



ROKT
FOUNDATION

**ENGAGE
EMPOWER
INSPIRE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

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TRUSTEES & PATRONS

Lidia Shinwell (trustee)
Jason Costello (trustee)
Gary Byrnes (trustee)
Bob & Carol Bridgestock (patrons)
Sean Jarvis (patron)

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD

ROKT Foundation goes from strength-to-strength and its reach is all encompassing, helping increase a person's health both mentally and physically. We are proud to support such an inspirational charity and delighted to report how well the Foundation has performed over the last 12 months since April 2021. How, as an organisation, we are reaching out to support new clients of all ages and abilities, seeing first-hand how clients have thrived in the setting and achieved more than they thought possible. Our objectives for the short to medium term are to grow as an organisation, to support new and varied audiences, develop strong and meaningful partnerships locally and across West Yorkshire so that we can continue to 'Engage, Empower and Inspire'.



WELCOME TO THE ANNUAL REPORT 2021-22

Since reopening in April 2021, following a really challenging year like so many charities experienced, I am really pleased to see how we have not only recovered but thrived as an organisation. The priority over the last 12 months has been to provide a safe and inviting offer to our clients. Throughout 2021 we have developed and harnessed our approach to 'Climbing for All', allowing children and young people with a varying degree of disabilities, the opportunity to climb. What we have witnessed has been amazing. Children achieving and excelling and most importantly having fun. We have really strengthened our links with partner organisations and as a result are supporting adult mental health programmes across Calderdale and Kirklees, using the power of climbing as a catalyst for supporting mental health and wellbeing. We are reaching further into our local communities through schools and other community focussed organisations. We are supporting those that are economically disadvantaged, affording children, young people and their families the opportunity to engage in urban adventure - something they would not normally have the confidence or financial means to do. Over the next 12 months we will implement our longer-term strategy with a view to providing support for new communities, with more innovative approaches to mental and physical wellbeing. We will continue to *engage, empower and inspire!*

Katie Kinsella, Director for Community & Business Engagement

1,157
people
engaged

The infographic features three blue, teardrop-shaped callouts arranged vertically on the right side of the page. Each callout contains a statistic in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a blurred photograph of a group of people, with a young girl in the foreground looking upwards and to the right.

4 2 9
kids from
25 schools

75
kids with
additional
needs

Our innovative partnerships have meant we have engaged, empowered and inspired more than 1,000 people in our first full year. More than half of these were children and young people - the rest being made up of adults, showing the full spectrum of our work.

75 children with additional needs have been part of our courses where our team took them higher and further than they thought possible, with lasting positive impacts on children living lives with barriers to overcome everyday. We helped them climb over those barriers thanks to our ground breaking Climbing for All programme.



WATCH OUR FILM



101
adults mental
health support

102
kids mental
health support

33
charity
volunteers

Teaming-up with partners has seen us unleash the power of the ROKT Foundation, enhancing existing support and creating new pathways. More than 30 children have been shown the dangers of crime in partnership with West Yorkshire Police. And our work with Invictus Wellbeing has seen us have a game-changing positive impact on the mental health of more than 100 kids, ranging from those suffering from depression to suicidal tendencies. This work has been replicated with a similar amount of adults, improving their life chances and wellbeing.



WATCH OUR FILM



WATCH OUR FILM



FROM THE FOUNDER

When I first built ROKT Climbing Gym inside this old disused flour mill over a decade ago I already knew the effect sport had on wellbeing. Climbing makes you focus with such intensity.

As we evolved what the climbing at ROKT offered, it became clear that climbing enabled people from all walks of life to escape, mostly upwards, and to experience mind and body working together, increasing that connectedness with time and experience. More obvious was the impact on children and families where neurodivergence and/or physical challenges meant accessing environments that delivered for their needs was hard.

ROKT Foundation was created with the goal of providing access to a place where everyone is welcome, that inspires change, growth and ultimately combines excitement with challenge and experiences that shape positive perspectives.

So after years of planning, we finally launched this charity only to be hit with a global pandemic. But in reality, the timing could not have been better because what the ROKT Foundation offered was what people needed the most. And the stats in the last few pages - and the pages to come - show just how much of an impact we have had. Thanks to Katie, who has built the foundation, and our awesome climbing team and partners, we have made a difference.

By working together with others, we have reached a huge group of people and used climbing to make a difference in their lives - not just when they are on the wall but for days, months and years after.

It's why the plans for the future are so exciting and together we can support even more people, get even more people active and leave a lasting legacy using the power of climbing. Onwards and upwards, as they say.

Dr Euan Noble, Founder of ROKT Foundation

1
WORLD-FAMOUS
FOOTBALLER RETWEET

£86K
GRANT FUNDING
SECURED

1
NATIONAL
AWARDS
NOMINATION

OUR MISSION

At ROKT Foundation our mission is to engage, empower and inspire, supporting those that would not normally partake in physical and wellbeing programmes.

We want to provide opportunities to help stop the negative upward trend in physical and mental health of all ages.

PEOPLE

...are at the heart of all we do. Before any programme or funding bid we conduct in depth research to see what interventions will achieve the outcomes required by participants. Programmes are tailored to the participants and adapted as we move forward with the participants in order that they achieve THEIR outcomes. Programmes are reviewed in real time and then at the conclusion.

UNLOCKING URBAN ACTIVITY

With one of the highest lead walls in Yorkshire at 21.5 metres high, 250 ft of indoor caving and an indoor abseil through the spine of the enormous mill that once supported flour production, the experience is truly unique.

Our offer allows participants to experience adrenaline fuelled activities in an urban, indoor

environment that challenges, builds confidence, generates camaraderie and importantly peer support. We offer bespoke outdoor and indoor programmes depending and tailored to the desired outcomes and the ability and accessibility of our participants.

All programmes aim to build on a sound base to build confidence and then take people further than they thought possible, no matter how far that is for the individual.

INCLUSION

We see no reason why our non-mainstream activities including climbing, abseiling, and caving shouldn't be accessible to all. It's why we are developing our 'Climbing for All' experience for children and young people with additional needs to create a truly inclusive experience.

We only run inclusive programmes. Ability or circumstance are challenges we all face and our programmes don't exclude anyone. The skill of the staff ensures the groups we work with move forward together whilst learning from each other.

IMPROVEMENT

We continue to develop and upskill our workforce and to improve our facilities to understand and support new and varied client bases. Our staff embody the Foundation ethos and act as ambassadors for the ROKT Foundation

INNOVATION

We strive to innovate, developing new programmes and opportunities. This will include developing from just indoor adrenaline to getting outdoors for summer activities.

We develop new programmes and each course is tailored to the specific needs of the client group. We constantly look for different opportunities, venues, locations and challenges to better deliver the required outcomes

SHARING OUR SUCCESS

We collaborate with excellent partners, across several localities, geographic boundaries, and areas of expertise, to engage more people of all ages that need and will benefit from our support.



IMPACTS

ROKT Foundation is dedicated to supporting physical and mental health and wellbeing. Across our programmes, we research how to support our client bases and get vital feedback from them to make sure we are best supporting them.

By measuring and evaluating we can understand how our interventions have had a positive impact on both our participants and those connected to them, including carers, teachers, and wider families.

The ROKT Foundation mission is to engage, empower and inspire, we work with groups that would not normally come along to climb, whether this is because of low income, low aspirations, lack of awareness, anxiety or even fear. We then support them to improve their confidence and self-value.

From the beginning of a course to the end of a course, confidence is raised, self-esteem is built and the challenge to do more and do it better is encouraged by us and welcomed by those we support.

Our approach works because climbing is an activity that appeals to our human nature, physically, mentally, and emotionally

Climbing regulates and stimulates emotions and is a mindful activity. When climbing, clients can feel fear or anxiety when challenged with a new route, they can feel frustrated when trying to achieve what seems unattainable, they feel elated and confident when they achieve and get stronger throughout their climbing journey.

Importantly they also learn how to manage frustrations when things don't go their way on the wall. All such emotions translate into everyday life and help people to become more resilient.

“I feel a lot better about myself, it gives me the confidence to do something even harder.”

David is a participant from Calderdale & Kirklees Recovery College. He has struggled with his mental health. He has been climbing with ROKT Foundation since July 2021.

“It keeps me fit and it's a challenge all the time, pushing myself.

“Once I've got over the challenge, I feel a lot better about myself, it gives me the confidence to do something even harder.

“When I first started climbing, I was doing easy stuff - it wasn't easy at the time but it's a doddle now.

“When I look back from when I started to where I am now, the things I found really hard before now feel easy, even the harder levels.

“I feel I can figure out problems better now, I really think about what I am doing now, where my feet go, where my arms are, whereas before I was all over the place. I am better at problem solving now.”

David - participant

Climbing is a very social sport by nature

With this in mind it has supported less vocal students to communicate better, young people who may be at odds with the world, start to engage with each other and this instils great camaraderie as participants get to know each other. Research has shown that spending time with friends has a direct correlation with lower levels of anxiety and depression. We are supporting the forging of new friendships and the strengthening of existing, through our approaches to health and wellbeing.

“Firstly, I would like to say thank you for all the work you have done with Bradley over the past few weeks on the Invictus wellbeing programme. “Here at the William Henry Smith School, we work with children and young people aged 5-19 across a broad spectrum of social, emotional, and mental health challenges.

“Our focus is the quality of life of all our children, giving them experiences they may not have had before and through partaking in this programme, Bradley has benefited hugely from your sessions in many areas of SEMH.

“He has shown an improvement in regulating his behaviour and emotions when returning from your sessions.

“He has shown more understanding in problem solving activities and when climbing in school you can see him thinking about where his hand or foot is going to go next.

“His confidence is growing through spending time at ROKT, being able to feedback to peers and staff about what he did in each session.

“He is now working with different adults in different environments which is a great achievement for Bradley, as he becomes anxious when facing new challenges and environments but had taken these tasks in his stride.”

Lydia Presley - Class Teacher at William Henry Smith School reporting on 7-year-old Bradley.

Climbing develops problem solving and communication skills

Problem solving is at the very heart of what climbing is all about. As the sport requires the visual analysis of a given route to determine the best possible path to reach the top, it is very usual to conduct this analysis in pairs or groups. We find this is particularly important to our clients managing their mental health and wellbeing. Often nervous about speaking to others, having a focus for communication, and speaking about a climbing route and how to navigate it helps participants to have a reason to be heard. This massively supports their confidence.

“His confidence is growing through spending time at ROKT.”

“Communicating with others has made a difference. I feel I'm bad at talking and saying words. At ROKT I must learn words and communicate, especially with things like belaying. I feel I'm more comfortable about communicating when I'm at ROKT now, which is good.

“When I started, I was really shy, I hardly said a word. I was terrified walking in to ROKT at first. “Now I'm able to talk to others and help them when they're climbing, which is massive. It's been a journey - my communication has come along over eight weeks, it's been a huge improvement. I walk into ROKT confidently now.

“I also feel like I have POWER, even if I get as high as a bunk bed it's like 'yes I've done it' It's that sense of achievement, knowing that I've done it all myself.”

Joanne- Mental Health & Wellbeing Climber – Recovery College for Calderdale & Kirklees

Climbing will take you to nature

The longer people stay climbing, the more likely it is they will end up outdoors within nature. This is something as an organisation, we are keen to explore and develop with our client bases, offering them the opportunity to engage in outdoor climbing and adventure experience. We will start this in summer 2022 through our Healthy Holidays programme and look to develop the outdoor experience.

“When I started, I was really shy...(now) I feel like I have POWER...”

TIMELINE 21-22



WATCH OUR 21-22 FILM

FINANCIALS

Following a very tough year in 2020 with little income secured because of the inability to offer intervention and educational courses, 2021 has been a positive year for fundraising and delivery.

April 21-Mar 22

Total income	Grant Funding	Local Gov Commissions	Educational Commissions	Fundraising & donations
£114,582.00	£86,189.84	£10,050	£17,643	£699.16

April 20 – Mar 21

Total income	Grant Funding	Local Gov Commissions	Educational Commissions	Fundraising & donations
£15,689.88	£9,596.00	£205.98	Nil	£205.98

Expenditure

Project Delivery Instructor costs and partner delivery costs	Core Costs Utilities and equipment subscriptions, staff training	Equipment Climbing	Charity Events
£54,972.27	£17,647.23	£1,216.73	£105.00

March 2022 year end balance: **£63,208.18**

“The largest proportion of our funding income comes from successful applications to grant giving trusts and foundations. During the financial year of 2021-2022 we raised over £86,000 in grants.”

FUNDING STREAMS

With the help of funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, Betty's & Taylors and One Community' Kirklees, we have been able to support many children with their mental health and wellbeing.

Combining our support with onsite interventions from experts in children's mental health such as Invictus Wellbeing Foundation and Bee Quirky has meant that we can support young people aged 12-17 with coping strategies to support everyday pressures but expose them to positive fear, the power of peer support and overcoming challenges through our urban adventure activities.

We will continue to develop our intervention with schools across Kirklees with our remaining funding throughout 2022.

We will start this in summer 2022 through our Healthy Holidays programme and look to develop the outdoor experience.

Following an incredibly challenging year in 2020 with minimal activity, One Community Kirklees and Community Foundation for Calderdale worked with Sport England to provide Clubs in Crisis funding to support organisations like ROKT Foundation to kick start programmes.

We used this funding to work with West Yorkshire Police to support young people in Calderdale and Kirklees at risk of or involved in crime. The intervention ranged between one off taster sessions with young people in schools to more intensive development courses with young people on the police referral programme. Combining physical team related activity with police learning about knife crime, county boundary lines drugs crime, gang culture and cyber-crime has helped reinforce the message with young people about making sensible life choices.

Adult mental health support has been a significant part of our annual programme. Supported by Community Foundation for Calderdale, One Community Kirklees, and Calderdale Council.

We have engaged over ninety clients from Calderdale's Early Intervention Psychosis 'Insight,' Calderdale & Kirklees Recovery College and more recently 'Andy's Man Club' Dewsbury. Confidence and development in climbing, combined with social network support in this area has been phenomenal and something we want to harness in 2022 and beyond. Barbur has been climbing with us for a good while now, an Insight client who now supports others to climb.

You can learn more about his experiences and how climbing has supported him on his journey to better mental health and in his words 'How climbing changed my life!' [Watch Barbur's Story](#).

With funding from Department for Education, throughout summer 2021 we took on the challenge to become a lead provider of the Healthy Holidays Calderdale programme.

A Marcus Rashford inspired initiative, it is to support children from deprived communities with new and exciting healthy activities along with healthy food and nutrition guidance. Over the course of two programmes we supported 200 children with the opportunity to try new things, including great food. See what they thought in [our film here](#) We are delighted to have secured funding to deliver a 2022 summer and winter programme.

LOOKING FORWARD

Looking forward throughout 2022 and beyond our mantra will be the same as we ask of our clients. We will keep trying to do more and do it better.

Our strategic aspirations will mirror those of our national and regional partners including Sport England and Yorkshire Sport Foundation.

As lead organisations, they understand that their overarching plans are only successful if implemented at a local level and through organisations that understand the cause.

"Together, we won't stop until everyone has the opportunity, the inspiration and the freedom to get moving"

Uniting the Movement, Sport England

From 2022 -2025 ROKT Foundation will aim to do the following →

**SUPPORT
MORE ACTIVE
COMMUNITIES**

**SUPPORT
ACTIVE WORK-
PLACE AGENDA**

**IMPROVE
HEALTH & CARE
FOR WHO WE
SUPPORT**

**ENGAGE
EMPOWER
INSPIRE**

**EFFECTIVELY
MARKET &
PROMOTE WHAT
WE DO**

**ENSURE WE'RE
INCLUSIVE, SAFE
& ACCESSIBLE**

**SUPPORT
THE ACTIVE
SCHOOLS
AGENDA**

MOVING FORWARD

Looking at our landscape helps us to determine future direction and intervention. There are two overriding themes that inform what we should be doing over the next 12 months and beyond.

Physical inactivity

ROKT Foundation operates to support people primarily in West Yorkshire which has a population of 2.3 million. (2020) The area has a rich cultural mix of ethnic groups and communities. How people live influences how healthy and active they are. On a strategic level, government agencies and sports organisations look to improve space, place and air quality to grow and regenerate neighbourhoods. ROKT Foundation is a small but integral part of this. The unequal impact of Covid-19 has meant people from 16-35 and the over seventy-five's have been affected the most and the inactivity gap has widened. We know that one in three adults are inactive which means they get less than 30 minutes of physical activity per week.

ROKT Foundation has use of a fantastic, accessible space and an ethos to improve health and wellbeing, targeting those that are more likely to be inactive because they will benefit the most. Research shows that women from ethnically diverse groups and lower socio-economic backgrounds are 60% more likely to be inactive. Currently, more than half of children and young people do not reach the national guidelines with one in three doing less than an average of 30 minutes per day.

Two thirds of adults and young people said their mental health deteriorated during lockdown. One in four adults and one in six young people experienced mental distress for the first time during the height of the pandemic. We know that half of adults affected by mental health issues turned to exercise as a coping mechanism throughout this time.

We must understand that inactivity is complex.

People need motivation, confidence, and capability to be active. We need to reduce the time being sedentary and focus on increasing movement. Physical activity and sport have a part to play in rebalancing the scales for the most adversely affected post pandemic. Everyone should have the chance to benefit from leading a more active life.

The time is right to increase momentum to effect change. We are now at a point in which national, regional, and local organisations are working better together than ever before. Uniting the Movement' a collaboration between Sport England and Mind strives to break down the segmentation between mind and body. Since ROKT Foundation's inception we have strongly advocated that mind and body are not mutually exclusive, they are intrinsically linked. We move, we feel better, we feel better, we move more. This is reflected in the activities we deliver and the people we engage. We want to go further and from 2022 ROKT Foundation will:

- Create new women only programmes with an added concentration on women from diverse communities, encouraging them to engage in an activity that will challenge their bodies and minds.
- Deliver more health and wellbeing programmes to adults, not just those that are receiving clinical intervention by statutory agencies, but others identified through more informal networks.
- We will be a part of embedding the 'Creating Active Schools' framework in our locality, supporting the development of young leaders in climbing to empower and inspire others.
- We will continue developing targeted programmes, using climbing and urban adventure to achieve wider wellbeing, social and educational outcomes. With a view to broadening our scope, we will develop more outdoor based activities, using our indoor facilities more creatively.

Deteriorating mental health across all ages

ROKT Foundation, throughout 2021, has strived to support mental health improvements, not just adult mental health but children and young people from the age of seven up to 17. This is because we know that it is a real area of concern.

Rising mental health issues in children and young people.

Worryingly, deteriorating mental health in children is increasing and suicidal behaviour among children has become a public health priority. Suicides in children has risen, non-fatal self-harm has increased and become more common in young people, many of whom use it to cope with stress.

In April 2019-March 2020, 108 children and young people died from suicide. Seventy-eight percent were aged between 15-17. Suicide is more common in boys and overall the split between white and BAME was 79% - 21% (comparable).

Significantly only 24% had a diagnosed mental health condition. Potential triggers include abuse or neglect with 32% having experienced this. Sixteen percent had a diagnosis of neuro development mental condition at time of death and 30% had experienced problems in school such as non-attendance and exam stress, 23% had experienced bullying (including cyber bullying). A staggering 44% had communicated thoughts on suicide or self-harm.

Over the last 12 months from April 2021, ROKT Foundation has provided vital support to children and young people.

We have supported 429 children from 25 schools across West Yorkshire. Four schools specialise in childhood trauma and behavioural problems, a further three have sent young people to us from pupil referral units,

youngsters that cannot sustain learning within mainstream education.

We have supported 18 young people referred from the police early intervention team, some children that have been victims of crime, trauma, and abuse. 103 children and young people aged between 12-17 identified with support of Invictus Wellbeing Foundation have attended our climbing taster and development programmes.

Some are already receiving clinical support through CAMHS, but a considerable number are not, or are still waiting for a diagnosis.

14 children struggling with speech and language have come to ROKT Foundation to improve confidence and overcome anxiety with speech and language differences.

We worked with Bee Quirky on an eight-week programme to support 17 children under the age of 10 that had experienced personal trauma. 67 youngsters with physical disabilities or neuro development delays have attended ROKT Foundation.

From analysing the evidence on child suicide and self-harm, being aware of and understanding the potential triggers.

All the children we have worked with identified above could be considered at risk. Therefore we need to continue to do more.

MOVING FORWARD

Deteriorating Adult mental health

We know that in the UK, one in three adults are now struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. Current suicide rate in England is 10 per 100,000 and in Calderdale this is higher.

It is evident that with people struggling with conditions such as psychosis this number doubles. This is partly attributed to the negative stigma associated with psychosis which causes isolation and loneliness.

Using and responding to this evidence base, over the last 12 months the Foundation has helped provide targeted support through climbing and urban adventure. Collaborating with expert practitioners such as NHS Insight and NHS Recovery and Wellbeing College we have offered people opportunities to try new activities that challenge, stimulate, and improve their mental health.

Through a co-created bespoke development programme of climbing activities culminating in an accredited climbing qualification, providing individuals with the opportunity to gain further qualifications.

We have supported forty-two clients from EIP Insight and a further thirty-eight from Recovery College Kirklees & Calderdale. We have now engaged 'Andy's Man Club' and are currently working with eight men with a view to expanding this. We are also supporting public sector and charity workers through a Calderdale Cares 4 Us programme.

Moving forward ROKT Foundation will:

- Develop new partnerships across the locality and West Yorkshire to support more clients of all ages
- Further upskill further ROKT Foundation staff in understanding mental health support and suicide prevention techniques.
- Continue to represent the Foundation through local steering groups and Boards that advocate methods for improved mental health.
- Increase the work we do with young people through schools, targeting pastoral and behavioural specialist leads to create adapted development programmes to support resilience.
- We will develop support for 'mainstream' employees through more initiatives like Calderdale Cares 4 Us
- We will gather more evidence to make the argument for the need to commission longer term, third sector interventions from organisations like ours in the support for mental health.

The information above concentrates on what we will work on during the next 12-18 months in relation to physical and mental health. The longer-term plan for the Foundation is to diversify our offer to compliment what we currently do. It is to grow our outdoor provision with accessible climbing and adventure, which is integral to our planning. It is to develop our staffing complement and support their professional development. Throughout the short, medium, and long term ROKT Foundation will continue to engage, empower and inspire.



**ENGAGE
EMPOWER
INSPIRE**

ROKTFoundation.co.uk