



# Calvert Kielder



Kielder Water & Forest Park  
Northumberland



The difference we made in 2025

## *Welcome to our 2025 impact report!*

It has been a remarkably busy year at Calvert Kielder. The generous summer weather brought many joyful days on Kielder Water and under the forest canopy, creating adventure and fun. More importantly, 2025 reaffirmed our commitment to making accessibility a reality for every person who comes through our doors.

We were privileged to welcome 325 respite guests. A stay at Calvert Kielder is far more than a short break—it is a restorative, confidence-building holiday designed to give disabled people the space to breathe, reset, and rediscover what is possible. For some, it is precious time to simply 'be'; for others, it is the opportunity to try activities they may never have imagined—canoeing, climbing, or ziplining. It also gives carers a vital pause, knowing their loved ones are safe and supported.

Across our 19 accessible lodges and centre, we welcomed 6,982 guests overall—each stepping into an environment designed for connection, shared memories, and time away from the demands of everyday life.

Our Moments That Matter campaign became a defining story of 2025, raising nearly £16,000 through the generosity of trusts and individual supporters. Guest stories and staff experiences brought the campaign to life, reaching tens of thousands online and increasing awareness of our mission.

Age and ability continued to be no barrier to adventure. Our oldest visitor was 92 and our youngest just 2, demonstrating that a spirit for exploration belongs to everyone. We also welcomed many groups from across the UK, ensuring disabled children and adults enjoy the same opportunities for adventure and independence as everyone else.

We were grateful for support from 42 grant-making trusts, 44 regular givers, event participants, numerous one-off donors, dedicated volunteers, and a thoughtful legacy gift. Delivering safe, adaptive outdoor adventure requires specialised staff, equipment, and 24/7 accessible environments, and this support makes it possible.

In August we were profoundly sad to lose our inspirational CEO, Kevin Appleby. Kevin was not simply a leader - he was the architect of belief in what Calvert Kielder could be. His legacy lives on in our culture of inclusion and in the thousands of lives he touched. He believed that adventure belongs to everyone, and his vision continues to guide us.

As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with excitement and optimism grounded in the strength of what we have built and the impact we know we deliver. We remain committed to providing exceptional, fully accessible outdoor adventure and transformative respite experiences in the beautiful Kielder forest. The year ahead is bright, and we are ready for it.

*The Calvert Kielder Team*

# A year in numbers

42 Grants

403 Regular and one off donations



21,217 Bed nights provided



325 Respite guests supported



6,982 Guests welcomed



4,500 Zips



2,109 People on day activity packages



7,000 Shots



2,000 Climbs



Our oldest participant was 92 and youngest was 2!



3,200 King Swings

# Pennypit Special Needs Youth Club

In the summer, 14 young people from Pennypit Special Needs Youth Club, supported by five staff members, enjoyed a residential at Calvert Kielder. For many, it was their first time away from home—an important milestone made possible through months of preparation and trusted, familiar support.

Club leader Fiona Hare reflected on the value of planning:

“We did lots of prep... so parents, carers, and the young people themselves knew exactly what to expect.”



Fiona also noted, “Coming away means getting a break for them—and for all their carers and families too.”

Participants tried adaptive activities and celebrated one another. One young person, unable to ride the zip coaster due to anxiety, championed others by cheering them on, showing the value of encouragement.

Fiona highlighted our instructors, “The CK staff broke down their fears with humour and gentle encouragement.”

The week strengthened friendships, nurtured independence, built self-belief and created lasting memories. The Pennypit group left proud, inspired and already excited for their return.

# Will

For former submariner Will Brown, returning to Calvert Kielder has become a highlight of his year. Now on his third visit, Will describes the centre as “good for the soul” — a place where he can enjoy new challenges, reconnect with fellow veterans, and experience the joy of being truly welcomed.

Will first visited with Help for Heroes, joining a group of veterans with a wide range of abilities and experiences. What keeps him coming back is the sense of camaraderie and mutual understanding. “Coming with the other veterans is like having your own support network,” he says. “We have a bit of banter, we look out for each other. It just feels good.”



The Zipcoaster is one of his absolute favourites, but the magic of Calvert Kielder is much wider than the activities themselves. “People do things they thought they couldn’t do. Nothing is impossible. The only limitation is your own mind.”

Will talks often about the atmosphere, the accessibility, and the people. The small touches mean the most. “It’s the little things that matter — the staff remember our names. Everything is set up so well. It’s a one-stop shop: so much to do, and all of it easy to access.”

For Will, every visit is a reminder of possibility, community, and confidence. Calvert Kielder isn’t just a place he enjoys — it’s a place that lifts him.

# Ava

For Holly Mecik, a stay at Calvert Kielder is more than just a break – it's a breath of fresh air in the middle of life's constant demands. Holly, from Aberdeenshire, is mum to 16-year-old Ava, who has complex disabilities, and Josh, her 15-year-old son. The family has now visited Calvert Kielder six times with a group of other families, and it continues to be a lifeline.

"There's nothing like this in Scotland," Holly says. "Here, I feel a weight lifted off my shoulders. It's the only time I really get a rest from my caring responsibilities."

While at the centre, the family embraced a full programme of inclusive activities. Ava enjoyed canoeing, archery, the thrilling King Swing, and the ever-popular Zip Coaster – all fully supported by expert staff trained in adaptive adventure. In the evenings, they joined in with the centre's social sessions alongside respite guests, creating a sense of community and fun that continued long after the day's activities ended.



Josh, Holly's teenage son, shone as a natural helper – not only with his sister but also with the other disabled children in the group. "He's brilliant," says Holly. "He just gets stuck in and knows how to help. He loves it here as much as we do."

For families like Holly's, Calvert Kielder offers so much more than a holiday. It's a place where every child is included, every parent is supported, and siblings like Josh get the chance to shine. It's where memories are made, friendships are deepened, and the daily pressures of life are replaced – just for a while – with laughter, adventure, and rest.

# Behind the scenes

Behind every moment of adventure is the Calvert Kielder Team. Maintaining accessible lodges, preparing welcome packs, coordinating safety checks, cooking delicious meals, managing logistics, and ensuring our grounds remain safe, adaptive, and inviting, is all in a days work.



Activities run smoothly, families feel supported, and every guest arrives to a warm Calvert Kielder welcome.



This is the heart of Calvert Kielder: a community of skilled, dedicated professionals who take care of the detail and make sure that no one ever misses out. Their commitment shapes this place into something truly special.

# The journey continues...

Thank you to all our donors and volunteers for being part of our journey.

There's still so much more to do though.

If you don't already support us, would you please consider making a donation today?

## Regular donation

Regular monthly or quarterly gifts help us budget for our activities, for example a regular gift could help pay the salary of one of our frontline workers. Contact [fundraising@calvert-kielder.com](mailto:fundraising@calvert-kielder.com) to receive your regular givers pack and receive a free gift when you join!

## One off donation

Some donors give a one off gift for a specific project or just to help us with our charitable work. You can donate gifts of less than £500 using the QR code below, visiting the Calvert Kielder page on Just Giving or calling us on 01434 250232. To make larger gifts or to discuss how your gift could be used, please get in touch.

## Leaving a gift in your will

Gifts in wills can be transformative to the scale of our work. You can leave a gift in your will at no cost to you now and in doing so, leave a lasting legacy for Calvert Kielder and people with disabilities far into the future. When writing their will, most people simply express their wishes to leave a gift to their solicitor and then let us know. However, if you need further information we may be able to help.

## Business support

Let us know if your company or employer would like to give a donation or a gift in kind or even match fund other donations. By donating, your business will gain wide brand exposure and you will be supporting a worthwhile cause.

### Contact us



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Please scan if you would like to make a donation

*thank you!*

