

Welsh attractions are becoming a magnet for adrenaline junkie pensioners

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Penrhyn

Quarry Velocity

David Owens

Wales is fast becoming a magnet for pensioners seeking out adrenaline-fuelled adventures.

People in their 70s, 80s and even 90s are rewriting the rules around ageing, as new figures reveal an increase in older visitors looking for adventurous pursuits in Wales.

Data released by Welsh adventure operator Zip World shows that more than 8,000 people aged 70 and above took part in its experiences since the start of 2025, marking a 5% increase compared with the previous period.

The increase equates to an additional 361 over-70 riders, averaging close to one extra participant per day.

From 100mph zip lines and alpine coasters to underground adventures, older visitors are increasingly choosing experiences once assumed to be reserved for younger thrill-seekers.

Some of Zip World's most popular attractions among over-70s include Velocity at Penrhyn Quarry – the world's fastest zip line where riders can reach speeds of up to 100mph – and the Fforest Coaster in Betws-y-Coed, the UK's longest alpine coaster.

Velocity alone attracted 1,925 visitors aged 70 and over in the past year, accounting for just under a quarter (24%) of all over-70s participation across Zip World experiences.

The figures also show that participation extends well into later life. Visitors aged 80, 90 and above have been recorded across almost every major Zip World experience.

Age milestones at Zip World include a 97-year-old rider on Helix – the world's longest and tallest tunnel slide – and riders aged 95 and 94 taking part in Velocity and the world's fastest seated zip line, Phoenix respectively.

Zip World says many older visitors are motivated to take part to enjoy shared experiences, whether that's marking a milestone birthday, ticking off a long-held bucket-list ambition, or spending time with children and grandchildren.

One visitor, David Aris, who took on a zip line at the age of 95, said: "I did the zip line shortly before my 95th birthday to raise money for St John's Hospice, which cared for my late wife. I went with my good friend Narelle, who I met through a bereavement group. We had a brilliant day out and I enjoyed it far more than I expected. In total we raised more than £13,700 and it showed me that you're never too old to try something new."



David Aris

According to experts, seeing people of a similar age successfully take on new challenges can be a powerful motivator, helping to build confidence and shift perceptions about what's possible later in life.

Commenting on Zip World's latest data, chartered psychologist, author and later-life specialist Dr. Denise Taylor said:

"A growing awareness that time is finite tends to sharpen our sense of what genuinely matters, and experiences that once felt too ambitious or self-indulgent suddenly feel worth pursuing."

"Previous generations often inherited a model of later life built around slowing down, staying safe and acting one's age. Many of today's older adults reject that model entirely.

"Many of today's older adults have spent decades embracing personal growth, travel and self-development, and they see no reason why those interests should stop simply because they have reached a certain birthday. It is less a rebellion against ageing than a continuation of who they have always been.



Penrhyn Quarry Velocity

"New experiences stimulate curiosity, build confidence and remind us that we remain capable of growth. Activities that involve an element of adrenaline, challenge and excitement can be particularly powerful because they demand full presence in the moment. There is little room to worry about anything else while you are hurtling along a zip line, and that total focus can be a genuine relief from the noise of everyday concerns.

"What might once have been dismissed as a bucket list is often something deeper: a recognition that there are still experiences to be had, memories to be made and new aspects of ourselves to discover. Rather than a refusal to age, it reflects a decision to remain engaged, curious and open to possibility, regardless of chronological age."

Martin Evans, CEO at Zip World, added: "We're seeing more people embrace adventure in later life, not leave it behind. Age doesn't have to be a barrier to shared experiences, and for many visitors these moments are about reassurance, connection and discovering just how capable they still are."

Top 10 Experiences for Over-70s by Participation (2025/26)

Product Location	Experience Name	Participation Among Over-70s	Share of All Over-70s
Penrhyn Quarry	Velocity	1,925	23.8%
Betws-y-Coed	Fforest Coaster	1,160	14.3%
Llechwedd	Llechwedd Deep Mine	655	8.1%
Tower	Phoenix	461	5.7%
Llechwedd	Underground Golf	444	5.5%
Llechwedd	Bounce Below	343	4.2%
London	Helix	292	3.6%
Tower	Tower Coaster	168	2.1%
Penrhyn Quarry	Quarry Karts	160	2.0%
Betws-y-Coed	Treetop Nets	155	1.9%

Source:

Data is based on Zip World booking and participation records for the 14-month period 1st January 2025 – 20th March 2026 compared with the preceding 14-month period where referenced.

Figures relate to completed participation only and include all Zip World sites operating during the period.

Participation figures refer to individual rides or experiences taken, not unique visitors.

Age is recorded at the time of participation.

<https://nation.cymru/culture/welsh-attractions-are-becoming-a-magnet-for-adrenaline-junkie-pensioners/>