



Peaks of Health BMW Recharge in Nature project

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Overview

Peaks of Health has enabled the National Park to grow and modify its health and wellbeing opportunities to reach new audiences and work in new ways with a wider network of partners, responding to the changing needs of communities seeking health and wellbeing opportunities. The project engaged with communities who have barriers to accessing the health and wellbeing benefits of visiting, walking, wheeling and cycling in the Peak District National Park supported participants to connect with nature, boost wellbeing, develop confidence and enhance the positive experience of being in a National Park.

The project has engaged with groups within the National Park and in surrounding urban communities supporting men's' groups, families with autism and neurodivergent children, adults with additional learning needs, women living with grief, people wanting support with mental health, physical disabilities, learning disabilities and people on low income, young carers, LGBT+ community groups and dementia support groups.

The project has met all the aims it set out in the application for the BMW Recharge in Nature funding outlined below.

Figures and impact

The duration of the project enabled growth in the engagement team with one new traineeship and a wellbeing project officer delivering the project, making new community contacts and growing networks in the southern part of the National Park.

55 connections made with community-based health and wellbeing organisations and networks (with a focus on the southern part of the National Park).

8 groups attended walks and/or cycling activities.

15 Guided Peaks of Health walks (including 2 cancelled).

5 Guided Peaks of Health cycling activities (including 1 cancelled).

221 people attended walks and cycling activities.

3 skills development training days for community-based practitioners and volunteers enabling a legacy for the project.

20 community group leaders upskilled and trained.

3 Health and wellbeing network meetings.

1 new traineeship within the Communities and Engagement team.

Development and design of a Peaks of Health information pack for community group leaders and volunteers.

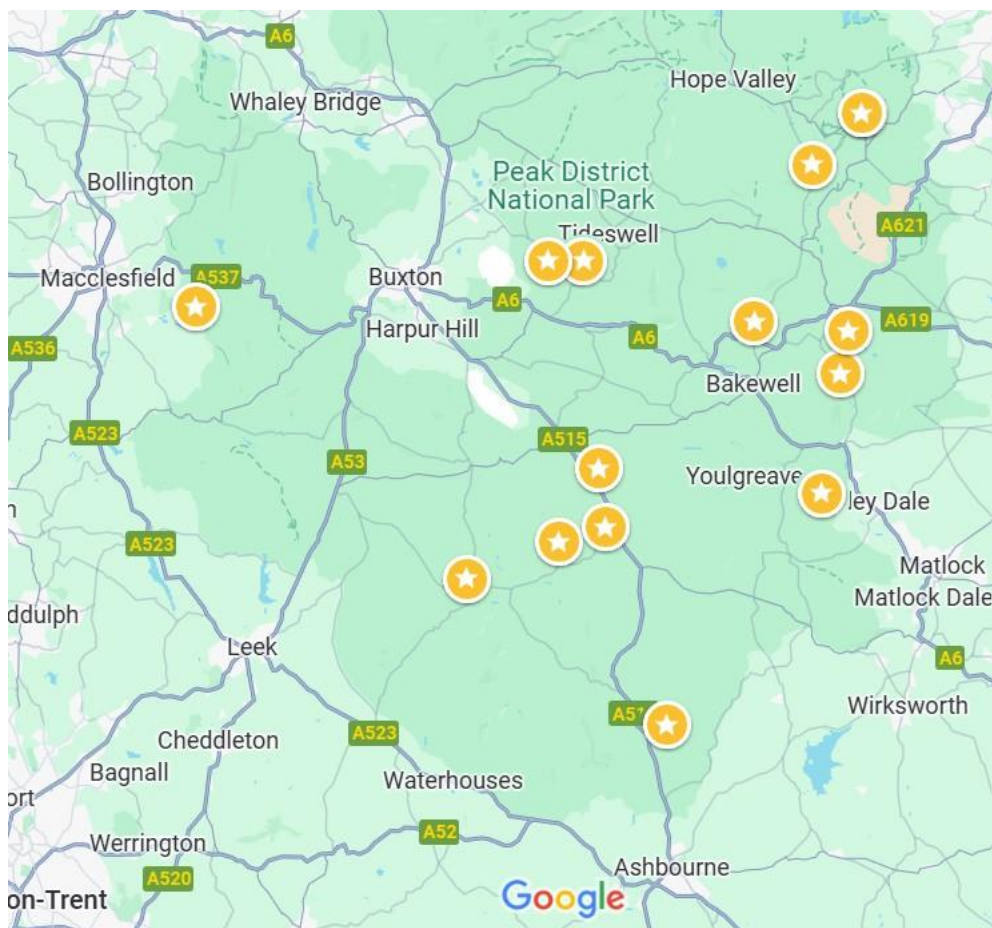
200 printed information packs.

133 hours of Peak District National Park volunteer time including development opportunities to lead health and wellbeing walks/cycling activities.

4 cycle hire assistants with training to support and lead groups on the trails using the adapted cycling equipment.

20 identified accessible walking routes within the National Park.

Engagement: Map of walk, wheeling and cycling locations



Number of attendees

Date	Community Group	Participants		Location
		Adults	Young People	
01/08/2024	Barrow Hill Group through Growth Activities	12	3	Longshaw
29/08/2024	Barrow Hill Group through Growth Activities	9		Chatsworth
23/08/2024	Re:Think Mental Illness Leek	4		Warslow
20/09/2024	Re:Think Mental Illness Leek	7		Hartington
02/08/2024	Our Vision Our Future Chesterfield	13		Monsal trail
07/08/2024	Derbyshire Young Carers	7		Grindleford
18/09/2024	Our Vision Our Future Chesterfield	13		Longshaw
14/09/2024	Derbyshire Young Carers	3	1	Stanton moor
30/08/2024	The Connection Space	9		Hartington
16/09/2024	The Connection Space	18		Chatsworth
30/10/2024	PDNP Volunteers	6		Parsley Hay
27/11/2024	Our Vision Our Future Chesterfield	24		Parsley Hay
01/12/2024	Impact 4 Life	14		Tissington trail
14/01/2025	Multiple group leaders	11		Aldern House
21/01/2025	Zink	18		Macclesfield Forest
18/02/2025	Zink	18		Monsal trail
19/02/2025	Derbyshire LGBT+	14	4	Tissington trail
25/02/2025	Multiple group leaders	7		Parsley Hay
28/02/2025	Still Waters	7		Parsley Hay
		Total adults: 214	Total YP: 7	

Survey Data

Participant demographics

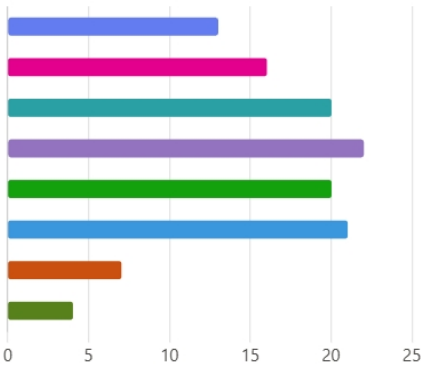
3. What gender do you identify as?

Woman	72
Man	46
Non-binary	4
Prefer not to say	0
Other	1



4. What is your age?

16-24	13
25 - 34	16
35 - 44	20
45 - 54	22
55 - 64	20
65 - 74	21
75 - 84	7
85 +	4



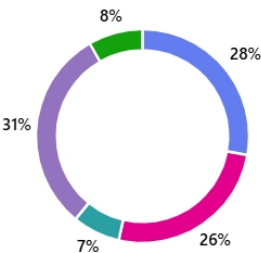
5. What is your ethnicity?

Asian or Asian British	3
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2
Mixed or multiple ethnic backgrounds	0
White/White British	115
Other	3



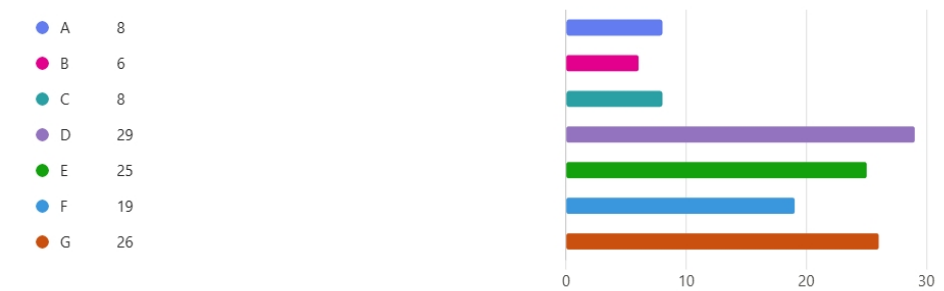
6. At the moment, are you experiencing any of the following?

A physical disability	27
Mental health condition (e.g. anxiety , depression)	25
Other health condition	7
None of the above	30
Prefer not to say	8



Before engaging with Peaks of Health

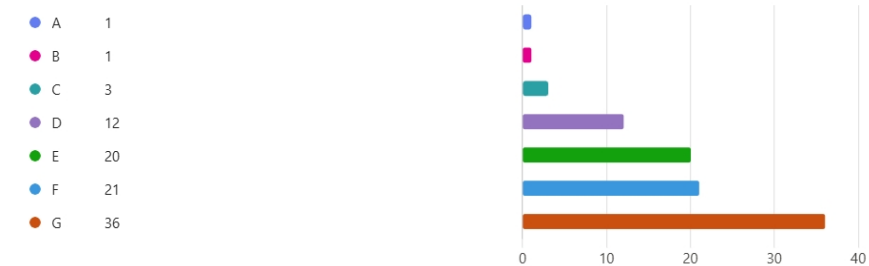
7. How connected do you feel to nature? Which picture best describes your connection to nature?



Nb. A – not at all connected
G – entirely connected

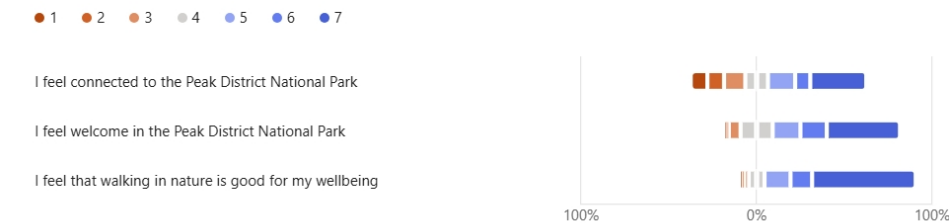
After engaging with Peaks of Health

11. How connected do you feel to nature? Which picture best describes your connection to nature?



Before engaging with Peaks of Health

8. On a scale 1 to 7, 1 being "not at all" and 7 being "fully" how well do these statements describe your feelings?



After engaging with Peaks of Health

10. On a scale 1 to 7, 1 being "not at all" and 7 being "fully" how well do these statements describe your feelings?



7. On a scale 1 to 7, 1 being "not at all" and 7 being "fully" how well do these statements describe your feelings?

[N](#)

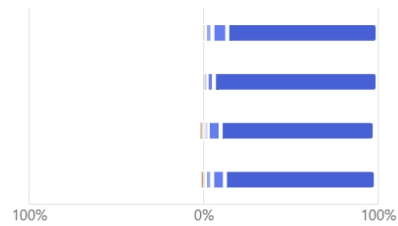
● 1 ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 ● 6 ● 7

The walk was suited to my needs

The staff and volunteers delivered a high quality experience

I feel more content after this walk

Attending this walk has helped me feel more positive



Participants aged 16 – 85+ engaged with the project, plus a handful of children under the age of 10.

Participants report a significantly greater connection to nature after engaging with Peaks of Health.

Participants report improved connection to the National Park and feel more welcome in the National Park after engaging with Peaks of Health activities.

Peaks of Health has positively impacted people's physical and mental health.

Peaks of Health in Photographs

Historic Padley chapel



DERBYSHIRE YOUNG
ADULT CARERS

Time to socialise and share the views



Flower appreciation



Exploring



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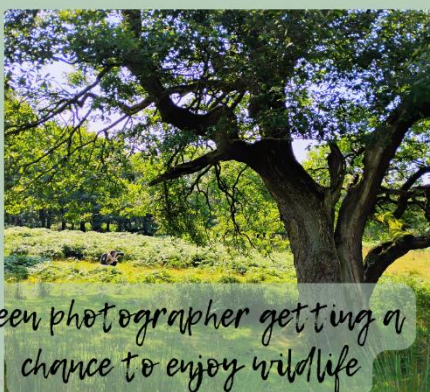
Time to rest and
connect



GROWTH ACTIVITIES
WOMEN'S GROUP

Sharing a walk at Longshaw

"It has given me a bit more
confidence to visit
this place"
-Walk participant



Keen photographer getting a
chance to enjoy wildlife
photography



Bird
spotting



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Cycling for health on the Tissington trail



First time cyclist



OUR VISION OUR FUTURE

A summer outing on the Monsal trail



"When can we come again?"



A tramper ride on the old railway line



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Learning the best places to go for wild flowers



STAFF & VOLUNTEERS LEARNING ABOUT CYCLE RIDES & NATURE CONNECTION



Noticing nature's beauty

Engaging with PDNPA volunteers training on use of adapted cycles



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Connecting to nature with
simple activities



ZINK-FOOD BANK & SUPPORT SERVICE

Boosting woods with the winter sunshine



"Like an escape
from everything" -
walk participant



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PARSLEY HAY CYCLE HIRE CENTRE



staff & volunteer training



strengthening our
relationship with
the cycle hire centre
& training
volunteers in use of
the adapted bikes



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Quotes: In the words of group leaders and participants

We found the day really interesting, helpful & inspiring.

Colette and Ruth, group leaders (ANSA) following a training day.

The project was amazing. The members loved Rachel and Kate, they always said they are both such lovely people. The members did really well and are still talking about how much they enjoyed their walk and bike ride with you. We are hoping to plan some spring activities outside soon.

Chloe, group leader (Our Vision Our Future) following their attendance at a walk and cycle ride.

Thanks for a lovely morning. It was very upbeat and everyone really enjoyed the positivity! It was lovely to get out of Buxton and Zink for the morning and be in the forest. On behalf of Zink I would like to thank Rachel and the team for such a positive morning! I loved how engaging and friendly the rangers were with us all. We were made to feel very welcome!

Liz, group leader (Zink) following their attendance at a walk.

A big, big, thank you for all your support this year and putting on two fantastic walks and training events for our volunteers!

Training session attendee

The Rangers led our group on a wonderful nature walk in Macclesfield Forest. We paused at different spots to appreciate and enjoy the beautiful views. We all benefitted from being outside and learning about how people lived in the past and the importance of the natural environment to their lives.

Group participant

Getting involved with Peaks of Health has given me a bit more confidence to visit the National Park. I want to bring my friends here!

Group participant

I noticed my mood is better after the walk.

Group participant

When asked "will you do anything differently as a result of Peaks of Health?" - *I'd like to lose some weight and find more nice places to walk.*

Group participant

Take time to stop and appreciate the healing benefits of being in nature, especially listening to water and bird life.

Group participant

Two flyers made by Logan, volunteer and walk participant at Zink:



Tuesday 18th February, 16 clients and volunteers embarked on an adventure with Peak Park Rangers to Miller's Dale via the Connex minibus service.

The Rangers led a fabulous guided tour of Peak Park in the sunshine, whilst supporting some of our clients with the more challenging terrain such as stepping stones.

The walk finished with a hot drink in the local cafe which was kindly funded by the Rangers along with Zinks transport.

 **zink**
for life & work

connext



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ZINKS TRIP

FEEDBACK



“First of all, thank you so much for organizing the special walks for the group, I really appreciate your efforts and imagination.”

“The walk from Millers Dale Station towards the Chee Dale tunnel was absolutely memorable, the rangers who were leading the group looked after us all really well. When we split into the mindfulness group and the more challenging walking group, I opted to go with the challenging walking group not realizing how steep it was going to be, the ranger leading our group was totally unphased by my personal physical challenges and offered me assistance appropriate to my needs, other members of this group also offered their assistance, as a result I was able to climb down the stone steps to the river side at the bottom of the gorge and back up when it was time to return. This is a path that I have wanted to try for quite some time, but was reluctant to try it alone as I couldn't see the risks involved from the bridge on the Monsal Trail. This outing with the rangers enabled me to do that. I am looking forward to our next adventure. Thank you so much to all involved.”

“Hi Liz, I just wanted to thank you and everyone for today's walk I have had such a lovely time and was so nice to see everyone smiling enjoying each others company and having a chat and a laugh while taking in the beautiful views”



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Case Study: Peaks of Health Traineeship



Peaks of Health Traineeship

Kate Uwins



Proudly putting on my uniform on my first day

Health & Wellbeing trainee

With a background in counselling and a passion for nature I was searching for a way to help others benefit from time outdoors. I know that a lot of mental health difficulties can be helped by spending time outdoors and feeling connected to the natural world. When I saw this role advertised I knew I had to do everything I could to get it. I was inspired to see that the National park where I live and explore was being active in tackling the mental health crisis that our country is in.

The role being at trainee level meant that I finally had the opportunity to get into the outdoor sector. Getting into a job in this sector is extremely competitive and without experience it can be almost impossible. Having an entry level job meant that I had a chance to make a start and gain experience.

All About Connection

- This traineeship has been a chance for me to connect with other people in the sector and learn from their expertise.
- It's been a chance for me to connect with community groups who do amazing work
- to collaborate with their leaders and volunteers, supporting people to connect with nature.
- I've had the chance to deepen my own connection to the natural world
- I've connected with people and place
- to my passion and to my sense of purpose.

"Sometimes a tree tells you more than can be read in books" C.G. Jung



On the project...



"I want to bring my friends here" Participant quote



I've learnt what it takes to get a project off the ground, the hard work that goes in before the fun bits can happen. I've gained experience in the organising, safety considerations and admin that must happen before you can take a group out for a nice walk or cycle ride.

I learnt the hard way when the first project officer moved to a new role and I worked to keep the project rolling until we got a new project officer.

My work paid off and I got five community groups signed up for the project. With each walk I got to meet new people and share different places with them. I organised walks in beautiful, natural places and had great feedback from the participants.

I've also learnt about the many barriers stopping people from being able to get out. Transport being one of the biggest issues, people either can't afford it or don't have the public transport routes to get out and enjoy the countryside. Being able to support people to get out has been so rewarding and I hope that I can find ways to keep doing this.



As a Peak District trainee I have...

- | | | | |
|----|--|----|--|
| 01 | Organised & led safe & fun walks and cycle rides | 08 | Attended a National park conference |
| 02 | Planned & delivered nature connection workshops | 09 | Learnt about flora & fauna |
| 03 | Supported people with additional needs | 10 | Learnt & taught willow & bramble weaving |
| 04 | Learnt & taught mini dry-stone walling | 11 | Liaised with community group leaders |
| 05 | Supported on school field trips | 12 | Run teacher training |
| 06 | Worked with people of all ages | 13 | Built connections with local organisations |
| 07 | Organised volunteers & other staff members | 14 | Planned & delivered safe & engaging outdoor activities |

Plus so much more....

Confidence building

- The project work has given me the opportunity to work with a diverse range of people, building my skills and confidence and experiencing the joy of working with people in the outdoors.
- Leading activities such as walks and cycles rides has taught me a lot about myself and my delivery style. I've had the chance to learn from others and also find my own way of doing things.
- Working with such dedicated volunteers has inspired me. It has been amazing to see how many people believe so much in the importance of this kind of work.



External Training

During my traineeship I have been able to take external training courses that have built my skills and abilities. Some things included have been:



Hill & Moorland leader qualification



Mindfulness & movement in nature weekend



Basket weaving

Some of my favourite things...



Environmental art



Cycle rides with amazing volunteers & team



Forest school lessons



Seeing people loving being out, even in the winter months



Learning about nature connection



Christmas crafts with junior rangers

Moving forward



After 10 months with the Peak District I am further down the path and heading in the right direction. This traineeship has fuelled my passion and drive to help others access the natural world's therapeutic benefits. I've seen the positive affects spending time outdoors has on people.

Although time in nature is extremely beneficial to mental and physical health, there are still not that many jobs in this work. Sadly, the Peak District has recently decided to cut down it's health and community work.

Yet, more and more research is being done into nature's health and wellbeing benefits and green social prescribing is a growing area.

I've learnt many new skills to bring nature into my counselling work and I will continue to work with nature to support people's wellbeing.

Thank You

Case Study: Accessible cycling in the Peak Park

Our Vision Our Future (a self-advocacy group for people in and around Chesterfield with learning disabilities), joined the project in November 2024 for a mindful cycle ride and walk along the Tissington Trail.

The Peaks of Health team considered cancelling the activity due to cold weather but agreed with the group coordinator and volunteer to go ahead, with lots of blankets, layers, gloves and increased time within the centre with hot drinks and snacks. Everybody had a brilliant time in the frosty sunshine, with some of the group walking and wheeling on the trail, and some hiring the accessible fleet of 3-wheel bikes and trampers, plus electric bikes.

There were 24 people attending, with Rachel, Kate and Chris making up the staff team, plus 4 Peak District National Park volunteers who joined – incredible support on the walk/ride, inclusive with the group, stepping up to make over 40 brews and toast and serve up warm crumpets. At the end of the day, one volunteer (Stuart) said to Rachel (project officer), *“in seven years of volunteering, this has been the best day I’ve had”*. A deep sense of pride for our team and enabling something that otherwise, the group wouldn’t have experienced, encouraged continuation of activities through the winter months (as weather allowed), hiring village halls and spaces to ensure groups were comfortable and adapting the offering to suit the season.

Chris, one of the OVOF group, permanently requires the use of a wheel chair, and was thrilled with the flat trail with no steep incline/decline. He had the best day he has had for a really long time, and didn’t stop smiling. “I want to make a TV programme about Parsley Hay and show everybody how great it is here”. This was the third event organised for OVOF; Chris wasn’t able to attend the first two as his wheelchair was broken, making him house-bound.

Ryan, who has dyspraxia, almost didn’t come along as he was afraid of cycling having fallen off a bike previously. After being supported by one of the cycle-hire assistants, Chris, to try a three-wheel bike he came out on the ride and had so much fun, it really built up his confidence. The group loved being in nature, learning about the limestone, touching soft spongy moss and noticing how winter is changing the landscape.

“I am so, so proud of our team, and grateful to Kate (wellbeing project Trainee) for the lengths she went to, borrowing tables from our main office and bringing toasters and mugs so that we could transform the bike centre into an indoor space for some of our time together”.
- Rachel, Project Officer

Prior to inviting groups into the National Park to attend a Peaks of Health cycling/wheeling activity, the team organised with + 5 volunteers to trial the accessible fleet which proved to be a really useful exercise. It ensured the team were familiar with what was available in the accessible fleet (and what wouldn’t be suitable) as well as the trail navigating larger vehicles that are less user-friendly to turn around. Not only that, but they were fun and provided a good opportunity for volunteers and staff to connect and build stronger relationships.

Case Study: Contributing to other National Park projects

The Peaks of Health team have worked to integrate the project within the National Park, contributing to other walks, conferences, events and engagement activities.

Feedback from the Nature Connection workshop that teachers attended as part of the Ambassador Schools Conference (September 2024)

- Very well delivered by informative staff, I can use the resources Kate and Rachel shared at school. The wellbeing activities were great.
- Quality of delivery was very good - passionate staff. Good ideas to use with children.
- Really useful with our new OPAL outdoor play & learning initiative and getting children outside - PSHE links - wellbeing
- A really great start to the day! Some great ideas to take away.
- Really well thought out activities delivered by knowledgeable and enthusiastic staff. It was great to be given the time and opportunity to connect with nature ourselves.
- Very insightful, I have left with lots of ideas to take back. I like that all the activities were delivered without expensive resources so it's something we can do.
- It taught me how to be connected with nature more and slow down and engage with the environment. The ideas of how outdoor space could be used were fantastic and it was an enjoyable experience.

Learning has also fed into the Nature Prescriptions project in collaboration with the Peak District National Park, local health and wellbeing individuals and organisations, volunteers and the RSPB.

Legacy and what's next?

- Peak District National Park going through a phase of Organisational Change (January 2025 onwards).
- Experience in delivering traineeships within the Engagement team. Traineeship case study and leavers interview to inform future traineeships across the Park.
- 20 trained community group workers and volunteers based within and near to the National Park.
- Multiple upskilled Peak District National Park volunteers who are able, inspired and motivated to lead health and wellbeing walks and cycling activities within the National Park.
- Peaks of Health informational pack - Printed and digital resource for community groups and volunteers to use, encouraging and advising groups to enjoy the National Park from an inclusive and accessible perspective.
- Bank of images to be used on the website and social media to inspire future visitors and demonstrate accessible routes and health and wellbeing benefits of the National Park.
- Re-established relationship with cycle hire centres and skilled staff who are able to confidently support groups with adaptive equipment and inspire cycling/wheeling activities.
- Wider promotion of cycling opportunities within local health and wellbeing networks and community groups.
- Severn Trent application in process to take the learning and achievements from Peaks of Health into an ongoing project within the Severn Trent supply area.