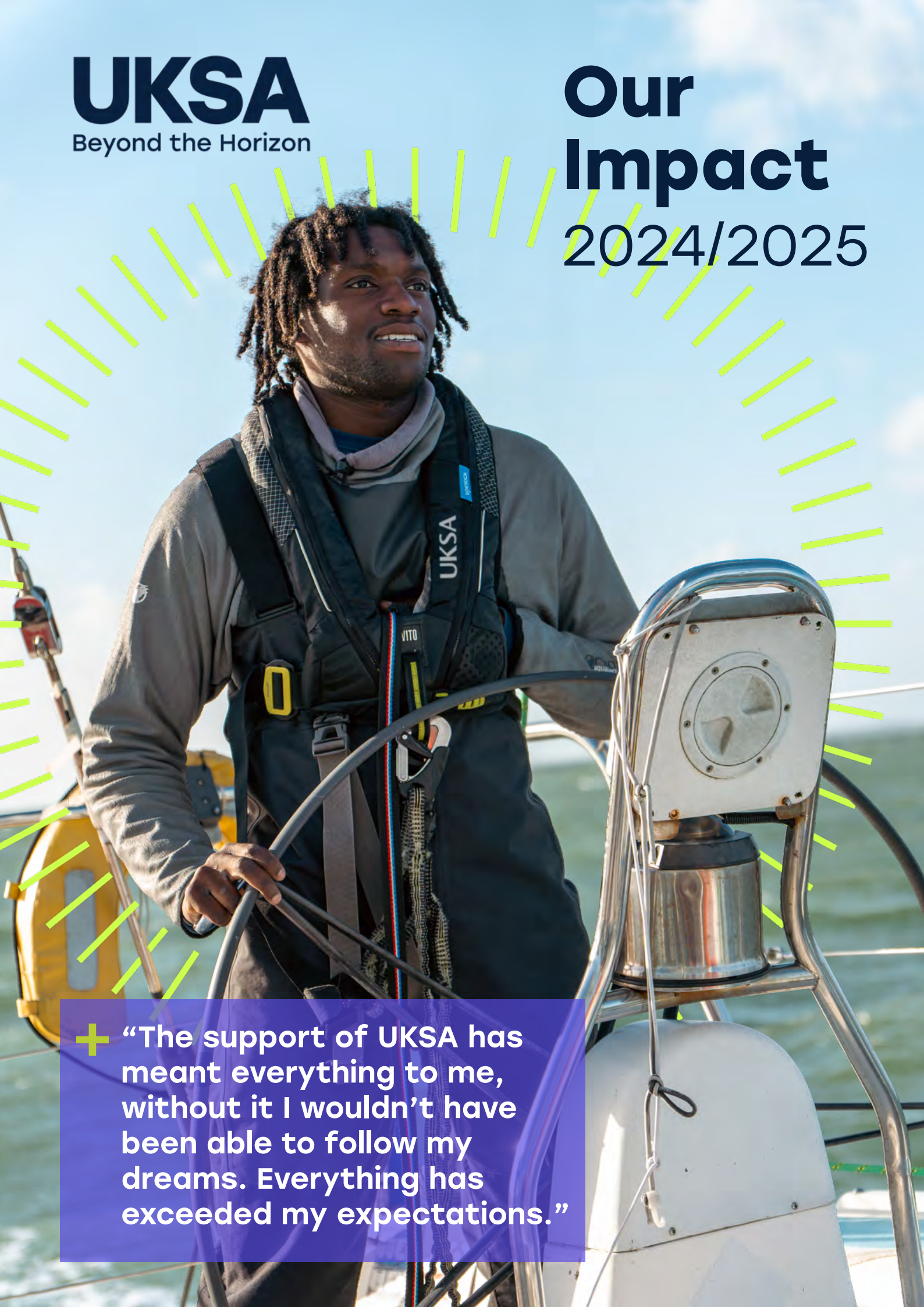




UKSA
Beyond the Horizon

Our Impact 2024/2025

+ “The support of UKSA has meant everything to me, without it I wouldn’t have been able to follow my dreams. Everything has exceeded my expectations.”

Note from UKSA’s Chief Executive Ben Willows

It has been another remarkable year for UKSA. We have welcomed a tremendous cohort of beneficiaries to our world-class centre on the Isle of Wight, providing life-changing experiences through water-based adventures, education, and maritime career training.

Our ethos is simple: those who can afford to pay do, and those that can’t, we raise funds to ensure they have the same opportunities. Everyone deserves a chance to succeed, regardless of their financial circumstances. At a time of growing financial hardship, we’re proud that **31% of our beneficiaries received bursary support totalling £1,486,714**, giving access to programmes that would otherwise be out of reach.

UKSA’s impact is delivered in two key areas:

- **Outdoor learning** – Providing water-based experiences that develop essential life skills and build confidence.
- **Maritime training** – Creating clear pathways into employment through expert training and industry partnerships.

Our work is more critical than ever. There’s a predicted shortfall of 90,000 seafarers globally by 2026 (BIMCO/ICS), yet only 1% of UK deck officers come from ethnically diverse backgrounds (Maritime UK). These figures highlight both a challenge and an opportunity—one UKSA is uniquely placed to address. Maritime careers are vital to the global economy, but access remains deeply unequal. Our programmes are bridging this gap, equipping young people, especially those from under-resourced and marginalised backgrounds with the skills, qualifications, and confidence to succeed at sea and beyond.

Over the past year, we’ve strengthened our employability support and broadened our training pathways, ensuring young

people leave UKSA ready to thrive. Whether that’s through gaining confidence on the water, discovering a passion for sailing, embarking on a structured pathway into a career at sea, we’re helping the next generation realise their full potential. In doing so, we are tackling educational inequality, the maritime skills shortage, and lack of diversity in the sector.

Looking to the future, we remain ambitious. We are dedicated to expanding our facilities, services, and support networks to meet the needs of young people now and for generations to come.

None of this would be possible without our valued supporters, including our Patron, Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal, whose longstanding commitment has been instrumental in helping us remove barriers and create opportunities for all.

After an incredible 20 years at UKSA, with nine as CEO, it’s time for me to step down and hand over the helm this summer. It has been my absolute pleasure to lead UKSA and I couldn’t be prouder of the impact we have achieved. This wouldn’t have been possible without such an incredible group of staff and dedicated supporters.

I want to personally thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we are inspiring and transforming lives through the power of the sea.



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UKSA's Pathway

designed to increase social mobility—helping young people from under-resourced communities access long-term careers at sea.

Residential Trips

We welcome schools and groups to our Cowes campus to participate in our outdoor learning programmes.

"I'd never spent a night away from home before, I was really anxious, but by the end of the week, I was so much more confident in the water."

4842 school aged pupils were welcomed to UKSA

Further Education (FE)

In partnership with the Isle of Wight College, UKSA provides fully-funded two-year Further Education courses for young people aged 16 - 18.

79% of FE graduates went into full-time employment

"I used to think maritime jobs were just for people who lived near the sea but there's a whole world of opportunity out there. Now I'm applying for the cadetship!"

"Before UKSA, I felt stuck -I didn't know what I wanted to do after school. Now, I've got a plan. UKSA opened doors I didn't even know existed."

75% of students reported an increase in understanding of maritime careers

Maritime Futures

An inspirational five-day residential course that further develops key life and employability skills, and introduces young people to career opportunities in the maritime industry.

Apprenticeships

In partnership with MSSC, we support young people aged 25 and under to complete a two-year apprenticeship and work experience programme.

Watersports Training

Our students train for their instructor qualification and then have the option to work for UKSA to gain work experience before starting their careers in the watersports industry.

94% of Cadets secured jobs within 12 months of their 2023 graduation

"Every single day at UKSA pushed me in a different way. I faced fears I didn't realise I had and came out stronger. I didn't just learn sailing; I learned resilience."

Careers at sea

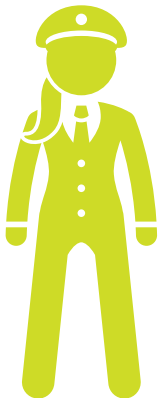
Training designed for individuals aged 18+ who want to pursue a career in the world of yachting, superyachting and the commercial sector.

MCA

MCA Deck Officer certificates are the highest qualifications in the yachting industry and we're proud to be one of the world's top providers of MCA Training.



"At the start of the course, I barely spoke. I didn't believe in myself at all. By the end of the course, I was speaking up, working as part of a team, and actually enjoying it. UKSA didn't just teach me new skills, it helped me find my voice."



Removing Barriers

Creating Opportunities for Young People

Outdoor learning and maritime training at UKSA provide significant benefits for young people:

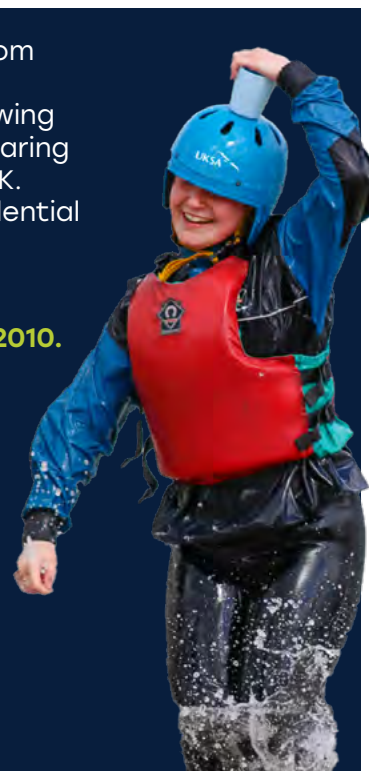
- **Boosts confidence and resilience:** Water activities, team challenges, problem-solving tasks, and adventure-based learning help build self-confidence, perseverance, and adaptability—all essential life skills
- **Improves mental and physical wellbeing:** UKSA is a safe space for emotional growth and well-being. Physical activities also contribute to better health, improving concentration and energy levels.
- **Enhances social skills and teamwork:** Group-based outdoor activities encourage collaboration, communication, and leadership skills. This is especially important for young people who may lack strong support networks at home.
- **Provides alternative pathways to education and employment:** Not all young people thrive in traditional classroom settings. UKSA offers practical, experience-based education that can re-engage those who struggle academically.
- **Broaden aspirations and opportunities:** Exposure to new environments and skills helps young people see beyond their immediate circumstances. Meeting our staff and students can inspire ambition and show a world of possibilities.
- **Reduces risk of social exclusion:** Many disadvantaged youth face isolation and limited access to extracurricular activities. UKSA provides inclusive, engaging experiences that encourage participation, reducing the likelihood of disengagement from education and employment.
- **Strengthens connection to the environment:** UKSA fosters a sense of responsibility and care for the environment, helping develop a sense of purpose and belonging.
- **Builds practical and transferable skills:** UKSA's programmes incorporate problem-solving, risk management, leadership, and decision-making, all of which are highly transferable to the workplace and increase employability and career readiness.

Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds benefit significantly from UKSA's programmes, which are a powerful tool for breaking cycles of disadvantage and unlocking potential. Young people in the UK face growing challenges, rising poverty, deepening educational inequality, and the soaring cost of living. Currently, 4.3 million children (30%) live in poverty in the UK. Thousands miss out on enrichment activities like outdoor learning, residential trips, and career training.

By the time they finish their GCSE's, disadvantaged students are 18 months behind their peers, a gap that has remained unchanged since 2010.
[Education for England report]

Without opportunities beyond the classroom, social mobility reduces, and young people struggle to gain the skills and confidence needed to transition into adulthood and employment.

By providing young people from disadvantaged backgrounds with outdoor learning and access to training, we equip them with the skills, confidence, and support they need to thrive in education, work, and life. We believe financial constraints shouldn't limit potential and this is why our bursary support for young people who face barriers is a vital part of our offer.



Why this support matters:

- The cost of participation is a huge barrier for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, our funding bridges the opportunity gap.
- **50%** of school leaders report cutting school trips due to budget constraints, disproportionately affecting disadvantaged children (National Foundation for Educational Research).
- Marginalised groups may feel less included in outdoor learning due to cultural factors, a lack of role models and a lack of representation. Our funding encourages positive relationships and inclusion.
- Without intervention, many disadvantaged young people risk falling into cycles of unemployment, crime and poor health. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are twice as likely to be unemployed (Social Mobility Commission).
- Financial barriers are preventing passionate young talent from entering the maritime sector. Without action, the industry risks losing the next generation of captains, crew and leaders who will sustain and evolve this world class industry.

+ Real Impact, Real Futures

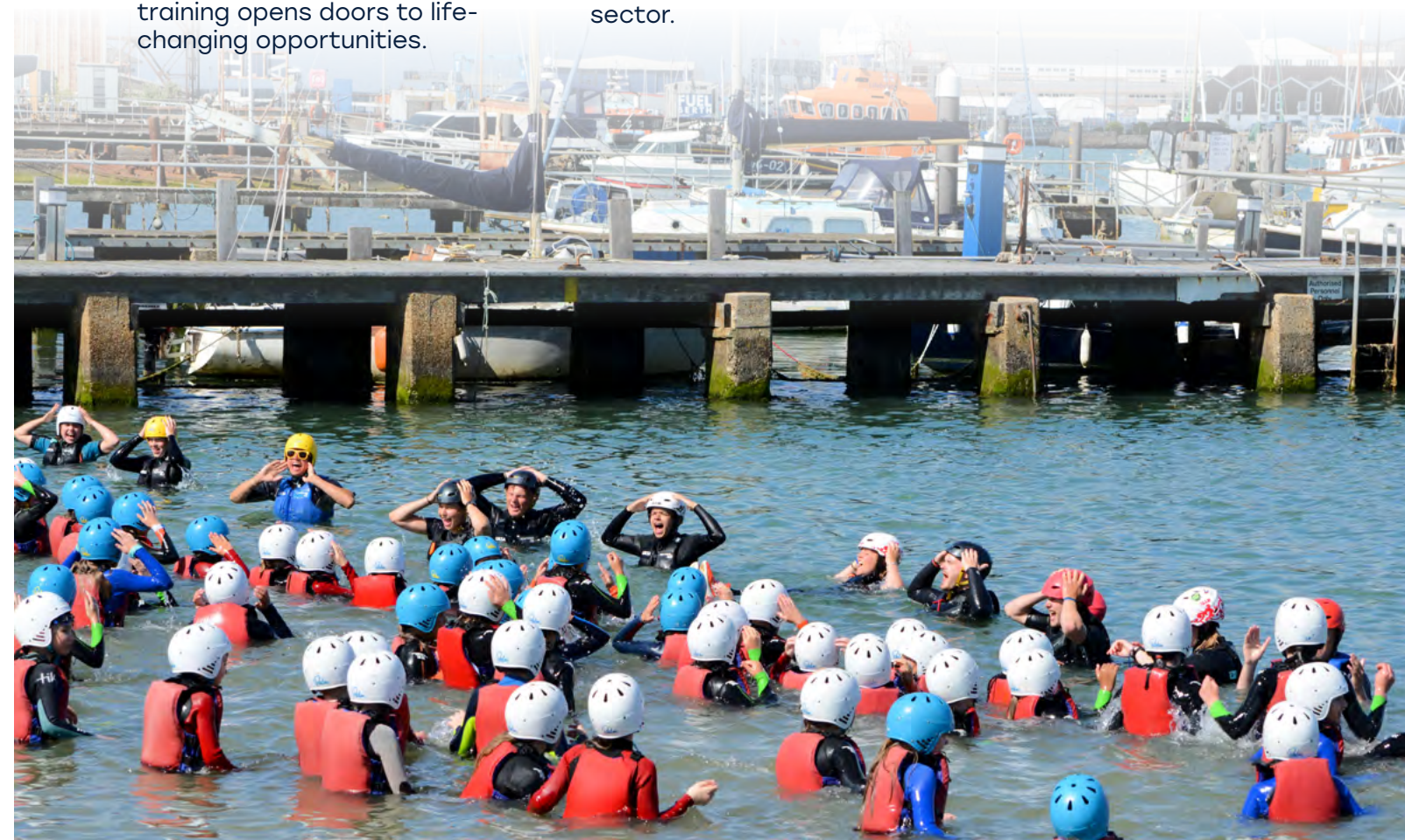
Bursary funding has already transformed lives. Because of the £1,486,714 in bursaries we provided, Lochy, for example, overcame financial hardship to complete his training and is now working as a deckhand on a superyacht, travelling the world. His story is one of many that show how access to training opens doors to life-changing opportunities.

+ Investing in the Future

Expanding bursary funding isn't just about individual success, it's also about strengthening the maritime industry and ensuring a more diverse, skilled, and resilient workforce. With the right support, we can create opportunities, change lives, and secure the future of the sector.

+ Support for the Future

At UKSA, wraparound welfare and mental health support is embedded into every aspect of our training. This integrated approach is a key reason our students succeed, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

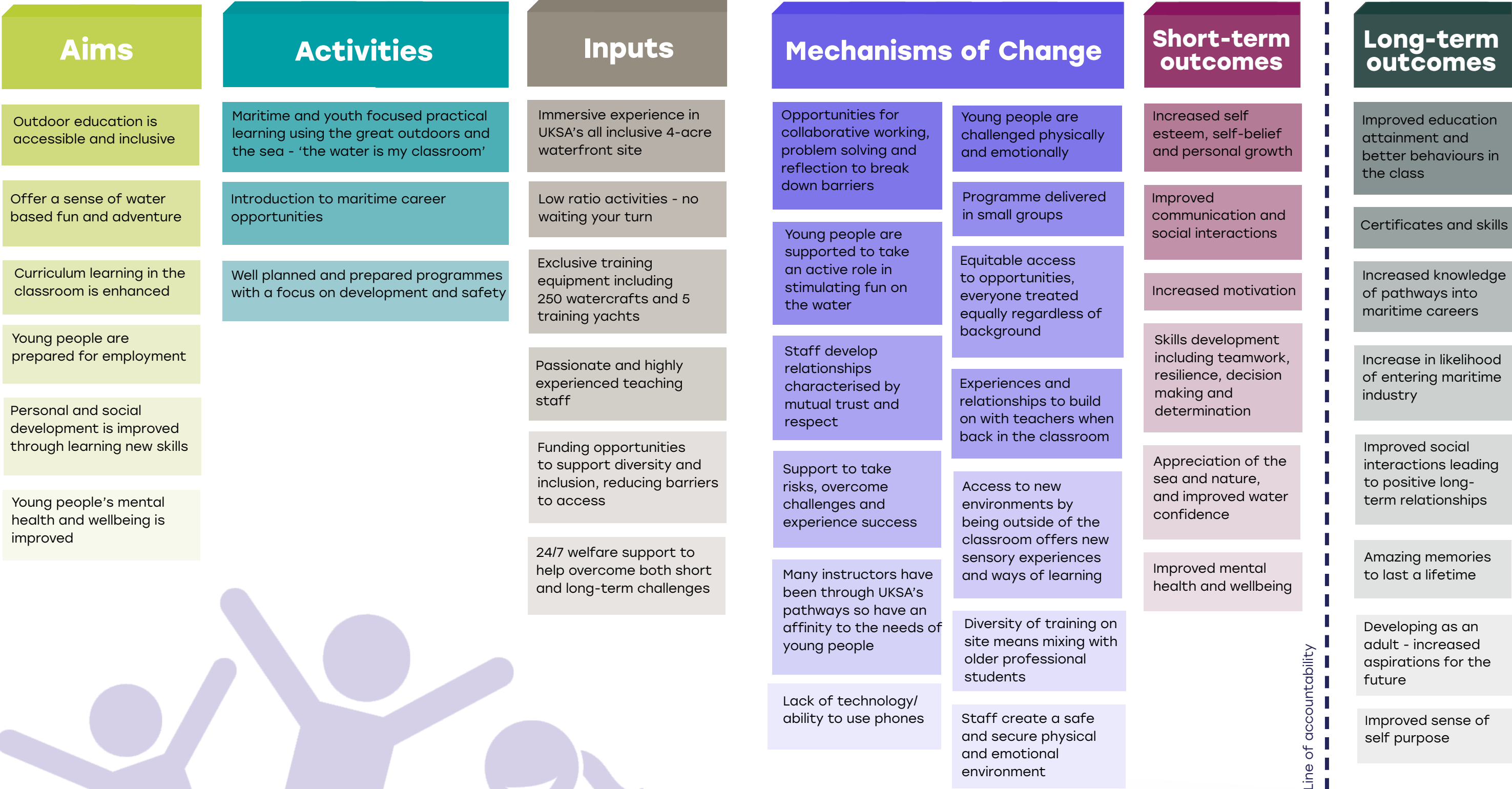


Impactful Adventures on the Water: Theory of Change



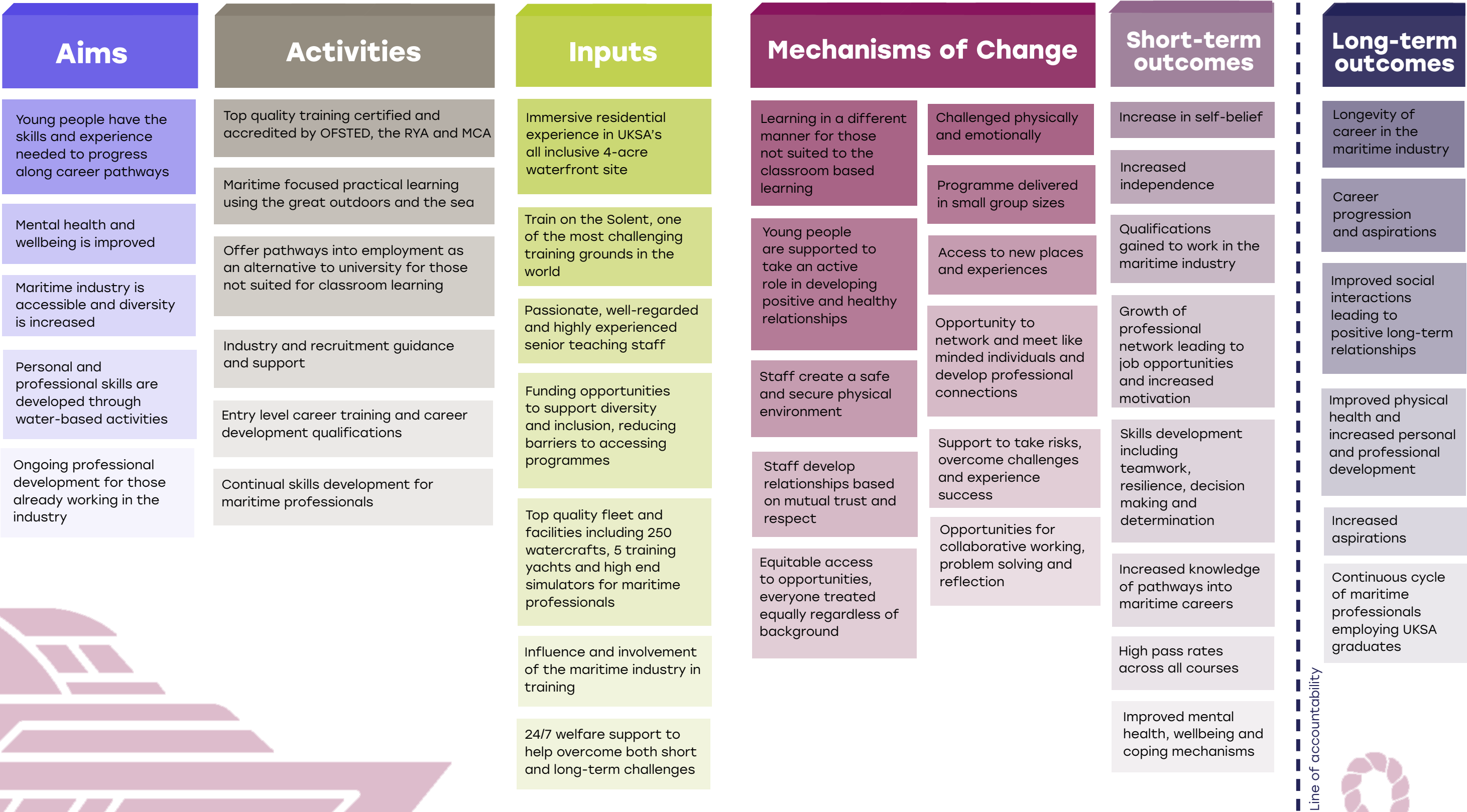
UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Teacher feedback and our Skills 4 Life Evaluation tool showed the strong impact of UKSA’s residential programmes on young people’s development. To further evidence this, we commissioned an independent study by Professor Ros McLellan of Cambridge University and a Paediatric Development Specialist, exploring the longer-term effects on academic, personal, and social outcomes.



Maritime Careers: Theory of Change

To externally validate the impact of our Maritime Career Programmes, UKSA partnered with YMCA George Williams College (Centre for Youth Impact), which supports improved outcomes for young people. Together, we redeveloped our Theory of Change for 2023/24, later refined internally, using analysis of three sets of quantitative and qualitative data to demonstrate both short- and long-term impact.



Test the Water

Our students come to UKSA from across the world, but we know charity starts at home. 2024 marked the ten-year anniversary of our local Test the Water programme. UKSA provides every Isle of Wight Year 6 child with a fully funded day on the water through their primary school.

Since 2022, the number of children on the Isle of Wight living in poverty rose to **34%**, with approximately 4,866 children under 16 growing up in low-income families. Many of these children miss out on experiences that others take for granted and, despite living on an island, they rarely visit the beach due to travel barriers, a lack of water confidence inherited from their parents, and limited exposure to basic water safety skills.

Through our Test The Water Programme, Island children are given the opportunity to build water confidence and learn about water safety as they experience a day of sailing and watersports with their school class. **In 2024 we welcomed 844 Island students from 27 primary schools.**

UKSA fundraise annually to ensure that every child is offered this opportunity and since 2004 we have enabled over **11,000** Isle of Wight children to spend over **38,500 hours** on the water at no cost to their families.

This introduction to the water is just the beginning. For those inspired by their first experience, UKSA offers follow-on programmes, creating pathways for further outdoor learning, adventure, education and training in the maritime sector.

"Before today, I didn't even know how to float, and now I can steer a boat!"

"Being on the water felt amazing – like I could do anything!"

"I'm now working as a Senior Instructor at UKSA. My journey started back in Year 6 with the Test the Water programme, which was a great first step and really sparked my interest in being on the water. After that, I returned to do a week-long Dinghy course, and when I was old enough, I came back again—this time to work as a Watersports Instructor. That first experience with UKSA set me on the path to where I am today."

Jamie, UKSA Senior Watersports Instructor

Polly's Challenge

Polly's Challenge is a five-day sailing or multi-activity watersports course for Isle of Wight children aged 8-14, delivered during school holidays. It offers adventure, skill-building, and personal development, giving children from low income families the opportunity to experience life on the water in a fun and supportive environment.

The challenge is supported by Polly's Fund, established in memory of Polly Birch, a passionate sailor. Every year, Polly's family and friends fundraise in her honour to remove financial barriers so that all children, regardless of circumstance, can access outdoor learning.

The average Polly's Challenge course costs £300 per child and is fully covered by Polly's Fund. Many participants first experience the water through our Test the Water programme, and Polly's Challenge ensures they can return to further develop their confidence and skills.

In the spirit of giving back, each child is encouraged to fundraise £20 to support the fund, helping to sustain the opportunity for future participants. **"It feels so good to know my challenge will help other kids be brave and try new things like I did!"**

In 2024, UKSA welcomed 89 children to Polly's Challenge, ensuring more Island children could enjoy outdoor adventure, develop life skills, and create lasting memories.

"This was the best week ever! I hope I can come back, I'm not afraid of the water anymore, I love it and want to go in it more and on the dinghy's again!"

-Adam, aged 9

"Thank you for an incredible week, it was so much fun, I learnt a lot and made lots of new friends as well as challenging myself"

- Tristan, aged 13

"Watching my daughter thrive during her watersports activity week has been incredible! She came home every day full of excitement, confidence, and new skills. The experience pushed her out of her comfort zones in the best way, letting her try new things and build friendships while having an amazing time. Huge thanks to the team for creating such a fun, supportive environment—she can't wait to go back!"

- Ashely, Mum of Polly's Challenge Participant

60

Children joined us for a Multi-Activity course



14

Children participated in a Dinghy Start course

3,338

hours spent on the water across all Polly's Funded courses

15

Children participated in a Dinghy Improver course



Watch our impact on Youtube

School Residential Trips

UKSA's residential trips immerse students from across the UK in an environment with unforgettable experiences that build confidence, resilience, and teamwork skills. Many of the students we welcome, particularly those from inner-city areas, have never seen the sea, let alone had the opportunity to engage with it.

With a 1:6 instructor-to-student ratio, the water provides a uniquely dynamic and unpredictable environment that challenges individuals both mentally and physically, making it an ideal setting for developing resilience, leadership, and problem-solving skills in ways that traditional classrooms or land-based activities cannot. We are one of the only outdoor learning centres whose work focuses on water activities. Our expert watersports instructors guide students through a range of dynamic activities, including dinghy sailing, keel boating, kayaking, paddleboarding, and raft building. These experiences challenge students physically and emotionally, fostering self-belief and a sense of responsibility.

Our residential trips also incorporate sustainability education, with hands-on experiences such as our oyster regeneration project and beach cleans to teach students about ocean health and environmental stewardship.

Beyond the water, evening activities such as indoor football, swimming, archery, and team games provide a well-rounded experience that strengthens friendships and social skills.

Outdoor learning has been proven to improve school attendance, behaviour, and academic performance. Thanks to the £200,000 UKSA fundraises annually towards our Leave No Child Behind fund, we can ensure that no student is left behind due to financial hardship, enabling all children to join their peers in these enriching educational experiences. Students leave UKSA not only with increased engagement in their education but also with friendships and memories that last a lifetime.

"The group have talked with passion and enthusiasm about things they have never tried before and didn't think they could ever do. Many have never been away from home, never travelled by the water and never had the opportunity to float around in the sea. It has been life changing."

-Sally Hodgson, Beacon View Primary Academy



Watch our
impact on
Youtube



"Every year we bring a class to UKSA, when the children write in their year books about their favourite memory of Haseltine, it is always the trip to UKSA. I love that - the impact you guys have is just so long lasting! The Leave No Child Behind fund is absolutely vital funding for us - we literally could not do it without this funding support - thank you."

Sara Anderman - Haseltine Primary School

"Lots of our young people would never be able to afford (or never be exposed to) an experience like this without the funded places offered. It is a once-in-a lifetime opportunity and we are eternally grateful. We have taken small groups to UKSA before and parents are still raving about it. They said that some of the activities they take part in now (at an older age) are easier because of the experience they gained during their time at UKSA."

Safiya Clunis-Emekwue - Northside Young Leaders Academy

20%
of school pupils
registered as
SEND



In 2024/25, UKSA's
Leave No Child Behind
fund enabled us to
welcome 653 students
from 32 schools to
our Cowes campus for
residential trips.



Building Life Skills

At UKSA, we believe in the transformative power of outdoor learning. Our development programmes are designed to foster personal growth, build essential life skills, and inspire confidence in children and young people.

By stepping outside the classroom and into a dynamic, hands-on environment, students engage in watersports and team-based activities that challenge them to push their boundaries, work collaboratively, and discover their full potential.

The impact of our programmes is clear, data collected from students during their 2024 residential trips highlights remarkable growth in key areas.

Teachers have also seen firsthand the lasting benefits of a UKSA experience. Feedback reports noticeable improvements in students' mental health and wellbeing, with many stating that the confidence and resilience gained at UKSA has helped young people better navigate personal and academic challenges. This is particularly vital as students continue to rebuild their self-esteem and emotional resilience after the setbacks of lockdown.

By providing young people with the opportunity to step outside their comfort zones, UKSA is shaping stronger, more confident individuals, equipping them with the skills and mindset to embrace their futures with optimism and determination.

74%
increase in
self-belief

62%
increase in
communication
skills

62%
increase in
decision
making ability

74%
increase in
participation
& engagement

72%
increase in
determination

67%
increase in
resilience



Case Study: Phoebe Tombleson Phoebe's Pathway at UKSA

Phoebe is now a qualified Yachtmaster, sailing internationally and setting her sights on the Fastnet race, but just a few years ago she hadn't even considered life at sea.

Raised in a low-income household on the Isle of Wight, Phoebe's journey began with a Test the Water session through her primary school. This experience lit a spark and with bursary support and guidance from UKSA mentors, Phoebe progressed through the Maritime Futures and Further Education programmes, gaining qualifications, confidence and a clear sense of purpose.

The Maritime Futures programme included lots of hands on experience, including a trip on a keelboat and sailing a yacht named Chale where Phoebe practiced parking in the river. Phoebe had lunch in Hamble during the programme and felt a sense of freedom that inspired her to progress on her journey. Her time at UKSA opened her eyes to the possibilities of working on the water and motivated her to complete the further education course at UKSA before continuing her development pathway to gain a qualification as an instructor in watersports.

"The Watersports Instructor role at UKSA was my first ever job. Everyone was really nice and helped me progress. It was challenging, but I had a good mentor. It was also a great experience getting to know different children and from different backgrounds. Having always lived on the Island, I had been quite sheltered, so this role helped me understand how life is for others and how I was helping them to have the same experiences I did."

Phoebe has now passed her Professional Yachtmaster Offshore course and is excited to progress in the maritime industry. Phoebe is eager to gain even more experience, particularly in racing, having already participated in races on the Solent with a friend during her time in education with the Fastnet Race as a key goal.

One of the biggest challenges throughout Phoebe's journey has been breaking out of her shell and learning to work as part of a team. During her dinghy instructor preparation, she initially found it difficult to speak in a group setting. However, with the support of her instructor who gave her time and the opportunity to try again, she overcame this hurdle and grew in confidence. Her ultimate dream is to sail across the Atlantic with friends, and with each phase of her training, she is getting closer to making this a reality.

"The funding has meant a lot, the first thing I have done independently, the support I have received to get to this step is huge for me. Without the support and funding, I would never have been able to do the Yachtmaster." Phoebe encourages others to follow their dreams, saying, "If you feel like the sea is the right place for you, don't hold yourself back because you think it might be difficult - just go for it - my UKSA journey has been truly enjoyable and life changing".



Maritime Futures Programme

The Maritime Futures programme bridges the gap between education and employment by informing young people of the career opportunities in the maritime industry. The five-day residential course for teenagers combines water-based activities with an career-focused tutorial sessions.

Designed for students who may not excel in traditional academic environments, the programme encourages teamwork, problem-solving, and self-reflection in an immersive learning setting. Participants take part in activities such as sea survival, dinghy sailing, kayaking, keel boating, yachting, paddleboarding, and raft building providing a dynamic and engaging experience.

Alongside practical training, tutorial sessions introduce them to maritime career opportunities that UKSA deliver training on, including engineering, navigation & radar, superyacht interior and deckhand roles, and our state-of-the-art TRANSAS sailing simulation suite, as well as signposting to other maritime career opportunities like the Royal Navy, shipping and marine conservation. Through shared challenges, students build strong connections with UKSA staff and leave with a renewed sense of ambition, improved behaviour, and greater academic engagement.

Understanding the urgent need to invest in young people's futures, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, UKSA established and fundraise annually into the Sea.Change Fund. Last year £233,000 was raised to ensure that those facing financial hardship don't miss out and can access fully funded places onto our programme.

Through targeted outreach, we connect with schools, groups and individuals in highly deprived areas, offering young people from disadvantaged backgrounds access to the Maritime Futures Programme to develop resilience, self-confidence, and key employability skills.

This initiative is not only helping to bridge the gap caused by financial and social barriers but is also contributing to the diversification and revitalisation of the maritime workforce.



In 2024, UKSA funded 444 beneficiaries through the Sea.Change fund to take part in the Maritime Futures programme. One of the most powerful aspects of the programme is its ability to introduce participants to opportunities they may never have considered. Many young people arrive with little to no awareness of the maritime industry or its vast career options, but after participating in the programme, 75% reported a greater understanding of the maritime industry, with a further 55% expressing a keen interest in exploring UKSA's maritime pathways further.

In 2024, we welcomed back 34 Maritime Futures students to our career courses demonstrating the programme's success in shaping future maritime professionals.

UKSA is committed to promoting diversity by ensuring that funded students train alongside fee-paying students, creating an aspirational environment where young people can see real pathways into employment.

"The young people that we work with come from minority ethnic groups from deprived areas/ social-housing and the post 16 opportunities are reducing, so young people are becoming less engaged in their futures. It's often 'not cool' to have high aspirations for the future. Here at UKSA, the students have been able to be themselves and make new friends and connections.

This is a trip that their families would never be able to dream about providing for them. Many of the teens are from single parent families and lack positive role models, often male role models. One thing that struck me and was amazing here was the diversity of role models that you have for young people, the students really look up to them".

- Claire Hodgkiss, Project Director SMK Gateway Education for under-achievement

"I didn't know there were so many exciting careers in the maritime industry. Using the sailing simulator and learning about sea survival was so interesting—it made me realise this is something I could actually do for a living. I feel like I finally have a goal for my future."

- Tommy, Maritime Futures Graduate



Watch our
impact on
Youtube



+ Our Year in Numbers 2024/25

27

Isle of Wight schools visited UKSA

50

Mainland UK schools visited UKSA

72%

overall improvement in development of life skills

£495,708

of funds raised for development programmes

642

students trained in mental health awareness



1637

MCA courses delivered

96%

course pass rate



10,027

students from

49

countries worldwide



4

acre waterfront campus

150

boats and watercrafts

64%

of students were under the age of 25



1:6

instructor to student ratio

4876

children under 18 took part in activities on the water

747

individuals supported through

1282

Welfare sessions



35,064

sea miles logged



Inspiring the Next Generation

Further Education

At UKSA, we are committed to shaping the future of the maritime industry by providing high-quality Further Education courses and apprenticeships for 16–18-year-olds. In partnership with the Isle of Wight College and the Marine Society Sea Cadets, our programmes combine hands-on training with essential theoretical knowledge, giving students the skills and confidence to launch successful careers.

With an 80% practical and 20% theory approach, our fully funded Further Education courses provide real-world experience on the water. Students can choose from the NCFE (Level 3) in Sport and Physical Activity (Outdoors) or the Maritime Foundation course, both of which open doors to careers in watersports instruction, the leisure industry, and yacht training. Many graduates continue within UKSA, progressing into instructing roles or professional maritime careers.

Our Further Education students benefit not only from industry relevant qualifications, but also from UKSA's award winning welfare provision which ensures they are supported both personally and professionally as they transition into adulthood and the start of their careers.

In 2024:

- + 82 Further Education students welcomed onto UKSA's Maritime Foundation and Maritime Advanced courses
- + 98% Further Education pass rate

"During the summer, I managed to land a job at UKSA as a watersports instructor, teaching many people how to sail. Just six months ago, I had no sailing experience. Learning so quickly and now being able to teach others is a truly proud moment for me."

–Summer, current Further Education student

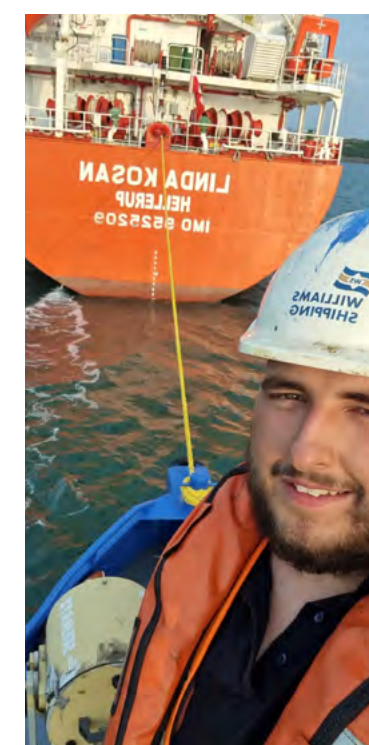
"Gaining the confidence to just go for it was a big step. I haven't always been overly confident, but I've changed a lot since my first year to where I am now."

– Bayleigh, current Further Education Student

Apprenticeships

Our apprenticeships offer a unique opportunity to earn while learning. In partnership with the Isle of Wight College, the Marine Society Sea Cadets, and five leading maritime employers, our structured programmes provide clear career pathways. In 2024, we welcomed 8 apprentices aged 25 and under into our two-year programme, leading to full-time employment and long-term prospects. Apprentices develop skills in seamanship, navigation, safety, and maritime hospitality, gaining industry-recognised qualifications.

With expert instructors, state-of-the-art facilities, and strong employer links, UKSA ensures every student is equipped with the experience and confidence to succeed.



Last year, Harvie completed a two-year Workboat Apprenticeship with Williams Shipping Marine LTD in partnership with UKSA.

"I chose the Marine Engineering route because it was something I was genuinely enjoyed and offered a diverse range of jobs and tasks. During my work experience with William Shipping, no two days were the same. Shortly after, I secured a role as an apprentice through UKSA's Workboat Crewmember Apprenticeship. UKSA's workboat facility for engineering training is fantastic."

– Harvie, William Shipping Apprentice

"A few years ago, I couldn't have imagined this life, docking in new ports, working with crews from around the world, seeing places I never thought I'd go."

Now I wake up excited to go to work. It's brilliant being part of this industry. I meet people from every corner of the globe, and I'm constantly learning. I really love what I do."

– Ella, Williams Shipping Apprentice





Case Study: Lauren Lucas UKSA Further Education

After completing the Further Education course at UKSA, Lauren went on to do an apprenticeship with Wightlink, which opened the door to an exciting new chapter in her maritime career. Since April last year, Lauren has been training as a Bosun with Wightlink and is currently the youngest Bosun in the company's history. While she still occasionally does deck work, her role now includes a broader mix of responsibilities. *"Being a Bosun is brilliant because you're berthing the ship and it's a big ship! But it's such a great experience"*

Reflecting on her time at UKSA, Lauren highlights how much she gained from the Maritime Foundation course. *"There's so much to the course. I learned how to sail, I had never sailed before, and then I gained instructing experience. I gained leadership and teamwork skills, working with different age groups and skill levels. One of my classmates was a Team GB sailor, and then there was me, who had never been on a sailing boat, but I learned so much. I've also made lifelong friendships."*

UKSA offers a two-year Maritime Foundation Programme for 16-18-year-olds with little or no experience in the maritime industry. The course combines hands-on training and classroom learning, helping students gain key qualifications such as RYA Dinghy Instructor and Powerboat Level 2. Fully funded and run with the Isle of Wight College, it prepares young people for careers in watersports, superyachts, the merchant navy, and other maritime sectors, or for further training in the industry.

Every day presents new challenges. *"For example, today we weren't expecting it to be so windy. We arrived in Yarmouth at 6 a.m., which changed our plan for the day. You always have to be prepared and make quick decisions to keep the boat, crew, and passengers safe."*

One of Lauren's biggest challenges has been being a young woman in the industry. *"It can be tough, and there are people who might try to knock you down, but you don't let them. I'm really proud of myself. The shift patterns can also be difficult, since I was 18, I haven't had regular weekends off. I get one weekend off every six weeks, but I love my job so much that it hasn't affected my social life. If you're committed to the industry, you adapt."*

Her next step is earning her Officer of the Watch (OOW) ticket. *"The first phase takes three years. You do college at sea and then take oral exams at the end. I'll start with my OOW ticket and see where that takes me. The way I feel now might be completely different three years from now."*

Lauren's ultimate goal is to become a Captain. *"I've always wanted to be on the Bridge of a big ship, traveling the world. I stayed local with Wightlink so I could go home every day, but now I'm ready to explore new opportunities. Wightlink has really supported me in getting to where I am today."*

She believes the maritime industry offers incredible opportunities. *"The Maritime Foundation course at UKSA really opens doors. I've applied for jobs, and companies have said my CV is great for my age, that's all thanks to UKSA."*



Welfare at the heart of UKSA



At UKSA, crew welfare is the foundation of a safe, sustainable, and successful maritime career. Thanks to funding from The Seafarers' Charity, we have developed and embedded a comprehensive welfare service that places wellbeing at the heart of maritime training – because we know that resilient, supported crew make for stronger, safer teams at sea.

Our dedicated Welfare Team work closely with social workers, GPs, guardians, and families to support students before they even set foot on campus, easing transitions and building trust from day one. Over the past year, they have **responded to more than 1,100 individual student support enquiries**, providing vital guidance on issues such as anxiety, depression, bereavement, financial stress, domestic abuse, and the trauma associated with suicide.

We then provide structured, ongoing support throughout training: one-to-one sessions with all Further Education students, monthly wellbeing check-ins with professional training cohorts, and a dedicated Welfare Mentor

assigned to every Superyacht Cadet. This proactive, person-centred approach ensures students are not only equipped to succeed academically, but are also mentally prepared for the demands of life at sea.

Beyond our own programmes, we are leading industry-wide efforts to improve crew welfare. Through our leadership of the Changing Tack working group, which is a coalition of maritime industry leaders, we are championing better welfare standards across the sector. Together, we've developed actionable recommendations to raise awareness, improve onboard conditions, and ensure that seafarers at every level receive the support they need. We are committed to working with industry partners to turn these recommendations into real, lasting change.

With continued support, we can ensure that crew welfare is not just embedded in the student experience at UKSA but championed across the entire maritime industry.

165
welfare
packs
provided

78
wellbeing &
workshop
drop in
sessions

65%
increase
in Cadet
welfare

6
dyslexia
assessments
undertaken



Supporting Every Student

At UKSA, we know that technical training alone is not enough. To thrive in the maritime industry, young people need holistic support -practical, emotional, and professional. That's why welfare, mentoring, and lifelong career guidance are central to everything we do, setting us apart from other training providers.

From the moment a student arrives, they are supported by our dedicated welfare team, available to offer guidance, reassurance, and practical help. Many of our students face significant challenges, financial hardship, unstable home lives, or low self-confidence. We provide a safe, inclusive environment where they are respected, supported, and empowered to achieve their potential. All residential students live in shared, on-site accommodation with meals included, allowing them to focus 100% on their training while also developing independence and teamwork, essential qualities for life in a working sea environment.

Our three-tiered mentoring system supports every student personally and professionally.

- + One-to-one welfare mentoring helps individuals manage life's challenges, build resilience, and grow in confidence.
- + Professional mentoring connects students with maritime sector experts who give tailored advice on career paths, based on each student's strengths and ambitions.
- + Career guidance team offers CV workshops, interview preparation, and personalised job-seeking support - ensuring every student leaves UKSA career-ready.

79
career and
CV advice
sessions

We also offer lifelong career support and access to unique networking opportunities. Whether a student finished training this year or 15 years ago, our team remains available for guidance, mentoring, and advice. We regularly invite industry professionals, alumni, and recruitment specialists to speak to students, providing real-world insights and building vital connections. Through partnerships with leading management and brokerage companies like **Edmiston, Burgess and Hill Robinson**, as well as other major superyacht and workboat recruiters, we help graduates access meaningful job opportunities.

UKSA CVs are of the highest standard. We work closely with students to help them translate their maritime training, personal growth, and onboard experience into compelling, industry-specific CVs that get noticed.

Our mission goes far beyond delivering qualifications – we empower young people with the confidence, resilience, and skills to thrive at sea and in life. With your support, we break down barriers, unlock potential, and ensure every student leaves UKSA equipped not just for a job, but for a lasting, life-changing career in the maritime industry.

"I received loads of support through the welfare team. The team always goes above and beyond and having them there for me has been essential to getting through my course."

"The team sent my CV to a skipper and in no time, I was being interviewed by the two co-captains and was offered the job. I can't wait to start my new responsibilities"

"The Careers Advice team have been amazing. Lauren gives excellent CV and career advice, offers tips for networking in the industry, and shares useful resources."



Launching Maritime Careers

At UKSA, we believe maritime careers should be accessible, aspirational, and transformative. Every year, our professional training programmes equip thousands of young people with the qualifications, experience, and confidence to begin successful careers at sea. From deckhands and stewards to watersports instructors and engineers, our world-class training opens doors into a dynamic global industry.

Professional Yachtmaster Offshore

The Professional Yachtmaster Offshore programme remains a flagship route into professional yachting. With hands-on sailing experience, expert tuition, and shore-based learning, graduates qualify with one of the most respected credentials in the industry.

In 2024, we achieved a **90% pass rate**, with graduates moving into roles as skippers, delivery crew, flotilla leaders, charter operators and on Superyachts.

Superyacht Cadetship

The Superyacht Cadetship offers a unique four-year pathway into the luxury superyacht sector. Blending academic training with onboard experience, cadets gain the skills, discipline, and leadership to progress from entry-level roles to officer positions.

In 2024, 79% of our cadets (41 out of 52) faced financial challenges, supported through bursaries funded by industry partners and legacy funders.

Cadets receive structured pastoral care and dedicated 1:1 support throughout the programme, helping them manage the pressures of intensive training and life at sea. This unique welfare focus sets UKSA apart in the maritime sector.

"The funding I have received allowed me to pursue my dream of becoming a superyacht captain, as well as making my family, friends and school proud.

Without this generosity I wouldn't be here. I come from a rough area of London which is fuelled by high crime rates and drug abuse – I worry I would have fallen into the wrong crowd if I wasn't here today."

- Jason, Superyacht Cadetship Graduate

Superyacht Deckhand Training

In 2024 we welcomed **127** onto our Deckhand Training course. The course introduces students to life on board, covering essential safety, seamanship, and industry certifications in just three weeks. For those looking to access to a maritime career this immersive course provides entry level qualifications.

We maintain close links with recruitment agencies and employers, and many of our deckhand graduates report finding work within weeks of finishing their training.

Superyacht Stewardess & Steward Training

Our Steward and Stewardess Training course delivers comprehensive interior crew training, including silver service, floristry, laundry, and wine appreciation.

In 2024, **53** students left equipped not only with technical expertise but also with the professionalism, discretion, and resilience demanded by high-end service roles.

Watersports Instructor Training

For those passionate about working on the water, our Watersports Instructor Training provides industry-recognised qualifications and real-world experience.

With **over 90% of graduates moving straight into employment**, this course has become a proven launchpad for careers in the leisure and yachting sectors.



"Being out on the water has always felt natural to me, but the Watersports Instructor course took that passion and turned it into a career. Training at UKSA opened doors I never expected – from earning my Powerboat Level 2 Advanced to sailing to France and Jersey to build sea miles. Now, as a Senior Instructor, every day brings new challenges and qualifications. The path I've taken has gone far beyond anything I ever imagined."

- Tom, Watersports Instructor Training Graduate

MCA Yachts <3000gt

At UKSA, we deliver world-class maritime training, empowering individuals to build successful and long-lasting careers at sea. Our MCA-approved yacht and workboat courses are designed to meet the needs of the superyacht and workboat industries, providing students with the mandatory qualifications, specialist skills, and confidence to thrive in their roles.

Whether pursuing a career on a superyacht or a windfarm transfer vessel, our students benefit from expert tuition, hands-on experience, and access to industry-leading facilities, including our state-of-the-art bridge simulators. Our focus on employability ensures graduates are ready for life at sea, progressing into positions such as deckhands, officers, and captains.

- + 1,637 MCA courses delivered
- + In 2024, 28% of career students returned to UKSA for an MCA course, demonstrating the value of our offering and the continued trust in our expert delivery.

We help create the future leaders of the yachting world, committed to safety, professionalism, and excellence. UKSA is also proud to be the leading provider of training for Nautilus Slater Scholarship recipients, supporting mature students to access MCA courses and take the next step in their maritime careers.

India Joseph-Meddle is a UKSA alumni now a Second Officer on an 80m luxury superyacht in the Mediterranean. India spent her life around the water, started scuba diving at the age of 8 and competing as a springboard diver for years.

Her passion turned into a career after training at UKSA: "The course was great fun, and an eye-opener into how the industry works. Only a week after the course I was offered a stewardess/diver position on a scuba diving liveaboard in the Bahamas."

Determined to progress, India stepped into a Deckhand role, then earned a scholarship to complete her Officer of the Watch <3000GT modules, which she passed in March 2024. "A normal day for me would involve safety checks, chart updates and GMDSS checks, tender driving, watersports with the guests or lend a hand on deck."

India returned to UKSA to complete her Chief Mate modules in January 2025, and we look forward to following her next journey.

Charitable Charters

In partnership with The Neighbourly Charitable Trust, UKSA is proud to run the Charitable Charter Programme, an initiative that gives deserving young people and adults the opportunity to develop vital life skills, boost their confidence, and explore new passions. Whether it's pushing boundaries, stepping outside their comfort zones, or enhancing sailing skills, these experiences at sea create lasting impact.

For over 20 years, The Neighbourly Charitable Trust has been a dedicated supporter of UKSA. In 2024, their commitment continued to provide essential resources that enabled transformative opportunities for those who need them most. As part of this partnership, the Trust has donated a fully equipped vessel, available for free charter by charities and people facing barriers based in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Hertfordshire. This generous gift allows deserving people to enjoy meaningful, life-enhancing days on the water.

But these are more than sailing trips, they are powerful experiences that build confidence, resilience, and ambition. For many participants facing trauma, financial hardship, or family instability, a Charitable Charter experience marks a turning point in their lives, giving them space to grow in a safe, supportive, and inspiring environment.

7
trips provided over
57
days to charities
from Bedfordshire,
Buckinghamshire
and Hertfordshire

This trip was their first time away from home, out of Bedford. On the ferry ride over they were very quiet, said little to anyone apart from when they expressed to staff that they didn't want to be away from home. Soon after they arrived, they went off to sail on a yacht and returned a different character.

They'd had a go at steering the boat and upon stepping back on land were excitedly telling the leaders of the experience, visibly bubbly and more confident. The week was not without a few wobbles, with occasional bouts of home sickness, but they enjoyed their time so much at UKSA that they have asked to come back in the Summer. Before the trip they rated themselves a 2 out of 5 in confidence, leaving with a score of a 4, and proud of themselves for their achievements during the week. In conclusion this trip has been very successful.

Every young person could report things that they had enjoyed, with everyone saying they had made new friends, tried new things and would love to come back to UKSA."

- Fun4Young People, Bedfordshire 2024 Charitable Charter



Thank You to Our Funders and Supporters

At UKSA, we believe in the power of opportunity. Thanks to the generosity and commitment of our incredible funders, partners, and supporters, we are able to transform young lives through outdoor learning, maritime training, and career development. Your support ensures that children and young people, regardless of background, can access life-changing experiences on the water, build confidence, and develop skills for the future.

This page is dedicated to everyone who has played a role in making our work possible. Whether through grants, donations, corporate partnerships, or in-kind contributions, your belief in our mission allows us to reach more young people every year.

Below, we proudly showcase the organisations and individuals who help make a lasting impact.

Thank you for being part of our journey+

"The centre has played a lasting part in their lives, staff were role models and sources of inspiration for our young impressionable children, and I felt privileged simply tagging along. Making myself clear, I cannot emphasise enough the positive impact that this trip has had on our children, and in so many surprising areas."

- Sally Watkins, Victory School



Looking to the Future

In last year's impact report, we outlined our Theory of Change across two core areas: Impactful Adventures on the Water and Maritime Careers Training. Over the past year, we have continued to embed these principles into our programmes, expanding our reach and refining our approach to maximise impact.

As we look ahead, UKSA remains committed to expanding our impact and ensuring that more young people can access life-changing opportunities in the maritime sector. We will continue to broaden our outreach, raising awareness of the diverse career pathways available at sea and inspiring the next generation to consider the maritime industry as a viable and exciting future.

To meet growing demand, we aim to expand our bursary support, ensuring that financial barriers, including travel, accommodation, and learning resources, do not prevent young people from accessing our programmes. Through our Industry Bursary Fund, we are actively engaging maritime businesses to invest in the future workforce by funding training for those who would not otherwise be able to afford it.

We are also expanding our work in key yachting hubs to offer welfare and career support for crew, supporting wellbeing and career progression for those already working in the industry. These interventions are essential in supporting retention and long-term success in maritime careers.

To stay aligned with industry needs, we will continue to adapt our courses and develop new training pathways, shaped by feedback from students, partners, and employers. This ensures our programmes remain relevant, effective, and focused on equipping young people with the skills and qualifications needed for sustainable employment.

A major milestone in our growth is the development of the Victoria Barracks Education Centre in East Cowes. Supported by the UK Government's

Levelling Up, The IOW Council, Bradbury Foundation, Bernard Sunley Foundation and Richard & Grace Palmer, this dedicated site will significantly enhance our delivery of both outdoor learning and professional training, allowing greater focus, efficiency, and impact.

Operating from Victoria Barracks will increase time on the water for young people, particularly school and youth groups, increase safety and reduce travel time towing children across the water, and provide immersive learning opportunities that build confidence, teamwork, and resilience. The facility will also create a professional training environment on our main site where students can fully focus on their development.

Looking forward, we are also developing a long-term plan to roll over our training fleet and continue investment in our site infrastructure, ensuring we remain at the forefront of maritime training and outdoor learning provision.

We're committed to levelling the playing field for those failed by traditional education systems, ensuring every young person has the chance to thrive.

With these exciting developments, UKSA is set to reach more young people, enhance our training offer, and strengthen pathways into the maritime industry. We are proud of the progress we've made and look forward to building an even brighter future for the next generation of maritime professionals.

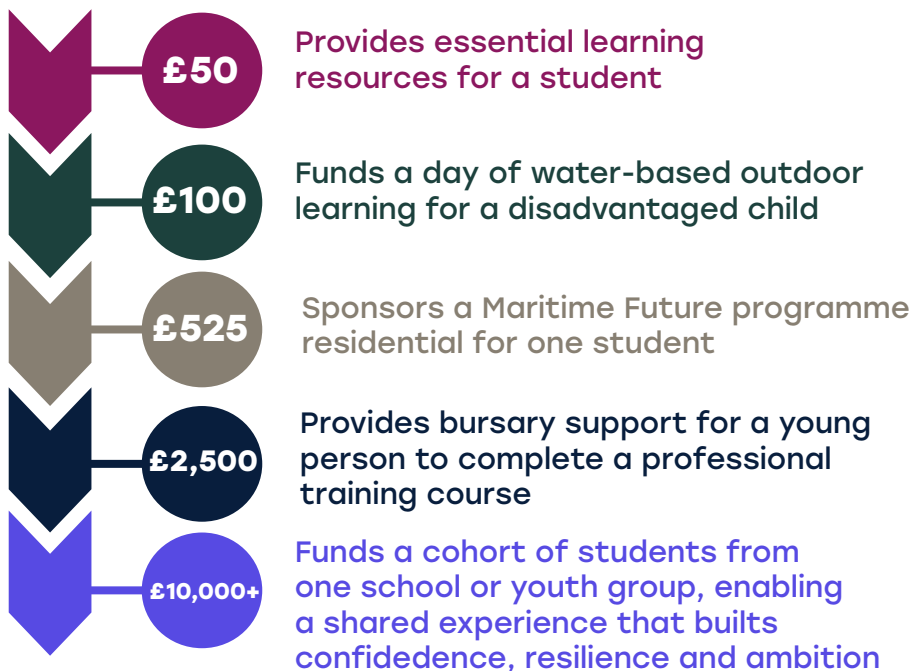


Help us reach even more young people



Your support can power life-changing experiences for the children and young people who need them most. With your help, we can break down barriers, build confidence, and create brighter futures through outdoor learning and maritime training.

What your donation can achieve:



Get involved:

Partner with us

Collaborate on shared goals through corporate or philanthropic partnerships

Mentor a young person

Share your expertise and inspire future maritime professionals

Leave a Legacy

A gift in your will ensures the next generation can thrive, no matter their background

Introduce Us

Help us connect with others who may be interested in supporting our work

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