



Inclusive
Surfing
Scotland

Impact Report

2025



“

Surfing has a magical effect on my son, it gives him drive and focus, feeding directly into his everyday life, supporting him to engage in his physical therapy as well as have a direct positive impact on his mental health.

The joy and freedom surfing brings him has improved life for my son in so many ways but the confidence it gives him is marked, life after finding his love of surfing has changed all our lives as a family for the better.

”

Jemima, parent of surfer Seb

Inclusive Surfing Scotland

Inclusive Surfing Scotland delivers adaptive surfing experiences for adults and children with disabilities that would otherwise limit their access to the waves. We believe that surfing is for everyone. We break down the typical high barriers to entry for surfers with disabilities by providing tailored equipment and professional support in an inclusive, safe and welcoming environment.

Why we are needed?

- Whilst 21% of the population identify as having a disability only 1% of surfers identify as such. ([Surfing England, 2021](#)).
- This reflects a broader trend. Only 22% of disabled people participate in organised activities and 41% have the opportunity to be active. In comparison to 36% and 70% respectively for non-disabled people ([Activity Alliance, 2023](#)).
- Surfing has been shown to have a positive impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of people with disabilities. This has been demonstrated through a wide range of research collated by the [International Surf Therapy Organisation](#).

76 79 50 137 3

surf sessions delivered

different surfers supported

volunteers

total attendance at our surf sessions

Scottish locations



Improving mental health

Our surf sessions lead to a demonstrable improvement in our surfers mental wellbeing.

100%

of our surf participants reported that surfing made them feel more confident, happier and improved their mental health

After the session, he was happy, relaxed and clearly proud of himself. In the days following, he kept wanting to watch the videos back and smiled every time, which shows the positive and lasting impact it had on him.



He absolutely loves being in the water and it has a really calming effect on him. We could see just how much he was enjoying it through all his smiles and laughter, which was so special to watch.



Iain and the volunteers were very good with me and I didn't feel as if there was any pressure or expectations from me, instead it was filled with support and positive energy.

I feel like I'm flying when I'm riding the wave



Improving physical health

Our surf sessions also improve the physical health of our surfers.

100%

of our surf participants reported that surfing made them feel fitter and stronger

Physically, [surfer] is Dyskinetic and surfing strengthens his core which has an enormous impact on his physical health as well as his mental health well being.

After the session I felt physically tired in a good way.

I felt really happy after and uplifted. My core had a really good workout.



Surfer in focus

Jaimé is a regular surfer with Inclusive Surfing Scotland, having joined us for four sessions since August 2025. Jaimé had been previously unable to access surfing due to a range of medical needs, but through Inclusive Surfing Scotland we have been able to get him in the water and he has well and truly caught the bug,

When speaking with Jaimé it was clear the surf sessions have had a **positive impact on his mental health and wellbeing**:

*"Even just lying on the board or feeling the water lift me **makes me feel strong, connected, happy and free**. Being at Lost Shore is one of the few places where I feel calm and proud of myself, even when things are hard.' The nature of surfing forces surfers to be present in the moment and Jaimé found that "**being in the surf completely clears my mind**".*

Jaimé's mum, Sharon, emphasised this: "*He just **looks so happy** and that's something we don't see very often.*"

The sessions made Jaimé feel "**energised, excited and proud**" and kept him wanting to come back!



Jaimé also spoke about the supportive nature of the sessions with the coaches and volunteers being "**super friendly and always cheer me on, which helps a lot when I'm struggling.**"

Jaimé has enjoyed the one-to-one focus of his surf sessions so far, as they have helped to build his confidence. He'd love to continue surfing once the water heats up in Spring. Jaimé would also be interested in group sessions with surfers of a similar age and needs.

Sharon emphasised that the normally very quiet Jaimé always "*spoke a lot*" about the sessions afterwards, telling friends and family about his surfing, which she said is a good sign given that **when he enjoys something "it's when he talks a lot".**

Surf programme in focus

In April and May, we partnered with Fairway Fife to deliver a five week programme of surf sessions for seven adults with learning difficulties. The five sessions were tailored to cater to the needs of the group and took place at West Sands Beach in St Andrews and Lost Shore Surf Resort.

The sessions were a great success with the surfers all thoroughly enjoying the experience and improving both their physical and mental health. You don't have to take our word for it though, check out the impact below

- **100% of surfers enjoyed the sessions with Inclusive Surfing Scotland**
- **100% of surfers felt more happy and resilient after the block of sessions**
- **85% of surfers felt more confident after the block of sessions**
- **100% of surfers improved their strength and fitness after the block of sessions**
- **100% of surfers wanted to continue surfing in the future***

* Figures based on a final survey completed by surfers parent or guardian and a hands up survey of the surfers themselves

Read on to find out more of what our surfers, parents, guardians and Fairway Fife staff had to say...



Surf programme in focus

My favourite thing about the sessions was trying to catch waves, standing up, being in the water - I just liked it!

He was so happy when I picked him up and was happy to tell me all about his day. He really enjoyed looking back at the photos of him surfing. He slept very well after each session too.

It was amazing to see the improvement, understanding and confidence grow throughout. Everyone has progressed and gained more than we ever expected. The group have all gained so much and loved every minute of it!

[Surfer] looked forward every week to her surfing sessions. She was full of energy and couldn't wait to tell us all about it when she came home. She was always exhausted after her day there and would be off to bed early and the next day she just seemed more full of life and enthusiastic. [Surfer] struggles with her mental health and surfing has definitely had a positive effect on her.

Every surfer who attended was keen to take part every week. One surfer who was previously fearful of cold water and outdoor pursuits was the most successful surfer and quickest to learn how to surf and stand on the board.



“

I had my leg amputated six months ago and this was this most exhilarating thing I've done since! Prior to my operation, I was a very active person and would regularly be out kayaking, canoeing or cycling. Whilst I've been making a good recovery, a lot of my activities have been indoors.

Before the session I was very nervous but the team made me quickly feel at ease.

Once I was in the water I was quite emotional as I felt a little like my old self! Once the waves started I really enjoyed the thrill, but also the challenge. Even falling off helped grow my confidence! Throughout the session the team were amazing. I felt very well looked after, but encouraged to push myself as much as I wanted.

”

Fearghal, surfer

Volunteer focus

In-water volunteers are essential to the successful delivery of our adaptive surf sessions, providing physical support to our surfers and sharing the stoke along the way! In 2025, our volunteers contributed an incredible 166 hours of in-water support.

Charlotte has been volunteering with Inclusive Surfing Scotland since summer 2024. We spoke to Charlotte to find out more about her volunteering experience...

How do you feel after volunteering at a session with Inclusive Surfing Scotland?

I would say I feel invigorated after a session volunteering. You get to spend an hour or so in the fresh air and in the cold water which is always great and then on top of that, and more importantly, it is so rewarding supporting our surfers to enjoy being in the water and build their confidence surfing. I have mostly volunteered with people who haven't surfed before or are new to the sport, and **seeing that transformation in just an hour's session from nervous apprehension to joy on the waves, is really amazing.**

What do you do when volunteering with Inclusive Surfing Scotland?

Initially we help the surfers get all sorted for the session, which might mean getting boards out or helping surfers into boots and gloves. **I'm not a surfer myself, my main role is to catch the surfers in the shallows of the water and be encouraging and enthusiastic.** Then make sure they feel safe and then help push them back out through the waves.



Volunteer focus

Has volunteering with Inclusive Surfing Scotland had a positive impact on your life?

It's incredibly rewarding, it's always lovely to meet new people. It's great to get out into the water and do something really useful and important with my downtime. I work as a midwife, so I've got quite variable schedules from week to week. **So those midweek mornings while other people are at work, that's prime time for me.**

Is there anything you would like to change about your volunteering experience with Inclusive Surfing Scotland?

No, I don't think so. I think my experience has been really good. **Sessions are really well organised. The communication in the run up to the sessions is really good.** You don't feel like you're obligated to volunteer all the time, it's just kind of when you're free, but it's also very much the 'the more the merrier'. If anything, I wish I was more available. I feel like I haven't been able to volunteer as much as I would have liked to this year.

What are your highlights from your time volunteering?

I think the highlight is probably the first session we did with the Dwarf Sports Association at Pease Bay. We didn't really have the waves on our side that day, but the weather was just so good. It was such a good bunch of kids and young people and **a lot of them hadn't spent a lot of time in the water before and there was just a lot of joy.** I've got to work with them once just after that. It was really nice to kind of see them again and see how much more confident they were the second time around.



Lost Shore Surf Resort

Inclusive Surfing Scotland runs many of our sessions from Lost Shore Surf Resort, the new purpose-built surf facility just outside of Edinburgh. Inclusive Surfing Scotland is Lost Shore's adaptive surf partner charity, giving us incredible access to their world class waves. Lost Shore is Europe's largest inland wave pool and utilises the highly customisable Wavegarden technology.

Lost Shore Surf Resort offers Inclusive Surfing Scotland:

- A controlled and safe environment for surfers with disabilities.
- Guaranteed and consistent waves year round, unlike the unpredictable nature of the ocean.
- Customisable wave settings. Waves can be adjusted in size, shape, power, and frequency at the touch of a button allowing Inclusive Surfing Scotland to cater their sessions to beginner adaptive surfers and experienced para surfers alike.
- A space that has specifically designed with people with disabilities in mind, featuring smooth ramps for water access and accessible changing rooms.
- An environment where physical differences become less apparent, allowing everyone to share the joy of surfing together.



Looking forwards

As Inclusive Surfing Scotland looks towards the future, we hope to build on our success in 2025 and continue our mission to make surfing accessible to people with disabilities into 2026. Some of our key objectives are as follows:

Surf Programmes

Following the trial and success of the five week surf programme this year, we will establish this as part of our delivery model for groups in 2026. We will therefore run more surf programmes of this nature, while also retaining the ability for people to book one-to-one sessions.

Expanded delivery

We want to expand the capacity of Inclusive Surfing Scotland to help support more people with disabilities through surfing. This will primarily require more staff time to organise and run sessions.

Volunteer Recruitment

Our sessions are only possible through the help of our amazing volunteers. We will look to continue to build our volunteer base in 2026.

Summer Programme

We want to trial a summer holiday programme for children and young people with additional support needs.



Thank you to

Our surfers

We have loved supporting each of you on your surfing journey.

Our volunteers

Who make all that we do possible.

Our partners

For your belief in our mission to make surfing accessible to all.



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Foundation



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