



## HORIZONS CHILDREN'S SAILING CHARITY, COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2022

### INTRODUCTION

For over 30 years Plymouth based charity Horizons, also known as Horizons Children's Sailing Charity, has been working with disadvantaged young people and young people with disabilities from the local community. Plymouth is an iconic maritime city and has recently celebrated the launch of the first National Marine Park in the UK. However, Plymouth is also a place where social deprivation affects the everyday lives of many young people. The work of Horizons is a direct response to the needs of these young people. We are highly inclusive, whilst remaining strongly focused on those in the most deprived areas of our community.

Horizons are a small, locally focussed charity with 3 FTE paid staff who are supported by a large team of volunteers. We provide sailing and motorboating activities for young people (aged 8-19) and people with disabilities (aged up to 25). By removing barriers to participation, we provide inclusive, safe and fun sessions where participants gain practical sailing skills, teamwork experience, confidence, problem solving skills and the awareness to keep themselves and others safe on the water. Through our activities participants improve their wellbeing whilst developing positive character attributes, and gaining transferable skills which boost the chances of success in their wider lives.

### PARTICIPATION RATES

Here we summarise figures from our 2022 attendance records, whilst reflecting on how this compares to participation rates in 2019, and 2021. Data from 2019 reflects a typical year and level of project delivery, 2021 was a year deeply impacted upon by Covid-19 restrictions and our activities were severely disrupted. The figures for 2022 tell a story of recovery and an almost complete return to pre-covid levels of activity delivery at Horizons.

In 2019 across all projects, Horizons delivered 224 sailing sessions to 1,264 different children/vulnerable young adults, of whom 244 had a registered disability. Many of the children attend multiple sessions, so when counted as a footfall across the season, this equates to almost 3,000 individual child sessions being provided through our water-based activity programmes which are delivered between April-October. In 2021 across all projects, there were 119 sessions delivered to 476 different children/vulnerable young adults, of whom 91 had a registered disability. When counted as footfall across all sessions, this equates to almost 1,300 individual child sessions being provided between April-October.

Our 2021 sessions were adapted to be compliant with Covid-19 related regulations and restrictions throughout the year. One side effect of this was an increase in the use of our single-hander and double-hander dinghies, as more experienced cadets sailed either alone or in household bubbles or pairs (i.e. with siblings) in line with social distancing requirements. In light of the challenges faced in 2021, the participation numbers reflect phenomenal dedication and effort from Horizons staff, our volunteers and the young sailors participating.

In 2022 as the nation began to cautiously emerge from the shadow of Covid-19, our sailing season got off to a slow start, and rapidly gained momentum. When the season drew to a close in October across all projects, we had delivered 168 separate activity sessions to 1,079 young people, of whom 136 had a registered disability (14%). As a footfall count we delivered 2,188 child sessions across all projects, adding up to a total of 6,564 hours of activity time provided to young people in 2022. Overall this season, the level

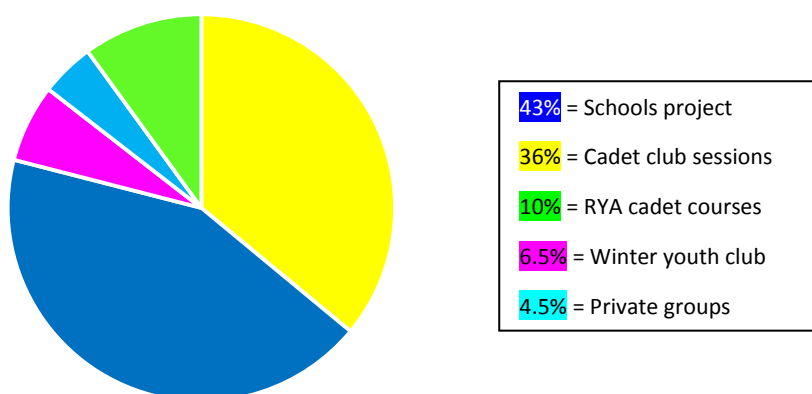


of activity delivery was equivalent to 85% of a typical pre-covid year. Whilst we believe that this represents a very positive, and hopeful recovery, it also needs to be looked at in more detail.

When the Horizons 2022 participation figures are broken down by project area we find that the Horizons Sailing Club, Schools Project, and Summer School all made a full recovery to pre-Covid levels of participation. The area of project delivery that has not yet bounced back fully is our accessible sailing activities for private and group trips with other charities and organisations (in particular our wheelchair accessible sessions for the likes of Dame Hannah and local care homes). The reduction in our accessible group sessions is reflected in the fact that the proportion of our participants with disabilities dropped to 14% this year, where previously it was a steady average of 20%.

We believe that the drop in accessible group sessions may be a consequence of the financial strain that many charities are currently facing, and that their vulnerable service users faced additional hardship and risks under Covid-19. We will be reviewing this aspect of our work, and talking to our local partners in the lead up to the 2023 season. At the start of 2023 we have been in talks with new partners from disability targeted support groups and youth clubs. This new collaboration has a number of sessions already booked in, and further dates awaiting confirmation. We expect that the 2023 season will see an increase, and far greater recovery in this area of our project delivery.

#### **Horizons project delivery as a proportion of total activities delivered in the 2022 Season:**



#### **SOCIAL IMPACT**

Based on previous research carried out in 2017 with research groups at the University of Plymouth, and ongoing informal feedback and discussions with our young sailors, their families, and our volunteers, we have found consistently high levels of satisfaction with Horizons from children, parents, carers and educators. Horizons removes barriers and facilitates access to the natural outdoor marine environment for children and families in a way that positively impacts the following:

- Educational engagement / attainment and future employability
- Self-esteem and self confidence
- Awareness of social and environmental risk and appropriate risk strategies
- Personal well-being and mental health
- Social communication skills
- Personal social resilience
- Knowledge of and respect for the natural environment
- Community cohesion and social difference

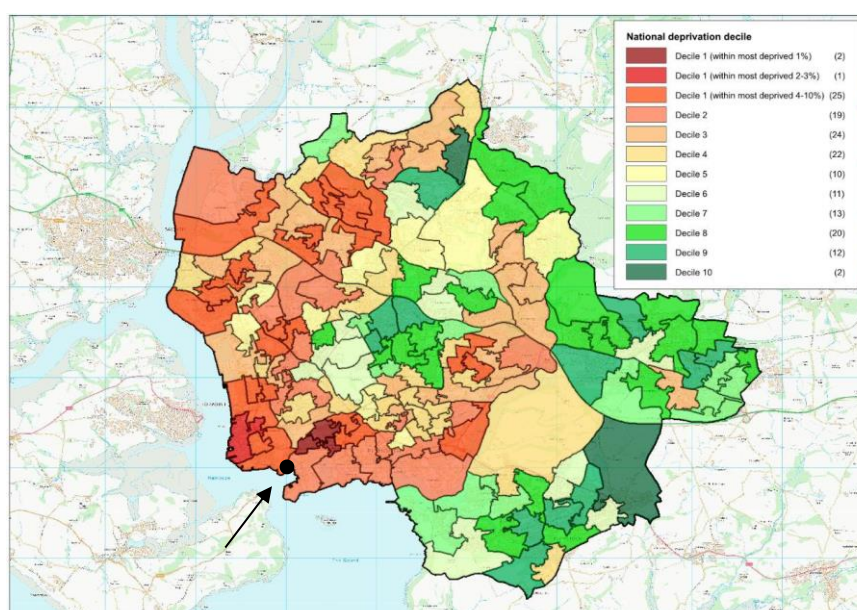


## PLYMOUTH DEMOGRAPHICS

Plymouth City Council has published a detailed analysis of its neighbourhoods, including statistics about areas where deprivation is prevalent. There is a long-standing awareness of the deprivation that exists in Plymouth. These inequalities occur both geographically across the city, and within and across communities, with disadvantaged and marginalised populations most severely affected. The proportion of residents in Plymouth experiencing deprivation due to low income has increased in recent years.

A deprived area is conventionally understood to be a place in which people tend to be relatively poor and are more likely to face challenges such as ill health, lower educational attainment, unemployment, limited access to goods and services, and inferior housing.

The map below is taken from the Plymouth City Council Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Summary Analysis document 2019 (the most up to date version currently available) the map below shows the demographics of deprivation in Plymouth. The location of Horizons is marked with a black circle, showing that we are located in the heart of the deprived communities that we serve.



*Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights [2019].*

The IMD also measures Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) these cover key indicators such as income, employment, education and crime. The number of Plymouth neighbourhoods classed as being in the most deprived 10% has increased from 12 in 2010 to 20 in 2019. Plymouth's most deprived LSOA, is the Stonehouse neighbourhood (part of St Peter and the Waterfront ward), which falls within the most deprived 1% nationally both in the IMD 2015 and IMD 2019 (data from page 9 of Plymouth City Council Index of Multiple Derivation (IMD) Summary Analysis document 2019)

The two most deprived neighbourhoods in Plymouth are Stonehouse and Devonport. Stonehouse is part of the St Peter and Waterfront ward. Since 2007 St Peter and Waterfront and Devonport wards have consistently been the 2 most deprived wards in the city (data from page 16 of Plymouth City Council Index of Multiple Derivation (IMD) Summary Analysis document 2019). Horizons is located in Devonport, and Stonehouse is the neighbouring area. 25% of the registered youth sailing club members at Horizons are residents in Devonport or Stonehouse, and we work with schools from these areas. The table on page 4 gives a snapshot of some markers of deprivation in these areas compared to city wide averages.



Indicators of deprivation in Stonehouse and Devonport alongside the city of Plymouth average:

IMD and LSOA indicators	Stonehouse	Devonport	Plymouth City Average
Deprivation ranking	1 out of 39	2 out of 39	Where 1 is the most deprived and 39 is the least deprived of the city's neighbourhoods
% of population in receipt of Universal Credit	14.2%	13.9%	5.6%
Children living in low income families	39.6%	32.7%	20%
Anti-Social-Behaviour rates per 10,000 of the population	1,143.1 per 10,000	604.5 per 10,000	323.8 per 10,000
Children in need per 10,000 of the population aged 0-17 in 2018/2019	369.1 per 10,000	323.3 per 10,000	201.4 per 10,000

The statistics used in table 2 are from:

IMD Plymouth City Council Neighbourhood Profile 2019: Stonehouse

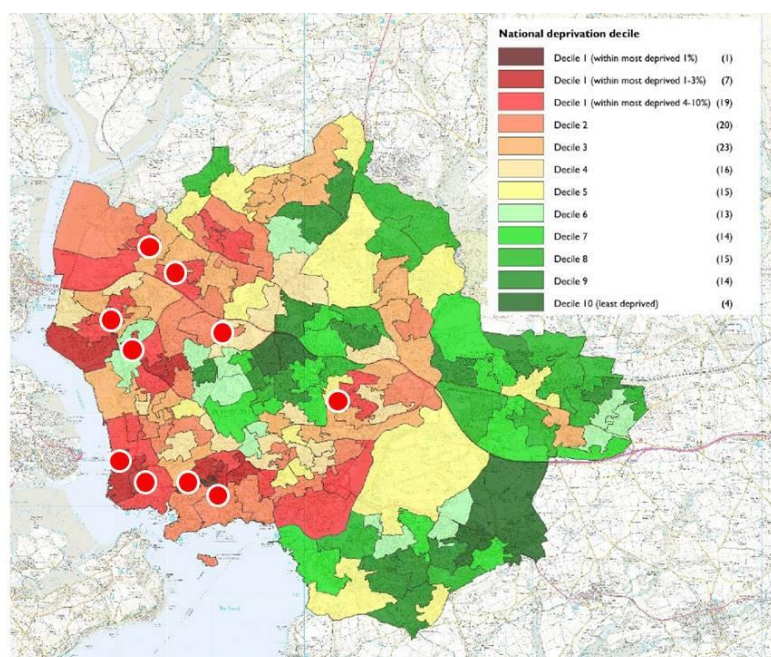
[https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Stonehouse%20Profile\\_0.pdf](https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Stonehouse%20Profile_0.pdf)

IMD Plymouth City Council Neighbourhood Profile 2019: Devonport

[https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Devonport%20Profile\\_1.pdf](https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Devonport%20Profile_1.pdf)

## HORIZONS' SCHOOLS PROJECT

Each year we work with 10 Primary schools in the city, targeting those located in the areas of most social deprivation. The map below shows the location of the schools we worked with in 2022 and that these are located in areas of high deprivation.





For each school Horizons aim to deliver 10 sessions for up to 14 pupils and 2 staff members, a 'session' is a child on the water for a morning or an afternoon. The school can choose if they send different children to each session, or send the same group each time. Horizons provide minibuss pick-up and drop-off to the school groups which is free of charge and reinforces the accessibility of our sessions for those who are most in need. Essential equipment is provided for students including buoyancy aids, and waterproof spray tops and trousers if required.

The School Project sessions delivered by Horizons are 'hands-on' learning experiences where children can steer the boat, conduct safety drills, enjoy the elements, look out for wildlife and learn more about historic Plymouth and its maritime environment. The trips take into account weather and tidal constraints, and give children an opportunity to see their city from another perspective; learning about Plymouth, its history and its importance as a port for the Royal Navy.

Our school sessions are flexible and can be matched to curriculum requirements such as History and Geography, Maths (time & distance), and Science (weather, aerodynamics and geological applications). Sailing lends itself to being a practical extension of in class activities, and recent school groups have completed creative writing and arts projects drawing on the technical and practical knowledge that they gained during their sessions with Horizons.

The Schools Project delivers up to 100 sessions between April and October. In 2019 we took 764 school pupils sailing of whom 54 had a disability and the gender split was very even between boys and girls participating. In 2021 our school project was still heavily impacted by Covid-19, despite this we took 203 school pupils sailing of whom 8 had a disability and 121 were girls and 82 boys.

In 2022 through the Schools Project, Horizons took 913 school pupils sailing of whom 39 had a registered disability (however some schools declined to provide this information, so our data here is incomplete). Some schools took the same group of pupils out more than once, so as a footfall count 957 child sessions were provided, which is 2,871 hours of activity session time for school pupils. There were 8 mainstream primary schools, one mainstream secondary, and one special school who took part across a total of 77 separate sessions. These figures show that our work with local schools recovered to pre-covid levels, and actually slightly higher during the 2022 season. This positive momentum looks set to continue into the 2023 season, by the end of 2022 we already had 5 schools confirmed for the 2023 Schools Project, with another 5 awaiting confirmation of dates and scheduling.

Each year we collect feedback from the schools and the pupils. It is very clear that these sailing trips provide an opportunity most of the school children could not have otherwise. The pupils talked excitedly about how much they enjoyed the experience, learnt more about their natural local area, and overcame their fears. Here is some feedback provided by our school pupils:

*"Thank you for such a fantastic week of sailing. I loved it! When I heard that we were going sailing I was scared but it was a great success, I loved it!"*

*"I never thought I would get the chance to sail... at first I was scared, and I came out confident and happy to do it again... I loved sitting on the side of the boat and getting splashed"*

Whilst one class teacher described the reaction of the children as follows:

*"It was great to see the smiles on the children's faces while sailing. Most of the children had only been on the Torpoint ferry at most, so this was a fantastic experience for them. They went home buzzing, telling their parents all about it"*



Another teacher reflected on how the experience enabled the children to build relationships with their peers and make new friendships:

*“New friendships were made as they spent time in a boat with children they do not usually talk to, and these [friendships] have carried on at school... All children loved it and couldn’t wait for the next session the following day.”*

The pictures below were sent in by year 4 school pupil participants, and demonstrate how much their imagination and creativity was sparked by their experience with Horizons:



## YOUTH CADET ACTIVITIES (Horizons' Sailing Club, Summer School, and Winter Youth Club)

### Sailing Club:

The Schools Project sessions are the main source of recruitment for our open sessions, the “Horizons’ Sailing Club”, which runs twice a week after school hours. These are 3 hour sessions and our registered youth members can sign up for sessions at the start of each week. In the past these were run on a ‘turn up and sail’ basis. However following Covid-19 and changes in regulations regarding adult : young people ratios our young members are now encouraged to sign up for sessions in advance so that we can ensure enough adult volunteers are present to support the session and comply with safety regulations.

Horizons run welcoming, fun and inclusive Sailing Club sessions where disability is accommodated as far as possible (however there are some limits in term of physical disability and Horizons do not currently provide for wheelchair users during our Sailing Club sessions). Participants are asked to give a voluntary donation of £1 for each 3 hour session, we found this creates a feeling of “buy in” and responsibility, but as it is optional does not present a barrier to access.



Typically, a child will start off in a Hawk 20 keelboat with 3 other children, a qualified Skipper and an adult crew member. As they gain confidence they will advance to our smaller boats and generally aim to work towards individually sailing one of our small Laser Pico dinghies. This learning progression is usually a very empowering experience and the children gain a real sense of achievement. Horizons also have 2 to 3 safety boats on duty during all sessions.

Sailing requires a range of costly equipment and specialist clothing. Essential equipment including buoyancy aids, waterproof spay tops and safety equipment is provided by Horizons for use in sessions. During Covid 19 Horizons donated sets of kit to participants to keep as their own and take responsibility for, this also allowed us to comply with restrictions on shared equipment which were in place at the time.

In 2019 our Horizons' Sailing Club delivered 50 sessions to 134 registered youth cadets of whom 85 were male, 53 female, and 27 had a registered disability. This equates to 844 sessions delivered as a footfall count. In 2021, during Covid-19 this was reduced to 44 sessions to 78 registered youth cadets of whom 51 were male, 27 female, and 16 had a registered disability. This equates to 415 sessions delivered as a footfall count.

In 2022 Horizons had 86 registered youth cadet members of whom 49 were male, and 34 female. There were 17 youth cadets with a registered disability (20%) the majority of these are neurodiverse. There was an almost even number of returning members, and new members in 2022. We had 36 cadets aged between 8-11; 37 cadets aged between 12-16; and 9 cadets aged between 16-19. There were 46 separate sessions run across the Sailing Club, providing 755 sessions as a footfall count, which is 2,265 hours of activity time for our young sailors. Average attendance at the Sailing Club was 20 young people per session. Some senior cadets also joined our adult volunteers sessions on a Wednesday to advance their skills further.

The participation figures for the Sailing Club in 2022 show a recovery to pre-covid participation rates. The way in which our cadets participate shifted slightly, in that a slightly lower number of young people attended overall, but those young people who did attend participated in more sessions.

### **Summer School:**

Over the summer holidays (July-September) we run the Horizons Summer School project offering our cadets (and if space permits, members of the public), a range of RYA accredited certificate courses and training programmes. These nationally recognised qualifications give our cadets opportunities to consolidate, and build upon the skills and knowledge that they have gained during the Sailing Club sessions.

We are a Royal Yachting Association (RYA) accredited Training Centre and our Summer School RYA certificate courses ran a full programme in 2022, another area of very positive recovery. The courses cover the RYA dinghy sailing scheme, from absolute beginners all the way up to the more advanced techniques and Assistant Instructor awards. This year 8 separate courses were delivered (courses are 2 days long), and 32 individual cadets participated, some of them attended multiple courses, so as a footfall count 55 courses were completed. Overall the Horizons Summer School project provided 687 hours of training delivery for our youth cadets.

### **Winter Youth Club:**

Between October-March Horizons run a youth club style winter programme of land-based recreational and educational activities linked to the local marine industry. This keeps young people engaged with our project all year round, and boosts retention. As part of these sessions we arrange visits with a range of local companies and partners such as Princess Yachts, and the RNLI which builds the young people's awareness of local maritime opportunities and encourages ambition. The winter 2021-2022 sessions were still impacted by Covid-19 restrictions until early 2022, despite the difficulties faced, 10 sessions ran with an average attendance of 15 young people, and as a total footfall count 145 sessions of activity time were provided.



## **HORIZONS' INCLUSIVE SAILING**

All of our sailing sessions are run in an inclusive and open manner. In total 20% of the individuals who sailed with us in 2019 and 2021 had a registered disability. In order to accommodate and include those with physical disability, we have a fully adapted and wheelchair accessible Mitchell 31 powerboat named "Friendship of Plymouth" affectionally known by Horizons as "Friendship". She can comfortably carry 4 wheelchair users and 6 ambulant people at a time.

Horizons work closely with local support groups and services including Dame Hannah's, Friends and Families of Special Children, and local care homes among others, to take groups of wheelchair users out on Plymouth Sound. In addition to being wheelchair accessible Friendship has a hydraulic platform by the steering wheel, a dual control system and a range of steering attachments meaning that everyone can have a go at steering the boat as well. This is a really empowering and novel experience for most of our disabled sailors which they greatly enjoy. Friendship is a great asset, having her means that we can provide chances for people to experience being out on the water for whom this would normally not be possible.

In 2022 Horizons provided 20 inclusive and accessible group sessions attended by 80 children, all of whom had registered disabilities. There were roughly equal numbers of boys and girls participating (42 girls and 38 boys). Some children attended more than once so as a footfall count there were 102 child sessions provided, which is equal to 306 hours of activity time.

Pre-covid inclusive sailing for private groups averaged 82 separate group trips per season. We believe it is likely that this drop in private group bookings, and limited recovery reflects the hardship being faced by many charities in 2022, and the medical vulnerability of these participants who were impacted upon disproportionately by Covid. In particular, a big difference has been that the care home groups who used to come out with Horizons have not returned post-covid. We will be reviewing this area of our work and talking to our local partners over the winter period and in the lead up to our 2023 season.

At the beginning of 2023 we established some new partnership connections, with local disability targeted young adult support services and youth groups. These groups have sessions booked in and further sessions planned for the 2023 season. We anticipate that in 2023 we will see an increase and recovery in our accessible group activities, especially as we build upon the new groups who will be starting with us. It is also likely that in 2023 we will look to make more group specific, targeted funding bids.

Outside of private group bookings Friendship has been used as a "mothership" and support boat during Sailing Club sessions and activities which has been a great help. For some of our young sailors with additional needs using Friendship as a base to come off the smaller boats and take some time to self-regulate, or just warm up, and then return to the smaller sailing boats has assisted them to be able to participate more fully. Friendship has been used to provide safety boat support at external events (helping to bring in essential income for our charitable activities). Friendship has also been used during our school group sessions, rotating groups between Friendship and the smaller sailing boats to give the pupils a more varied experience. Many pupils declared their motorboat experience with Horizons as a real highlight.

## **HORIZONS' STAFF**

Horizons Plymouth provides a large programme of water-based activities to a vulnerable target group and we rely extensively on volunteers to achieve this. Because of the nature of this work we employ a core of professional staff to ensure the safety of operations on the water, as well as the associated safeguarding for all young participants.

Our staff are a small but dedicated and highly skilled team. We have 2 staff members responsible for all aspects of our water-based activities. The Horizons Chief Executive is an RYA Sailing Scheme Trainer, and RYA Powerboat Trainer who ensures that all sailing, boating and training programmes conform to RYA standards and Horizons' Procedures. Our senior instructor oversees the safe and efficient operations for all our activities and manages our activities diary. We have an office based staff member responsible for fundraising, some administrative tasks, and who is currently working to expand and strengthen our local partnerships moving forward.



## **HORIZONS' TRUSTEES AND VOLUNTEERS**

Horizons currently have 70 registered and DBS checked adult volunteers with 56 of them regularly involved in our activities. Of our volunteers 66% are male and 44% female. We also have 7 dedicated trustees from a variety of backgrounds including the Royal Navy, business and finance, academia, and the NHS. Several of our trustees are regularly involved as volunteers.

Our Horizons trustees and volunteers range from highly experienced life-long sailors who support our sessions as qualified skippers, to parent volunteers with no experience who assist as crew on a boat with a skipper present. The trustees and volunteers also support Horizons in a variety of ways off the water, for example driving the minibus to collect school groups, administrative and fundraising assistance and much more. With such a small staff team, the scale of our impact and activities simply could not be achieved without the amazing support that we get from our trustees and volunteers.

Over the course of a year our volunteers give a huge amount of time to Horizons. In 2022 Horizons adult volunteers generously contributed 3,999 hours of their time, supporting sessions delivery 1,317 times (as a footfall count across all sessions). Using the Office of National Statistics "hourly rate" guideline figure for volunteer time of £14.81 per hour (2017 figure) that is £59,225.19 of donated time. It is no exaggeration to say that the support of the amazing trustee and volunteer team is what enables Horizons to achieve and deliver the great work that we do.

Horizons has played a major role in the lives of some volunteers. One volunteer joined us at the age of 10 as a youth sailor and is now a qualified skipper and volunteer in his early 30's who states that Horizons has been his connection to the world and kept him out of trouble as a teenager navigating the world with Asperger's. Other volunteers are of retirement age and Horizons is their key connection to the community as they support our sessions on a daily basis and rely on it as a way to access the resources to sail and do what they love. The average time our volunteers have been with us is 5.8 years and our most long standing volunteer has been with Horizons for 23 years. This level of volunteer retention reflects the positive and mutually beneficial relationship between Horizons and our volunteers.

## **COVID-19**

It has been widely recognised and accepted that the impacts of Covid-19 were felt more keenly by vulnerable sectors of society, especially those in lower socioeconomic groups. In April 2022 the Office for National Statistics (ONS) published a detailed report into loneliness at a national scale and broke the data down into local authority areas. "This work found that areas with a higher concentration of younger people (aged 16-24) and areas with higher rates of unemployment tended to have higher rates of loneliness during the study period (October 2020 to February 2021)". These descriptors apply to the communities that Horizons serve.

COVID-19 highlighted the importance of social connection and showed many people how difficult things can be when you feel isolated. ("Tackling Loneliness Annual Report February 2022 – The third year"). Feedback from Horizons participants and volunteers strongly identifies the feelings of loneliness and other challenges experienced during periods of lockdown, examples are:

*"My son has additional needs and during lockdown it has affected his mental health. Going back to sailing with Horizons will give him the chance to socialise, feel part of a group, and give him the freedom and break from his mum. Getting back on the water helps him de-stress and helps with his anxiety, confidence and self-esteem."*



*“My son has had very little contact with anyone at all since lockdown and sailing having to stop. Being autistic and having ADHD, he finds making friendships very difficult and with the lockdown restrictions, he has become almost virtually isolated to the outside world with an exception of a walk once an evening to get some fresh air or he wouldn't leave the house at all. Sailing gave him a huge confidence boost as he used to attend with a friend. It enabled him to be more independent, less shy and make friends within the sailing group. Since lockdown, my son regularly talks about Horizons and often asks when he can return to sailing. He is so keen; he now has the confidence to attend without his friends or siblings to accompany him.”*

*“Since lockdown she has lost all confidence in herself, not wanting to leave the house. She doesn't speak to anyone outside the house and she spends most of her time in her room. The only thing she is looking forward to is sailing again, as it brings her calmness. Also, the staff are brilliant at boosting her self esteem. My son has not done very well being isolated away from people. Being out at sea brings him so much joy and excitement. Horizons give children an experience they wouldn't normally be able to afford to do.”*

Horizons plays a crucial role in providing positive opportunities for local young people, and relieving pressure on their families. Horizons fosters positive community engagement and builds a sense of belonging and community around a shared interest. Our volunteers and staff provide young people with positive role models, and support them to achieve their goals through sailing, which builds their confidence and life skills more generally.

## **FINANCE - EXPENDITURE**

Our annual expenditure is typically around £130,000, of which about 60% is staff costs. We also need to rent office space, moorings and boat storage – together with all the associated overheads of maintenance, insurance etc.

The marginal cost of running any of our activities is very small, hence almost all our expenditure (apart from any capital purchases) may be regarded as operating overheads. Since we deliver around 3,000 sessions per year this leads to a cost of about £40 per session - and this figure is used as a benchmark (a detailed breakdown of how we reached this figure can be provided on request). Therefore the cost of delivering the Schools Project is about £4,000 per school, or about £40,000 per year.

## **FINANCE – INCOME**

Horizons has limited opportunities to generate income and we rely extensively on grants and donations to balance our budget. We hold a charitable investments account and we are able to generate some income from providing commercial services using our fleet of vessels and qualified staff and volunteers, but this has to be planned into our very busy charitable programme. We also have fund-raising events and activities – the largest of which is the Eddystone Charity Pursuit where we compete against other local boats for sponsorship and prize money. Our 2022 teams in the Eddystone Pursuit secured over £14,000 for Horizons and a number of our talented young sailors got their first taste of sailing in larger boats and beyond Plymouth Sound.

In theory the Schools Project can deliver up to 100 sessions for 1,400 pupils each season, but in reality due to cancellations, weather, and schools bringing different numbers of pupils on average we deliver about 75 sessions to up to 900-1000 pupils. When the £40 per child, per sessions figure is applied each school therefore costs around £4,000. We ask for a contribution of £500 from each of the Primary Schools that we work with, which leaves a funding gap of about £3,500 per school. In the past we have been successful in securing multi-year funding of £8,000 each year towards our schools project. However this grant is in its final year in 2023, and we are needing to focus on future funding options for this area of our work.

We have had some success with capital grants. In 2019 we were able to replace our ageing minibus and office portacabins, as well as acquiring some new boats to add to the fleet. As 2022 drew to a close we were on track to reach our funding target to replace both of our Bahia dinghies for the 2023 season, as at 15 years old our current pair had done their dash. Donors seem generally more willing to fund capital purchases, whereas our primary need is to maintain our existing programmes which are in demand, but are targeted at groups that cannot normally afford such activities.



We were fortunate in 2020 that our staff could access the furlough scheme, this reduced our losses and enabled Horizons to retain its dedicated and highly experienced core staff. Despite all these challenges, and annual fluctuations between surplus and deficit, we have maintained a safe, high quality experience for our service users and have built up great positive momentum in our 2022 season, slowly but surely building back up to our pre-covid levels of operation.

## **HORIZONS – THE FUTURE**

Horizons celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2021. We know that Horizons has a strong, unbroken record of service to the local community, and creating positive change through sailing. We also know that our participants, their parents, and our volunteers give consistently positive feedback about our work, and the difference it makes to our young people. What is unknown is how the charitable funding environment may change in 2023, and if we will be fortunate enough to continue to secure adequate funding to sustain our operations.

As ever, Horizons is focused on providing learning opportunities through sailing for disadvantaged young people and those with disabilities from the local community. We are dedicated to maintaining our core activity delivery and meeting local need. Our 2022 season saw a very positive recovery, with all but one of our projects getting back up to pre-covid levels of participation. It is realistic to anticipate that this recovery will continue into the 2023 season, and the building of new partnerships and collaborations is further cause for optimism.

In response to changing trends in the charitable funding environment we are working hard to develop our partnerships with other local agencies and charities to strengthen and diversify our projects. We are ensuring that we capitalise on local sources of support such as the Plymouth Octopus Project, and that we tap into existing networks and forums. In 2023 it is our intention to review our feedback and monitoring processes to make sure that we are able to clearly capture and demonstrate the impact of our work to strengthen our future funding applications.

Despite our “future proofing” efforts, this remains a very uncertain moment in time. Following the devastation of Covid 19, the UK is experiencing significant political change, financial instability, and is in the throes of a cost of living crisis, with many of our poorest communities once again being the hardest hit. Alongside these events, the charitable funding sector has also undergone major change. Seeking charitable funds has become an increasingly crowded and competitive arena, with many funders now putting more restrictions on their funding criteria, or pausing applications whilst they review their priorities in the wake of Covid 19. Now more than ever, Horizons depends on the generous financial support of charitable funders to continue our great work, and secure the future of our projects.