



Tideway and London Youth Rowing:
Reconnecting Londoners with the River Thames

“We are incredibly lucky to have been able to work so closely with the Tideway team over the last few years. It is the sort of partnership that charities always hope to have with their funders; one where they become friends and help provide a legacy for the organisation that will still benefit the charity after the partnership has ended. Tideway have helped us to mature as an organisation and their support will continue to determine how we will operate and develop in the future. That’s a real legacy.”

Matt Rostron, CEO, London Youth Rowing

“The partnership with London Youth Rowing has not only helped thousands of young people to get active, learn new skills and reconnect with the river, it has been a singular joy for us to work with the team at LYR. We are proud to support LYR and it is wonderful to see them go from strength to strength.”

Andy Mitchell, CEO, Tideway



Introduction

The Tideway project is cleaning up the Thames for future generations by building a 25-km long tunnel to intercept millions of tonnes of raw sewage that flow into the river each year. Tideway also aims to leave a wider legacy to ‘reconnect Londoners with the River Thames’, enhancing its wider social benefit to the capital. LYR has a mission to ‘make rowing accessible to all, opening the door to opportunity and better health’. Our shared goals and values led to a partnership being set up to help deliver these legacy commitments.

The partnership had its origins back in 2012, when the Tideway project was in its early planning stages, with engagement programme Row4Results. It moved into combining rowing and life skills when the Tideway project formally began and contractor CVB helped to pilot the new Breaking Barriers programme. In 2017 Tideway joined forces with Sport England to fund Active Row, a four-year programme that encouraged 11 to 18-year-olds in over 70 schools across London

to take part in indoor and on-water rowing.

These programmes have helped thousands of disadvantaged young people to get active, learn new skills and reconnect with the river. The partnership has also established links at every level: from strategic support via the Trustee Board to large-scale volunteering and fundraising. The strength of the partnership was recognised when it was shortlisted in the 2021 London Sports Awards. This report captures the key impacts of the partnership and the reflections of some of those who benefited.

OVER
12,000
young people supported by the partnership





In the beginning ... Row4Results



This programme started in September 2012 when Thames Water was developing its plans for the project and was looking for ways to engage communities and raise awareness of the need for a cleaner river through the Thames Tideway Tunnel.

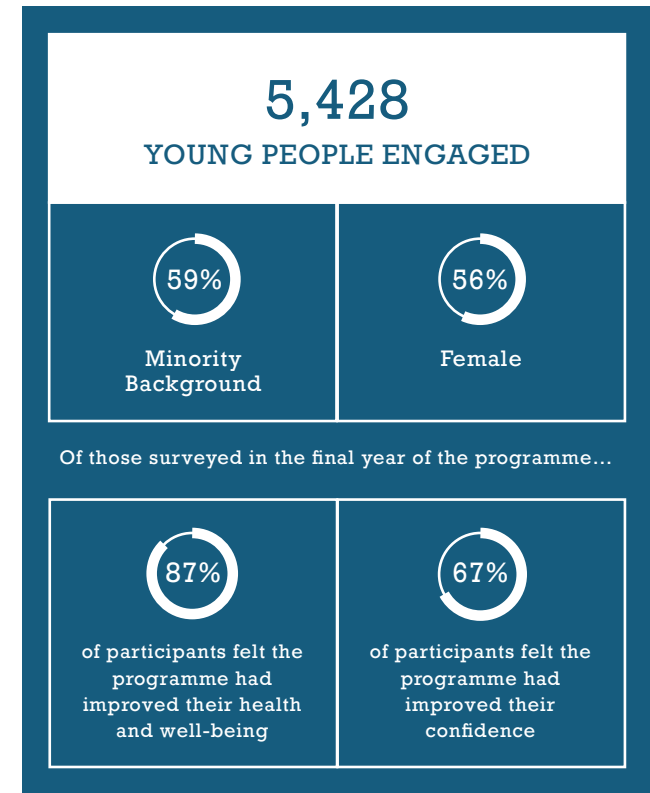
Row4Results encouraged boys and girls in years seven and eight (11 to 13-year-olds) to improve their health and well-being through access to rowing and to help them connect to the River Thames through rowing.

Each year, LYR worked with 12 schools in boroughs along the tunnel route, offering indoor rowing taster sessions in each school, and competitions in East, Central and West London to mirror the separate contracts being planned for tunnel construction. A Row4Results indoor final was held each year at various prestigious locations, including Fishmongers' Hall in 2013 where the Princess Royal gave out the trophy and on the race floor of the National Junior Indoor

Rowing Championships in front of 2,000 other competitors.

Following the indoor season, on-water taster sessions were offered to schools in spring and summer terms. The programme ran until July 2017 and as well as delivering impressive impacts, supported Tideway's early engagement with local communities and its construction partners.

A number of the Row4Results schools also went on to join the Active Row programme, ensuring nearly a decade of continuous provision thanks to Tideway's support.



"I joined the Active Row club because it looked fun and a physical activity I would enjoy. Rowing has taught me bravery, resilience and coordination and how to be a better listener. I feel like I am a changed person. I am a proud, independent young teenager. A confident teenager. I feel like I have achieved something."

Awa from Harris, Academy Bermondsey



Active Row ... a bigger collaboration for bigger impact

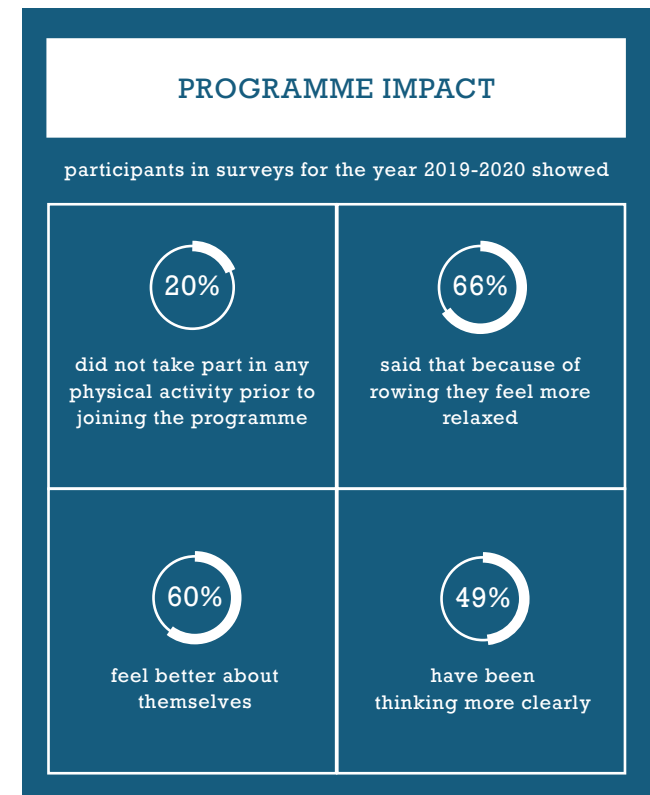
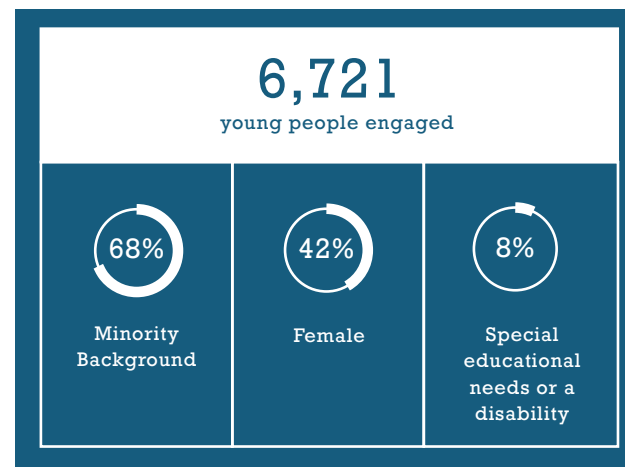


In 2017 Tideway joined forces with Sport England to fund a four-year engagement programme called Active Row. The joint public/private funding was new for LYR and this combined support allowed them to deliver greater impact, to more than 70 schools across 12 priority boroughs based on the London Poverty Profile.

LYR installed rowing machines in these schools and its coaches ran 'taster' sessions and after-school clubs. There were competitions with other schools in area finals and an overall indoor final before the programme moved onto the water at seven river venues, often using fixed seat rowing boats which are easier and safer for those new to the sport. 'Star awards' were also given out to young rowers who displayed the best of the programme's values: teamwork, communication, resilience and inclusion.

During the pandemic LYR took their programme online, focussing on weekly workout videos and

providing training packs for teachers so that they could run sessions themselves. The pandemic year culminated in the first-ever Virtual National Junior Indoor Rowing Championships in May 2021, in which more than 1,600 Active Row participants took part out of a total of more than 4,100.



Jakub

**2017/18 cohort at St Michael's College,
Bermondsey**

"My communication skills have improved. Now, if I were to go to an interview, I wouldn't be as bothered about meeting new people and interviewing.

During rowing, I learned how to work as a team and how I can push myself beyond my limits... this increased my confidence, which makes me less scared to try new things."



Alysandra

**2018/19 cohort at St Michael's College,
Southwark**

"I felt intimidated before [Breaking Barriers], but as I got used to meeting new people on Breaking Barriers and talking to new mentors, I made conversation and did well.

Now I can be more independent, do well in an interview and do things for myself. Recently I walked into a place and asked for work experience, and I got it!"



Breaking Barriers ... Life Skills and rowing for greater impact

BREAKING / BARRIERS

LJR's Breaking Barriers 'life skills' programme combines rowing and mentoring to enable young people to flourish as they transition from school into the wider world. The programme recognises that the soft skills required to be a successful rower are also necessary for success in the classroom and the workplace and that young people from the communities where LJR works lack the opportunities and role models to help them develop these skills.

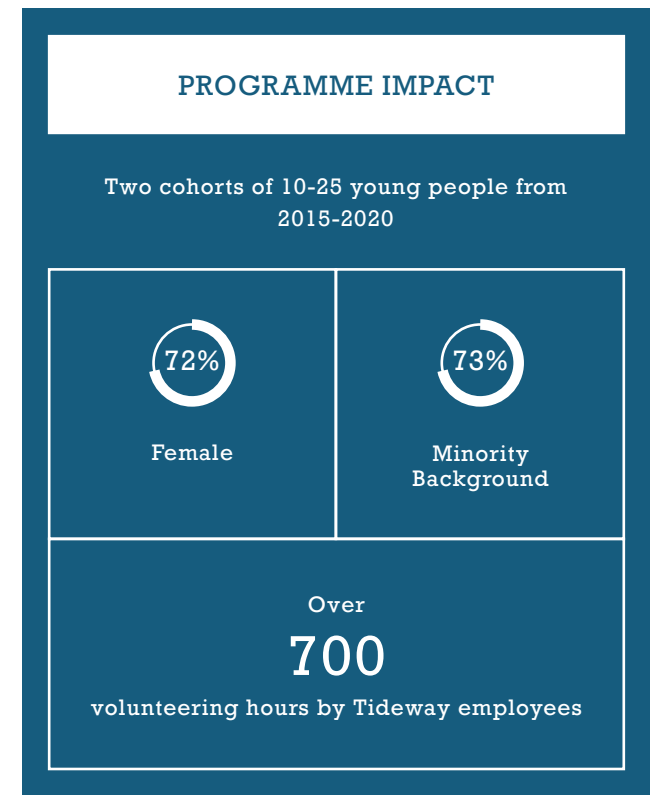
The programme provides tools for young people to unlock their potential. By engaging with LJR coaches and partner mentors from Tideway, participants gained:

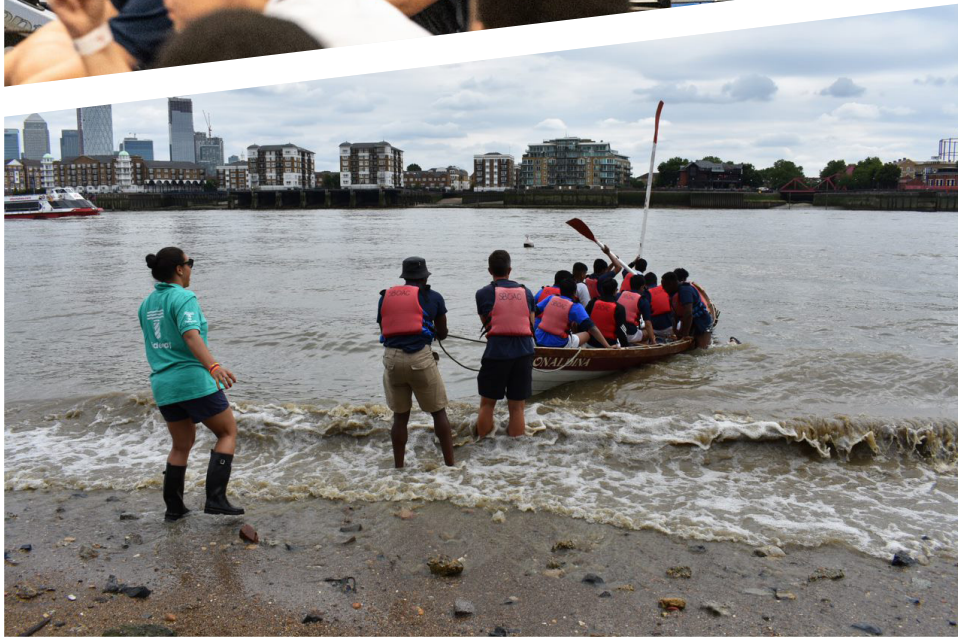
- broader aspirations to succeed and commitment to take on challenges
- more developed life skills and increased confidence to apply them to sport, education and employment

- improved experience of the working world and pathways into further education, apprenticeships and careers

Tideway main works contractor, Costain Vinci Bachy (CVB) were the "anchor tenant" for Breaking Barriers after first piloting the programme in 2014-15. Each year from 2015-2020 they supported two cohorts of young people aged 14 to 15 from schools that supported wider Tideway outreach, including working with girls-only schools to encourage female participation in the programme and awareness of potential careers in the construction industry. Each cohort completed a learn to row programme and a series of group mentoring sessions at CVB's offices.

The programme provided consistently strong employee engagement, and the value for those who took part was measured through psychometric (MTQ48) assessment surveys of attributes such as confidence, communications and knowledge of career pathways.





Giving something back ... support through volunteering

Tideway and LYR have developed strong bonds driven by the 'people factor' – Tideway's staff giving their time to support LYR's events, its organisation and its team.

Events

Tideway volunteers have given more than 1,300 hours to London Youth Rowing and the vast majority of these have been at indoor and on-water rowing events, supporting Active Row finals, beginners' regattas and the National Junior Indoor Rowing Championships (NJIRC) at the Lee Valley Stadium and, from 2019, the Copper Box Arena. Marshalling, recording results and offering general encouragement has helped these events to run smoothly and give volunteers a real buzz.

"It was a great day, I felt that I made a positive contribution and enjoyed helping people succeed. It was also a great team building event."

David Hardy, NJIRC volunteer

Using professional skills

Tideway has offered its skills in a wide range of areas – John Sage, Tideway's Head of Corporate Responsibility, giving strategic support at Trustee Board level; Tideway's General Counsel using legal skills to ensure LYR secured contracts for its new base at the Olympic Park; and staff using an array of other professional skills to support LYR in areas such as: privacy and data regulations; managing company risks and social media; and technical mapping for virtual events.

"Celia was fantastic, supporting with a huge amount of legal work and advice at the crucial point in the negotiations to get the lease for our Olympic Park base over the line."

Matt Rostron

LYR staff development

The closer the two organisations became, the more Tideway realised it could support LYR's staff in their personal and team development. Its cohort of trained life coaches supported LYR team members with their career and personal aspirations and challenges. Tideway's Head of Diversity and Inclusion and our media team led training workshops to ensure LYR staff were continuously developed and we hosted an 'insights day' during which LYR's team learned more about each other and how they could work best together.

"The insights day was so useful - Tideway's experts helped us to understand what makes each of us tick and how we like to interact with colleagues. This is vital when you have a number of new recruits who need to gel quickly."

David Tinnion, Chief Operations Officer, LYR



Challenges galore ... Tideway support for LYR through fundraising and donations



Fundraising is the life blood of any charity. For Tideway and LYR, it has also proved a very good way of reconnecting its staff with the river and with each other.

The Oarsome Challenge

There is no better way to connect with the River Thames than by rowing on it. For three years from 2017 to 2019 the Tideway Oarsome Challenge raised more than £100,000 for river-based charities and brought together project staff in the shared experience of rowing 13 miles through the centre of London in a large 'skerry' boat.

In 2019 LYR managed the event, in which 16 boats and 128 people rowed from Wapping to Chiswick, raising more than £34,000 and paying for the Ada Salter, a new community boat that LYR have based at the Olympic Park – see page 15.

Louise Walsh, whose team won the fundraising prize, said: "The challenge was fantastic – lots of

aching body parts but all well worth it! A truly unforgettable experience which we all loved."

Race The Thames

Race The Thames is LYR's annual fundraising challenge, in which teams compete on indoor machines to row 72km, the length of the tidal Thames, as fast as they can. The event began in 2019 at the Copper Box Arena, held on the same day as NJIRC. Tideway played a leading role in the inaugural event, giving ideas for the format and supplying more than half of the 11 teams who raised a total of £25,000. In 2020 the event expanded to 18 teams and raised £35,000.

Then the pandemic struck and with Tideway's support it went virtual and to a completely different level of success. Tideway Programme Manager Andy Triggs Hodge was seconded to LYR to act as event director and his leadership helped to attract 180 teams and more than 1,000 participants from around the world all connected

by an online 'arena'. The event raised £120,000, including £70,000 for LYR. Almost 50 Tideway staff raised £10,000 themselves.

"Andy's support on Race The Thames was a game-changer. It left us at the end of our year with a small surplus, which was completely amazing. The event gave the LYR team a focus to come together at the end of a really challenging year and allowed us to share our mission with entirely new groups across the UK and beyond."

Matt Rostron



The future ... new horizons for Active Row and a new Olympic Park base



Although Tideway's funding for Active Row ended in August 2021, it is not the end of the programme nor the end of Tideway's support for LYR.

In fact, after Tideway and Sport England's four-year funding, from September 2021 Active Row will run outside London for the first time, in Leeds, Bradford and Wakefield, thanks to new funding from Henley Royal Regatta Charitable Trust (HRRCT) and Gemini. Active Row will also expand in London - funding from Sport England, City Bridge Trust and HRRCT will allow not only develop of thousands more young people through rowing but also train coaches from under-represented backgrounds, giving them a career pathway and making rowing a more inclusive sport.

In September 2021 LYR also launched a new base for its operations at London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP), offering opportunities to row and take part in other water sports along the 6km of waterways in the capital's newest Royal

Park. Tideway's legal team supported LYR with negotiations to secure the pontoon and riverside area from which it will operate these activities for schools and companies. LYR's boats on the park include the Ada Salter, the large skerry funded by Tideway staff through the 2019 Oarsome Challenge. In spring 2022 the base will include a space to store boats and equipment, also funded by Tideway, and it will provide a permanent home for LYR in East London.

After the challenges of the pandemic, LYR now faces the future with confidence and offering more opportunities to reconnect communities in London and beyond with their waterways.

"Our partnership with Tideway has provided LYR with a brilliant platform from which we can build for the future, and Tideway's legacy with LYR and the young people we support will be long and profound - we owe them our sincere thanks. The establishment of our new base on the Olympic Park will support our continued commitment to London. Tideway have helped us to become a larger and more mature and sustainable charity. This will enable us to be confident in taking the step to expand our work outside London for the first time this year with Active Row Leeds."

John Kinsella, LYR Chair



Tideway

tideway.london



londonyouthrowing.com