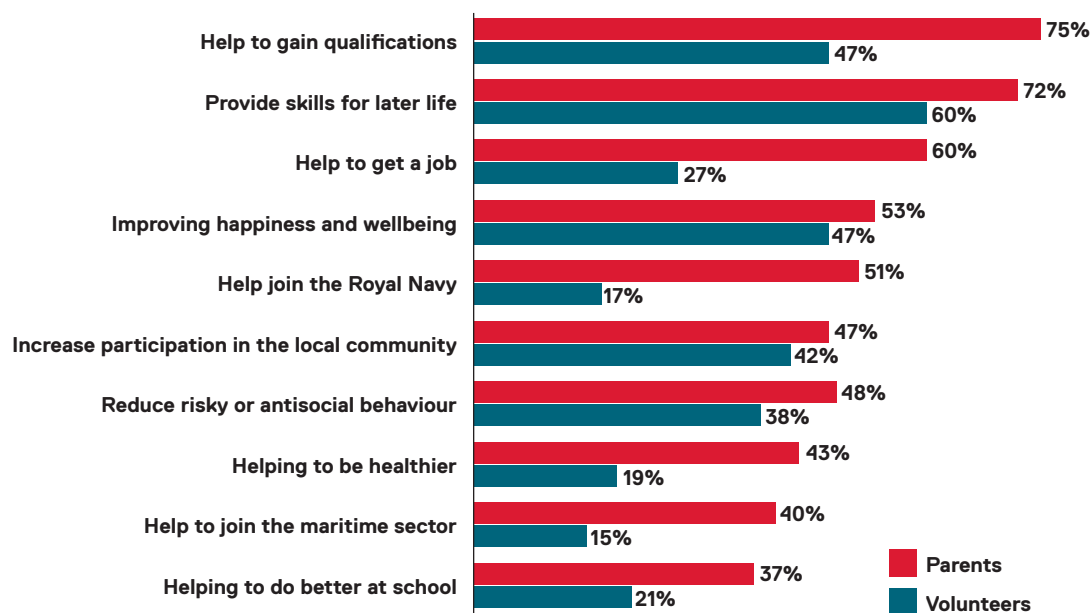


Figure 14: Views of cadets on the extent to which Sea Cadets will give them the following long-term benefits, and views of volunteers on the extent to which Sea Cadets currently gives young people the following benefits (base: 3,050 volunteers & 2,580 cadets)



Volunteers are also reasonably confident that Sea Cadets will help young people gain skills for later life (60%), but less so than cadets themselves (of whom 72% think Sea Cadets will help them 'a great deal' in this area). Volunteers are also less confident about the ability of Sea Cadets to help young people get a job – 60% of cadets think Sea Cadets will help them a great deal in this area, compared to only 27% of volunteers.

This suggests that volunteers are not really seeing the potential future employment benefits of their work and is something the Sea Cadets might wish to discuss and promote with them.

Conversely, both volunteers (47%) and cadets (53%) agree that Sea Cadets has an impact on improving young people's happiness and wellbeing.

Doing better at school

Although three-quarters (75%) of young people surveyed believe that Sea Cadets will help them 'do better at school' (including 37% who believe it will help them 'a great deal'), they have less confidence that the Sea Cadets will play a role in this than for other outcomes.

That said, parents do not consider this a particularly important benefit (or, at least, not a benefit which they feel the Sea Cadets must provide), with only 35% of parents considering this a high priority.

Nevertheless, the qualitative evidence suggests that Sea Cadets is having an impact on the way young people engage at school:

'I don't know why, but it makes me more committed to my schoolwork. Ever since I started here my schoolwork grades have gone up. Maybe it's just the feeling that I'm doing something with my life.' **Holyhead, male, age 14-16**

'I was really bad in year seven and eight. I just thought that school didn't really matter, and I didn't put any work into it. And once I started here, the discipline here really made me rethink, and I started getting better grades, better test marks. And now, if it wasn't for cadets, I wouldn't have the grades I have today. It's really changed me, 'cos I used to be that person who didn't care about anything.' **Tenby, age 16-18**

However, many of the cadets consulted during the qualitative research appeared to be from backgrounds 'where educational achievement was encouraged', and already had a high level of motivation for their schoolwork. This could explain why parents do not consider attendance and engagement a high priority for their children (eg, that young people who attend Sea Cadets may generally have good school attendance and are engaged in their education).

Evidence for this impact measure is also available from the study by Betram et al (2018) from 2018, which attempted to link data for a sample of cadets—whose units were part of the Cadets in Schools Programme—

to see if there was any relationship between being a cadet and educational outcomes. This analysis was achieved by taking a sample of Sea Cadets, identifying them in the National Pupil Database and then creating a comparison group that matched the cadet sample, using a statistical approach called Propensity Score Matching.

This analysis does not show evidence of a correlation between participation in Sea Cadets and educational attainment at GCSE; 43.6% of Sea Cadets achieved 5 A*C grades compared to a range of 43.6–45.5% of those in the comparison group. However, they did find a small significant positive correlation between cadet participation and school attendance; 4% of cadets had attendance rates below 85% compared to between 4.3–5.5% of the comparison group. However, these findings do need to be treated with some caution.

- The research was undertaken over a short period and at the inception of some of the units, meaning that the period of engagement of young people was less than a year and before the units were properly established.
- Methodologically, as noted in chapter 5, only 7% of the Sea Cadets' data they were sent was actually linked to the NPD and analysed. This level of attrition may have had a significant effect on the results, for example the profile of cadets in this analysis seemed both more male and white than is suggested by in-house analysis (pages 28–29) and of units in start-up where typically there is greater attrition— which raises the clear possibility that the achieved sample in this research was unrepresentative.

Nonetheless, the fact that methodology has been tested is a positive step forward, as NPC has been advocating for this kind of approach for some time.³⁶ In our view, a larger and more up-to-date exercise of established units that reduces the level of attrition seen here remains the best way for Sea Cadets to test its impact on this measure,

Improvement in post-16 destinations and labour market participation

As we saw above, both the qualitative and quantitative evidence shows that Sea Cadets helps young people improve key skills and gain qualifications. Three-quarters of young people (75%) believe Sea Cadets has a positive impact on their school attainment (including 37% who think it helps them 'a great deal', and 38% 'a fair amount'), and only 6% believe it does not have any effect.

'It's definitely going to look good on your qualifications that you can take charge of a situation. Say on a construction

site... they can point at you and say well you've learnt leadership skills when you were really young, so this is basic stuff for you.' **Tenby, age 16-18**

The qualitative data also suggests that for some young people, Sea Cadets gave them the drive to work harder at school, which the young people felt resulted in higher level qualifications and better grades. This was particularly evident in the qualitative interviews with volunteers, with many citing examples of cases where the Sea Cadets had made a positive difference. A cadet from Leeds explained that Sea Cadets had increased his motivation and given him the discipline he needed to continue his education. He said:

'A couple of years ago I didn't want to do my A-levels. I didn't even want to do my GCSEs. I only expected to get three GCSEs, but I got 12 in the end. Just because cadets gave me that discipline, to get my head up and realise—oh god—you've wasted your school life here. I'm doing A-level history now, which is no walk in the park. I feel like cadets is contributing to that 'you've got to get it down, right now, if you do it later you might mess it up.' It made me want to do uni as well—I'm doing my UCAS application now. I'm hoping to do history at university. Cadets has helped, 'cos it'll help me get into university; if it requires an interview I'll be more confident when I go in, I'll be relaxed.'

Leeds, age 16-18

Cadets also believe that their involvement will help them get a job in future—with 61% saying they think Sea Cadets will help them 'a great deal' to get a job, and a further 27% 'a fair amount'.

Although it is not prioritised, a relatively high number of young people report that their involvement in Sea Cadets will make them more likely to join the maritime sector in general (69% say 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount') and the Royal Navy in particular (79% 'a great deal' or 'a fair amount'). We do not have hard data to tell us whether cadets actually pursue these careers. But during the qualitative research volunteers suggested

that, ultimately, many do not. It seems that Sea Cadets can give young people focus and direction, widen their understanding of the breadth and variety of options available to them and help them crystallise their ideas:

'I figured out my career future from joining the cadets. I want to go into the Navy as a chef and then go into the military police.' **Milton Keynes, male, age 12-14**

'I think it's made me sure of what I want to do. I want to do something earth science-y, and in cadets you do a lot of meteorology, sailing... it kind of overlaps a lot and I really enjoy it and it made me realise that really was what I wanted to do.' **Buxton, female, age 16-18**

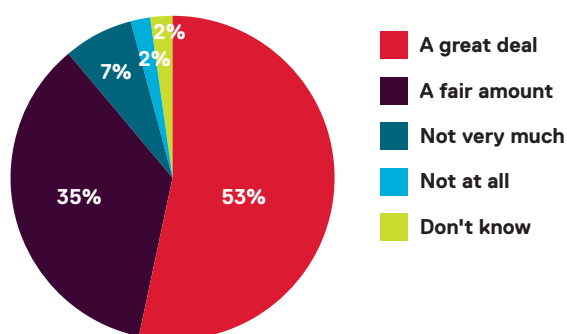
So, although we lack data about cadets' post-16 progression outcomes, the evidence we do have indicates that involvement in Sea Cadets may help young people to develop their intentions, increase their skills, gain qualifications, stay in education, and focus their career aspirations. From this evidence, it is reasonable to infer that the Sea Cadets has some positive impact on young people's post-16 options.

Long-term physical and mental health

According to parents, improving young people's happiness and wellbeing is the second highest priority for their children's involvement in Sea Cadets after helping them develop skills for later life (with 71% saying improved wellbeing is of high importance). Insight research with five cadet units by fundraising and marketing agency Burnett Works also showed that parents believe the resilience their children gain through Sea Cadets will help them stay well as they grow up—through helping them deal with challenges, be more adaptable, and develop good habits for physical activity, particularly outdoors. A parent of a Cadet in Oxford said:

'When you're a grown up, you have to cope with what life throws at you, but that is less true for kids nowadays. If Sea Cadets can deliver resilience, it's a very valuable skill. To pick yourself up and try again.'

Figure 15: Cadets on whether they think Sea Cadets will improve their happiness and wellbeing long-term (base: 2,350 cadets)



Health and wellbeing did not emerge as a theme in the qualitative research with cadets, but young people's feedback via the quantitative survey is encouraging. Just over half of cadets (53%) say Sea Cadets has improved their happiness and wellbeing 'a great deal', and a further 35% 'a fair amount'. The data does not show how long this improvement lasts after young people leave Sea Cadets.

Reducing risky or problem behaviours

Three-quarters of young people (75%) said that Sea Cadets had significantly helped them reduce their risky or antisocial behaviour (either 'a great deal'—48%—or 'a fair amount'—27%). Almost six in 10 (55%) say that Sea Cadets has stopped them getting into trouble (although only a third—34%—strongly agree that Sea Cadets has helped them in this area). Improving behaviour is prioritised less highly by parents than other areas (with only 44% of parents citing this as a key long-term benefit they are hoping their young people will gain from Sea Cadets), most likely this is because risky or antisocial behaviour was not perceived as a major problem for most young people in the first place.

For a significant minority of young people consulted during the qualitative research, involvement in Sea Cadets had helped them stop getting in trouble, and had improved their attitude to authority figures. Many reported that this is due to the ethos and discipline of the Sea Cadets, which increased their maturity and their respect of others.

'Discipline. I used to fight in school. Now through Sea Cadets I don't fight as much, because I've learnt to control my temper.' **Holyhead, male, age 12-14**

These views were also reflected in the qualitative interviews with volunteers, with many suggesting that the structured activities and motivated peer groups provided by Sea Cadets have a positive impact on young people:

'For me, I was in some quite bad groups, drinking and that from quite an early age. Then you get into this and you'll come down on a Wednesday night and do some extra boating or whatever, and you've got into a new friendship group and got that self-discipline and self-confidence ... they'll be the new people you'll hang around with and none of them will do it.' **Volunteer, Leeds**

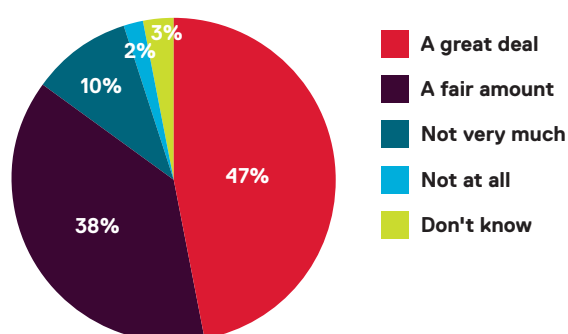
I think it gives them a different road to look down. Whereas they're drawn in by their peers that are maybe just around the streets, they realise there's a whole different life out there too.'

Volunteer, female, Kingston

Increased participation in communities

The quantitative evidence shows that Sea Cadets encourages young people to help others – 74% of Sea Cadets see 'helping other people' as a positive change in them because of their involvement (more substantial than any other change). Eight in 10 young people felt the Sea Cadets would significantly increase their involvement in their community over the longer-term (with 47% saying 'a great deal' and 38% 'a fair amount', see Figure 16).

Figure 16: Cadets on whether they think Sea Cadets will increase their involvement in their local community long-term (base: 1,812 cadets)



As part of their Sea Cadet role, many young people get involved in fundraising activities such as poppy-selling. However, overall the qualitative research provides less evidence of impact in this area, especially of community engagement outside the Sea Cadets. Some young people had volunteered in youth-oriented work such as

Cubs and Brownies, or as sports leaders at schools—suggesting their increased confidence and improved leadership skills helped them gain these positions and succeed in them.

However, both cadets and volunteers pointed out during the discussions that Sea Cadets involves a big-time commitment, which—when combined with school or college work—does not leave much time for additional activities. An exception seems to be the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which was mentioned by several young people:

'Duke of Edinburgh. Any cadet would be mad not to do it because everything in cadets counts for Duke of Edinburgh. I speak to a lot of the younger ones who say they'll definitely want to do it because they can.' **Tenby, male, age 16-18**

Feedback from the 2015 Cadet Conference on the results of an earlier survey indicated a strong desire from cadets for increased opportunity to take part in social action through Sea Cadets. In response, Sea Cadets has begun initiatives to promote, encourage and profile social action activity across Sea Cadets. This has included introduction of annual regional awards for social action projects as well as an Autumn 2016 pilot of the National Citizen Service programme, providing a structured route to promote social action. Work is ongoing to develop the delivery of the NCS programme long-term.

It is also striking the number of former cadets who go on to volunteer as cadet leaders:

'Look at the percentage of ex-cadets that we've got coming back to instruct other Cadets. We've got lifeboat crew here as well, including the next coxswain who takes over in two or three weeks' time. And quite a few of the crew are [ex-cadets].'

Holyhead, volunteer

This observation is backed up by the quantitative surveys, with half of the volunteers (50%) having been Sea Cadets themselves in the past.

8. The challenge of reaching the most disadvantaged

Reaching the most disadvantaged young people can be difficult due to the multiple issues they face. But given the substantial evidence of Sea Cadets' effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes, it is clear the organisation could make a positive difference to disadvantaged young people's lives.

Suitability of the environment Sea Cadets creates for disadvantaged young people

A strong theme emerging from the qualitative research is the open and welcoming environment created by Sea Cadets, and the charity's ethos of treating all young people the same, regardless of background or social status. This theme also emerged from the quantitative research, but less strongly. Nine in 10 cadets (90%) agree that 'Sea Cadets is a supportive environment', of whom 65% strongly agree. Almost the same proportion (94%) agree that the environment Sea Cadets creates feels safe, with 71% strongly agreeing.

Those consulted by the qualitative research argued that disadvantaged young people 'do not experience the same stigma within Sea Cadets that they do elsewhere—partly because the organisation is able to ensure, through bursaries and subsidies, that economic factors do not exclude them from the courses and activities open to other Sea Cadets':

'There aren't any disadvantaged [kids]—I feel that we give the same to every cadet, irrespective of background, and I don't see that anyone is disadvantaged when they walk through the door. My daughter is a cadet from a disadvantaged background, and she's progressed as well as anyone from a more well-to-do family. She's been able to experience the voyages, the summer

camp as well as anyone else, so she feels like there's no stigma attached to her as a cadet as she does at school. It's the one place she's felt equal to everyone else.' **Kingston, volunteer**

The stability, structure and discipline offered by Sea Cadets is also a positive factor, as young people from disadvantaged backgrounds may lack this elsewhere in their lives:

We've had a lot in the past from foster care, troubled backgrounds; we used to have a lad that was in a behavioural school because he couldn't manage mainstream school, and because of effort here and from other parties he was able to go back to mainstream. And his foster parents put a lot of it down to us, having the stability, the structure, the discipline. When they come in the door we set a standard and they know that standard when they come in. Just his attitude, the way he spoke to people, how he presented himself, how he behaved with his peers. Just what was socially acceptable, that he couldn't deal with before. So, you can't bully, when you speak to us you have to call us by our rank, you have to wear your uniform.' **Milton Keynes, volunteer**

Volunteers also commented that the guidance they provide to young people, in an environment where young people are listened to and their perspectives and ideas are taken seriously, is helpful to disadvantaged young people:

‘We had one in Fraserburgh, from a very very poor background, and he became a PO Cadet. And the thing he mentioned, all the way through, was adult guidance. Positive adult guidance that he didn’t get at home. To encourage him, discipline him, support him, all that. That brought him right through.’

Oban, volunteer

What success is Sea Cadets having in reaching disadvantaged young people?

The enrolment data analysed by Dr Will Parry provides a valuable insight into the profiles of young people reached by Sea Cadets. Cadet’s postcodes were mapped on to the database using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which is a UK Government study of relative deprivation in areas across the country (unfortunately available in England only). Dr Parry also mapped cadets against the Acorn categorisation, which segments the UK population using postcode data.

Analysis of the data shows the variation in levels of deprivation across different units. Looking at an average level of deprivation for each unit based on the cadets’ Index of Multiple Deprivation deciles (England only) shows that, according to 2016 data, the units with the highest average levels of deprivation are City of Liverpool (average score: 1.0), Newcastle East (average score: 1.2), Middleton & Chadderton and Edmonton (average scores: both 1.5), and Kirkby & Liverpool North (average score: 1.6). The units with the lowest levels of deprivation are Huntingdon (average score: 10.0), Sunbury & Walton (average score: 9.7), Thornbury (9.6), Romsey (9.4), Warsash (9.3), and Hertford & Ware (8.9). The average score across 301 active units in England is 5.1 (for cadets enrolled in 2016).

Factoring the average levels of deprivation of the areas in which the units are located shows that—as we might expect—units in more deprived areas tend to have a higher proportion of cadets from deprived areas. But some units have more deprived cadets, on average, than expected. These units include Sheffield, City of Liverpool, Kirkby & Liverpool North, Chiswick and Felixstowe. It may be useful for Sea Cadets to analyse this data further to identify any lessons from these units on how to reach more disadvantaged young people.

Units with more affluent cadets, on average, than expected include Huntingdon, Thornbury, Gosforth, and Romsey.

How long disadvantaged young people stay involved

As we have seen, the data clearly shows that Sea Cadets is reaching some of the most disadvantaged, with the analysis showing that cadets fall into all deciles between 1 (most deprived) and 10 (least deprived) of the Index of Multiple Deprivation, and from categories 1 (least deprived) to 6 (most deprived) of the Acorn categorisation. This lends weight to reports from cadets and volunteers picked up during the focus groups that the open, welcoming and non-judgmental atmosphere created by Sea Cadets puts the organisation in a good position to engage disadvantaged young people.

However, although Sea Cadets is good at recruiting young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, the data shows that average retention is lower for this group than others. Looking at retention rates for young people in each decile of the Index of Multiple Deprivation shows that—put simply—the more deprived a young person’s background, the less likely they are to remain engaged with Sea Cadets over a long period of time. The median length of engagement since 2010 for the least deprived cadets is 471 days (1.29 years), whereas the most deprived cadets stay engaged for a median length of 318 days (0.87 years)—a 32% difference.

Analysis of this difference over time (see Figure 17) shows the positive finding that median duration has increased for both groups between 2010 and 2016, particularly in the most recent two years. However, the largest increase has occurred in the least disadvantaged cadets, while retaining the most disadvantaged remains a challenge.

Variation by units

Median cadet duration varies widely by Sea Cadet unit and analysis of this data can be a starting point for determining the factors behind why some units are more successful than others. The table below shows the 30 units with the most deprived cadet intake, ranked by the median duration of cadets at the unit. Six of these units have a median duration of over 500 days compared to two units where the median duration is below 200 days. What can these units learn from each other?

Evidence from the Sea Cadet exit survey

The exit survey highlights some of the reasons why cadets leave—this may be because they are too busy, or because they become bored, because they are not happy at their unit, or simply because they ‘age out’ when they reach 18. But the survey does not distinguish

between levels of disadvantage. So, at present, it is not possible to know whether there is a reason which affects disadvantaged cadets more than others. This

could be useful further analysis for Sea Cadets to conduct in future.

Figure 17: Average duration in days and years of the most deprived (IMD decile 1) and least deprived (IMD decile 10) cadets, and the percentage difference between the two groups

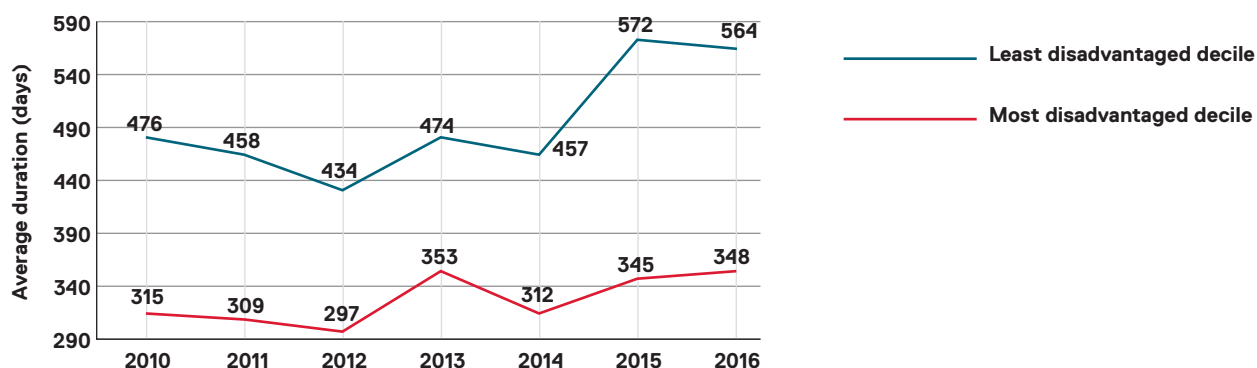


Table 2: Variation by units

Unit	Median duration (days)	Average of IMD decile	Number of cadets leaving 2013 – 2016
Southwark	834	2.4	31
Penzance	581	3.1	34
Skelmerdale	551	1.6	42
Walsall	544	2.7	85
Wallasey	543	2.9	58
Sheppey	527	2.8	62
City of Liverpool	474	2.3	44
Newham Cornwell Vc	451	2.8	34
South Liverpool	410	2.7	82
Morecambe And Heysham	407	2.5	45
Sefton	395	3	91
Clapton And Hackney	372	2.3	44
Clacton-On-Sea	362	2.3	38
Kirkby And Liverpool North	360	2.1	80
Middlesbrough	349	1.9	50
Basildon	340	3.1	30
Hepburn And Sunderland	334	2.8	39
Oldham	333	2.9	30
Great Yarmouth	330	2.8	46
Bradford	310	2.7	62
Barnsley	302	3	63
Workington	289	3	49
Newcastle East	288	2.3	43
Liverpool (West Derby)	285	2	88
Haringey	284	2.8	56
Jarrow	261	2.3	45
North Shields	245	3.1	44
Middleton And Chadderton	233	2.4	44
Sandwell	153	2.8	35
Birkenhead	126	2.1	51



9. Potential economic benefits of Sea Cadets

SNAPSHOT

Existing evidence for the economic benefits of Sea Cadets can be grouped into four categories—the value of volunteering, the increased wellbeing of volunteers, the increased wellbeing of cadets, and the improvement in life (non-cognitive) skills for young people.

An estimated value of volunteering can be calculated as the number of volunteers multiplied by the average number of hours multiplied by the average hourly wage. Applying this to Sea Cadets (assuming 8227 volunteers giving c.550 hours per year, and a median hourly wage of £13.08) gives an estimated value of £54,439,000 per year.

Economists have developed ways to estimate the value of changes in subjective wellbeing by using large UK survey data to identify a) the effect of life factors on subjective wellbeing and b) the value of increased income on subjective wellbeing. Using this approach, one researcher estimated that going to youth clubs improved subjective wellbeing equivalent to an increase in income of £2,300. Extrapolating this across the 14,000 cadets, we can estimate the value on participants' wellbeing is £32,200,000.

INTRODUCTION

Using the Sea Cadets' outcomes framework, the organisation's potential economic impact can be thought of as consisting of four components:

1. The value of volunteering.
2. Increased wellbeing and outcomes for volunteers
3. Increased wellbeing of cadets because of their participation.
4. The effect of improved life skills on the long-term outcomes, namely improved educational attainment, improved post-16 destinations, better health, less likelihood to engage in crime or anti-social behaviour, and increased participation in communities.

While each of these impacts is expressed as a monetary value, it might be misleading to add them up to create an estimate of total economic impact because across the three: a) the types of impact are different; b) the methods of estimating the impacts are different; and c) the people who benefit from the value created are different (specifically, the Sea Cadets benefit from 1, volunteers benefit from 2, and cadets, government, and taxpayers benefit from 3).

Below we describe how it is possible to estimate the value of Sea Cadets for each component. This is a preliminary assessment of how the charity could estimate the economic value of sea cadets, not a robust analysis of what that value might be.

VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

There are a few ways of estimating the value of volunteering. The simplest, and most common, is to use the following formula:³⁷

The number of volunteers X average number of hours X average hourly wage

This method is based on the idea that the value volunteers provide equals the value of what equivalent employees would provide if they performed the work instead, and the best way to estimate that value is to use the market price of employee time (i.e., wages).

Using this method, the value of hourly wage depends on the skills and experience that are required. An hour of a volunteer's time who happens to be a surgeon, for example, would be higher if they were doing surgery in a refugee camp than if they were serving food in the camp. If it is not possible to specify the skills and experience used, such as when estimating the

value of many volunteers who play different roles, it is conventional to use the median hourly wage as the value of a volunteer's time.

A calculation of the number of volunteers multiplied by the average number of hours multiplied by the average hourly wage can give a simple indication of the estimated value of volunteering. Applying this formula for Sea Cadets, the estimated number of volunteers and number of volunteer hours (derived from survey responses) per year as follows:

- Uniformed instructors: 3,890 volunteers average 670 hours per year = 2,609,000 hours
- Civilian Instructor: 1,365 volunteers average 380 hours per year = 519,000 hours
- Unit Manager / Trustee: 2,059 average 343 hours per year = 706,000 hours
- Other: 913 volunteers average 359 hours per year = 328,000

Giving a total of c. 4,162,000 hours volunteered. The median hourly wage is £13.08. Based on these assumptions, the estimated value of people who volunteer for Sea Cadets is £54,439,000 per year.

INCREASED WELLBEING OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering brings a range of benefits including enjoyment, satisfaction and achievement, meeting people and making friends, broadening life experience, boosting confidence, reducing stress, improving physical health and learning new skills.³⁸ Based on the literature review and evidence provided by MSSC we suggest benefits of volunteering for Sea Cadets can be broadly grouped into three outcome areas: (1) Enhanced wellbeing; (2) Physical health benefits and (3) Skills and employability.

Enhanced wellbeing

Volunteering can improve people's happiness, life satisfaction, self-esteem and sense of mastery, and provides physical and mental health benefits.³⁹ Volunteering is typically found to have a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing, for example, by enhancing social integration and engagement⁴⁰ – individuals with higher levels of social contact tend to report better mental health.⁴¹ Volunteers also have a higher perceived level of wellbeing⁴² as well as reporting improvements in confidence and self-awareness.⁴³ The positive activities and training involved in Sea Cadets will contribute to an enhanced sense of wellbeing for volunteers as they will encourage young people to achieve and feel appreciated for the work they put in.⁴⁴ Volunteers also achieve a personal sense of satisfaction when they see young people achieving and feel they have contributed to that⁴⁵ and the very act of volunteering can help people feel better from the sensation that volunteering gives them.⁴⁶

Physical health benefits

Volunteering allows people to remain active and socially engaged, which can be particularly important for older age groups, post-child raising and post-retirement. Volunteering has been shown to reduce the incidence of depression, stress, hospitalisation, pain and psychological distress,⁴⁷ as well as boosting the immune and nervous system and reducing heart rate and blood pressure.⁴⁸ The physical health of adult volunteers is linked to the type and duration of activity they are involved in. Adult volunteers in Sea Cadets must participate in a range of physical activities, alongside the cadets, which can include yachting, kayaking and hiking. Volunteers with Sea Cadets also dedicate a lot of time to cadet activities⁴⁹ so it is likely that they experience improved physical health because of their volunteering.

Skills and employability

The evidence on the impact of volunteering on employability is more mixed and not all types of volunteering will necessarily lead to better employment outcomes.⁵⁰ However, it is important not to overlook the potential benefits from volunteering felt by employers, as well as by employees – nearly all managers believe that workplace skills can be gained from volunteering.⁵¹ Emotions induced by volunteering, like confidence and self-esteem, have been linked to factors important in the workplace such as efficient problem-solving.⁵² Although younger volunteers may have a more explicit focus on skills development it is still relevant to adult volunteers. While qualifications are available to volunteers in Sea Cadets it is important that the charity continues to provide development opportunities for volunteers, especially as volunteers in Sea Cadets have a strong desire to share their skills and experiences with cadets.⁵³

INCREASED WELLBEING OF THE CADETS

As participation in Sea Cadets is voluntary, we can assume that young people who participate benefit in terms of increased happiness or wellbeing. In recent years economists have developed ways to estimate the monetary value of changes in subjective wellbeing by using large UK survey data to identify: a) the effect of certain life factors on the respondents' subjective wellbeing; and b) the value of increased income on subjective wellbeing. So, if, for example, a specific life factor – such as being married – is associated with a 5% increase in subjective wellbeing compared to not being married, and an increase in income of £20,000 is also associated with a 5% increase in subjective wellbeing, then being married can be thought of as being equivalent to an increase in income of £20,000.

Economists have developed ways to estimate the value of changes in subjective wellbeing by using large UK survey data to identify a) the effect of life-factors on subjective wellbeing, and b) the value of increased income on subjective wellbeing.

Using this approach, the Housing Association Charitable Trust estimated that going to youth clubs results in an improvement in subjective wellbeing equivalent to an increase in income of £2,300 per year.⁵⁴ As such across the 14,000 cadets, one estimate of the value of participating in Sea Cadets on participants' wellbeing is, therefore, £32,200,000, but this is highly hypothetical particularly as we know not all 14,000 cadets engage to the same extent.

Another way to look at this is to consider total MSSC expenditure; reported in 2016-17 as 16,799,000.⁵⁵ To 'break even' on this budget, Sea Cadets would need to achieve value equivalent to £2,300 for c.7,300 cadets (roughly half the number who currently receive the service).

IMPROVED LIFE (NON-COGNITIVE) SKILLS

The outcomes framework developed here is based on the idea that participating in Sea Cadets has an impact on the life skills of young people. Here we describe how, if MSSC was able to demonstrate that participating in Sea Cadets does, in fact, have such an impact, to turn those estimates of impact into economic value.

Effect on educational attainment

Much research identifies strong and positive links between educational attainment and earnings, although some research suggests that undertaking some vocational training (e.g. NVQ level 2) has a negative return.⁵⁶ In a 2004 study, Dearden et al. found that the returns to 'marginal learners' of staying on are around 11% for men and 18% for women.⁵⁷ Moreover, according to an internal report of the Department of Education,⁵⁸ the estimates of wage returns to qualification (percentage increase in wages and likelihood of employment) are similar to the latter. Taking on 2+ A Levels (relative to Level 2 qualifications) increases returns by 14% for both men and women.⁵⁹ Marginal learners are individuals at the margin of the decision as to whether to stay on or not. Sea Cadets are likely to include several marginal learners.

These figures can be used to estimate the economic impact of Sea Cadets if the charity can show that participating in Sea Cadets increases the likelihood that young people will stay on at school or increases their educational attainment.

Effect on post-16 destinations

Academic literature provides ample evidence that non-cognitive skills in general and higher levels of young people's openness, leadership, and self-expression will have economic benefits later in life. For example:

- Kuhn and Weinberger⁶⁰ found that white men in the United States who occupied leadership positions in high school have increased earnings of between

4% and 24% (corresponding to three data sources across decades between the 1970s and 1990s) as adults compared to their counterparts after adjusting for differences in cognitive skills. Measures of self-perceived leadership status were more weakly associated with increased future earnings, at the 3 percentage point mark.

- Eren and Ozbekli⁶¹ similarly found that high school leadership activities and adult earnings are positively related and that leadership skills are acquired in high school.
- Feinstein (2000)⁶² based on a UK study of younger children than NCS participants, found that extrovert boys are much less likely to experience unemployment.
- Zhang and Arvey⁶³ found that Social Potency—like extraversion and self-confidence—predicted individual earnings over time.
- Keller⁶⁴ concluded that in Hungary, self-confidence has a positive significant impact on wages.
- Heineck,⁶⁵ using British Household Panel Study data, found that for both men and women openness to experience was rewarded with higher wages.

If Sea Cadets can increase their leadership and self-confidence through participating, it can use these research findings to estimate the value of these non-cognitive skills to the cadets themselves and the economy.

Effect on health

There is a broad consensus that physical activity is associated with improved health and a reduced likelihood of certain diseases later in life, and that participating in physical activity as a young person is important. For example, the World Health Organisation recommends that "Children and young people aged 5-17 years old should accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity daily."⁶⁶ Telama et al. found that "a high level of physical activity during ages 9 to 18, especially when continuous, significantly predicted a high level of adult physical activity....we consider it important that school-age physical activity appears to influence adult physical activity...."⁶⁷

The UK government's Culture and Sport Evidence (CASE) programme has estimated the economic benefits of adults and young people engaging in different physical activities.⁶⁸ The benefits come from reduced healthcare costs and improved health, learning, and social/community cohesion outcomes.

Table 3: Discounted total economic value of the health gain associated with playing sport (based on actual frequency and duration of engagement, and £/QALY = £20,000)

Age (years)	11–15	16–29
Swimming	£9,023	£19,320
Cycling	£10,418	£22,290
Football	£10,093	£21,601
Athletics	£6,718	£14,383
Golf	£12,368	£26,463
Badminton	£4,171	£8,934
Tennis	£6,833	£14,627
Squash	£9,543	£20,428
Cricket	£7,045	£15,084
Recreational walking	£15,481	£33,129
Health/fitness	£16,772	£35,879

Table 3 shows lifetime benefits in reduced healthcare costs and improved health gains resulting from reduced risk in chronic heart disease, stroke, type-2 diabetes and colon cancer as these are thought to be most closely linked to physical activity. The economic value is greater if the young people engage in recommended levels of physical activity.

If a 15-year-old gets involved in typical health/fitness activities, the economic value of this to them and society over their lifetime is the equivalent of £16,772 today compared to if they do not participate in health/fitness activities.

This type of analysis can be used to show the economic value of participating in Sea Cadets – in terms of the impact on their physical health.

Effect on anti-social behaviour and crime

Participating in Sea Cadets may reduce anti-social behaviour and crime in primarily one of two ways. First, there is the diversionary nature of the Sea Cadets – if young people are participating in other activities, they are less likely to be engaged in anti-social behaviour and crime. The second is that the mentoring by volunteers and the self-discipline taught as part of the programme may also help young people desist from engaging

in crime and anti-social behaviour. In either case, if participating in Sea Cadets does, in fact, lower the risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour and this can be shown, there is a strong economic case to be made. A report by the National Audit Office estimated that in 2009, offending by all young people cost the economy £8.5-£11 billion.

Effect on community participation

Community participation is generally considered a worthy goal, not one that is desired for its economic value. There is very little economic literature on the economic value of community participation and involvement in general, and there are numerous methodological problems in trying to get a sensible estimate of this. While participating in Sea Cadets may promote young people's sense of civic duty and engagement in the wider community, there is not enough research done to date on how to sensibly measure and convert this into an economic value.

SUMMARY

We do not have enough data for a full economic analysis of the costs and benefits of Sea Cadets, however, this section has sketched out the possible parameters of such a study and some indicative data.

10. Learning

AREAS IDENTIFIED FOR DEVELOPMENT OR FUTURE LEARNING

Longer-term measurement

The qualitative and quantitative data analysed indicates that Sea Cadets can help young people develop skills, strengthen values and gain qualifications. It shows that cadets expect their experience to help them in future, for example in finding a job or improving post-16 outcomes, but currently Sea Cadets does not have data on whether these expectations are met in practice. A survey of former cadets could give some reflections on Sea Cadets' longer-term impact, we also suggest that the organisation continues working towards getting access to DFE data on educational outcomes of cadets.

Steps to improve retention of cadets including those from deprived backgrounds

Sea Cadets should continue its work to ensure all young people get full access to the whole of the Sea Cadet experience. For example, maximising enjoyment levels and ensuring there are adequate volunteers trained and equipped to deliver well and effectively. This should help improve overall retention levels.

The Westminster data described here gives a clear picture of the relative levels of deprivation experienced by cadets in different units, and the median time they remain engaged. It may be useful for Sea Cadets to draw on the experiences of those units with higher levels of duration and deprivation to identify lessons which might help other units attract and retain disadvantaged young people.

Another recommendation is that the exit survey is greatly improved – including trying to achieve a much higher rate of response. This should be providing important information about the cadet experience at the unit level.

Improve communications

Parents feel a need for better and more timely communications with their children's units. One parent said:

'Better communication with parents about what activities are available, also when activities are booked what is required for each activity, as relying

on the cadet to gain all the information doesn't all ways work.'

and another commented:

'The only thing I would change is to give parents more notice of equipment and things needed for trips or events (a couple of weeks before would be good) as finding out the same week they go is a bit too soon to get things if money is tight.'

Cadets also suggested that they would value improved communications, in giving cadets more say in the opportunities offered to them by their units. For example, when asked how Sea Cadets could improve, one cadet said:

'Let cadets have more say in what we can do instead of the staff telling us.'

And for volunteers, this would also be helpful, with only 10% of volunteers surveyed saying they 'strongly agree' that there is good communication across Sea Cadets (and 29% who 'slightly agree').

Maintain and enhance the public profile of Sea Cadets

Volunteers seem to value the public profile of Sea Cadets, with almost four in 10 (37%) strongly agreeing that 'Sea Cadets has a good public profile' and a further 37% saying they 'slightly agree'. So, it is important to maintain and enhance this public profile, which also addresses the views of cadets, many whom commented that cadet units should promote themselves and advertise more.

Appendix: Research methodologies

Survey methodology

Most of the survey findings in the report come from three online surveys conducted by Sea Cadets in conjunction with NPC between July and September 2017.

Volunteers, parents and cadets were invited to participate in separate surveys through a range of channels (direct emails, promotion through units, magazines, etc). Surveys were completed online. In total, we received the following numbers of responses:

- Cadets: 2580
- Parents: 2752
- Volunteers: 3064

While these sample sizes are large we cannot be certain of representativeness. However, we draw some confidence from the fact that gender and age breakdowns broadly match the profile of cadets and that the results are very consistent through findings from a similar exercise in 2015. The data presented are unweighted.

Qualitative methodology

Focus group discussions were conducted on behalf of MSSC among Sea Cadets and supervising volunteers by Sam Mountford during October and November 2016.

The objective of the exercise was to supplement other ongoing MSSC-commissioned quantitative research work and database analysis and to provide first-hand testimony and insight into the profile of the young people who pass through Sea Cadets, their experiences and the impact it has on their lives and life chances.

One unit in each of the six regions was selected at random to take part in the research. A seventh unit in a more economically disadvantaged area (Holyhead) was then selected.

The dates and locations of the discussions were as follows:

- 4 October – Oban
- 6 October – Buxton
- 14 October – Milton Keynes
- 18 October – Tenby
- 24 October – Kingston-upon-Thames
- 15 November – Holyhead

The focus groups took place during regular parade nights and comprised a series of short informal 20-25-minute-long discussions (a) with cadets, split broadly by age into groups of 5-8, and (b) in a separate session, supervised by volunteers. They were moderated by Sam Mountford, an independent researcher, and structured around topic guides developed in collaboration with MSSC. These topic guides are included in this report as an appendix.

A note on interpreting these findings

Qualitative research like this aims to provide rich personal insights into the experiences and perspectives of the people it studies. While we aimed to ensure that the units we included and the Sea Cadets we spoke to provided a broad cross-section by geography and age, they do not constitute a formal sample and the views described here should be regarded as indicative rather than representative of the Sea Cadet Corps.

As we were interested primarily in the impact of being a Sea Cadet on young people's lives, we focused the research on those who had been coming to Sea Cadets for at least a year. Of course, this means that these findings relate only to those who chose to persist with it; there will be other young people who may have found that Sea Cadets was not to their taste and stopped coming. The views of these young people are outside the scope of this research.

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