

Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs

Annual Report 2023-24



Alternative Format Page

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Contents

Foreword	4
Introduction	5
Meet the Team	7
Contact	8
Highlights	9
Participation	9
Curricular Support	12
Probationary Teachers Day	13
School Sport Awards	14
School to Club Pathways	15
Aboyne Network - Girls Mountain Biking	15
Banff Network - Macduff Petanque Club	15
Huntly Network - Cluster Cross Country and Roller Skiing	16
Turrieff Network - Day of Dance	16
Equalities and Inclusion	17
Free Bike Initiative	20
Stay and Play ASN Sessions	20
Boccia Festivals	21
Volunteers	22
Deliverers Day	22
Volunteer of the Year	23
Volunteer Pathway	24
Leadership	25
I Can Lead	25
Young Ambassadors	25
Banff NPLQ Programme	26
Greenmyres	26
Play Leaders	27
Community Sports Hubs	28
Changings Lives Through Sport	28
Collaboration	28
Community Need	30
Sailing	32
Volunteers	33
Ellon Squash	36
Focus on a Developing Sport - Pickleball	37
Talented Athlete Pass	38
Sports Kit For All	39
UCI Community Cycling	40

Foreword

Welcome to our Active Schools and Community Sports Annual Report.

This provides an overview of work undertaken by the Aberdeenshire team over the academic year 2023-24.

It's been a fantastic year for the team, who have met challenges head on and found creative solutions to ensure that opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity are available for everyone living and working in Aberdeenshire.

Our Active Schools team made significant changes at the start of this academic year, removing all charges for participation, in line with a national requirement to make activity free of charge from the point of entry. This led to a new delivery model in some areas, and I am delighted to see so many new opportunities becoming available, contributing to an overall increase of 6.5% in distinct participation in our programme.

Our Community Sport Hub team were allocated a pot of Community Grant Funding from Aberdeenshire Council, which was used in addition to activation funding provided by **sport**scotland to support direct work with community hubs, clubs and organisations, to identify and tackle local need, empowering community leaders to demonstrate the power of sport and its ability to change lives at a local level. With 16 projects delivered in total, it has been humbling to see the positivity and impact that this funding has had right across Aberdeenshire.

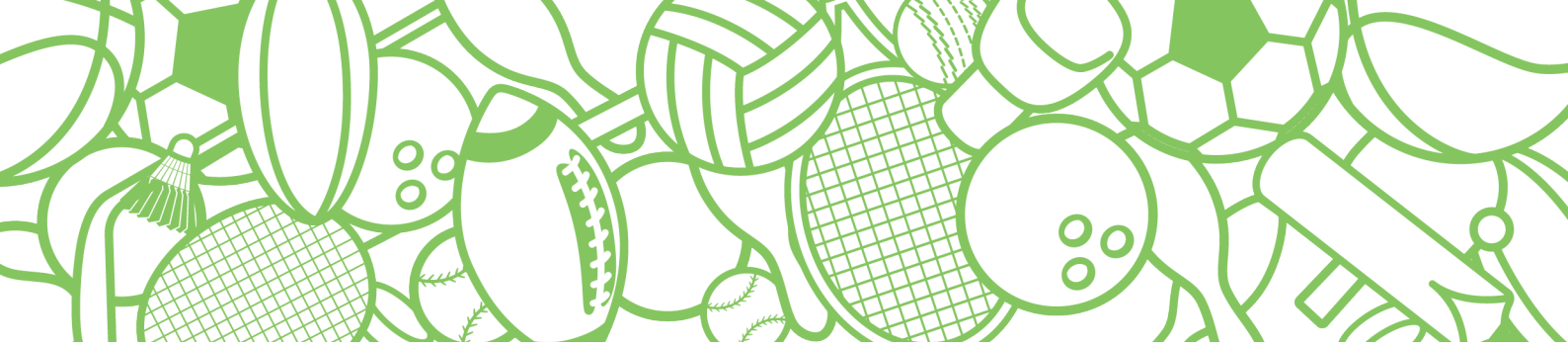
When reflecting back on the positive outcomes achieved last year, its important to recognise the support networks which make all of this possible. Whether in an Active Schools or a Community club capacity, none of this work would be possible without the commitment, endeavour and determination of our amazing volunteers. For that reason, I thank all volunteers who have been involved with our programmes and hope we can continue to collaborate in future to achieve even greater success.

Finally, to the Active Schools and Community Sport team, I wish to express my ongoing thanks and appreciation for the commitment, dedication and tireless work, which has had a huge and lasting impact on so many lives of those within Aberdeenshire.

Stuart Grant



Aberdeenshire Active Schools and Community Sport Manager



Introduction

Welcome to the Annual Report 2023-24, for the Aberdeenshire Active Schools and Community Sport Hub Team.

Aberdeenshire Council have a long-standing partnership with **sportscotland** who have developed and enhanced the Active Schools programme since its inception in 2003. The core principles of the Active Schools programme have remained broadly similar and look at how together we can create high quality opportunities for young people of school age to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, establishing strong and effective pathways from School to sports clubs within local communities.

Aberdeenshire Councils Sport and Physical Activity strategy focuses on 4 key outcomes which are

- Helping the people of Aberdeenshire to live longer, healthier lives with a focus on reducing obesity and improving mental health and wellbeing.
- Promoting diversity and tackling inequalities.
- Using Sport & Physical Activity to build stronger communities.
- Support people to reach their potential by providing opportunities for wider achievement

sportscotland's 'Sport for Life' strategy acts as a guidance document which drives the national agenda.



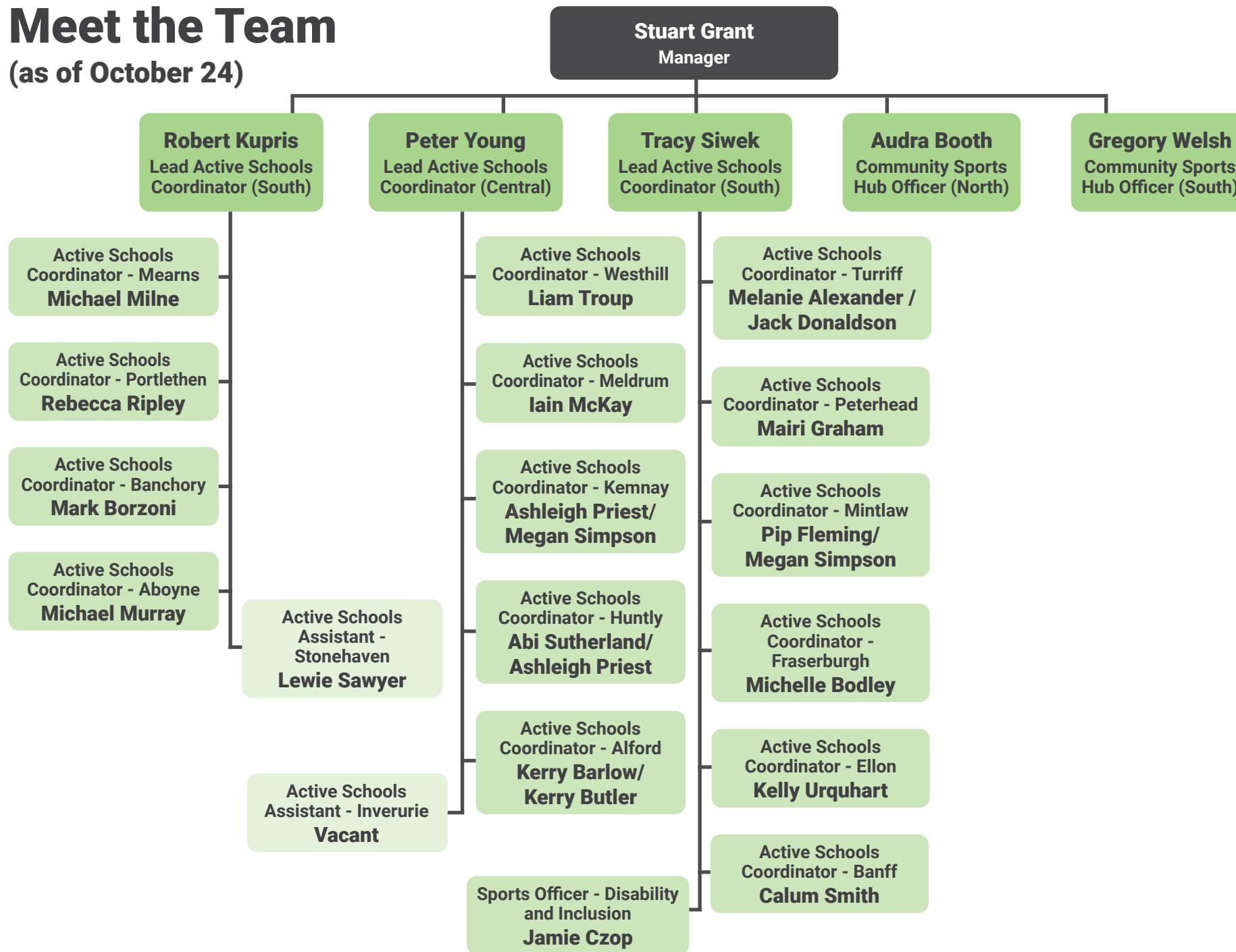
sportscotland are committed to ensure that ‘inclusion underpins everything we do’ and this has led to some significant changes being made to the delivery model for Active Schools Aberdeenshire, most notably that all Active Schools sessions are now being offered as a free activity. Across Aberdeenshire we adopted a more targeted approach to some activity which provided a blend of universal and targeted sessions, and we will aim to build on this in future years.

Our 2023-24 plan was developed to align with priority areas that were identified nationally by **sportscotland** and the Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) business plan, and were agreed through the new partnership agreement in February 2023. Priority areas are outlined in the following table:

sportscotland priority	Outcomes	LLA - Aberdeenshire priority	Outcomes
Participation	Provide High quality opportunities for Young people to take part in sport & physical activity before school, at lunchtime and after school	Improve Health & Wellbeing	More children and young people getting more active, more often. Increased participation in community sport clubs
School to Club Pathways	Develop, lead and support effective pathways to connect schools, clubs and communities	Tackle Poverty & Inequality	Barriers to participation in these areas are reduced. Increased confidence in young people
Equalities and Inclusion	Provide inclusive opportunities by using targeted approaches to remove barriers to participation	Sustainability & Climate	Increased awareness of climate & sustainability
Volunteers	Develop a network of volunteers to deliver activity sessions.	Community & Partnerships	Stronger and more resilient communities offering more opportunities for participation
Young Leaders	Develop and support leadership opportunities for young people		

Meet the Team

(as of October 24)



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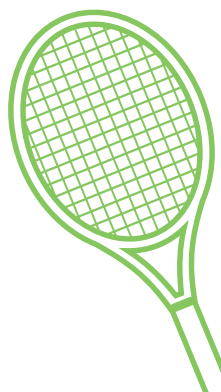
COMMUNITY SPORTS HUBS

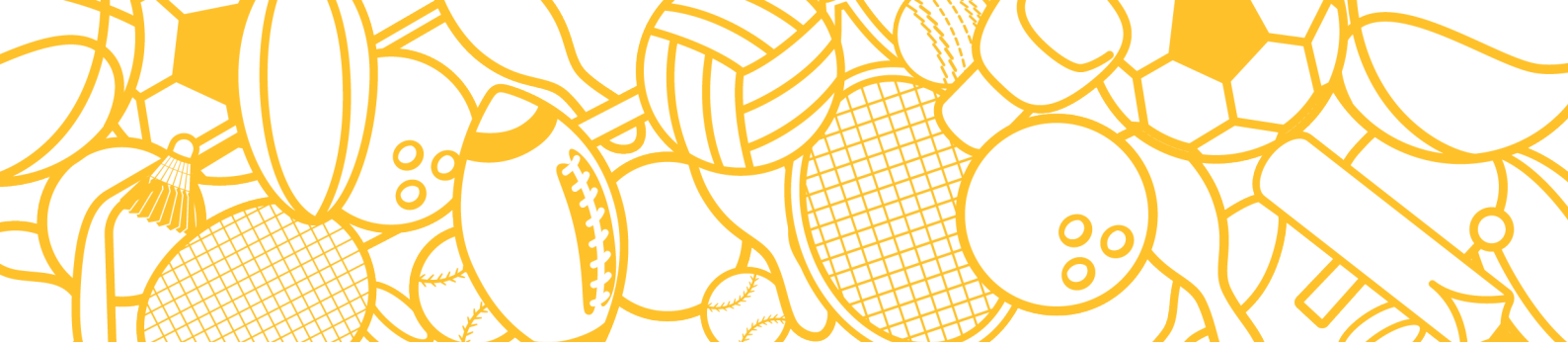
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Highlights

Participation

Having delivered a strong programme in 2022/23, this year our Active Schools team targeted growth across every network. Of particular focus this year was bridging the gap between Male and Female participation, and increasing volunteer numbers to help minimise the impact from removing chargeable activities. A breakdown of our programme statistics is below:

- Total number of distinct participants – 11,365, an increase of 6.5% from 2022.23.
5220 Female – increased from 4634 in 22.23.
6145 Male – increased from 6033 in 22.23.
- 31% of total school roll participated, an increase from 29% in 22.23.
34% of primary school roll.
28% of secondary school roll.
- 11,762 sessions were offered, an increase of 117 sessions from previous year.
- Total visits were 195,249, an increase of 1,403 visits from previous year.
- 978 deliverers supported the programme, increased from 875 in previous year.



Number of visits
195,249

Number of participants

11,365

Percentage of school roll **31%**

Number of sessions
11,762

Number of deliverers

978

Percentage of whom are voluntary **97%**



Active Schools Aberdeenshire Report 2023-2024

The landscape of opportunities has changed this year, and although Football remains the most popular and well attended activity, we are starting to see movement within other sports – with Dance and movement showing a notable increase in popularity. Our top 10 activities are broken down as below:

Football	63,673
Netball	34,369
Basketball	13,236
Multisports	12,707
Badminton	9,217

Dance and Movement	7,937
Fitness	6,985
Running	6,689
Cheerleading	5,908
Hockey	5,099

The team have also continued to develop our festivals and events programme to provide some competitive opportunities that are both cluster and area based. Some of our key programmes delivered include:

- **Run for fun series**

Throughout the 2023/24 academic year, Active Schools Aberdeenshire hosted 16 different Run4Fun Cross Country events from Laurencekirk in the South to Banff in the North. The Run4Fun events allowed pupils from P1 to P7 (P1-S6 in the North networks) to test their running skills and compete alongside their friends. No two events were the same as we saw races along the beach, through the woods and in some fields, running through all four seasons of weather – sometimes even all in the one race!

As well as providing the competitive aspect of racing with 1st, 2nd and 3rd place medals being distributed, every child who participated at several events were rewarded with their very own Run4Fun participation medal.

Participation across all events was very impressive, with 16 races, 921 distinct participants, and 193 participation medals handed out.

- **Primary School Football**

The Primary School Football Programme, in partnership with Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust, Active Schools Aberdeenshire, and Active Schools Aberdeen, aims to engage young footballers from across Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The 23.24 programme involved 27 teams from 13 Aberdeenshire schools, with festivals and fixtures planned at key venues including Harlaw Playing Fields (Aberdeen) and Cormack Park (Westhill).

Approximately 200 pupils from Primary 4 to Primary 7, with schools from across Aberdeenshire, such as Westhill, Meldrum, Portlethen, Laurencekirk, Kemnay, and Ellon took part through the year.

A key objective is to foster school participation at scale, with most schools anticipated to enter multiple teams, highlighting a growing passion for football in the region. The programme could not run successfully without the support of around 60 volunteers, contributing to various roles such

WATCH HERE! 

Video link:
[Run4Fun](#)



Key Objectives for the Year:

- Engage 200+ pupils from 13 schools in the football programme.
- Mobilise 60 volunteers to support the delivery of events.
- Deliver well-structured, inclusive festivals and fixtures that promote participation and fun for all age groups.
- Foster strong community and family engagement at each event.
- Strengthen partnerships between schools, Active Schools, and Aberdeen FC Community Trust to ensure efficient programme delivery and sustainability.



as coaching, refereeing, and event management.

The programme is structured to prioritise inclusion and participation for all players. P5 to P7 teams play three 15-minute matches, with some teams participating in four 10-minute games. P4 players participate in shorter games with more frequent playtime, ensuring that all participants receive ample opportunities to develop their skills and enjoy the sport. A

structure which ensures the programme's focus on fostering skill development, teamwork, and enjoyment for all participants can be achieved.

As the programme progresses, we will explore opportunities to expand participation by inviting additional schools from the region and increasing the frequency of football festivals. Providing additional volunteer training and offering more opportunities for players to develop their skills will be key focus areas for future growth

• **Netball**

Within the Central and South Aberdeenshire Active Schools Networks, we run annual Primary Fun5z Netball Festivals.

The Central festivals have fixtures for P4-7 teams and P6-7 teams. 5 out of 6 of the festivals in Central are for teams to play friendly matches against other teams. The last event each year for the Central Networks is a scored festival.

This year, we had 21 schools/groups participate over the 6 Central events, this equated to 107 teams in total, 51 P4-7 teams and 56 P6-7 teams over the 6 events. The scored festival this year was held in Inverurie, and our P4-7 winners were Midmar with Elrick in 2nd place and Gordon Primary in 3rd place. Our P6-7 winners were Westhill, with Midmill in 2nd place and Elrick in 3rd place.

In the South, all the festivals were non-scoring events. The participating teams had the opportunity to play friendly games against the other teams. Over the 5 festivals there was a total of 29 teams who took part.

In the North, Mintlaw ran 2 festivals last academic year in term 2 and term 3. In term 2, 8 teams participated in the festival from 4 different cluster schools and in term 3 there were 10 teams participating from 5 different schools.

Active Schools also coordinate an Aberdeenshire Academy Netball League for school teams that want to participate. This gives the Netball teams an opportunity to play fixtures against other Aberdeenshire Academies.

This year there were 9 Junior teams (S1-3) from 8 schools and 8 Senior teams (S4-6) from 7 schools taking part. Overall, there were 62 games played over the course of the 2023/2024 academic year. For the Junior League Inverurie Academy were the winners with

Mintlaw Academy runners up.

For the Senior League Mintlaw Academy were the winners, and the runners up were Kemnay Academy.

Well done and thank you to all teams that took part in any of our Fun5z festivals or the Academy League.

WATCH HERE!

Video link:
[Netball](#)



Curricular support

We work with partners from National Governing bodies and locally with clubs and organisations to support opportunities where possible.

Some highlights from club and community support this year include:

- **Squash**

In the second year of a Direct Club Investment (DCI) project, Grampian Squash continued to deploy coach Joseph Ewen to deliver squash in schools across 3 networks in Aberdeenshire (Banchory, Ellon and Inverurie). These networks were chosen due to the existing club and facility structures in the areas, and with a target of getting more young people back involved with the sport. In total, 102 sessions were delivered with 329 distinct pupils taking part.

A critical part of the programme is to ensure there are extra-curricular sessions available for young people to attend, giving an opportunity to further develop skills and progress into a club and competitive environment if they chose too. Joseph ensured there were EC sessions in every network whilst he was delivering and worked with existing club volunteers to try and establish junior club sections.

- **Rugby**

Scottish Rugby are committed to developing Rugby opportunities directly into schools, and have invested in officer posts across several clubs in Aberdeenshire. Through this investment, a total of **653 sessions** were delivered across primary and secondary schools with a total attendance of **8,719 Males** and **7,726 Females**.


- **Table Tennis**

Aberdeen and District Table Tennis Association Development Officer Dave Lomax visited Mearns Academy to provide an Intro to Table Tennis input to the schools S5&6 Sports Development pupils. Nine pupils participated, receiving an overview of the rules of the games and coaching techniques. ADDTA also contributed to curricular delivery at Lairhillock School in the Mackie network, offering sessions as part of Health Week which was planned by the schools pupil led Health Week committee.

- **Bowling**

Active Schools have been working with Bowls coach, Ian Hepworth, as an Active Schools volunteer for multiple years.

Mintlaw network delivered indoor ASN bowls sessions in term 2 and 3 of the 2023-24 school year at the Buchan Indoor Bowls Centre for P6-S6 pupils. Over the 2 terms we had a core group of pupils from both the Mintlaw and Peterhead network who attended the sessions each week. Although numbers were small the pupils all enjoyed the sessions, with parents commenting that their child loved attending the sessions on a Friday evening and would be disappointed if they had to miss a week. Parents also stated how grateful they were for the opportunity for their child to take part in a lower impact sport as for some the session was the only activity they took part in during the week.



For the 23/24 school year, Ian delivered weekly ASN Bowls sessions at Anna Ritchie Special School. The pupils developed their bowls skills through playing fun games and activities. These sessions are always well-received by the school staff and pupils





and the participants looked forward to the sessions each week. Ian also delivered two network bowls sessions in Peterhead during term 4, a P4-P7 session and an ASN session. These took place in partnership with local club, Peterhead Bowling Club, who kindly hosted the sessions on their green. Eleven children from Peterhead network schools attended the P4-P7 sessions and we had five attend the ASN sessions, two of which signed up after trying the sport at the Anna Ritchie sessions. Active Schools have also worked with Peterhead Bowling Club coaches, with them supporting network schools health weeks, exposing more children to their sport.

Probationary Teachers Day

This year, Active Schools and Community Sports were asked to deliver a workshop for the 101 probationary teachers starting their teaching journey in Aberdeenshire.

The workshop ran over 2 days, allowing for a 50/50 split of attendance. We delivered presentations outlining the vision and mission of the team in Aberdeenshire, and explained how we can support them in their own journey.

Feedback from both days were overwhelmingly positive, with a number of probationary teachers reaching out in the following days to seek support, and in some cases request to help start new clubs.

95% of those who provided feedback from the event said they would recommend this session to future probationary teachers, whilst other participant feedback included suggestions to have a longer session in future, and to meet with them earlier in their probationary year.



“The event was well planned by the Active Schools organisers and presenters to share their expertise. We very much look forward to working with Active Schools in the future, where we can continue to shape opportunities for the professional learning of our new teachers. The Active Schools input has been appreciated”

Julia A. Scarrott (Probationer & Mentor Support)

Key topics covered at Teachers Probationary Day:

- Lesson plans
- Play leaders
- School Sports Awards
- Collaborative opportunities with sport hubs and disability and inclusion training

School Sport Awards

sportscotland school sport award is designed to support schools to make improvements which put pupils at the heart of decision making and planning of extra-curricular school sport.

Since applications reopened in 2023, schools across Aberdeenshire have been working hard with several applications submitted following collaboration with Active schools coordinators, school staff and pupils. Many schools have achieved an award and continue to grow with an aim of reaching Gold in future.



GOLD

- The Gordon Schools
- Midmar
- Kellands
- Bervie
- Banff Primary

SILVER

- Westhill Primary
- Turriff Academy
- St Fergus Primary
- Rothienorman
- Port Errol
- Pitfour
- Mintlaw Academy
- Fraserburgh Academy
- Burnhaven
- Aboyne Academy

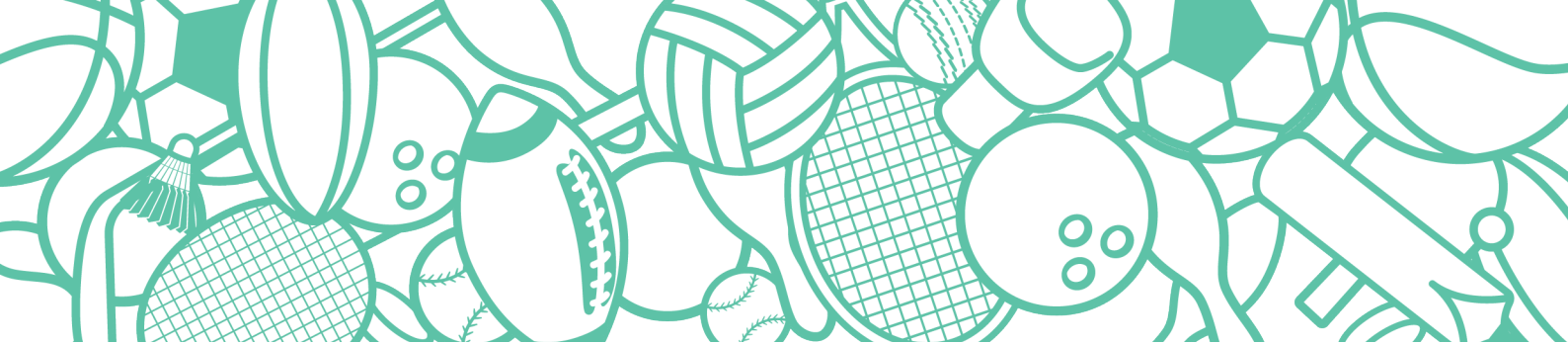
BRONZE

- Turriff Primary
- Strichen Primary
- Strathburn Primary
- Mintlaw Primary
- Longside Primary
- Hatton Cruden
- Gourdon
- Gordon
- Fetterangus
- Drumblade

IN PROGRESS

- Strathdon Primary
- Mearns
- Insch
- Hill of Banchory
- Ellon Academy
- Buchanhaven
- Banff Academy
- Aboyne Primary





School to Club Pathways

119 sport clubs had some form of partnership agreement with Active Schools by June 2024. The team are in the process of reviewing partnership agreements, with an aim of simplifying the process and then re-engaging with some of those who have previously linked with us. We've had fantastic support from clubs as demonstrated through impacts below:

Aboyne Network - Girls Mountain Biking

Active Schools Aboyne have worked with Ride In Peace Adventures (RIPA) in previous years to support our extra-curricular programme. This year, we offered P5-P7 girls the opportunity to participate in girls only mountain biking sessions at Deeside Activity Park led by coaches from RIPA. The coaching costs were covered by Active Schools to support the sessions and sign-up was high for this activity. 8 pupils registered for the 6-week block, giving them the opportunity to work on and improve their riding skills, as



well as learn the importance of bike safety.

Pupils have enjoyed the sessions and improved their

biking confidence. The club managed to engage with pupils that hadn't previously attended any AS clubs this academic year.



Banff Network - Macduff Pétanque Club

Working in Partnership with Macduff Pétanque Club and their head coach we trained 6 senior pupils from the sport and recreation class in the basics of coaching Pétanque.

Following this, the young leaders engaged with two of the local primary schools, Whitehills and Macduff, and delivered coaching sessions to the P7's pupils before running a festival at Macduff Pétanque Club.

"I am very thankful to the petanque club for their support, and give huge credit to the young leaders who showed patience with their peers and the enthusiasm was fantastic"

Calum Smith – Active Schools Coordinator for the Banff network

Huntly Network - Cluster Cross Country and Roller Skiing Sessions

Whilst working in Partnership with Huntly Nordic and Outdoor Centre, we were able to provide 4 weeks of extra-curricular sessions of Cross Country and Roller Skiing to pupils from P1 – P7 in the Huntly Network.

As Women and Girls in sport week was around the corner, we then added a final two sessions at the end of the block for girls only, and extended the offer to anyone up to S3.

"Around 50% of those that attended the 4-week taster block went onto attend a block of paid sessions with us. We're delighted to have run these sessions with Active Schools and are keen to explore more opportunities in future"

Feedback received from the Ski Centre

Turriff Network - Day of Dance

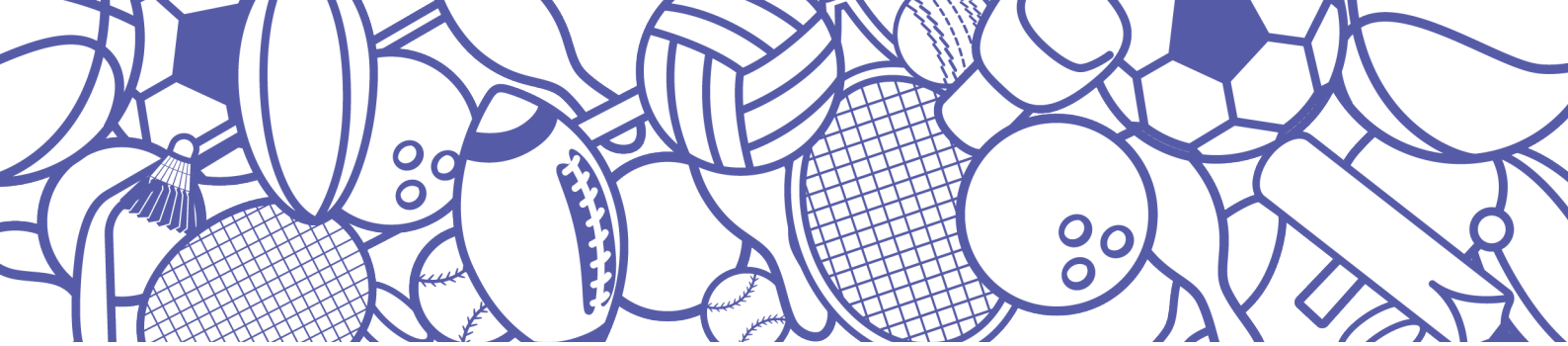
The team in Turriff managed to secure funding which allowed them to deliver a school based dance programme which culminated in a celebration of dance. Project Dance provided

an opportunity for Turriff Network primary aged pupils to have at least one dance activity in school this year, whilst also promoting a community pathway for them to continue. Almost 150

girls experienced at least one dance club this year in school.

The Day of Dance was held on June 3rd, bringing girls together from individual schools to celebrate their love to dance. Tutoring was provided by partner club LJ's Streetdance and also local dance teacher Lucie Lister. 48 young girls aged 7-12 attended and the girls experienced two 90 minutes workshops on Street and Contemporary dancing before coming together to perform the routines they learned. The day had a sense of community with parents and grandparents having the chance to view the short performance at the end.





Equalities and Inclusion

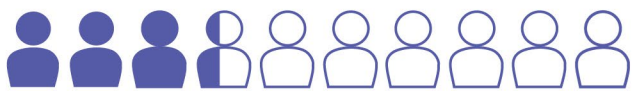
In line with our reporting requirements, our team measure participation from young people with protected characteristics. As general growth was the overall aim, we did not set specific targets in these areas, rather an aspiration to grow in line with all other participation. Below is a summary of participation:



21% Defined Disability
(136 annual participants)



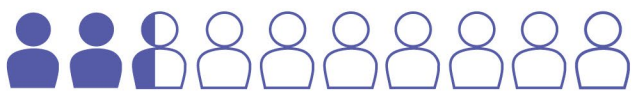
27% ASN
(4,762 annual participants)



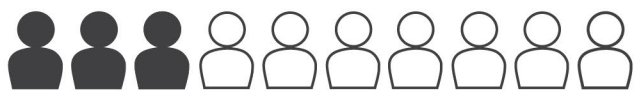
33% Minority Ethnic
(556 annual participants)



18% SIMD 1&2
(152 annual participants)



22% FSM
(975 annual participants)



31% TOTAL
(11,306 annual participants)

Active Schools Aberdeenshire have a dedicated part-time **Sport Officer for Disability and Inclusion**, to support the networks activities in relation to equality and inclusion which stands as a priority throughout all activity delivered, by aiming to **remove barriers** to participation and **supporting individuals** to take part and enjoy sport.

A core focus within the 2023-2024 annual plan has been the development of opportunities for schools to participate in events with peers and other schools, for children and young people with protected characteristics. The Grampian Schools Inclusive Events Programme has been identified as an invaluable opportunity for



school pupils with additional support needs to attend festival events allowing them to experience different sporting activities with a focus on participation and fun,

whilst meeting their individual needs. This is a partnership programme with Active Schools Aberdeen City which highlights Active Schools Aberdeenshire's commitment

to collaboration to bring high quality cultural and sporting opportunities to everyone in Aberdeenshire (and Grampian).



The Grampian Sportshall Athletics Festival (November 2023) is an event which was hosted by Active Schools Aberdeenshire at Aberdeen Sports Village in partnership with Active Schools Aberdeen City, Live Life Aberdeenshire, Scottish Disability Sport and Grampian Disability Sport. The event saw schools from Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire taking part in an indoor programme of adapted athletics activities which was fully inclusive for pupils with additional support needs. Events included Speed Bounce, Javelin, Shuttle Runs, Target Throw, Standing Long Jump, Hi-Stepper, Seated Chest Push and with additional Relays at the end. The event was supported by Sports Leaders from Ellon Academy, coordinators from Active Schools Aberdeenshire, Active Schools Aberdeen City and led by athletics coach Ruth Watson. There was a significant increase in participation for this annual event with 27 participants taking part in 2022/2023 from 5 schools and 67 participants in 2023/2024 from 10 schools (148% increase). Next year we aim to be able to send a regional team with the support of Grampian Disability Sport to the national Scottish Disability Sport event.



SHARING OF BEST PRACTICE – SPORT IN EDUCATION



Teaching Staff and Active Schools Coordinators who work with the special schools in Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City came together for a Sharing of Best Practice – Sport in Education networking event (February 2024). Hosted by St Andrews School, Inverurie. This allowed us to promote, increase awareness and publicise the work of disability sport in Active schools and from key partners whilst determining opportunities to learn from our colleagues in education, gaining a valuable insight into the needs of their pupils.

Presentations were given by the teaching staff of the host school, which provided a platform

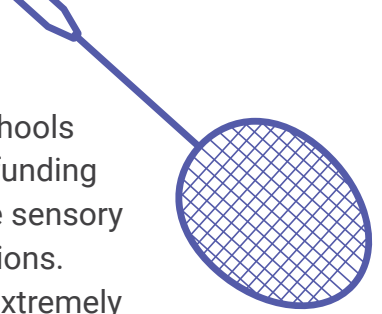
for those attending to collaborate and discuss ideas for physical activity participation for pupils with complex needs. Representatives of Education Staff and Active Schools from the other attending schools also presented allowing for information sharing on their current physical activity programmes on offer and an understanding of their needs. A tour of the facilities within St Andrews School and the Live Life Aberdeenshire facilities within Inverurie Community Campus (warm water and hydrotherapy pools, bouldering wall etc.) concluded the day.

Feedback from attendees will help to shape future networking events, which is hoped will become an annual feature within the calendar following the success of this pilot. The discussions on the day will also help to shape an Active Schools programme of support for children within the schools/ and other schools.



From the sharing of best practice event, we took shared learning to create a new session which was piloted within Stonehaven – ASN Stay Play and Connect Aberdeenshire. These monthly sessions support an open play environment for children with Additional Support Needs (ASN) and their families to explore sports activities within a positive, friendly and inclusive environment. Siblings can also sign up to attend

these sessions. Active Schools Mackie network secured funding to allow them to purchase sensory equipment for these sessions. The sessions have been extremely popular with maximum session numbers being reached and waiting lists operating for each of the sessions.



We were delighted for the Grampian Beginners Swimming Gala festival (June 2024) to be taken on and hosted by Active Schools Aberdeenshire/ Live Life Aberdeenshire as part of the Grampian Schools Inclusive Events Programme. This festival event meets an identified gap within swimming gala provision for children with an additional support need/ disability, currently unable to swim lengths of the swimming pool, however, can swim a width of the pool with/ without aids/

assistance.

This festival event highlighted the essential collaborative working required between Live Life Aberdeenshire and Education within Aberdeenshire Council for these events to successfully take place, LLA Business Plan 2023-2028 - Maximise our partnership working and collaborative approaches to develop the best portfolio of venues, facilities and experiences for all who live, work, study and visit Aberdeenshire.



- Education - St Andrews Special School Inverurie - provided their curricular pool time
- LLA - Inverurie Community Campus - Facility provision and event support
- Education - Swimming Officer, Education, Marie Cheyne - the driving force behind this event, event lead
- LLA - Active Schools Co-ordinators – Event support
- LLA - Sport Officer for Disabilities and Inclusion – Event co-ordinator
- LLA - Active Schools Aberdeenshire Mascot, Archie the Stag – Event supporter

Free Bike Initiative

This project comes from a ScotGov manifesto pledge that all children in Scotland should be able to access a bike. Angus Cycle Hub had

“I spoke with the pupil who received the bike and she says she loves it, she uses it every day and has great fun with it”

Head Teacher

successfully gained funding for the past 4 years during which time they supported young people in Dundee and Angus to gain access to their very own bike. The hub approached us in December 2023, with an opportunity to bring the project to Aberdeenshire.

Following this, we worked closely with schools and identified 32 young people across Aberdeenshire who



would benefit this opportunity and across the next 6 months, bikes, helmets, lights and locks were delivered to schools and presented to the young people.

“The bicycles that have been donated to our school have been greatly appreciated by our families. This has enabled some of our pupils to feel included, confident and independent. At Buchanhaven we regularly promote pupils to cycle to school and hold Bike Breakfast sessions to help our environment and these donations have made these sessions accessible to all.”

Stay and Play ASN sessions

One area highlighted at the Sharing of Best Practice event was stay and play family sessions which had been running in Aberdeen for a few months prior.

Following the meeting, the Active Schools team in Mackie were successful in application for a small pot of funding from the K&M Local Learning Community Partnership which has allowed them to pilot similar sessions in Stonehaven.

The sessions which are supported by volunteers have been very successful and always at capacity. The original intention was to offer a safe space for families to come and meet with others in the

“The ASN Stay, Play and Connect sessions were established through dialogue with our Sports Office for Inclusion, Jamie Czap and Carronhill ASN school HT John Forrester with the aim of creating an opportunity that meets the needs of local children, young people and their families. The uptake of the sessions has been very positive and we are looking forward to re-establishing them in Term 1 2024/25 to continue this provision for people with ASN and Disabilities.”

Robbie Kupris, Active Schools Lead Coordinator

area, and provide equipment and space which allows members of their family to explore and play in an environment they feel comfortable in.

The funding from the K&M LLCP allowed for the purchase of specialised inclusive equipment and the delivery of a disability

inclusion training course. The equipment has been made available to local community groups with Re-Activate in Newtonhill and Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living network accessing it for their users.

Boccia Festivals

Three successful boccia Festivals were delivered in March 2024 at Westhill Academy, Turriff Sports Centre and Mackie Academy which saw gatherings of Boccia enthusiasts from across the region.

At Mackie in advance of the session Active Schools provided a CPD to the S5 and S6 pupils in the Mackie Academy Sports Development class training them in the delivery of the “Boccia Bonanza” session plans with the aim of the pupils leading the activities at the festival.

Each festival had a mixture of match play and skill development stations to provide a varied and enriching experience for all involved. This format allowed for rotation among the groups, providing ample opportunities for everyone to actively participate and enjoy the event.

Participants demonstrated great sportsmanship and dedication at each event.

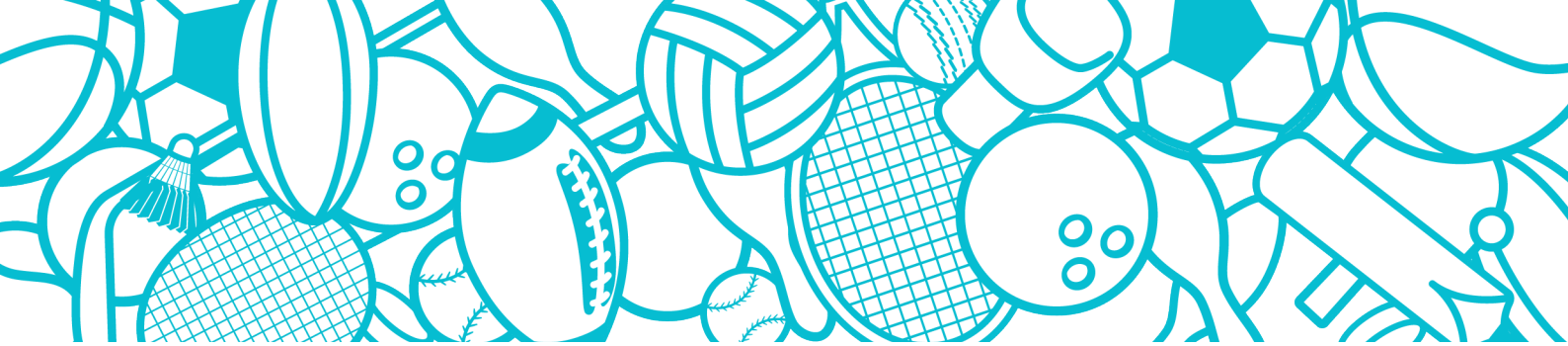
110 Pupils from **14 Schools** participated in the **3 festivals**.

Age range **P4-S6**

All Schools had Helpers/PSA'S/Teachers in attendance to **support** the pupils.

9 Active Schools Coordinators, 2 Active Schools volunteers and **14 Sports Development volunteers** ran the events.





Volunteers

Delivering the programme simply would not be possible without the support and effort of a strong and dedicated team of volunteers and coaches. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who offers up some of their time, and have support from school staff, parents, young leaders, further education students and community volunteers.

Having this support has enabled us to retain a high level of free delivery, with 947 of the 978, or 97% of those involved doing so in a voluntary capacity.

We are committed to supporting the dedicated workforce and last year, working in partnership we were able to offer CPD in the following areas:

- First Aid
- Child Protection
- ADHD Awareness
- 1.1 Football Coaching
- Hockey Leaders
- Netball Leaders
- Dance and Movement
- Playleaders
- Badminton Basics
- Disability and Inclusion Awareness

Deliverers day

We were also delighted to welcome 20 of our delivery team to Inverurie in June for our annual deliverers workshop where we invite all of our volunteers, coaches and anyone who supports delivery our Active Schools programme. Attendees are offered several workshops designed to inspire and share best practice around their own coaching in a CPD format as well as networking opportunities over lunchtime.

This year saw the event open with an inspirational speech and discussion with Invictus

Games Gold Medallist, David Jarvis before sessions from Joe Ewen at Scottish Squash; Martin Braithwaite from Grampian Flyers Basketball

Club, Jamie Czop delivering a Disability and Inclusion workshop and finishing with Grampian Pickleball.





Participant feedback:

“The speaker at the start was very good.”

“On the whole it was great fun, and a good chance to share experiences with other volunteers.”

“Hands on activities with ideas on how they can be adapted.”

Volunteer of the year

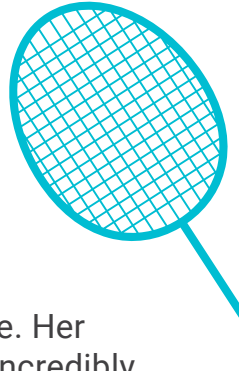
In March 2024, we were once again delighted to be able to present an award during the Aberdeenshire Clubsport awards evening, to our volunteer of the year.

Susan has committed nearly quarter of a century – 24 years - to volunteering with local schools. Having started a running club in New Deer when her daughter was

still in the school, she has continued to support and lead the club – this is despite her daughter having long since left both primary and secondary school, citing a passion for providing active opportunities for young people as her motivation to continue doing so.

Susan delivers 3 weekly after school sessions, supporting

with badminton clubs in new deer and Mintlaw academy in addition to the running club that continues to thrive. Her sessions remain incredibly popular with an average of just under 70 young people attending every week across the 3 clubs.



Pip Fleming – Active School Coordinator for Mintlaw was blown away by her longevity, commenting:

“Susan is an absolute inspiration, she is an absolutely amazing volunteer, and we are extremely lucky to have someone as dedicated and enthusiastic supporting us”



Susan receiving award from Cllr Anne Stirling – chair of Aberdeenshire's communities committee.

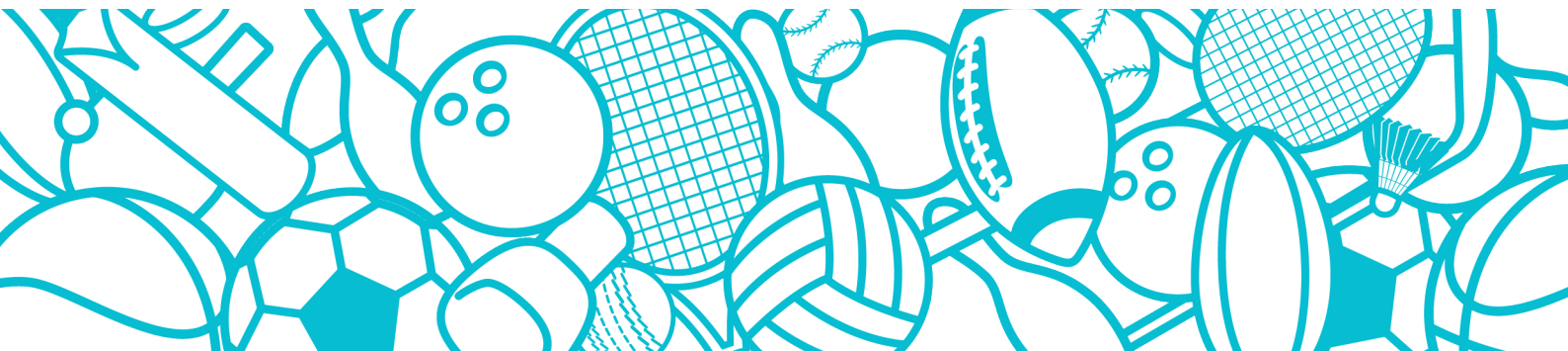


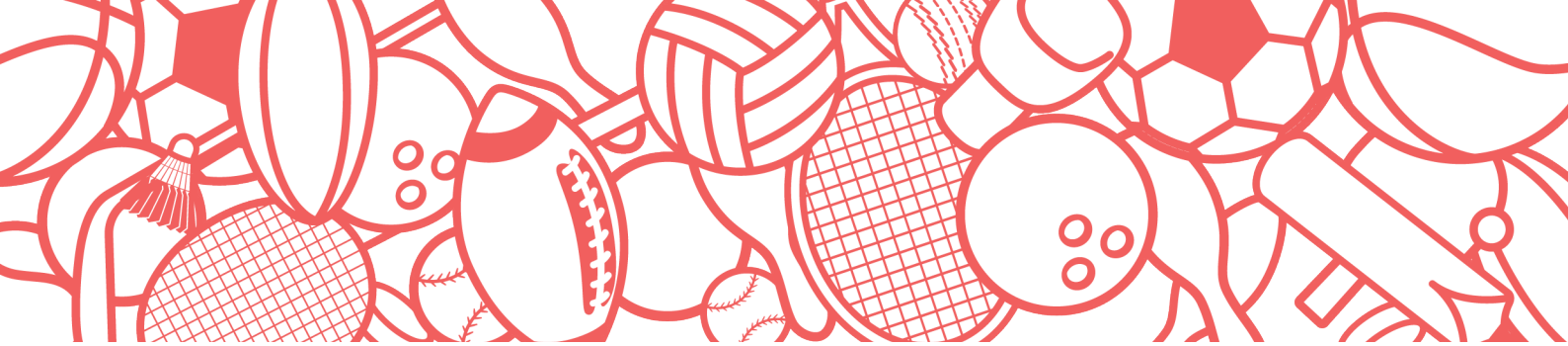


Volunteer Pathway

Logan Andrew an S6 pupil first volunteered with Turriff Active Schools 5 years ago after attending the I Can Lead training event. Following this training Logan has regularly volunteered at holiday camps, after school clubs (rugby) and Turriff Primary PE classes. In S5 he undertook more Leadership training at Turriff Academy, this included Active Schools Play Leader Mentor Training after which Logan guided Turriff Primary 7 pupils to become Play Leaders themselves. Supporting more Turriff young people to start their Leadership Pathway.

Logan's volunteering has benefitted a fantastic number of P1 –P7 pupils over the years. He has selflessly input well over 40 hours annually for Active Schools and as such was rewarded with a funded space on an NPLQ course during the Easter Holidays. Logan passed with flying colours and has gone on to secure a full-time job with Live Life Aberdeenshire, however even with this new paid role, Logan has continued to volunteer at Turriff Holiday Programmes.





Leadership

I Can Lead

A priority for LLA and Active Schools is to support young people through leadership opportunities and provide the chance for them to grow in confidence and develop skills to become effective leaders. We hope this leads to volunteering with us to support our programme whilst gaining lifelong opportunities for employment and other

key skills. The team agreed to help fund places on the Leadership Skills Foundation 'I Can Lead', with delivery scheduled for the school in-service dates – 16th & 17th November. There were three 2-day programmes organised to ensure coverage in North, Central and South Aberdeenshire. Pupils were charged £5 each to

"I have gained more confidence and I have also learned how to be more responsible and prepared."

Pupil feedback

participate, with active schools funding the remaining £13 per pupil.

Following the sessions, the pupils committed to complete 5-hours of volunteering within their school settings, supporting a growth in activity as well as their own personal confidence to lead in future.

In total 83 pupils gained the qualification with everyone who took part showing great enthusiasm during and after the course.



Young Ambassadors

Young ambassadors is a programme funded through the national lottery and seen as a flagship approach to developing young people as leaders. Some highlights from those who took part are below:

Young Ambassadors at Meldrum Academy visited 11 out of 12 network primary schools to give a presentation on the P7 Transition extra-curricular clubs hosted at Meldrum

Academy. Four clubs (Football, Netball, Basketball and Dance) were delivered in term 4 by PE staff at the Academy along with our Young Ambassadors.

The Alford YA has been very proactive in developing a Sports Council within the Academy. The pupils have spoken of their aim of leaving a legacy in the school by changing the



planning approach to schools sport.

The hope is that we can encourage more pupils to participate in physical activity and

“Many thanks, great opportunity for those transitioning up to S1, much appreciated.”

have their opinions heard and taken forward to shape future opportunities. As a rural community we hope to offer meaningful activities to participate in and give pupils opportunities within the curricular and extracurricular programme to develop their own skills and knowledge within sport and have fun.

Banff NPLQ Programme

Calum Smith, Active Schools Coordinator for the Banff network has developed a programme in partnership with Banff academy, which offers pupils the opportunity to gain a National Pool Lifeguarding Qualification (NPLQ) in exchange for committing to volunteering that supports the networks strategic plan. Each pupil contributed a minimum of 40 hrs of voluntary work before sitting their NPLQ. Many have continued to support the network even after completing the course.

This year, 6 pupils from Banff Academy and one former pupil whose foster parent got in contact about the opportunity completed the programme, whilst 2 spaces on the course were taken by pupils from Turriff Academy who had also volunteered throughout the year working with Mel Alexander in the Turriff Network.

All pupils and 3 other members of the public successfully passed their NPLQ and are now applying for part time and casual jobs in their local swimming pool. One from Turriff Academy is now in full time employment at Inverurie Community Campus and one Banff Academy pupil is currently doing her induction at Deveron before starting the part time role.



Greenmyres

The Huntly team worked along with Greenmyres Adventures to offer 2 weeks of adventurous activity opportunities in the summer. To support the delivery, we arranged training for pupils from S4 and above, allowing them to learn about the Greenmyres facility, the activities they offer and to be trained to help with things like inflating paddle boards and sizing wetsuits. Pupils who attended then volunteered their



time to help deliver the summer programme.

Over the 2 weeks, 238 spaces (98 distinct participants) took part in the adventurous activities. Children had a fantastic time despite the terrible weather some days! Participants reported having fun, increased confidence and making new friends. Parents

commented on increased resilience, increased 'give it a go' attitude and a general all-round satisfaction. Senior pupils enjoyed their volunteering opportunities and the responsibility given to them to run activities, and are hoping to continue this journey in future.



Play Leaders

Play Leaders is an introduction to leadership using sport and physical activity. The programme was designed and developed by Aberdeenshire Active Schools team and has proved to be hugely popular since inception.

It is aimed at older primary pupils, who learn about the safe delivery of playground games and activities to younger Primary School aged children.

It can be used as a standalone course or can be developed into using P6-P7 pupils as Playground

Leaders on a rotational basis or on rainy days. This gives older pupils more responsibility in school and allows the younger pupils to have more structured play at lunchtimes, resulting in less disruptive lunchtimes with less playground incidents. It also helps build the pupil relationships across P1-7.

The programme aims to raise awareness and ability around planning, safety, how age/stage can affect how you play games using the STEP principle (Space, Task, Equipment, People). It also builds pupil confidence when speaking in front of their peers and when required to

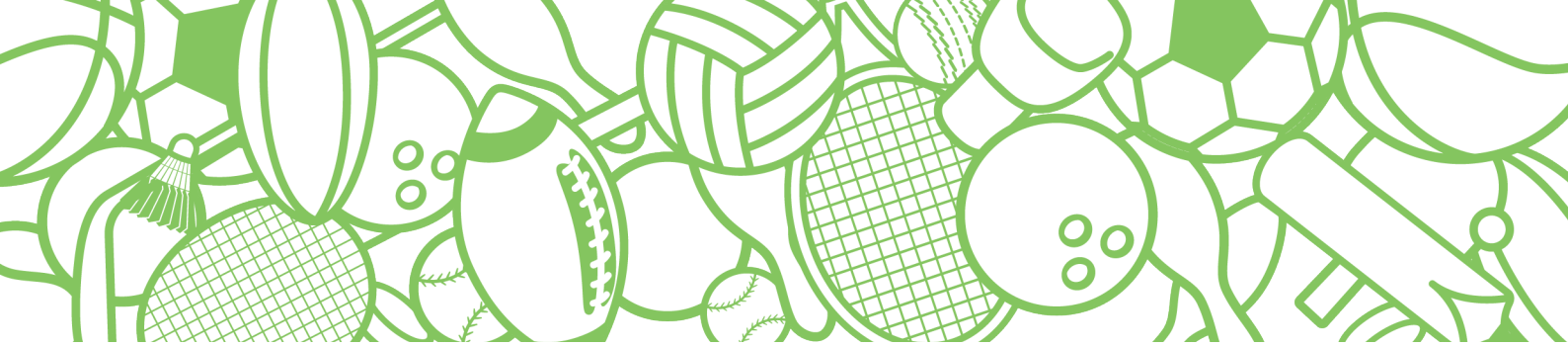
guide and lead their peers to ensure enjoyment and safety at all sessions

Certificates are awarded on completion of the course and assessment.

Delivery can be done in a number of ways- Active Schools, senior pupils, college students and internally in schools, with support of Active Schools for assessments.

Once again 2023-24 academic year proved to be very popular with a total of 84 schools having playleaders delivered, to a total of 1783 pupils.





Community Sports Hubs

Changing lives through sport

A Community Sport Hub (CSH) is a collective of local sports clubs & other community organisations that come together to improve the contribution that sport & physical activity has on a community.

The Community Sport Hub approach is to support and empower local people to improve sport & physical activity in communities across Scotland. It starts with understanding the needs within a community and then collaborating to facilitate and deliver activities and interventions.

Community sport hubs are naturally evolving from the traditional constituted model to a thematic approach which can lead to greater collaboration across wider areas. In Aberdeenshire we have a blend of approaches across the 11 areas we

currently recognise as being active hubs. Every area is very different and throughout 2023.24 we have been involved with some incredible work that has been developed and led by communities.

Aberdeenshire Council fully support and recognise the impact hubs can have

in delivering on local and national outcomes, and we were delighted to be allocated £30,000 of funding, which along with activation funding provided by **sportscotland** allowed us to direct funding into communities, to support projects which tackled local needs and delivered some incredible outcomes.



Collaboration

• Peterhead BMX project - Peterhead Area Community Trust (PACT)

PACT are in the process of developing a new pump track which will be sited in the centre of Peterhead. Understanding how popular this facility will be when it opens, the committee were keen to engage with young people and offer support to those who may otherwise struggle to use the venue. Working with partners, they delivered a project which saw 18 young people identified through engagement with Active Schools, given the opportunity to attend a 4 week

block of BMX lessons with local coaching business owner Ashleigh Armstrong, delivered in Peterhead rescue hall.

Through a partnership with Scottish Cycling, we were able to source a brand new BMX, along with a helmet, pads, lights and locks for every participant. Thanks to Peterhead Mens Shed, these were built on the final week and the young people were presented with their new bike, so they can continue to practice and hone those newly learned skills ahead of the Pump track opening later this year.

WATCH HERE! 

Video link:
[Peterhead
BMX project](#)



- **Stonehaven Walking Football - Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living**

Mearns & Coastal Healthy Living Network is a charity established in 2002 to support the wellbeing of older people across the whole of Kincardine & Mearns. They were approached in summer 2023 by a local volunteer who was looking to establish walking football sessions in the Stonehaven area.

Through support from the Community sports hub officer Greg Welsh and the Stonehaven recreational ground committee, they were able to identify a venue, and fund some equipment including balls and bibs needed to facilitate the sessions.



Very quickly, a core group of players were established, however as word spread the sessions became more popular and in time developed to 2 x weekly sessions. Over winter, the group were grateful for the support from Mackie Academy who found time for the group to continue their sessions which were at risk due to the temporary closure of local leisure centre.

WATCH HERE! 

Video link:
[Stonehaven
Walking
Football](#)



Whilst maintaining fitness and continuing to play football was the initial aim, the group, led by the volunteer, have developed a strong social bond, which saw them form a WhatsApp group, and even go for a social Christmas lunch together after their final session of 2023. They have now also started a older men's stretch class and continue to look at other opportunities to keep active together.

- **Bounce Back Netball**

Women and girls has been a priority for the Stonehaven and Portlethen hub. Newtonhill Netball Club as a member, having raised the issue based on the community need they've seen from members leaving the club and attending other community meetings, wanted to start a recreational netball session. The aim of the session was primarily to target working age women – perhaps with children. Working with the Bettridge Centre we identified a late evening session at 8-9pm. These sessions have proved really popular with 30 women now registered to come along – feedback has shown the late sessions have worked really well and the group have now established a close social group regularly creating and taking part in social events.



• **Eden Court - Care Home**

Stonehaven Community Sport Hub, Mackie Academy, Active Schools, Pamis and Edenholt Care Home worked on an intergenerational project which resulted in eight S5 students across 2 days delivering sport and physical activity to the local care home. The project was initiated by a health and social care worker approaching the hub looking for activities to link within the care home. The follow up resulted in linking with the Academy located nearby. Mackie academy had developed an s5 elective class of volunteering and had been looking for opportunities for the students to engage within the community. The sessions were supported by the local active school coordinator and CSHO discussing with the students some of the requirements and expectations. The course leader worked with the students to develop session plans and drills in the weeks leading up to the sessions. Equipment provided to the community sport hub from PAMIS in the form of two SOMA bags were delivered to the students for them to develop activities. The students were then inducted to the care home and supported in their weekly sessions by the activities coordinator from the home. This project had been incredibly well received by the school, students and the care home with positive feedback from all and something which will now become a regular occurrence with plans already in place to expand the project next year.



Community Need

• **Cricket – Westhill**

In April 2023 a group of asylum seekers and refugees were relocated to Westhill, and it very quickly became obvious there were a lack of opportunities for the men to remain active.

Westhill Community Sport Hub were contacted and asked whether they could support any activity, and Dunecht Cricket Club stepped forward and offered to support the group, by securing funding to hire Westhill community centre to run indoor club sessions through the winter months.

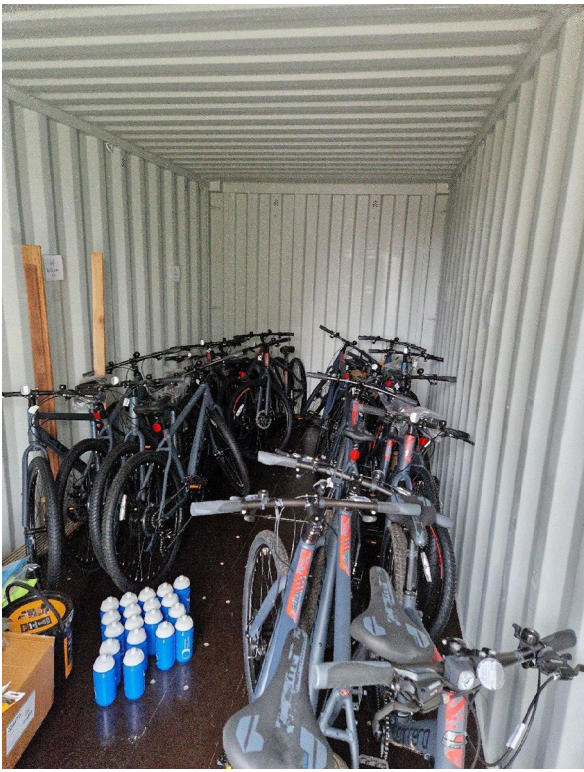
The men attending were initially reserved when attending, however very quickly the love for cricket removed any uncertainty and they integrated seamlessly into the sessions.

One of the lead coaches for the group was keen to share that the club members all feel that the sessions have created a family atmosphere and are looking to develop more opportunities in future.

WATCH HERE! 

Video link:
[Westhill Cricket](#)





- **Rock up n ride – Westhill**

Working in Partnership with Scottish Cycling, Westhill Community Sport Hub developed and delivered a rock up and ride programme. Originally aimed at supporting the asylum seekers housed in a local hotel the project has been extended and supported community led rides and a local breeze ride leader uses the bikes to improve access to bikes to those that require. The project has enabled a container and 20 bikes and relevant equipment to be purchased and housed by a local facility who support with storage and key arrangements. Although the project which started in October 23 planned to begin with asylum rides took a while to get up and running with the men at the hotel the access to the community and breeze rides proved immediately popular and have since May 2024 a regular ride with the asylum seekers established. Rides take place on a regular basis with a ratio of 8 per ride.

- **Movement Evolution**

The Movement bothy / Movement Evolution is a not-for-profit organisation who aim to ensure children have opportunities to participate in a range of sport and physical activity activities, including parkour, cycling and skateboarding. The group applied for funding in collaboration with Banchory District initiative, having realised that there was a significant lack of young girls taking part in these activities. Funding was provided to support delivery of 4 x Miss Fits Movement and Mindset Days where we pair sports/fitness with yoga and mindset activities. We would run these on a Weekends every 6-8 weeks following a block of discounted sports sessions over 6 months, which targeted young girls and was in partnership with Deeside Wellbeing Collective, who also offered some yoga and mindfulness sessions.



The project worked with partners including active schools, to identify young girls who would benefit from this free opportunity. The sessions were incredibly popular, and all who took part said the sessions had helped boost their confidence to try new things, helped create social connections with new friendships being made and ultimately were just loads of fun to be a part of.

WATCH HERE! 

Video link:
[Movement evolution](#)



• Friends of Al-amal

The friends of Al-amal is a group set up in Inverurie that have supported New Scots in the area to find new opportunities and become increasingly integrated to their local community. The group had been working with a large group of participants, aging from 17 to 65 and from various backgrounds including Polish, Ukrainian, Pakistani and Syrian and they had been keen to get involved in sport and physical activity opportunities for a long time, when they approached Greg Welsh – Community Sport Hub Officer for South Aberdeenshire.

Through working with Live Life Aberdeenshire colleagues from Inverurie Community Campus, funding was used to support a block of swimming lessons, along with the provision of Birkinis for those who needed. The sessions proved to be incredibly popular, with many of the women now integrated into community swimming sessions, whilst others are also getting involved in other activities such as using the fitness room and even climbing on the venues bouldering wall.

“This has been one of the most successful activities we have provided in terms of uptake and regular attendance, and following sessions, another fantastic thing is that the ladies are asking for other activities - this came from them, not from us”

Volunteer

Please click on the link for more detail on the project Swimming Lessons Bring Community Together - [livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk/news-folder/sports-hub-swim/](https://www.livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk/news-folder/sports-hub-swim/)

Sailing

Peterhead Sailing Club, in collaboration with Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust, recognised a significant challenge in retaining girls' interest in sailing after they entered secondary school. To address this issue, they aimed to create a more inclusive environment by organising girls-only sessions for ages 8-14, targeting those who had shown a decline in participation. The six-week program focused on skill development, confidence building, teamwork, and social bonding. Eight girls signed up, and feedback indicated that participants enjoyed sailing more when surrounded by their peers, leading to increased confidence in their abilities and opportunities to forge new friendships. The project successfully engaged the target group, providing a supportive environment that encouraged participation. Participants expressed a desire to continue sailing in sessions open to both boys and girls. The project successfully addressed the identified challenges and achieved its objectives



by providing a targeted and supportive environment for girls to engage in sailing. The positive feedback and increased participation indicate the effectiveness of the girls-only sessions in building confidence, teamwork, communication skills, and decision-making abilities.

Volunteers

- **Braemar Hub**

Braemar has traditionally been a challenging area for LLA to provide community activity due to its rural location that doesn't lend itself to be close to any of the authorities leisure venues.

Through local engagement, it became clear that whilst there were pockets of activity in the area, there wasn't a coordinated approach to developing opportunities. Through ongoing discussions with a number of community groups, schools and clubs running in the area – funding was used to support discussions around creating a Braemar hub that could collectively respond to community need.

Funding helped to deliver a community engagement day in May 2023, which was very well attended and allowed those involved to get a better understanding of the challenges, and what the community would like to see happen in future.

Following on from the event, a number of new sessions have been established which include Hill running, older adults exercise classes and an after school running club. These would not have been possible without funding being used to pay coaches to establish initial interest, which allowed time to recruit and train new volunteers who will support delivery in future.

Since this, the community have been far more cohesive in their approach to planning activity and have engaged with other providers with an aim of bringing fishing, Rugby and cycling to the area to offer taster sessions and potentially start local satellite opportunities in future.

- **Girls Dance**

Working with Active Schools the Banchory and Westhill CSH helped support a joint Dance Leadership course in Banchory in order to upskill some of the girls in the network to allow them to support our extra-curricular programmes in their local primary schools. Supported by Y Dance from Glasgow who



"Just to feedback my daughter really enjoyed the dance classes. I hope you run them again"

BPS Parent

"My little girl loved it!"

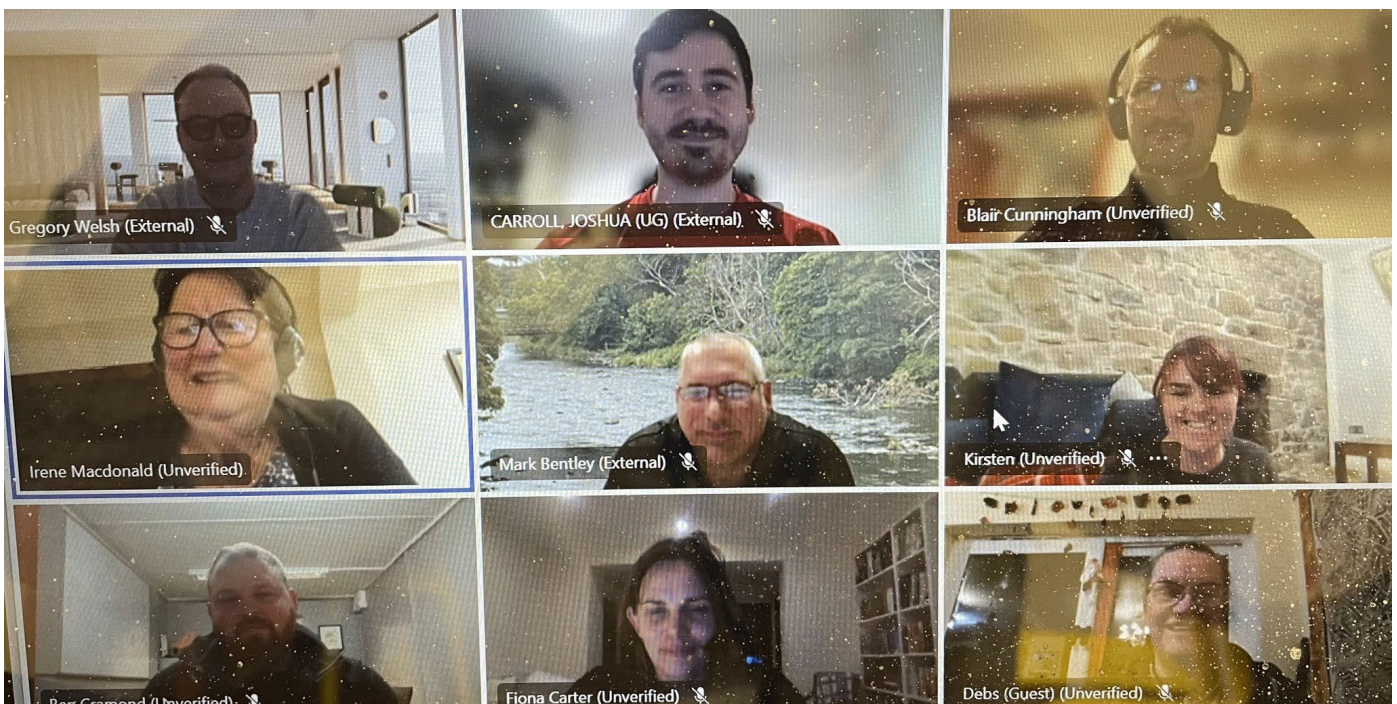
BPS Parent

deliver the award. The 5-day course was delivered to 18 girls across Active Schools networks, the girls have then gone out to deliver dance to primary aged pupils in schools across the area and helped increase participation as well as hone their skills and develop confidence.

“I just wanted to drop a wee email to say how much Chloe enjoyed the dance class today at lunchtime. She came out of school so excited speaking all about how much fun she had and how awesome the class was. This is such a lovely class to run. It is very much appreciated so a big thank you to all involved in making this happen” - BPS Parent

- **ADHD Training**

Discussions with clubs and hubs it was clearly identified that coaches and clubs wanted further CPD to support their volunteers and participants, feedback had indicated that Autism and ADHD were the two most popular areas. It was felt that there were some online tools available for Autism so ADHD was the focus. Having had discussions with a local charity and rugby club who were looking to run their own inhouse CPD they connected with the ADHD foundation. The feedback from the club was positive and hence something we wanted to roll out to clubs and hubs across Aberdeenshire – we organised a course which had 40 people maximum- this was filled within 48 hours and so we agree to expand places and arrange another. In total we had over 100 sign ups to the two courses with a total of 78 attendees. The course content included Strategies for support in sports settings- including support for executive functioning, communication, session planning, inclusive practices, mental health vulnerabilities, memory, organisation and support for self-management. We’ve had great feedback from the courses and are now actively supporting the range of clubs who attended to support bring this to the forefront of club priorities. The course benefited by having a mix of Committee, Volunteers, Coaches and staff attend so we hope this helps benefit clubs across their organisation. On reflection it’s been great to address such a need and really helped us understand the number of clubs positively impacting in this space and wanting to engage.



- **Peterhead Prison**

Peterhead prison staff recognised the need to address mental health issues amongst inmates. The fitness team proposed that they started a running group as an activity which would also help with rehabilitation and reintegration back into communities on release.

A Jog Scotland volunteer instructor was identified, who came and ran weekly sessions, with a classroom lesson on the mechanics of running followed by a session on the 3G pitch and road that surrounds the grounds. Prisoners ran for the remainder of the session combining various techniques towards running long distances. These were very well attended with an average of 21 inmates taking part. In partnership with Run Garioch each inmate was entered 'virtually' into their annual event held in March. Volunteers came along and facilitated the event and



timed runners and supplied refreshments during the 5k, 10k and half marathon distances. On completion of the event each participant received and finishers medal along with a race t-shirt. Feedback from the inmates was positive and some are now keen to attend a course where they can volunteer and support the sessions as jog leaders.

- **Peterhead Netball**

Peterhead Netball Club, funded through PAG and supported by the hub, made a significant impact on the local community, including refugees and immigrant groups currently not engaged in sport or community activities, through its multi-stranded women and girls' netball project. Dedicated volunteer coaches tackled challenges such as isolation and high transport costs by launching the Pop-Up Netball initiative, which brought the sport to rural locations. This initiative provided opportunities for diverse age groups to engage in playing, coaching, volunteering, officiating, and supporting.



Building on this success, the club introduced "Netball Together," focusing on inviting new players, highlighting the social aspects of the game. This initiative targeted a wide range of communities in Peterhead, including inactive refugees and those facing social isolation. The women and girls' sessions promoted learning through fun, simple games,

WATCH HERE!

Video link:
[Watch Peterhead Netball Club](#)



encouraging ongoing participation.

Their “Bring an Adult to Netball” sessions created a family-oriented experience, allowing younger players to showcase their skills alongside parents and guardians. The project culminated in a “Netball World Cup,” which attracted over 100 players and which celebrated all participants, developing teamwork and inclusivity.

This year, we were delighted to attend Aberdeenshire Clubsport’s annual awards evening, and we presented our first ever ‘Sport for Change award’, which recognises the effort and impact a hub project has had with its local community. With so many fantastic projects it was a tough choice, but ultimately we were proud to present Peterhead Netball club as winners of what will become an annual award in future.

Ellon Squash

Ellon Squash Club, in collaboration with the Ythan Community Sport Hub and Scottish Squash initiated a project to promote female participation in squash within the community. The project aimed to address the existing gender gap in squash attendance, especially in the adult sessions where a predominant number of attendees were male. To bridge this gap the club and CSHO, in consultation with the Club Development Manager (Women & Girls) from Scottish Squash met to discuss putting a plan in place to offer a block of free female-coached sessions.

The objective was to build on the success of the junior squash programme and tap into the increasing interest in squash within the community. Coached sessions were promoted as an opportunity for women to learn a new skill, stay active and engage in a fun, friendly and safe environment.

The coaching block offered a diverse range of activities aimed at making the



experience enjoyable and beneficial for participants and included fun games, squash-specific fitness and circuits, technical coaching, and match play. The goal was not only to introduce participants to the game but to provide an experience that encouraged skill development, physical fitness, and a sense of community.

The success of the project was evident in the participation numbers and the positive impact on the attendees. Across the 6-week block, 14 participants joined the sessions, who showed significant improvement over the duration of the

programme. The engagement and progress of the participants demonstrated the effectiveness of the approach in making squash accessible and enjoyable for women in the community.

Following the completion of the block, Ellon Squash club is committed to building on the success of the project, and collaborative efforts are ongoing to sustain and expand the sessions and create a supportive environment that encourages women to continue their involvement in squash.





Focus on a Developing Sport – Pickleball

Pickleball was virtually unknown in Aberdeenshire at the beginning of 2023. However, through Community Sport Hub efforts, the sport has significantly expanded, with multiple venues now offering activities across North and South Aberdeenshire. Equipment has been acquired through various funding sources, including hubs, PAG, and Activation funding, ensuring that sessions are well-equipped and accessible.

North

- Alford:** Weekly taster sessions at the Community Campus, funded by the hub
- Banff:** Weekly sessions
- Turriff:** Weekly sessions
- Mintlaw:** Weekly sessions
- Peterhead Prison:** Daily sessions with an average of 40 prisoners participating
- Peterhead:** Taster session held, with equipment purchased for weekly and pay-and-play sessions
- Udny Green:** Weekly community sessions at Dr. Spence Village Hall
- Ellon:** Weekly sessions at The Meadows and pay-to-play options at the campus
- Huntly:** Ongoing discussions for future sessions

South

- Westhill:** Membership has grown from 20 to 90 following a six-week funded block; new nets and equipment funded via hub grants
- Grampian Pickleball:** Active Schools link in development in Westhill
- Ashdale Hall:** Recreational sessions supported by Grampian Pickleball and funded by PAG
- Stonehaven:** Two sessions established, with the first needing expansion due to popularity
- Newtonhill:** Three sessions initiated when the local sports club closed, with two continuing; equipment funded by activation

Volunteer Coaching

Angela, Ellie and Harry delivered at the Active Schools Delivers Day and have supported all the sessions in the South, whilst Eric, Scott and Steven have delivered taster sessions to over 400 community members, significantly raising awareness and interest in pickleball. The efforts of all these volunteers have ensured that these sessions are not only successful but also sustainable.

Funding

Approximately £2,300 has been allocated through hub grants and activation, contributing to the successful growth and sustainability of pickleball in Aberdeenshire. In addition, Pickleball sessions were provided in kind support from LLA and community venues.



Talented Athlete Pass

In October 2023, we undertook a review of our sports pass award, which was designed to provide free venue access to athletes training or performing at a national squad level.

Rebranded as the Talented Athlete Pass, we were delighted to receive support from 3 of the existing athletes to create a short promotional film which can be seen below.

This helped us to launch the new pass scheme, which asked athletes to provide some form of support

back to the service, with options including school engagement, vlogs and blogs or volunteering with Active Schools.

One Athlete who was delighted to get the chance to tell his story in schools was David Jarvis, an Invictus games athlete who did brilliantly to achieve a Gold Medal in the cycling event at 2024's Invictus games.

David spent a full day at Port Errol primary school where he took the opportunity to bring in his bike and some medals from his time in the British forces. Pupils, teachers and even local councillors who popped in during the day were mesmerised by David's inspirational stories and continued desire to push himself to achieve greatness.

David did not stop there and has visited a further 2 schools and has agreed to do even more in 2024.25.

Tracy Siwek, lead active schools coordinator for north Aberdeenshire said after the visit to Port Errol:

"It was just an incredible day, David stayed and spoke with every single class in the school, and was so engaging and good with the Pupils. There was a definite buzz around the school and the pupils really enjoyed listening and asking David questions"

WATCH HERE! 

Video link:
[Talented Athlete Pass](#)



Sports Kit for All

What is it?

The Sports Kit for All project is a nationwide initiative aimed at reducing barriers to participation in sports and physical activity by providing free sports kits to those who may otherwise struggle to afford them. The project not only helps individuals get involved in physical activity but also addresses environmental concerns by promoting the reuse of clothing, reducing the carbon footprint, and encouraging a culture of recycling. To date, over 3,000 pieces of kit have been donated to families and individuals across Aberdeenshire.



Where?

The initiative has a wide reach across Aberdeenshire, with active local projects in Peterhead, Fraserburgh, Turriff, Huntly, Garioch, Banchory, and Stonehaven. These projects have been set up through partnerships with local volunteers, Community Sport Hubs, schools, leisure centres, social work, and Community Learning and Development (CLD) staff. A network of support has been established across Aberdeenshire, ensuring that kits can be distributed to areas with higher needs, even when local resources are initially unavailable.

Recent Milestones (January to March 2024):

Over 550 donations of sports kit were received.
More than 600 pieces of kit were distributed to individuals and families.

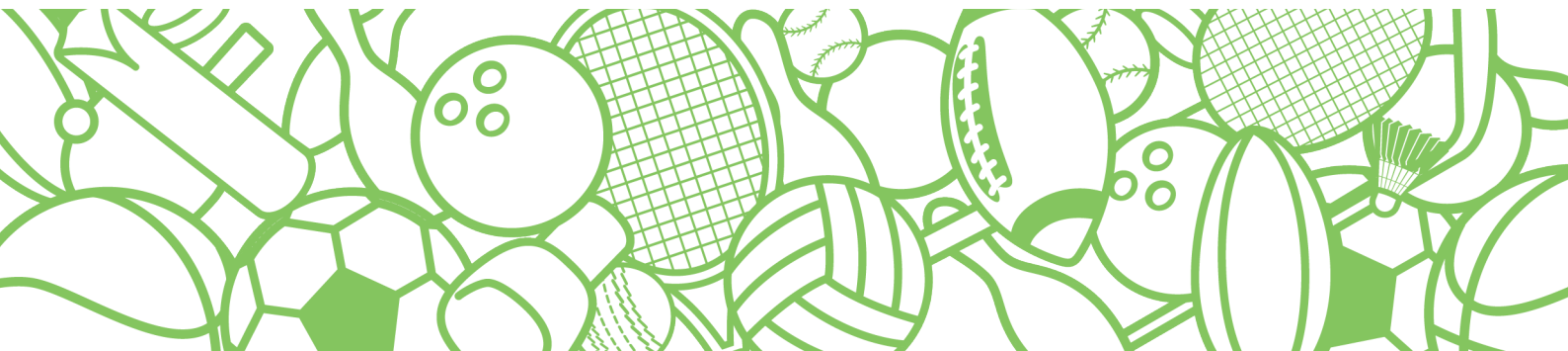
How it is developing?

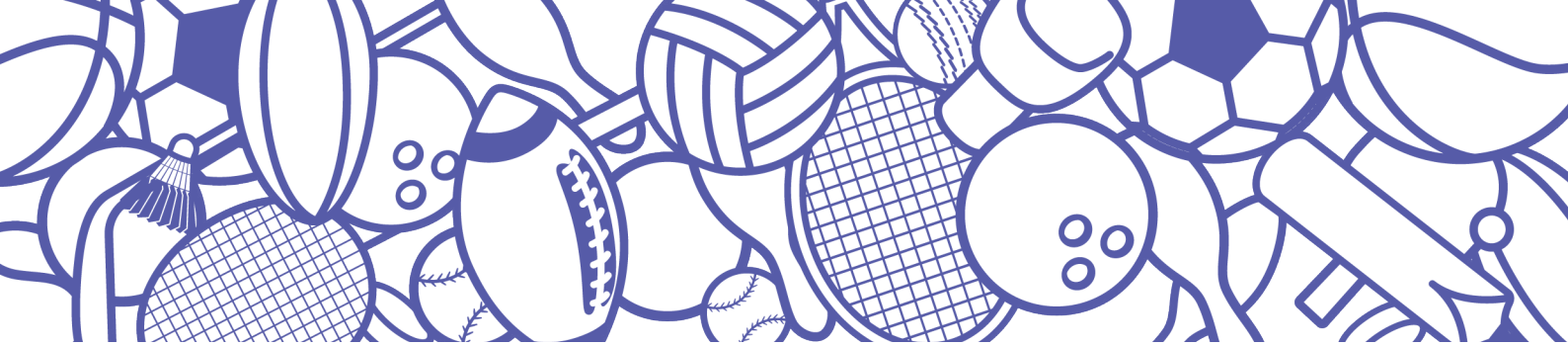
The project is evolving with plans to introduce a referral scheme, making it easier to access kit through our established community projects. Additionally, we are connecting our project volunteers via instant messaging to support the sharing and requesting of clothing and equipment. To further showcase the project's success and growth, quarterly updates on kit donations and distributions will be shared through an infographic, highlighting the local impact.

Additional benefits

In the UK 350,000 tonnes of used but still wearable clothing is sent to landfill each year. By encouraging the reuse of sports kit, Aberdeenshire are contributing to a reduction in the amount of clothing sent to landfill, thereby lessening the environmental impact and supporting global efforts to combat climate change.

As the projects continue to grow, raising the profile of the Sports Kit for All initiative will be a key focus, aiming to increase support and expand the reach of this impactful program.





UCI Community Cycling

Aberdeenshire secured additional investment worth £12,703 per year, for 3 years from sportscotland in 2022, to support the development of cycling opportunities across the region. With a Cycle Aberdeenshire team in place, coordination of activity was largely managed by team lead Malcolm Grant, supported through dialogue with the wider Live Life Outdoor and Active school team. Now into our second year, we have focussed on developing community capacity to support longer term sustainability for the sport.

For 2023-2024 we used the Community Cycling Fund for the following:

- 2023 UCI focused Cycle Schools for 636 pupils from rural, coastal or SIMD areas in partnership with Active Schools Aberdeenshire and Live Life Outdoors
- MTB Leadership focused grants to one Scottish Cycling affiliated club and start up MTB businesses via NEAT/DMBiS
- Cycling focused Outdoor First Aid training for 15 individuals involved in the delivery of cycling activity in Aberdeenshire
- Emergency First Aid training to revalidate Go-Ride 2 x coaches from Grampian Tigers, a Scottish Cycling affiliated club from Stonehaven
- Cycle Mechanic qualifications for two staff to support schools and the Live Life Aberdeenshire Cycle Programme
- Staff training x 3 via Cycling Scotland to support a bridging programme for children unable to cycle at the level required to start Bikeability L1 or to simply have confidence to cycle
- STEM focused holiday programmes over Easter and Summer 2023, including a focus on families and S1 Transition, with Aberdeen Science Centre saw 99 participants. This is also





part of an ongoing STEM Nation Award certification with Education Scotland

- Event support to Ythan CC who hosted a round of the Scottish National Youth Road series, with the provision of winner's yellow jerseys
- Event support to Tarland Trails on the opening of the new facility <https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/scotland/article/20230613-scottish-cycling-news-%C2%A31-1m-Tarland-Trails-officially-opened-0>

The delivery of the above programme ensured that we linked at all times to the build up to the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Glasgow and across Scotland, with direct contact with UCI23 Marketing due to our existing relationship with Neah Evan as our Women's and Girls Cycling Ambassador.

The funding covered the following:

- Costs to deploy staff to deliver cycling activity, including sessions of Balance to Pedal
- Grants of £415 were awarded to Ythan CC and a number of start up/growing MTB related businesses via NEAT and DMBiS, ensuring targeted work aligned to the DMBiS strategy
- BASP Outdoor First Aid training to enable MTB activity and Emergency First Aid training to allow qualified club coaches to continue coaching as per British Cycling requirements
- Velotech qualifications to staff within the Live Life Outdoors Cycle Base to provide support to our full time mechanic
- The creation of a bridging programme called "Discovering Cycling" via Cycle Trainer & Bikeability Trainer qualifications to three staff and future cascade training to other staff. This programme aims to reduce the number of children unprepared to start Bikeability in P5
- Following the success of a similar programme themed to the 2022 Tour of Britain, the UCI themed sessions of "The Science of Cycling" proved popular and aligned to our ongoing accreditation to the STEM Nation Award from Education Scotland. These new sessions also introduced family groups to the subject
- The Ythan C-C hosted round of the Scottish Youth Road Series was supported by the provision of Winner's Yellow jerseys for each age group male and female from A-E and were presented by the Deputy Leader of Aberdeenshire Council Cllr Anne Stirling
- Tarland Trails opened in June 2023 as Scotland's newest trail centre and we provided support to their opening day via our outdoor track being deployed to the event village



The infographic below provides a snapshot of the key areas of support we focused on to date:

