

2024 Our Year

An impact story from
The Lake District Calvert Trust





The Lake District Calvert Trust is a unique specialist outdoor centre, where people with disabilities can experience adventure, ambition, and achievement, far beyond societal perceptions of disability.

2024 marked 48 years of us welcoming guests with disabilities and their families to enjoy the benefits of outdoor activities in a safe and accessible, yet challenging environment. Our dedicated team are always looking for new ways to expand the limits of what is possible, working with our disabled visitors to encourage them to reach their full potential, building confidence and resilience that extends into their daily lives. As a result, our guests change their perceptions and make positive and lasting changes to their lives.

Put simply, as a charity, our goal is to challenge disability through outdoor adventure. It's what we do best.

Impact and achievement are difficult things to reflect on. Context is everything.

If you walk into our Sports Hall on any given day, you'll see what I mean. It's there that our 'Rock and Ropes' sessions give visitors a chance to tackle our climbing walls. For some, shooting straight to the top of the wall is cause for celebration. For others, raising a single foot off the ground is just as meaningful. For those in wheelchairs, putting their trust in ropes to be swung from the ceiling is worthy of fireworks and high-fives. Impact and achievement are different for everyone.

What follows on these pages is a picture of the impact of the Lake District Calvert Trust over the past year. Just like in our Sports Hall, context is everything. We are now only a few years post-pandemic; a time when for organisations like ours, just surviving was more important than thriving. To just be here today and writing this is something to

be celebrated. Yet to be here today and be back into 'thriving' mode, really is an achievement.

You're about to read some inspiring stories, impressive statistics, and sizeable challenges and plans. It is my job to remind you that behind these are a whole range of people. Incredible instructors, administrators, cooks, fundraisers, donors, and guests. As anyone who has ever been to Calvert will attest, it is the people who make this place what it is.

As CEO I have the privilege of being able to introduce this story of our year and preface it with thanks. Our impact and achievements are only possible thanks to you.

Celebrations, fireworks, and high-fives to you all.

Sean Day
CEO



Highlights of 2024



2,845

We welcomed 2,845 participants (on both Calvert Lakes residentials and one day visits) who experienced outdoor adventures in the stunning Lake District. Our participants were encouraged to challenge themselves through various outdoor activities, improving their self-confidence and shaping their aspirations.

2,482

At our Stable participants benefitted from a total of 2,482 equine therapy sessions—an increase from the previous year. We launched a new 'Tea and Trot' service for the local community and introduced the opportunity for people to Sponsor a Pony!

£36,000+

This year's Big Give campaign was a resounding success! With your incredible support, we exceeded our fundraising goal and raised over £36,000 towards the costs of our amazing instructors and the vital work they do.

7,500

As well as our residential guests, we had 7,500 sessions where local parents, children and care groups use our specialist swimming pool and water centre.

153

Thanks to funding from UK Youth, 153 young people had the unique opportunity to enjoy a Calvert Lakes Residential or experience a one-day visit to the Lakes, broadening access to our life-changing programmes.

42

In July, we had the privilege of hosting a group from Ukraine, offering them much-needed respite and a chance to reflect and connect as a community.

17

2024 was a year of partnerships! We were supported by partners at Holiday Cottages who helped us renovate 17 guest rooms in our 'Byres' accommodation block. We also worked on a Charity of the Year Partnership with the Keswick Booths store. This boosted our profile locally, involved staff in fundraising, and even saw our logo on jars of local pickle!

80+

Finally, we achieved all we did in 2024 with the amazing support of over 80 volunteers. These incredible volunteers gave their time in our stables, in fundraising efforts, as well as by working alongside our staff.

A shift in perception

Lily-Mae (12) visited Lake District Calvert Trust in 2024 with her parents. As a child with multiple and complex needs, much of her life was defined by the barriers imposed by her conditions. When her dad, Tony, introduced his daughter to others, his words often reflected her challenges:

“This is Lily-Mae. She can’t talk or walk. She’s totally blind, has cysts on her brain, suffers from epilepsy, and is doubly incontinent.” These words, though true, overshadowed the spirit and potential that Tony and his wife knew existed within her.

During her week at Calvert, Lily-Mae took part in activities that had once seemed beyond reach. Each day brought something new and unexpected—a world of experiences that seemed to expand her family’s vision of what was possible for her.

By the end of the week, Tony’s perceptions of his own daughter had changed, and his words about Lily-Mae had transformed:

“Now, I can say: ‘This is Lily-Mae. She can abseil, canoe, ride a pony and trap, zip wire down a canyon, build a campfire, and toast marshmallows. She can do so much more.’” For the first time, Tony saw Lily-Mae not through the lens of her limitations, but through the potential the week at Calvert Trust had unlocked.

As he reflected on the experience, Tony was overcome with emotion:

“I feel as her dad she is reborn, and her life has just begun thanks to your team, the ethos of Calvert, and the desire of your staff to give opportunity.”

Lily-Mae’s story is a testament to the incredible work of the Lake District Calvert Trust. It is a reminder of the transformative power of inclusive outdoor activities and the dedicated staff who create opportunities for growth and joy. Through our instructor’s focus on possibility, they gave Lily-Mae and her family not just a memorable week, but a new outlook on life—one filled with potential and adventure.





2024
in Pictures







Enabling Adventure in 2024



Scan the QR code to donate to our Enabling Adventure Fund

Here at The Calvert Lake District Trust, we offer accessible adventure that shifts perceptions of disability. It is both life-enhancing and life-changing for those who take part.

Our setting is unique, specialist, with high staff-to-guest ratios, and equipped for participants of all abilities. What this also means, sadly, is that it can appear expensive.

In order to counter this and stop cost being prohibitive to access, each year we focus fundraising efforts on building up our Enabling Adventure Fund. This fund allows us to reduce the cost of a visit to our centre, through bursaries to individuals and groups from across the county.

If you want to donate to our Enabling Adventure Fund or find out how you or your group could benefit from it in the future, get in touch.

950

In 2024 our Enabling Adventure Fund meant that 950 guests could benefit from a reduced rate!

A case study

'Mary' visited Calvert Lakes with her SEND college. Her Head of College shared the following:

Mary's journey at Calvert Trust has been nothing short of life-changing – an opportunity that pushed her beyond her comfort zone and left a lasting impact on her confidence, independence, and aspirations.

I had the privilege of observing Mary during the trip. Her growth, enthusiasm, and engagement truly stood out, demonstrating how immersive experiences like this can unlock new potential and aspirations. The Calvert team played a crucial role in ensuring Mary felt at ease. Their warmth, patience, and tailored communication strategies allowed her to build trust, move beyond usual boundaries and connect with her peers in a way she hadn't before.

The range of accessible outdoor activities was truly inspirational. Mary embraced every challenge with courage and enthusiasm, describing the experience, as one of the best of her life, in particular achieving:

- quality time with friends and staff, building deeper relationships.
- independence in a setting away from home and college.
- new activities that pushed her beyond her comfort zone.

But perhaps the most powerful outcome was the way it has reshaped Mary's aspirations, inspiring her to re-evaluate future goals. She realised that working in the countryside and engaging in outdoor learning experiences aligns with her strengths and passion. So much so, Mary would like to pursue outdoor education in the next academic year.

Returning to college, Mary chose to share her story with her peers – demonstrating not only her own personal growth but also inspiring others to embrace new opportunities. The Calvert Trust team has ignited new aspirations, built resilience, and shown that, given the right opportunities, students like Mary can thrive in ways they never imagined possible.

Our visitors this year

Calvert Residential

2,845

This year we had 2,845 participants explore the outdoors at the Lake District Calvert Trust

Where they came from

75%

North East and North West

3%

Midlands

12%

Yorkshire

<3%

London, South East and South West

6%

Scotland

<1%

East of England



Their disabilities



1,376

of our visitors (53%) had multiple disabilities.



Type of disability

- 40% Physical
- 52% Learning
- 7% Sensory
- 1% Mental Health Condition

Looking forward

The three years prior to 2024 were some of the hardest that the organisation has faced. The pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis were a huge challenge for us and the rest of our sector. However, we're proud that our 2024 ended with real clarity about the need to focus on what we do best. We look forward to...



Building on our expertise

As our reputation and the experience of our instructor team grows, so too does the variety of profound needs we are welcoming to our centre. While this is a credit to our staff and facilities, it also increases demand on and for our services. In this sense, our success also has financial implications for us. We look forward to building on our expertise and using what we learn to open adventure to more people.



Growing our Enabling Adventure Fund

Without the subsidies that our Enabling Adventure Fund allows us to make, the specialist accessible adventure we offer would simply be prohibitively expensive for so many of our guest. Maintaining a fund so we can widen our reach is a real challenge. Across the north especially, from where we welcome most of our guests, demand for bursary support grows each year. We look forward to raising more than ever in 2025.

Focusing on what we do best

We are proud to have supported 45 individuals with their families at Reconnections - our acquired brain injury unit in Keswick. However, changes in the unique ways that such a specialist unit was funded and needed to operate meant that sadly this wasn't a sustainable service we could continue to provide. It is with regret that we had to close Reconnections and say goodbye to the incredible staff who made it what it was. We look forward to focusing on what we do best and supporting those with acquired brain injuries through our activities at our main setting.

Thank you

What happens at the Lake District Calvert Trust is truly special. The connections between instructors and guests as new achievements are unlocked and celebrated are a joy to witness. These countless moments wouldn't be possible without the support and commitment of so many other people.

Our staff who consistently go above and beyond – thank you

Our volunteers who generously give their time – thank you.

Our supporters and donors who make so much happen – thank you.

Our partners, schools, colleges – thank you.

Our visitors who leave so much of themselves behind – thank you.

2024 was another year of The Lake District Calvert Trust making transformative experiences possible.

Thank you all for being part of our story.



What our guests tell us...

“This has been the best week of my life.”

School Group Participant

“Being in a wheelchair won’t stop me! Not anymore”

Group Participant

“The students leave with memories and experiences that cannot be replicated elsewhere, and which often equip them with additional skills to deal with new situations and challenges in their own lives.”

Teacher of School Group

“We all had a wonderful time, and seeing how much Aaron enjoyed the high ropes has encouraged us to try new activities with him in the future. Normally, we’d avoid things like this because we’re concerned Aaron might not engage, but watching how well he managed gave us the confidence to explore new activities together.”

Parents of Participant

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