



## **PRESS RELEASE: Senedd reception to launch the Outdoor Alliance Wales Manifesto, 24th September 2025**

Organisations representing Wales's outdoor recreation, learning and adventure activity sector call on politicians and policymakers to ensure future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from the outstanding natural green, blue and underground landscape, culture and heritage of Wales.

Over 50 member organisations of Outdoor Alliance Wales (OAW), are urging the Welsh Government and Senedd Members to take bold, strategic action to fully unlock Wales's green and blue spaces. These natural assets hold immense potential for recreation, education, health, and community wellbeing. This call to action is at the heart of the OAW Manifesto 2026, developed in preparation for the upcoming Senedd elections.

The OAW Manifesto will be formally presented to the Senedd at a reception being held on 24th September, marking a key moment for policymakers to engage with the vision for a more accessible, active Wales.

Outdoor recreation is far more than a leisure activity—it's a public good. It contributes to:

- **Health and well-being:** A 10% increase in outdoor activity participation could generate £187.1 million in social value across health sectors.
- **Education:** Outdoor learning boosts attainment, confidence, and resilience. Yet, access to wild spaces is declining—especially for children.
- **Economic growth:** The outdoor activity tourism sector contributes £1.619 billion annually, supporting over 31,000 jobs.
- **Environmental stewardship:** Engaging with nature fosters respect and responsibility—essential for tackling climate and biodiversity crises.

Despite these clear benefits, Wales remains one of the most nature-disconnected countries in the world. Compared to Scotland—where all inland water is free to paddle and swim, 99% of trails are legally rideable and wild camping is permitted—Wales falls behind:

- Only 14% of trails are legally accessible for cycling or horse riding.
- Wild camping is not legally permitted anywhere in Wales—even though it's a core part of outdoor education programmes like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.
- Access to inland water is severely restricted, limiting opportunities for paddling, swimming, and water-based learning.

The OAW Manifesto for 2026 calls for politicians and policymakers to:

- Acknowledge outdoor recreation participation and lifelong learning as essential components of Welsh Government and political party policy, contributing to creating a lasting legacy and achieving Wales' seven Well-being and Future Generation Goals.
- Support this manifesto by committing to work with the sector to deliver the identified actions under the headings of Environment, Education & Lifelong Learning, Health & Well-being, Economy & Community, Access, and Responsible Recreation.

Chair of Outdoor Alliance Wales, Paul Donovan, said "The landscape and biodiversity of Wales, and its enjoyment through outdoor recreation and education, is a vitally important component of Welsh culture, spanning health and wellbeing, economy and environmental protection. Through this manifesto, Outdoor Alliance Wales highlights the social and economic value of the outdoor sector, but also shines a light on its shared vision for the next five years. OAW's expectation of future politicians and policy makers is clear, and we are committed to working with them to ensure a thriving outdoor sector for Wales."

Sam Rowlands (MS and Chair of the Cross Party Group (CPG) for the Outdoor Activity Sector in Wales) said, "It's fantastic to see Outdoor Alliance Wales publish a manifesto ahead of the next Senedd elections. As a strong advocate for this economically important sector, I know the benefits a thriving outdoor sector can provide; supporting positive mental health, physical health, understanding of our natural environment and expanding educational attainment. I would encourage MSs and candidates to give real consideration to the Outdoor Alliance Wales' manifesto and consider how their proposals can be taken forward to benefit people throughout Wales."

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### **Notes to Editors:**

*Outdoor Alliance Wales is made up of 50+ organisations, all of which are actively involved in elevating the status of the outdoor community within Wales, and in doing so can reach, influence and empower a network of like-minded people to work more closely together to address key issues in society.*

### **Outdoor Alliance Wales**

- *Represents the shared values of the outdoor sector and wider community and provides consistency and advocacy for & to the outdoor sector in Wales.*
- *Provides a platform with which external sectors and organisations can engage.*
- *Facilitates knowledge sharing and acts as an advisory forum on issues and opportunities within the outdoor sector.*
- *Represents members who innovate new ways to support the health and well-being of our nation whilst being considerate of protecting and enhancing the nation's basic resources - the natural environment.*

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*Outdoor Alliance Wales members supporting this manifesto:*

*Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee / Adventure UK / Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres Cymru / Association of Mountaineering Instructors / Beicio Cymru; Welsh Cycling / Bike Park Wales / Black Swimming Association Cymru / British Activity Providers Association / British Caving Association QMC / British Horse Society Cymru / British Mountaineering Council / British Mountain Guides / Caving Wales / Campaign for National Parks / Cardiff Metropolitan University / Cycling UK / Duke of Edinburgh Award Cymru / Glandŵr Cymru; Canal & River Trust Wales / Institute for Outdoor Learning Cymru / Mountain Training Cymru / National Coasteering Charter / National Trust Cymru / North Wales Mountain Rescue Association / Open Spaces Society / Outdoor Education Advisors' Panel Cymru / Outdoor Industries Association / Paddle Cymru / Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum / Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group / Plas Menai / Plas y Brenin / Royal National Lifeboat Institution / Royal Society for the Protection of Birds Cymru / Royal Yachting Association Cymru Wales / Ramblers Cymru / Scouts Cymru / Snowdonia-Active / South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group / South Wales Search & Rescue Association / Swim Wales / The Outdoor Partnership / UK MTB Trail Alliance / Urdd Gobaith Cymru / Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation / Wales Council for Outdoor Learning / Water Safety Wales / Welsh Sports Association / Welsh Triathlon Cymru / Woodland Trust / Youth Hostel Association Cymru*