

# WHAT A YEAR!



2023 has been one of the most successful years to date for Polly's Challenge and we have welcomed the highest number of beneficiaries yet! We are excited to share the amazing impact that the Polly's Fund has had on Island children this year. The first of our leisure programmes started in Spring, our favourite time of year hearing the children's cheers, laughter and singing.

Along with Polly's friends and family, UKSA have been busy organising and attending events that have contributed to a successful year of fundraising in support of the cost of our development programmes within our pathway programme, of which Polly's Challenge is an important step.



Charity Number 299248



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

## WHAT IS POLLY'S CHALLENGE?

Polly's Fund was set up to offer Isle of Wight children a special opportunity to join us at UKSA for a fully funded five-day sailing or multi-activity watersports. The courses run during the school holidays enabling them to have fun, be adventurous and learn new skills through participation in outdoor activities.

As part of the challenge, we ask each young person to to fundraising a minimum of £20 that goes straight back into Polly's Fund, to enable the programme to support more children in the future. We encourage the children to do this through sponsorship like cleaning cars, tidying their room, or helping a neighbour in need but they can be as creative as they like!



## OUTREACH

Sadly, 34% of children on the Isle of Wight live in poverty and 22% of Primary school age children are in receipt of free school meals. The cost-of-living crisis is increasingly putting financial pressure on parents, having to choose between sending their child on an adventure of a lifetime or feeding their family, having to prioritise finances knowing that your child is missing out on invaluable experiences that help them to develop life skills. Thanks to Polly's Fund, we have been able to increase our support to meet the high demand for places on Polly's Challenge this Summer.

UKSA's aim is to widen access to outdoor learning and maritime training, to enhance life skills and employment in the maritime sector. In early May this year, we promoted Polly's Challenge to all local primary schools that participated in the Test the Water programme through our All Aboard newsletter. We also posted on social media and other local community group platforms and through targeted local promotion we were able to fill our course spaces with many new participants.

## OUR NUMBERS

- 92** Young People took part in Polly's Challenge in 2022/23
- 12** Young people took the next step and completed their RYA Start & Intermediate Dinghy qualification
- 35k** Over £35,000 raised
- 797** Fully funded young people have taken part in Polly's Challenge since it began



## Testamonials

Dinghy sailing was really fun. My instructors where really good and made the whole thing really fun too! I definitely gained more confidence over the week. On the first day I was really nervous but once I got used to it and met everyone else, I just started to enjoy the whole thing and I made 3 or 4 new good friends. Now when I'm older I want to do one of the bigger sailing courses and become an instructor!

## Polly's Fund Additional Support

Our fleet of dinghies got a makeover this year! Our dinghies, used as part of Pollys Challenge, saw the maiden voyage of the six new zests that were generously donated by Polly's Fund last year. They are out daily along the busy River Medina and look fantastic with the new UKSA and Polly's logos. The branding on our dinghies helps to extend our local awareness to Island seafarers and visitors.

We were also able to purchase essential safety equipment including buoyancy aids and helmets for the children on Polly's Challenge, both necessities to enable our sessions to run.



## THANK YOU

Every young person takes something away from each course, whether that's feeling a little more confident to speak, standing a little taller knowing they can achieve anything, a future they might never have dreamed of or a happy memory that will last a lifetime.



## Polly's Challenge Gazebos

This year, UKSA were also lucky enough to receive funding through the Polly's Fund to purchase new branded gazebos. Purchased early Summer, these have provided some much needed shelter from the sun during the warmer months, offering spaces around our Cowes campus for the children to sit in the shade to cool-off between sessions, and also have been used to create a lunch space for the children to eat under in our busier months.

