

EVALUATION AND IMPACT OF THE SURF ACTION 'POSITIVE PATHWAY PROJECT'

TITLE - The Green Blue Health Recovery Pathway.



KINDLY FUNDED BY

 THE ARMED FORCES
COVENANT FUND TRUST



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Foreword

There is overwhelming scientific evidence that being physically active leads to a healthier and happier life and that these benefits are even more prevalent when activity takes place in or near the ocean and/or green spaces. Surf Action has been at the vanguard of the development of ocean-based activities and its acceptance in the mainstream. It is a complimentary therapeutic approach that enables an element of space, creativity and fun that is often lacking in traditional therapy options. Surf Action has been delivering surf therapy to the armed forces community for over five years and latterly, it has also been asked to work with vulnerable families and individuals from the wider civilian community.

There is a common tendency when reporting on services for children to use a lot of pictures showing the children active and smiling and to 'let the picture tell a thousand words' and Surf Action is not totally immune to this however, we realise that a picture is only the encapsulation of emotions at that specific moment. This report seeks to examine the effects of our surf therapy programme when there is not a photograph to consult.

Surf Action has collected both quantitative and qualitative data throughout the Resilient Communities in the new normal project and this report is an examination of that aggregated data to examine the delivery, efficacy, and outcomes of the Surf Action Surf Therapy model over the duration of the project.

We are not a surf school that provides free surfing! Through our funding streams and ethos, Surf Action uses surf therapy as a therapeutic tool but wants its service users to be able to move on in their lives and are delighted when this means they don't need our help anymore. Those who wish to take up surfing as a sport as a result of their participation are taught all the necessary health and safety considerations and encouraged to do so however it needs to be done at their own expense either individually or by joining a surf school. Similarly, if someone has moved on in their life but feels the need to return to us for a spell, we will always try to accommodate them.

Surf Action is very fortunate in benefitting from a wide range of skills possessed by its invaluable and dedicated volunteers and these include the degree-level mathematical and statistical skills necessary to arrange and amalgamate the data, to carry out the associated statistical analysis and the generation of the appropriate diagrams. One of the most important forms for capturing on an emotional level is the emotional needs audit, really drilling down to the effectiveness of Ocean Therapy, with this Surf Action can develop bespoke programmes to fit the need of the beneficiary.

This form is the backbone to the impact the project has made on someone's life and gives our coach and mentors a greater understanding on what is needed to be put in place. The immediate intervention is crucial to a successful outcome.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2021 has been an interesting year with many challenges for the population and society as a whole. At one point we were unsure if we would be able to run any courses due to the uncertainty and plethora of limiting regulations however once the lockdown was eased, we were proactive in trying to achieve something within the time left and through flexibility and good liaison with our volunteers and 'Global Borders', our specialist surf provider, we have achieved what looked to be impossible. Working with Sports Coach UK and Surfing England we were able to facilitate the beneficiary's needs working within safe practices.

We successfully ran 8, six-week Resilient Communities in the New Normal Ocean therapy courses and then due to increased demand we provided a further 4, six-week courses. All these were delivered whilst meeting all the relevant social distancing and health regulations and engaged with a large number of families and children. Most of the children had been at school for 3 months, but with irregular patterns of education and many of the parents were tired from home schooling and the general uncertainty. Some parents were back at work, some were still furloughed whilst others had been busy trying to support their wider family. This made our Resilient Communities' Project more important and relevant than ever and may help account for its excellent outcomes. Many of the children knew one another from school but had not seen one another since lockdown and the same went for many of the parents and meant they appreciated the courses even more. On top of this many fathers had received deployment notices with the new strike force and that meant any connection time was paramount.

The outcomes of the Resilient Communities children are summarised below.

The boys showed an average increase in wellbeing scores of 28% and this may indicate they had been very frustrated during lockdown and used their time with us to rid themselves of it in a healthy manner. (At this point school sports programmes had not resumed)

- The girls showed a more measured but very pleasing, wellbeing score increase of 13.4% and this may indicate that they dealt with the challenges of lockdown better than the boys.
- The group scores for the 12 children showed a statistically significant wellbeing increase of 19% with a greater than 95% certainty that the outcomes are accountable due to participation in our Resilient communities in the new normal programme and not to other environmental factors.
- The children who showed the lowest initial wellbeing scores benefited the most and exhibited an average increase in their wellbeing scores of 58% by the end of their courses.
- None of the children reported experiencing Covid 19 anxiety, but general stress dealing with the emotional cycle of deployment was evident.
- The children came from a record number of 18 schools including Torpoint and this shows that people are prepared to go to some lengths to attend.

The outcomes from the Emotional Needs Audit (ENA) from the 48 parents/carers who completed them showed that:

- As a population they were mostly stable and satisfied in the most important areas of their lives.
- Several participated in private talks with the on-site counsellor and asked for advice on specific subjects.
- 2 separate adults showed relatively low ENA scores and are working with us on ways to increase them in the medium term.

The feedback from the participants was excellent and demonstrates that Surf Action is providing practical and valuable services to the armed forces community at this difficult time in a successful and safe manner. During this time, it was evident that the immediate intervention with our psychological team was paramount especially helping parents deal with parenting skills and understanding of children's and parents' development.

Background

Surf Action is the trading name of Combat Surfers, a Cobseo registered military charity (Charity Number: 1140191). Surf Action promotes good physical and mental health through personal development, good personal choices, solution focused therapy, education and empowers its service users to lead healthy, fulfilled, and independent lives and to become valued and active members of their community. Core to achieving this is the use of progressive lifestyle medicine and the blue and green gym concepts and involving our service users and their families in high

intensity water-sports in the magnificent coastal environment around us with the resulting recognised physical and psychological health and resilience benefits.

Surf Action has developed a pioneering and highly cost-effective physical and mental health, wrap-around, 'Joined-Up Recovery Programme' for the armed forces community, working with individuals and families many of whom have complex physical and/or psychological problems including PTSD, depression and anxiety in particular as a result of their service.

The wraparound recovery programme was developed because Surf Action believes that recovery:

- Does not necessarily mean getting back to where you were before
- Happens in 'fits and starts' and, like life, has many ups and downs
- Is profoundly influenced by people's expectations and attitudes
- Requires a well organised system of support from family, friends and/or professionals
- Requires services to embrace new and innovative ways of working.

The efficacy of Surf Action's surf-therapy for adults has been independently examined, researched and its outcomes endorsed by several universities. The resulting published papers include

- Caddick, N., Smith, B., & Phoenix, C. (2015). The effects of surfing and the natural environment on the well-being of combat veterans. *Qualitative Health Research*, 25, 76-86.
- 'Exercise is medicine for mental health in military veterans: A qualitative commentary' (2017) by Dr Nick Caddick (Veterans and Families Institute, Anglia Ruskin University) and Professor Brett Smith (School of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation Sciences, University of Birmingham)

POSITIVE PATHWAY PROJECT - TITLE – BLUE HEATH RECOVERY PATHWAY



Surf Action applied to the 'Armed Forces Covenant Trust' for funding for this project as part of their small grants programme. In November 2020 we were delighted to receive the notification from Carol Stone that we had been awarded the funding.

The aim of the project was to support the physical/psychological wellbeing of the armed forces and local communities around RNAS Cudrose by helping local families best deal with the emotional effects of the current heavy deployment cycle by involvement in healthy activities in the blue and green gyms in the magnificent Cornish coastal environment.

RNAS Cudrose is the largest and busiest naval air-station in Europe and has a higher proportion of its personnel deployed at any one time than virtually any other base. An already hectic schedule has been further strained by the commissioning of two large aircraft carriers and the demands of current unstable world situation. This is having a commensurate effect on service families with increased demands on the base welfare services and reports from local schools of noticeable changes in some of the children whilst being exacerbated by social media and the 24-hour news cycle. An increasing number of military personnel are choosing to live further away from the main military housing areas and amongst the local community. They are also choosing to keep their families in the local area when they are posted away from Cornwall. Their families can then become rather isolated and struggle to integrate easily within the local community as shown in the 'UK Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2017' in these areas; Section 1 (Morale, Commitment and Engagement), Section 9 (Work/Life Balance), Section 11 (Health, Fitness and Welfare) and Section 13 (Family Life and Being Part of Society).

The Surf Action Resilient Communities in the New Normal Project is evidence-based variation of our adult surf-therapy programme, an experiential learning opportunity to help address the problems outlined above by the provision of supportive activities for children, young-people and families to take part in within Cornwall's stunning natural, outdoor environment. It was tailored for families and

children who were facing challenges and experiencing difficulties in everyday life to support their resilience, ability to cope and to boost wellbeing.

At the core are a series of vigorous water-based activity courses. Participants experience the benefits of being active in the outdoor environment and an exhilarating physical, emotional, and social experience, which could act as the foundation for improvement in long-term health, wellbeing, lifestyle, and family relationships. We wanted to harness the research-endorsed physical and psychological health benefits of being regularly active in the ocean for the children and their parents/carers. These include:

- Improved Vitamin D levels from being active in sunlight
- Improved quality of sleep due to boosted Melatonin levels
- Improved core body strength
- Stronger muscles
- Improved balance
- Improved sense of self-worth
- Improved relaxation and mindfulness
- Being a respected part of a friendship group
- Feeling satisfaction and pride in their achievements
- Better social integration & reduced isolation
- Better able to discuss their situations with others
- Improved anger management
- An active lifestyle reduces the severity of the symptoms in some life-long health conditions such as cystic fibrosis by strengthening the lung function and the immune system, thus aiding the clearing of mucus and boosting the quality of life
- Helping some who are on the autistic spectrum by helping reduce sensory overload and interrupting obsessive-compulsive routines thus improving their quality of life
- A reduction in the severity of the symptoms in PTSD and a wide range of related mild to moderate depressive mental health conditions.
- Being in an atmosphere which is very different from that of the day-to-day life
- The opportunity to identify and concentrate on and develop one's own recovery path
- Being more receptive to learning new things

- Enhanced peer support relationships
- Enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem
- Learning from the experiences of others and offering their own experiences
- Improved physical and psychological resilience
- Learning about new adjustment strategies
- Learning about new coping skills and education within a group setting
- Learning about the benefits of, education, work and volunteering opportunities improved family cohesion, relationships and understanding



Involving parents/carers

From the outset we wanted to encourage parents/carers to join their children in the water and to experience the programme together because it is recognised that spending quality time together as a group, and especially as a family, can have beneficial outcomes for everyone and especially children, the connection that group therapy offers is that it builds a family's resilience to change not just the individuals. The recognised benefits include

- o **Bonding Time:** Spending quality time together as a family allows everyone to bond. Whether this is partaking in everyday activities or going on holiday, creating warm memories is so valuable for children. In fact, strong child-parent

bonds are only formed through consistent communication and meaningful time spent together.

- o **Happier children:** Even though the entire family benefits from being together, it can have really a positive effect on children's general wellbeing and happiness and it's the quality of interactions not the quantity that really count. Making small changes when spending time as a unit can make all the difference. Putting aside distractions and listening to each other can help make everyone feel loved and appreciated.
- o **Improved self-esteem:** When children feel as though they're valued by their parents and spend regular, quality time together, it helps build up a positive sense of self-worth. This self-esteem often translates across to their social and school lives. Even better, family time doesn't have to be expensive - activities such as going for a walk or a bike ride hold just as much worth. The important part is spending time together and enjoying each other's company
- o **Improved mental health:** The importance of family time on children's mental health is significant. Children who feel engaged and connected in their family dynamic are more likely to be sociable, perform better in school and have less behavioural issues. In fact, recent reports have shown that teens who have infrequent family dinners are twice as likely to use tobacco and alcohol.

Surf Action recognises that there are many different family structures however the benefits of being active together remain the same. In the case of families which are no longer together, our courses give the opportunity for absent parents to be positively involved in their children's life in a structured way over 8-weeks which would not be otherwise possible. Of course, it was not possible for some parents/carers to participate for many good reasons, but we still ask them to remain in the vicinity of the beach to watch, give encouragement and to engage in conversation with the other parents/carers and our own staff and volunteers. We were not there to provide a free child-minding service for the morning! Conversations on the beach are an important part of our structure as they allowed parents/carers the opportunity to talk openly, but confidentially, to our professionals and volunteers on a regular basis in a natural environment when they were relaxed. From these conversations we learned about their lives and what was working well and what was not. This became the foundation on which to help support them in addressing the areas of worry where it was possible through advice and/or referral.

Measuring Wellbeing

Surf Action has always taken a well-being approach in its delivery and in assessing outcomes because it enables us to:

- Move beyond a narrow focus on what can go wrong in people's lives, to look also at what makes people's lives go well.

- Move beyond looking only at what people lack or need and look at the positive things people bring to situations and communities – their assets. This in turn can help us think about the ways that people can be empowered to contribute to improvements in their own lives.
- Move beyond just focusing on economic circumstances to include the important areas of people's emotional and social needs.

When we understand what makes people's lives go well, see the positive things people bring to situations, and understand people's emotional and social needs, projects and services can be better designed to respond to the many aspects that make up people's lives.

In 2014 Surf Action opted to use the WEMWBS scale, a positively worded measure developed by Warwick and Edinburgh Universities in 2006 in conjunction with NHS Scotland, measuring emotional and psychological wellbeing, validated with children aged 8 upwards.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a scale with five response categories on a Likert scale, which have been specifically designed to measure both the feeling and functioning aspects of positive mental well-being. These questions meet various statistical tests of robustness, and they also have 'face validity' as measures of aspects of flourishing within the dynamic model, i.e., on the face of it, the questions really are about wellbeing! For example, good feelings ('feeling relaxed'), sense of meaning ('feeling useful') and good relationships ('feeling close to other people'). Warwick and Edinburgh Universities were commissioned to develop this in 2006, and it has been academically validated as having good psychometric properties, good validity, and reliability with the ability to distinguish between population groups. WEMWBS has been widely used in population surveys in the UK and elsewhere, including in the Health Survey for England in 2011.

Although the scale is validated for children aged 8 and above, the minimum age for participation in our water-based activities was 7 so after consulting widely amongst our trustees and professionals, we decided to let the 7-year-olds complete the forms. There was a 'neutral' Surf Action volunteer available to them during this process to further explain questions and to find examples in day-to-day life which helped explain the various concepts.

The children were asked to complete a WEMWBS form at the start, in the middle and at the end of their courses.

Throughout this report we will be using mean (average) WEMWBS scores for individual children and groups because this allows us to easily translate a score into a meaningful word statement linking the quantitative and qualitative data using the WEMWBS Likert scale table below.

The WEMWBS Likert scale for each of the questions					
WEMWBS Score	1	2	3	4	5
Qualitative meaning	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All the time

The parents/carers were also asked to complete an emotional needs audit during the course associated with our adult provision to give us a snapshot of their lives and situation. This could then be used as a catalyst for a directed conversation later to support them if they wanted. They were also asked to complete a comprehensive feedback sheet at the end of their course.

Inclusivity

We wanted the project to be as inclusive as possible and made the decision to, unlike many organisations, integrate any participants with special needs with their peers whenever possible taking into consideration our duty of care and safeguarding requirements. We were delighted that this was achieved in its entirety.

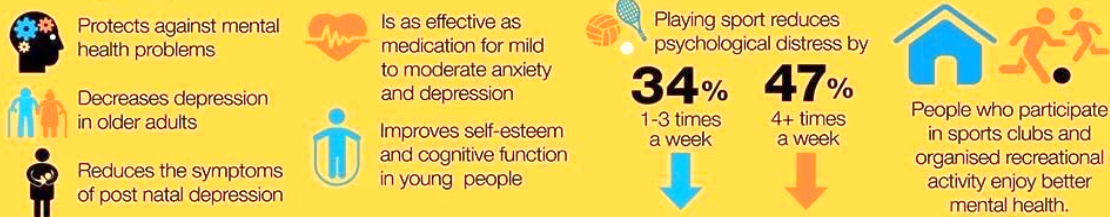


Client Ethnicity

The declared ethnic mix of participants was consistent with the demographic of Cornwall in which 98.7% of the population define themselves as white (ONS 2008)

Physical activity and mental health

Being physically active:



METHODOLOGY

Preparation

The Resilient Communities Ocean therapy courses were comprehensively advertised from Christmas 2020 onwards through social media and the local military establishments and cluster schools. Several parents saw our advertising and booked places for their children whilst they were still deployed overseas which was good to see.

There were plenty of applications and the courses were quickly filled and in fact over-subscribed. All applicants also completed relevant 'Photographic Consent' and 'Disclaimer' forms. There was a good age and gender mix amongst the participants which was very pleasing.

Each course accommodates 10 children so there were 120 places available during 2021.

Activities

Surf Action adapted its research backed, community-based, sports-oriented, fully risk assessed occupational therapy course (Ocean Therapy) which uses the high-intensity water-sports such as surfing and kayaking etc in an experiential, skills-based experience specifically adapted for military personnel and veterans seeking mental health services. Consistent with conceptualizations of the transformative nature of engagement in meaningful occupations and the dynamic influence of environment on a person's performance this course combines surfing performance, focused group processing, and social participation to create opportunities for veterans to examine ways in which their individual values, abilities, and experiences can support successful transition to civilian life.

By providing individual support in the water for each child, preferably from one or both of their parents/carers, to help build confidence and by adding extra fun challenges and games in the water we hoped that it would have similar beneficial effects on the children as well as their parents/carers. Parents/carers who did not go into the water but who remained on the beach whilst their child was in the water then had the opportunity to chat to other parents from the civilian and military community

for a couple of hours and to discuss a wide range of common issues etc in a very welcoming atmosphere and environment.

The twelve Ocean Therapy Courses in 2021 were run at Gwithian beach which is just north east of Hayle, it is a beautiful surfing beach and is easy to access for all the participants. It has a popular beach café which acted as the focus of many of the beach discussions and allowed privacy for those who wanted to ask for advice or to discuss problems.

The courses were free to participants and all equipment such as wetsuits, boots, gloves, and surf boards were provided by Surf Action. Fully trained surf and water-sports instructors and lifeguards oversaw the water-based activities. The courses were run at weekends to make them as inclusive as possible.

Each session started with a general welcome followed by a comprehensive and necessary physical warm-up which included a wide range of activities which all young people, parents, carers, staff, and volunteers participated. It was made as much fun as possible and each week every young person was given the opportunity to pick a warm-up exercise. These sessions became an excellent scene-setter and a superb way in which to get people working together within a fun atmosphere. After the warm-up there was a recap of lessons already learned and discussions on beach safety, the environment etc before the introduction of the weeks theme. All the lessons and discussions were then put into practical use in the water sessions. After each session a circle of life is draw upon for families to start conversations amongst each other with the coach and mentor staff, these conversations gave great insight to keeping our delivery fluid and needs based.

Evaluation Measures

Adults and children completed the wellbeing paperwork that was described earlier. The adults were also engaged in conversation by the Surf Action volunteers and qualitative data was gathered about what changes they had experienced as each course progressed.



Name:

STATEMENTS	None of the time	Rarely	Some of the time	Often	All of the time
I've been feeling optimistic about the future	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling useful	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling relaxed	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling interested in other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've had energy to spare	1	2	3	4	5
I've been dealing with problems well	1	2	3	4	5
I've been thinking clearly	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling good about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling close to other people	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling confident	1	2	3	4	5
I've been able to make up my own mind about things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling loved	1	2	3	4	5
I've been interested in new things	1	2	3	4	5
I've been feeling cheerful	1	2	3	4	5

Resilient Communities' Emotional Needs Audit

How well are your innate emotional needs being met?

Nature has programmed all of us with physical and emotional needs. These are the 'human givens' that cannot be avoided. How stressed we are depending upon how well our needs are

being met, and how well we deal with the situation when they are not. Rate, in your judgement, how well the following emotional needs are being met in your life now, on a scale of one to seven (where 1 means not met at all, and 7 means being very well met), by ticking the appropriate boxes.

NO SOMETIMES YES

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Do you feel secure in all major areas of your life (such as your home, work, environment)? | | | | | | | |
| 2. Do you feel you receive enough attention? | | | | | | | |
| 3. Do you think you give other people enough attention? | | | | | | | |
| 4. Do you feel in control of your life most of the time? | | | | | | | |
| 5. Do you feel connected to some part of a wider community? | | | | | | | |
| 6. Can you obtain privacy when you need to? | | | | | | | |
| 7. Do you feel an emotional connection to others?
For instance, do you have an intimate relationship in your life, one where you are totally physically and emotionally accepted for who you are by at least one person (this could be a close friend)? | | | | | | | |
| 8. Do you feel you have status that is acknowledged? | | | | | | | |
| 9. Are you achieving things and feeling competent in at least one major area of your life? | | | | | | | |
| 10. Are you being mentally and/or physically stretched in ways which give you a sense that life is meaningful? | | | | | | | |

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Surf Action Community Integration and Wellbeing Project Feedback Form

Surf Action values your feedback and uses it to further improve its services and for data collection which is then incorporated in its reports and funding bids.

Please answer the questions as honestly as possible. The more information we get, the more help it is to us!

You can complete the form anonymously or if you are happy, include your name and contact details.

Name (Optional);

Course Number;

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. The courses were well advertised.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Surf Action was easy to contact.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The paperwork was simple to fill in.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The joining letter contained enough information.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The aims of the course were well explained.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The Surf Action staff; volunteers and surf instructors were friendly and easy to talk to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. We were made to feel welcome on the first day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The children's WEMWBS paperwork was easy for them to understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The surf instructors were professional and explained everything well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. We felt safe in the water.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. If we had a problem, there was someone to talk to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. We looked forward to each week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The children benefited from the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The parents/carers benefited from the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Our family benefited from the course.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. We would recommend the course to other families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please use the back of the form for any additional comments/thoughts on what benefits you have got from the course as a family.



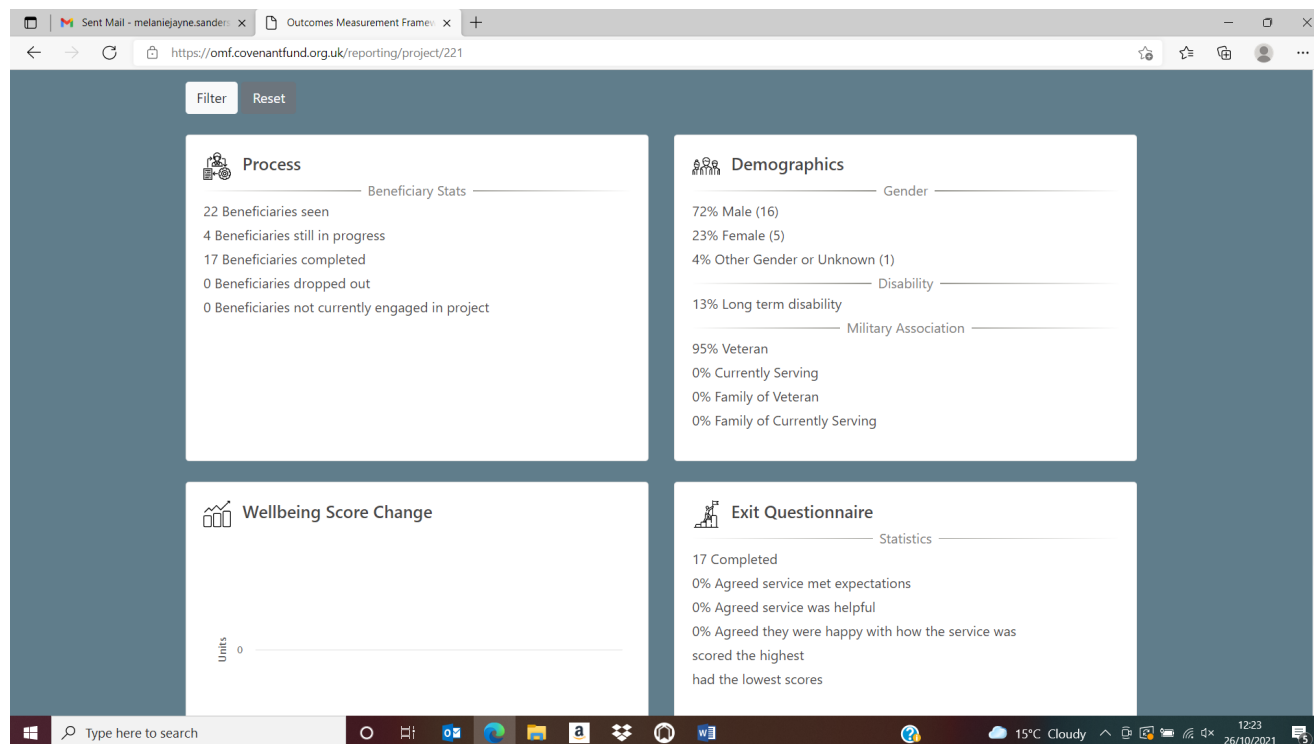
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Participant WEMWBS and Data Analysis

We chose to work with mean WEMWBS scores rather than total scores as it kept the numbers smaller and allowed for comparison of outcomes on a 1-5 continuous

scale which allowed for comparison within the meaning of the Likert scale. This allowed an assessment of the trend and spread in mean scores which is perfectly valid even for Likert data. The parametric statistical analysis assumes the data to be approximately normally distributed, so we made extensive use of box and whisker diagrams to display data giving an additional visual assessment of normality.



Data Protection

Surf Action is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office under the registration number Z3463898 and is GDPR compliant. All information and data collected during this project was treated and stored in accordance with current data protection regulations.





Results and Outcomes

Attendance

The overall attendance figure of 97% was very pleasing and this was indicative of how enjoyable the participants found their courses. Several people withdrew due to unforeseen illness/injury but were mostly replaced provided it was in the early weeks of the course.

Amongst the qualitative feedback written on the back of the forms were the following,

Summary

2021 has been an interesting year with many challenges for the population and society as a whole. At one point we were unsure if we would be able to run any courses due to the uncertainty and plethora of limiting regulations however once the lockdown was eased, we were proactive in trying to achieve something within the time left and through flexibility and good liaison with our volunteers and 'Global Boarders', our specialist surf provider, we have achieved what looked to be impossible. Throughout the 2021 year it was evident that communities had to get back to a simple focus on enjoyment and something to look forward to. The

beneficiaries are all aware of the outside world and its white noise, through streaming, social media and the daily news channels which unfortunately have a negative effect on peoples thought processes. The situation with Covid-19, Brexit and the constant misery that the news can unfold has been one of the most talked about topics. This along with the daily routine of life creates huge anxieties. What the most pleasing thing to see was the effects of the Ocean Therapy course reducing this anxiety and level of negative thought process.

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult situations and life events. Being resilient does not mean that people don't experience stress, emotional upheaval suffering.....Resilience is important because it gives people the strength needed to process and overcome hardship.

The project funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Trust Fund and delivered by Surf Action enabled its beneficiaries to experience resilience in the Blue Gym.

We are happy that the outcomes demonstrate that 'The Surf Action Resilient Communities in the new normal was a well-designed and targeted provision with proven and sustained wellbeing outcomes which is ideally suited to help combat the growing physical and psychological health worries within the armed forces community in these challenging times.

