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Ocean in the Community

Grace Clifford – Ocean Advocacy Manager

17/09/25

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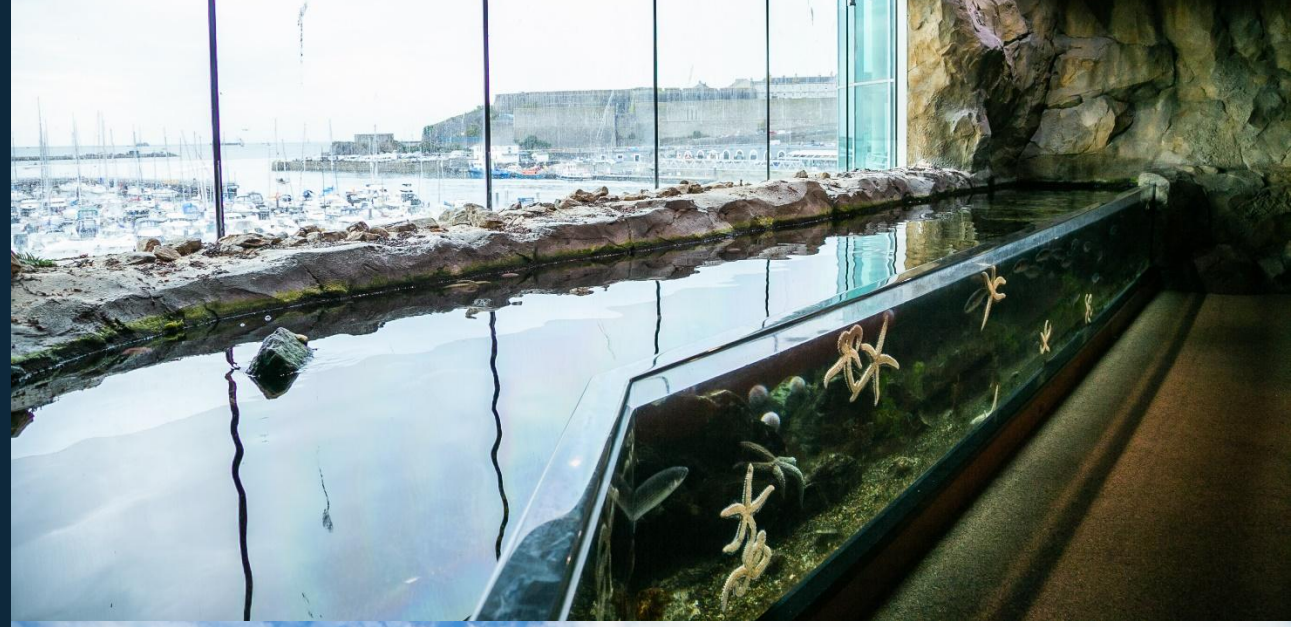

Plymouth, Devon.

We exist to **restore and protect** the Ocean, centred around **people** and **positive action**, our focus is on pro-Ocean behaviour and habitat restoration.

Our vision is
a healthy Ocean.

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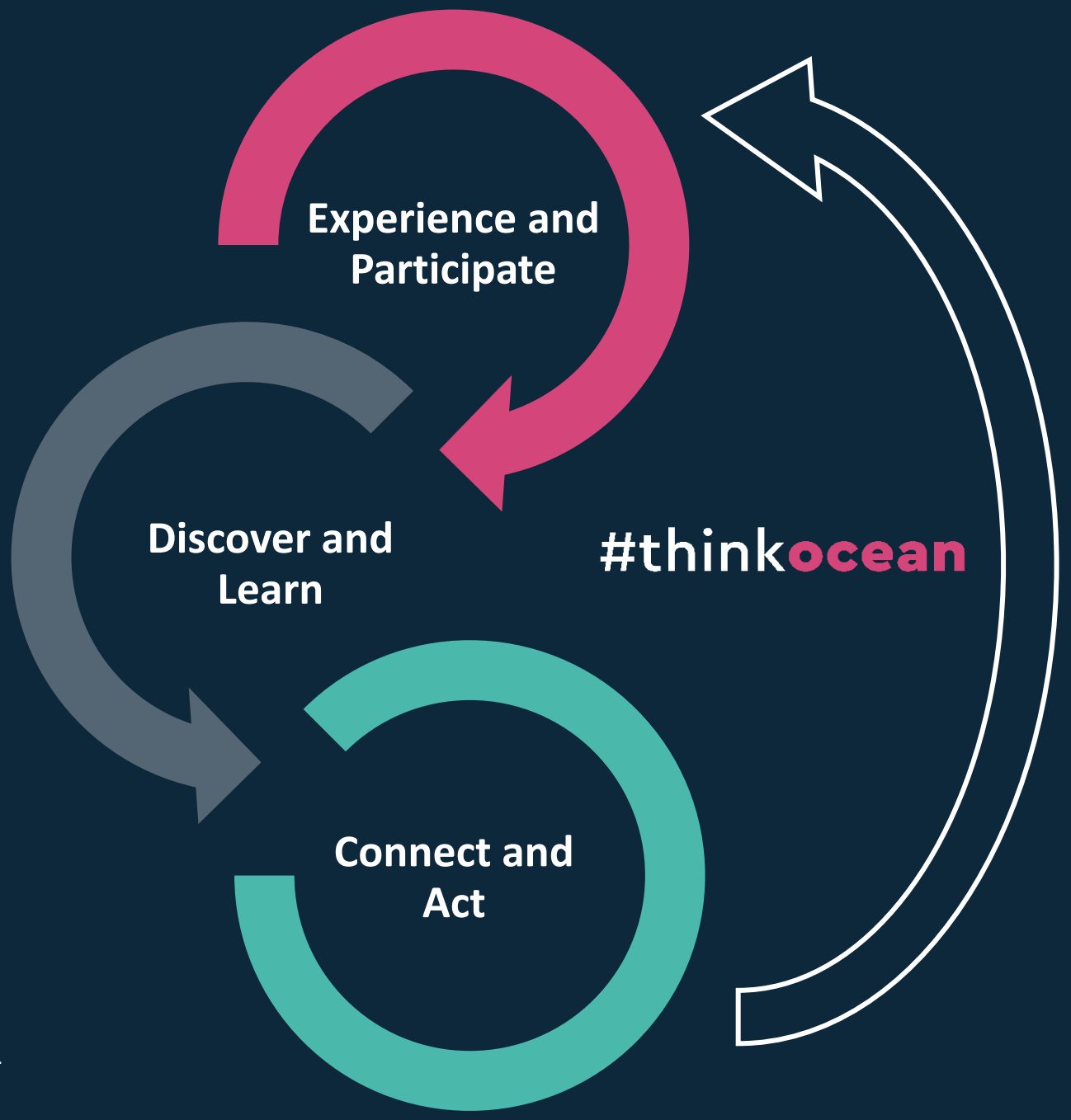


Theory of Change: Conservation Pathway

An Ocean Of Opportunities
Economy
Knowledge
Oxygen
Carbon Store
Food
Positive Wellbeing Experiences
Life and Habitats
Leisure
Energy
Climate

Barriers to those Ocean Opportunities
Confidence
Cost
Physical Access
Language
Travel to the Ocean
Culture
Poor Mental Health
Childcare
Disability
Knowledge
Equipment

Ocean and Society Survey

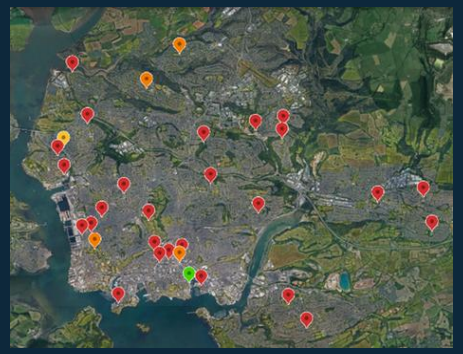
- Over **1/4** said costs were preventative from participating in Ocean connective experiences
- **1/4** of people state physical access was a problem
- **1/5** shared they had transport limitations

So how do we break these barriers and show people the wonder of the Ocean?

In the community...

Breaking Barriers…

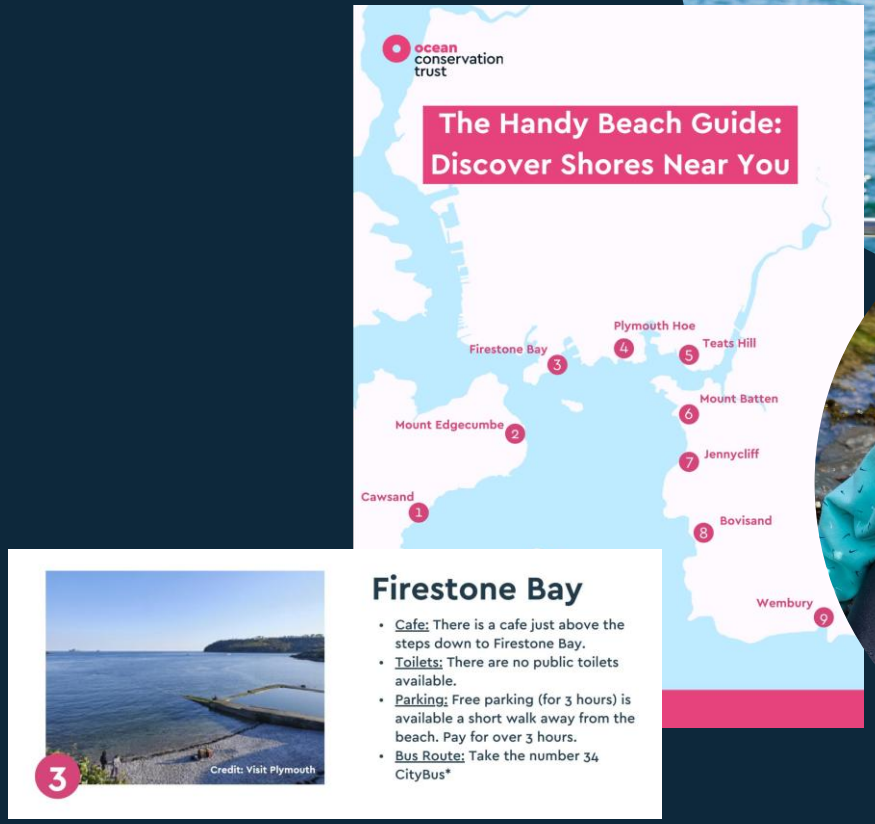
- Our Ocean Discovery Rangers get outside
- Plymouth Sound National Marine Park – Engagement and Schools Programme
- Free activities during large events



Breaking Barriers...

- Funded youth engagement officer and associated programmes.
  - Blue Influencers

- Creating and distributing leaflets



Ocean For All

Breaking down barriers – costs, access, equipment, confidence, travel, childcare, disability, knowledge

- Visits across the South West
- Variety of visits
- Over 1600 people engaged

"The VR experience is an exciting and innovative way for individuals to experience the aquarium when they otherwise may not have been able to."

Blue Mind Hub

Being in, on or around the Ocean can have restorative benefits for our mental health and wellbeing.

Breaking down barriers – equipment, cost, confidence, poor mental health, disability

- 45 participants across activities since 2023
- Blue social prescribing
- Working with 26 link workers in Plymouth

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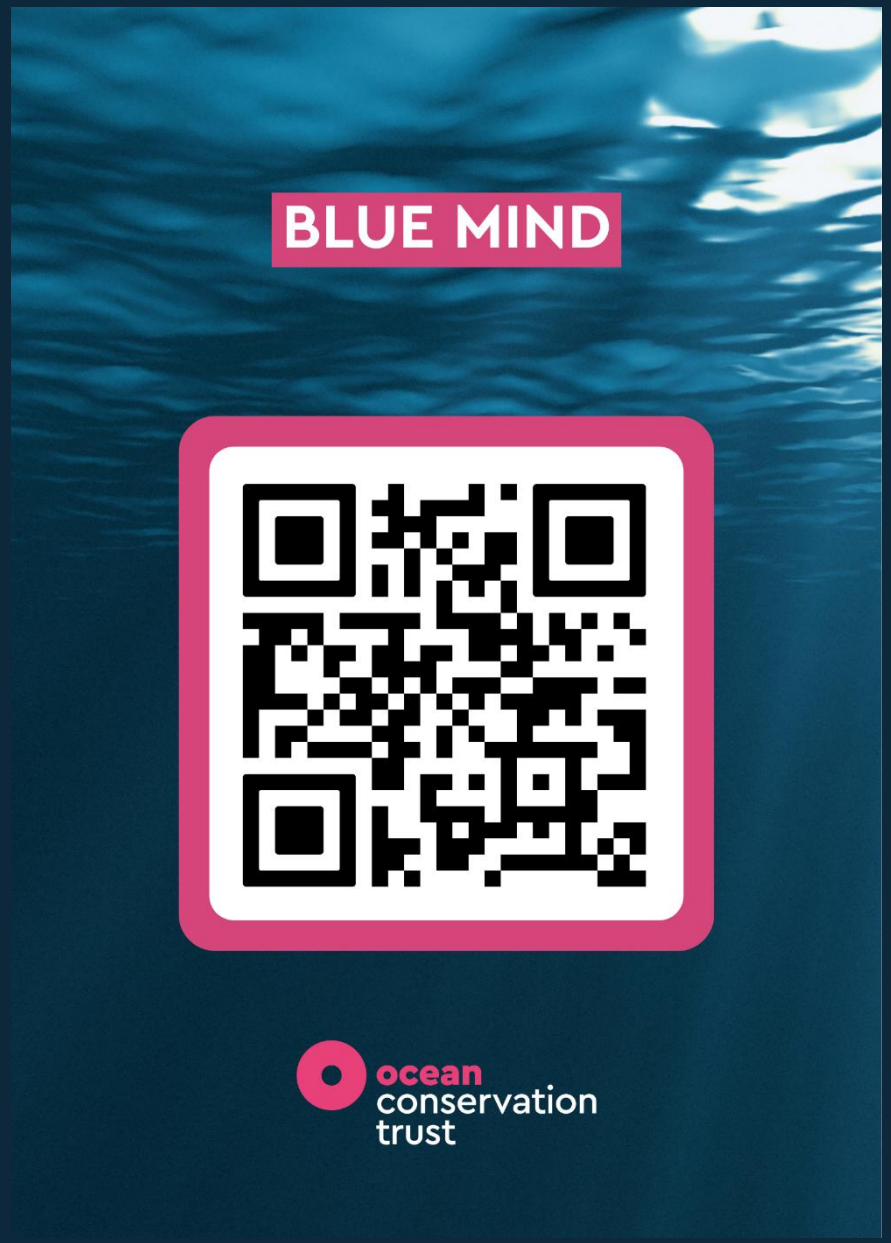
"I am always nervous before, then excited, exhilarated and pleased!"

-Participant of Step into Snorkelling Pilot Programme



Dip in the Sea

Breaking down barriers – costs, equipment, confidence, knowledge

- Started in 2022
- Work with groups, foodbanks and public events
- Received, cleaned, packed and donated nearly 400 pieces of swimwear, and 200 water accessories.

Work Within Our Community

- Local authority services
- Collaborate on projects
- Attend networking events that aren't Ocean focused

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I'M A MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER

#MentalHealthFirstAid

Makaton

LEARNING FROM LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

Guide Dogs

Invest in your Teams

Impact... in the last year

- Over 2500 community individuals engaged.
- 550 enrolled onto our Youth Engagement activities.
- Over 6000 people engaged through Meet the Marine Park.
- 56 VR sessions run.

Impact... wellbeing

We track wellbeing using the UCL Wellbeing Measures Toolkit during feedback surveys

4.4/5 average positive influence wellbeing score

……hear it from them…

*"The whole session brought energy and life to the ward. The staff and young people were able to be immersed in wildlife and new experiences. We learned about local ocean life and have planned lots of trips and adventures to continue our learning. Thank you for the experience.
"*

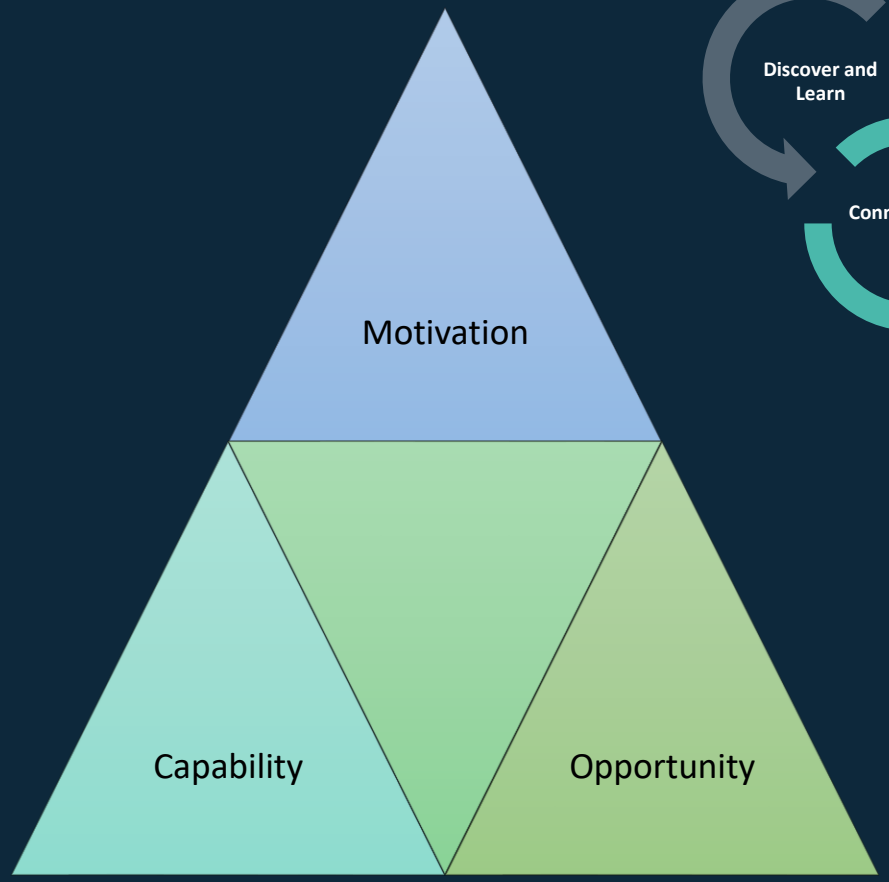
"access to water, wouldn't have done it on my own"

"…all members were able to participate and enjoy the session and be inspired by what they saw via the VR technology and handling the artefacts…"

"All of the group were really involved the session and found it useful to learn new things about the Ocean"

- Person centred approach
- Identify barriers
- Work with local groups
- Support networks, and utilise collaboration opportunities
- Don’t be afraid to engage with audiences you are not comfortable with
- Recognised the role we place as community educators.

For our model…



Thank you.

OCT Website

LinkedIn

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