

# Making Waves with MACS

## Thank you from the crew of 2024



Ahoy there! It's Macs the Monkey here, reporting from the high seas.

I had the best time with 10 amazing MACS members, aged 19-25, on an unforgettable sailing adventure around the Devon coast (27 July - 02 August 2024).

The sun was shining, the waves were gentle, and the crew? Well, they were simply the best! We navigated through sparkling waters, shared plenty of laughs, learned new skills and made new friends.

What a fantastic trip. Here's our postcard and short report from our adventures.



Thank you so much from everyone at MACS for making this possible, and enjoy

MACS the Monkey



The Worshipful Company of Shipwrights

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# Introduction

This postcard report outlines the achievements of our 2024 sailing voyage to support young people born without eyes or with under-developed eyes.

This voyage was a unique opportunity for participants to develop new skills, grow in confidence, and strengthen their social and teamwork abilities, all while exploring the beautiful southwest coast of England.

## Purpose of the programme

The primary objective of this voyage was to provide an inclusive, supportive, and challenging environment for young people with MACS conditions to experience sailing. The voyage served as a platform for personal growth, leadership development, and the promotion of independence. Key goals:

- ✓ Build confidence
- ✓ Enhance teamwork, problem-solving, and communication skills
- ✓ Promote independence, resilience and the ability to cope with new experiences
- ✓ Foster a sense of community among voyagers facing similar challenges.

## Voyage Overview

The voyage took place along the southwest coast, starting in Brixham and traveling to key coastal locations, including Dartmouth, Cawsand Bay, Fowey, and Plymouth. Highlights included meeting the crew of another sail training vessel, Johanna Lucretia, and helping tow a disabled vessel back to Brixham harbor. Throughout the voyage, the weather was outstanding, allowing participants to fully engage in the experience and enjoy the beauty of the southwest coast.

- ✓ Total distance sailed: 136 miles
- ✓ Number of participants: 10
- ✓ Duration: 6 nights, 7 days



# Outcomes & Impact

This year's sailing trip was successful in fostering personal growth across various areas. Using the Outcomes Wheel, developed in collaboration with Children in Need and the Prince's Trust, participants rated their progress in key areas from the start to the end of the voyage. There were measurable improvements in confidence, teamwork, and the ability to cope with new experiences.

From the nine sailors who agreed to take part in the evaluation this year, we saw a marked change from the start to the end results, with overall scores for all the young people moving up 70.5 points from the start to the end of the voyage. These were evaluated in the following categories:

- ✔ Feeling confident (+8 points overall)
- ✔ Working in a team (+8 points overall)
- ✔ Learning new skills (+12 points overall)
- ✔ Coping with new experiences (+8.5 points overall)
- ✔ Getting on with people (+7 points overall)
- ✔ Dealing with setbacks (+8 points overall)
- ✔ Compromise & negotiation (+6 points overall)
- ✔ Learning from experience (+5 points overall)
- ✔ Looking after myself (+3 points overall)
- ✔ Communication (+5 points overall)

This sailing voyage had a profound effect on the participants, fostering not only technical sailing skills but also personal growth in areas such as leadership, communication, and social interaction. Participants formed strong bonds with one another, building a sense of community and mutual support. Their confidence in handling challenges increased as they took on various responsibilities aboard the ship.





# Individual success stories

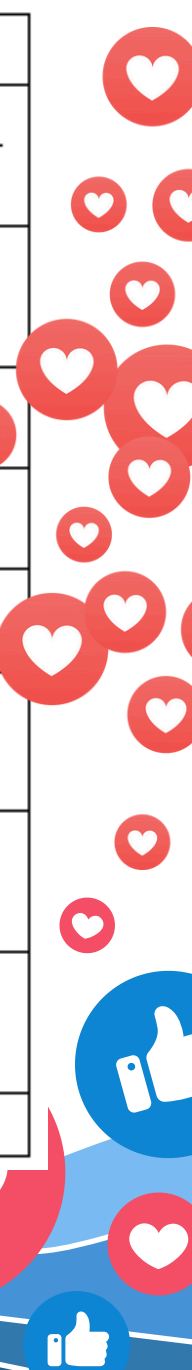
**AD (age 22):** Took the lead on sail drops and developed her technical sailing skills. She expressed interest in returning as a volunteer in the future, reflecting her confidence and enthusiasm for sailing.

**AS (age 23):** Overcame her fear of getting into the dinghy which she has avoided during previous voyages, showing growth in confidence and resilience.

**WA (age 19):** Demonstrated significant personal growth, transitioning from limited speech to full conversations by the end of the week.

**HD (age 19):** Showed growth in her sailing abilities and displayed a proactive approach to the wellbeing and morale of the group and became a source of comfort for her peers

Age	Comment
22	Another amazing voyage! I loved leading sail drops and getting included in everything! I can't wait for many more years sailing and maybe even volunteering. Thank you, Sea Staff - brilliant as always :)
22	Thank you for another amazing trip. The staff were welcoming and lovely. I have learned new things and had a laugh. Had a great time sailing and I didn't feel sick. Can't wait for next year.
25	I enjoyed being on the bowsprit, lead the main hoist. I also enjoyed doing the G.O. ship - they had showers! Seeing dolphins was magical!
23	The voyage was so cool and fun with great Sea Staff I had the best time ever with good weather and wind. I am so proud of myself about getting in the dinghy to go ashore.
24	Seeing the young people step up to new challenges that they have not done in previous voyages was great - hoisting, leading drops and getting in the dinghy - thank you!
19	I loved this voyage so much! the staff and crew were so kind. I felt much more confident and knowledgeable. I love revisiting places around the coast and steering. I shall return next year with my tea, coffee and hot chocolate service. Thank you so much! :)
23	I love coming on these voyages and this year was no different! I really pushed myself to try new things which resulted in me going out on the bowsprit to help take in the jib sail and leading a mizzen drop which I am really happy about. Thank you very much! :)
24	Being back on <i>Prolific</i> was amazing. I always enjoy getting to take part, lead sail hoists + drops. This year was especially fun as the Sea Staff were all so lovely + supportive! I can't wait to come back next year.
19	I had a great time, and I was really helpful and kind.



# Challenges, learning and recommendations

While the voyage was a success, feedback from both staff and participants highlighted a couple of challenges:

1. Some experienced crew members felt pressure to assist less able participants, which detracted from their ability to enjoy the experience. A suggestion was made to involve dedicated carers or buddies for those who need more support.
2. One participant, (W aged 19) thrived with the support of his peers but would benefit from having a designated helper for future trips.

## Conclusion

The 2024 sailing voyage with MACS was a remarkable success, offering a unique and transformative experience for all participants. The combination of sailing challenges, teamwork, and personal development helped our young MACS members grow in confidence, resilience, and camaraderie.

Members were pushed beyond their comfort zones, gaining practical skills in sailing while also developing key life skills such as leadership, communication, and problem-solving, that will help them as they transition into an independent adulthood.

Feedback from the voyage suggests that this project continues to be a vital opportunity for young people with MACS to thrive in a supportive and challenging environment. As we look to the future, we aim to build on these successes, refining our support structures to ensure that every participant, regardless of their needs, can fully enjoy and benefit from the experience.

We are incredibly proud of what the crew achieved this year, and we look forward to continuing this valuable work with future voyages.

Plans for 2025 are already underway. We've booked the Prolific again for **05 - 10 August 2025**, with space for 12 MACS members. We'd be delighted to have you *on board* again, should you want to continue funding this worthwhile initiative.

Please do get in touch with Emily, our Trusts and Foundations Fundraiser if this is of interest to you [emily@macs.org.uk](mailto:emily@macs.org.uk)

