

Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs

Annual Report 2024-25

CELEBRATING
20 YEARS
OF ACTIVE SCHOOLS



Alternative Format Page

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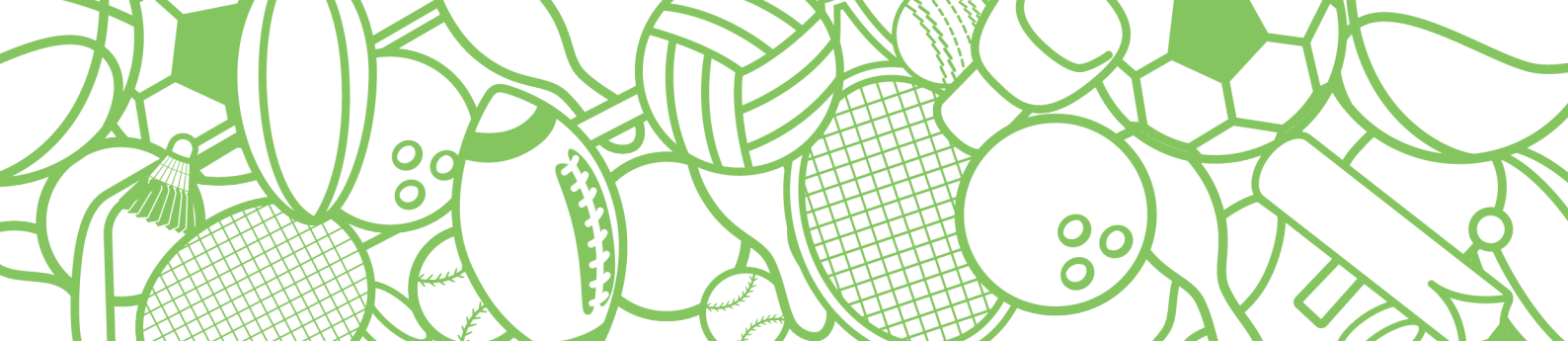
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Contents

Foreword	4
Team Details and Contacts	7
Participation	8
Run4Fun	8
Netball	9
Student Placements	9
Primary School Football	10
School to Club Pathways	11
Attack Basketball	12
Turriff Golf Club	13
Equalities and Inclusion	14
ASN Sessions	15
Grampian Schools Inclusive Events Programme	17
Volunteers	19
Volunteer of the Year	19
Portlethen	20
Kemnay	20
Fraserburgh	21
Young Leaders	22
Play Leaders	22
Get Ready to Lead	22
I Can Lead	23
Young Ambassadors	24
School Sports Award	24
Whole Family Wellbeing Fund	25
Probationer Teachers Core Days	27
Community Sports Hubs	28
Community Collaboration	28
Meeting Community Need	30
Empowering Community Leaders	35
UCI Community Cycling	38



Foreword

Welcome to our Active Schools and Community Sports Annual Report, which provides an overview of the impact the team has had across Aberdeenshire over the academic year 2024/25.

This was an extra special year for the Active Schools team as it marked 20 years since Active Schools was launched as a national programme and gave a chance to celebrate and reflect on how the programme has evolved nationally, and the huge impact it has had locally.

The Active Schools team have once again delivered a programme which has offered more opportunities to young people to participate in sport and physical activity, and to try a variety of sports which otherwise may not have been possible. I'm delighted to report that both our distinct participation level and number of visits have exceeded levels from 2023/24, despite a reduction in the school roll.

Our annual calendar of events has also proved to be extremely popular again this year and we've seen record numbers participating in primary school football, as well as our Netball Fun 5s festivals.

2024/25 was a big year for leadership, with a focus on developing our young leader opportunities leading to record numbers of young people undertaking some form of leadership role.

Our Community Sport Hub team were once again involved in the coordination of 'Sport for Change' funding, and worked with a number of partners both local and national to deliver impactful and sustainable activity in pockets right across Aberdeenshire. Whilst continuing to work with hubs locally to develop more activity and support clubs and groups to tackle local need.

This was also the final year that we received funding for the UCI community cycling programme, and it's particularly pleasing to reflect back on the past few years and look at how the funding has helped to grow sustainable programmes which create the legacy the funding was intended to create.

At a time where people are stretched, it's incredible to see so many people, of all ages, engaging with our programme by volunteering their time to support their community – and I would like to express my ongoing thanks and appreciation to all for this support, without which would mean much of what has been delivered would not have taken place.

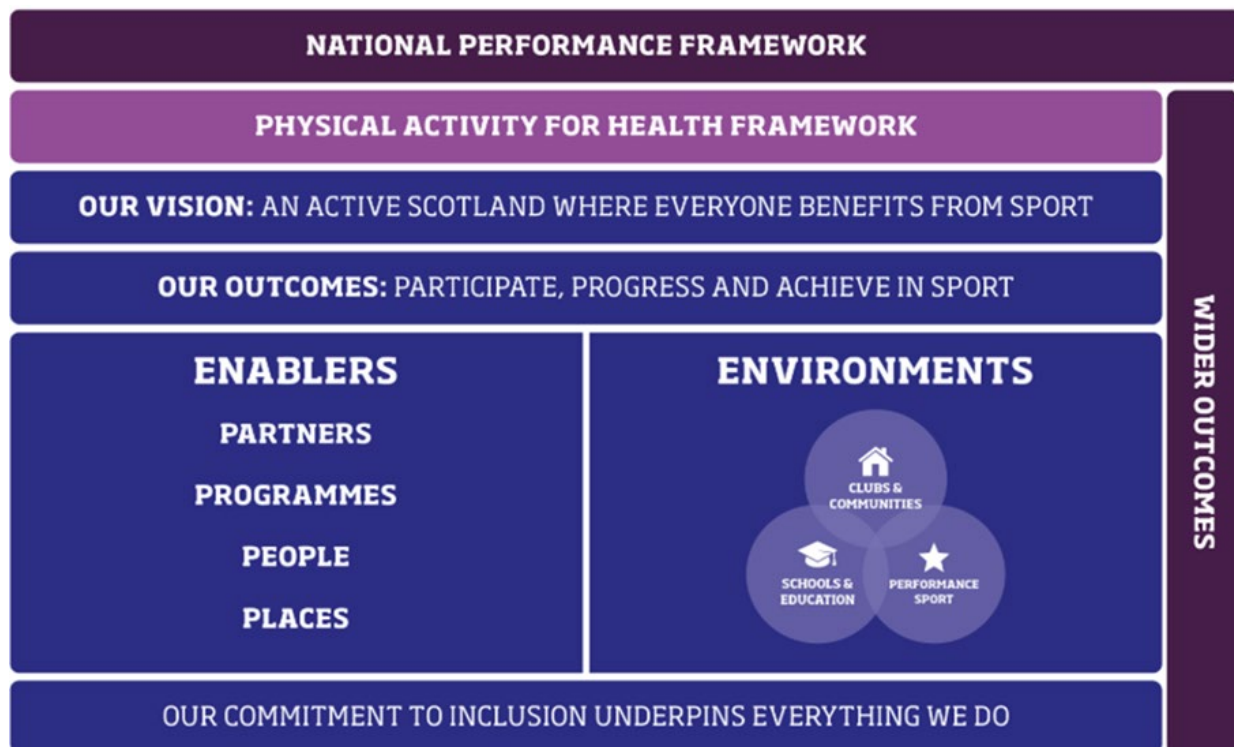
Stuart Grant

Aberdeenshire Active Schools and Community Sport Manager

Active Schools

The aim of the Active Schools programme is to provide free, high-quality opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity before school, during lunchtime and after school, while developing effective pathways between schools and sports clubs in the local community. Developing a network of volunteers is a key component of the role of the team to ensure that activities are offered at no cost to the participant.

sportscotland's 'Sport for Life' strategy guides the work and the infographic displayed below highlights the key areas of participation, people and profile.



Our 2024-25 plan was developed to align with priority areas that were identified nationally by sportscotland and the Live Life Aberdeenshire (LLA) business plan

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		



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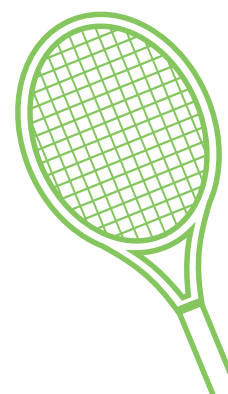
Gregory Welsh

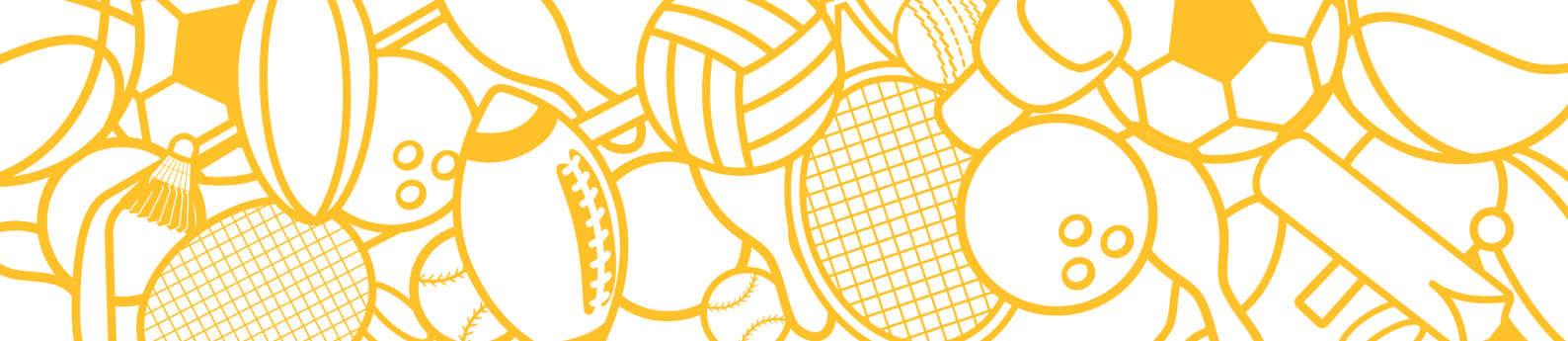
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Participation

Our Active Schools team has continued to achieve and create growth within Aberdeenshire. The team has worked to create an increase in all the following areas: total participation, number of sessions provided, number of visits and number of volunteers. The breakdown of this increase is shown below.

Distinct participants:

11,879

A **4.5% increase**
from 2023/24

6,402 males

5,477 females

Both increased by **257** from 2023/24



33% of total school
roll participated

A **2% increase** from 2023/24

Sessions provided:

12,130

A **3.1% increase**
from 2023/24

Total visits throughout
Aberdeenshire:

204,750

A **4.9% increase**
from 2023/24



1,129

volunteers

supporting our programme, a
19.2% increase compared to 23/24 and a
33.6% increase in volunteers from 22/23.

Run4Fun

Active Schools Aberdeenshire hosted Run4Fun events in 16 networks, from February to June. All events took place on a weekday evening at each network's chosen location with the aim of ensuring that each month we had at least one event running in North, Central and South

Aberdeenshire. All P1–7 pupils in Aberdeenshire were able to take part. We had routes on the beach, in a park, in the woods, and of course, it wouldn't be Aberdeenshire Run4Fun if we didn't experience all four seasons through the programme! Three of our races had new

locations compared to previous years which meant sorting out new running routes.

All 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed runners received



a medal at each event and all P1–3 runners received a sticker for taking part. In addition, any participant that took part in 3 or more races over the whole Run4Fun series received a special participation medal.

Overall, we had a total of 966 runners throughout the 16 races which was a 5% increase compared to 2023/24. 152 participation medals were handed out across Aberdeenshire.

In addition to the 16 network races, we once again supported Kayleigh's Wee Stars. This event saw 105 distinct participants take part in the event at Meldrum Academy.

Netball

In Central, five out of six networks ran friendly fixtures for participating teams and a scored festival at the end of the series. This year, the scored festival was held in Alford. These festivals are open to P4–7 or P6/7 teams.

In South, all five festivals are non-scoring events, where teams had the opportunity to play friendly matches with other participating teams. Turriff and Mintlaw both ran their own netball events in their networks.

Overall, we saw 53 teams from 36 schools over the whole of Aberdeenshire taking part in a planned netball festival.

Active Schools also coordinates 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. In total there were 16 teams taking part in the fixtures: nine junior teams (S1–3) from nine schools and seven senior teams (S4–6) from seven schools. Overall, there were 40 junior, and 21 senior games organised throughout the 2024/2025 academic year. For the Junior League, Mintlaw Academy came 1st, with Peterhead narrowly edging Banff to 2nd place on goal difference. For the Senior League there was a three-way tie at the top, with Mintlaw running out as overall winners on goal difference, followed by Kemnay in 2nd and Inverurie in 3rd.

We also had five teams within Aberdeenshire playing in the Aberdeen City League.



Student Placements

Active Schools Aberdeenshire works in partnership with Robert Gordon University (RGU) and North East Scotland College (NESCOT) by

supporting sports students to complete placements within our team. This gives students an opportunity to utilise their skills they continue to learn

whilst in further education. As Active Schools rely heavily on volunteers delivering our activities, having the opportunity for students to be

able to deliver in our clusters gives more opportunity for all children and young people to take part in sport and activity, whilst students gain hands-on experience of Active Schools and coaching. This year we saw a total of 51 students on placement with us, 22 RGU students and 28 NESCOL students as well as one student from the University of the Highlands and Islands (HIU). The student placement times differ from institution and year group, some of these spanning 180 hours over six weeks, while others are a couple of hours weekly over the course of several months. The students' delivery within

our programme enabled us to provide an additional 117 new extra-curricular clubs to over 1,000 participants. During the time all the students were on placement, this equated to over 800 hours of extra-curricular volunteering.

As well as being a key partner with the further education institutes for these placements, we also offer students the opportunity to continue their development by becoming an Active Schools volunteer. This year, four students remained involved with the programme following the conclusion of their placement.

A big thank you to all the students who were able

to help expand our extra-curricular provision throughout Aberdeenshire.



51 students on placement

117 new 

extra-curricular clubs to over

1,000 participants 



Primary School Football

The Primary School Football programme, working in partnership with Active Schools Aberdeen, continued this academic year aiming to engage the football participation of primary-age groups from Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The opportunities available were for P3–7 pupils. P3–4 play festivals which consist of small-sided games in a round robin style format. P5–7 teams play 7V7 games. All teams could also organise friendly matches with other teams. In term 3, teams had the opportunity to play some games on Aberdeen Football Club's training centre, Cormack Park, which was a great opportunity for all pupils! Teams are supported by our dedicated volunteers, who give up their time on a Saturday to allow teams to take part in these fixtures/festivals. Aberdeenshire teams come from Westhill, Kemnay, Ellon, Meldrum, Mearns and the Portlethen networks.

Overall, each team had approximately 29 matches, or 29 festivals throughout the academic year. In Aberdeenshire we have 26 teams, 14 schools and 397 distinct participants taking part in Primary School Football.



School to Club Pathways

Active Schools values the many partnerships we have with a wide range of clubs across Aberdeenshire; from Sooyang Do to Pétanque, Mountain Biking to Badminton, we have over 90 clubs with a current working agreement for supporting activities in schools. A club agreement allows for joint working with clubs in areas such as providing curricular and extra-curricular activities, promotion of club opportunities and events, and holiday provision through camps, all of which support the development of school to club pathways for pupils.

Rugby is strongly represented this year with nine rugby clubs having current partnerships across the Shire. Coaches from these clubs are providing activities in their catchment areas to introduce the sport to as many pupils as possible through school visits which can bridge the gap between school participation and uptake at a community club.

Garioch Rugby Club visited 27 schools this year in Inverurie, Kemnay and Meldrum clusters, running blocks of curricular taster sessions for P1–7 pupils, reaching over 1,000 children during the period. They also delivered six extra-curricular clubs in Inverurie and Kemnay networks.

Fraserburgh Rugby Club held a P7 transition festival in the last term of the year which saw 147 pupils being encouraged to stay on their rugby journey as they head to the academy after summer. They also



delivered 4–5 week blocks of curricular and extra-curricular sessions in eight primary schools covering P4–7 pupils, reaching around 373 children.

Deeside Rugby Club ran a 4-week block of rugby in each of the 10 primary schools in the Aboyne network covering all pupils P1–7. They completed this programme with an extra-curricular club in the community for P4–7 pupils. 13 pupils engaged with this additional opportunity, five of the ten network schools had pupils attend. They delivered a 2-week block to 288 pupils in nine schools in the Alford network as well as supporting rugby in the Academy. In Banchory they ran

36 extra-curricular academy sessions throughout the year: Six distinct participants (216 attendances). Nine extra-curricular cluster primary sessions. 21 distinct participants (189 attendances). 30 curricular primary sessions across 3 schools. 120 distinct participants (360 attendances).

Mackie Rugby Club support school rugby in the Portlethen, Mackie and Mearns networks. The Development Officer Alex Beveridge delivered sessions for local primaries and secondary schools throughout the academic year as well as running regular extra-curricular opportunities.

The club supports volunteers to access CPD through the Rugby Activators course and delivered rugby coaching basics to the South Aberdeenshire I Can Lead cohort.

Aberdeen Wanderers run P2–

P4 rugby sessions in Westhill with senior pupils that play with them as well as supplying a coach to run our school rugby team. They also help set us up with funding via SRU to pay buses, rugby pitch upkeep etc. They also supply coaches

for health weeks.

Huntly Rugby Club delivered sessions in some primary schools, and then a festival ran after the sessions had finished. This ran well and the schools and pupils enjoyed it.

Attack Basketball:

Working in partnership with Attack Basketball and their coaches, Active Schools set out to bring new life to the Friday night basketball sessions at Inverurie Community Campus after losing our regular coach at the end of 2023.

The partnership started when the club delivered basketball sessions during the Transition+ days that we run for new S1's at Inverurie Academy over the summer holidays and from here the coaches showed an interest in being involved in our Friday night sessions.

The club has gone on to deliver an S1–6 session for Inverurie Academy pupils, a P1–3/P4–7 cluster session that runs side by side, and a P4–S6 cluster girls' session.

All these sessions have proven to be popular with 90 participants from P1–S6 who have attended sessions over the course of the year with an average of 8, 18 and 14 pupils respectively attending the sessions over the course of the year. The cluster sessions have also proven to be popular outside of the Inverurie area

Feedback:

"Does basketball have to finish for summer? I love coming here!"

P4 pupil

"Thank you for putting these sessions on again, it's the highlight of X's week"

– P2 Parent

with pupils from Huntly, Meldrum and Kemnay also attending both the P1–7 and the girls only session.

The club also assisted with the annual Kenny Gibb Basketball Festival in Inverurie in March 2025, providing refereeing support for the event.

After further input at this summer's Transition+ sessions the club will resume in August with the hopes of also introducing an S1–2 cluster club as this is an age group that the club are trying to recruit more players for.

Four senior pupils have been helping with the sessions and will continue to learn from the club coaches this next year.

Several participants have already transitioned to the club sessions.



Turriff Golf Club:

In partnership with Turriff Golf Club and Turriff Primary School a successful pilot project was delivered which helped to develop school-to-club links. The club has an aim to attract more juniors to the sport and with this in mind, funding was secured to deliver a free golf programme to local youngsters with

no previous experience of the sport, and no family connections to the club.

14 pupils initially received coaching in school in March, 11 of whom then moved into a club setting with Turriff Golf Club for four lessons on the course in April.

Turriff Golf Club has now welcomed six of them as

junior members for the next year at no cost to the families. There are also junior clubs available to hire so parents will not be required to purchase clubs yet, making this as accessible to all as possible.



In partnership with Stonehaven Thistle Cricket Club we created a new pathway from four local primary schools to the Cricket Club.

With Active Schools' support, the Cricket Club delivered new extra-curricular clubs at Arduthie, Catterline, Gourdon and Mill O Forest schools. 43 young people participated in cricket across the four schools, and at some of the clubs the Stonehaven Thistle Cricket Club coach was supported by Active Schools secondary pupil volunteers.

The programme offered new opportunities to pupils at these schools and created a pathway for them to continue playing cricket at the club over the summer. It also provided volunteering opportunities for seven secondary pupils who gained valuable experience shadowing an experienced cricket coach.

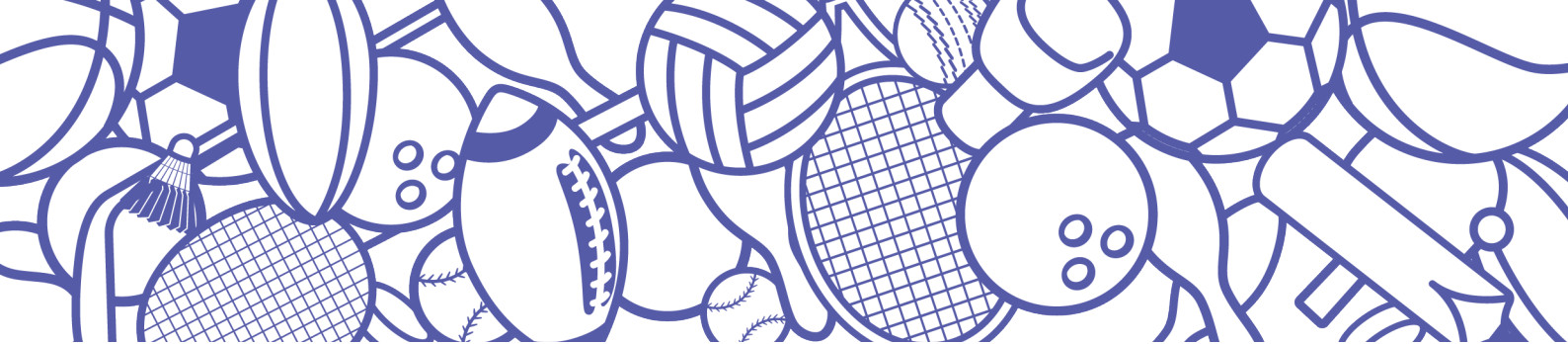
Five pupils went on to join the Cricket Club because of these sessions.



 **43** young people participated

 **4** schools delivered to

 **5** pupils went on to join the Cricket Club



Equalities and Inclusion

Active Schools Aberdeenshire has developed and expanded their offering of opportunities for children with an Additional Support Need (ASN) during the academic year 2024–2025. Inclusion underpins every part of the programme and we are committed to ensuring that young people of all abilities can access a safe and welcoming space, allowing them to develop as individuals and develop relationships with peers. We have a part-time coordinator for Disability and Inclusion, to support the network's 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. Below is a summary of participation:



29.5% Defined Disability
(188 annual participants)



28.8% ASN
(5,158 annual participants)



34.8% Minority Ethnic
(628 annual participants)



27.6% SIMD 1&2
(257 annual participants)



24.8% FSM
(1,070 annual participants)

ASN Sessions

Extra-curricular programmes have been delivered in Alford, Banff, Fraserburgh, Inverurie, Peterhead, Portlethen, Stonehaven and Turriff. Activities on offer have included boccia, bouncy castle and soft play, bowls, climbing, football, multi-sports, trampoline and stay play and connect sessions. For all ASN/disability sessions, parents/guardians/carers stay at the session to support their child as required.

The activities available are dependent on the facilities, equipment, and the deliverers/volunteers available in each location. We are committed to expanding the offer where the resources are available to support this. These sessions are at no cost to the participants, as are all sessions directly offered by Active Schools Aberdeenshire as part of term-time activity.



Banff ASN Stay, Play and Connect sessions are the longest-running programme of ASN sessions across the network. We were fortunate to be gifted additional funding from a local club, who asked that we support inclusive activity with the money.

This funding has supported the five volunteers to develop new activities for the session through attending training and the purchase of new equipment. Thank you to all volunteers who make sessions possible for the pupils of Aberdeenshire.

Inverurie ASN Multi-Sports

This session continued to develop over the last year and now has 14 children attending with their parent/guardian/carer each week. Sessions are led by deliverer Vanessa Jack and supported by Active Schools Inverurie volunteers and coordinators.

Each week there is a theme which allows children to try a different activity. Children attending are from P1–S5 who attend local schools and there are younger family members (pre-school) who also come along, supporting the whole family approach to inclusion.

Benefits observed:

- Children becoming comfortable in the environment, e.g. removing their ear defenders, even when there is noise during the session.
- Families socialising with other families during sessions and making connections which extend beyond the weekly session.



“As a primary school teacher and a personal assistant for children who are non-verbal and have autism, I cannot speak highly enough of the ASN multi-sports sessions.” - Feedback received



Feedback:

"From the very first session, the staff have been nothing short of incredible. They are warm, patient, and genuinely invested in making sure every child feels welcome and included. What really stands out for me is that the staff speak directly to the children, not just the adults. This might seem like a small thing to some, but it speaks volumes about the respect and value they place on every individual, regardless of communication style or ability."



"I have also connected with some of the other parents. We have exchanged numbers, often chatting about our challenging days and achievements, and providing each other with advice. I can honestly say that this group has been a very positive experience for both [him] and me." - Feedback received

Fraserburgh ASN Bouncy Castle and Soft Play with Multi-Sports

A local parent sought to get a fun and engaging ASN session set up in Fraserburgh and kindly came forward to become an Active Schools Volunteer. Together we managed to make this happen. We made use of the bouncy castle and the soft play equipment to create a fun, inviting, safe space for P1–P5 ASN pupils and their families. The first session saw 6 pupils with ASN, 2 siblings and 10 parents/family members attend for a relaxed session. Everyone who came along had a blast, lots of smiles all round.

Parents expressed how much these sessions mean to

them and their children, allowing them a space to play and explore without judgement or too much distraction. Some

children do not engage in other activities and struggle with the busyness of other sessions they have attended previously, but they were able to relax and play during this session.

"I am feeling emotional, I have never seen my child play this way, she doesn't normally play like this at sessions. Thank you."

We look forward to developing further opportunities for ASN Bouncy Castle and Soft Play sessions across Aberdeenshire where possible, to support children to access physical activity in a setting which supports their needs.

NEW SESSION

6 P1-5 pupils with ASN

2 siblings

10 parents/family members



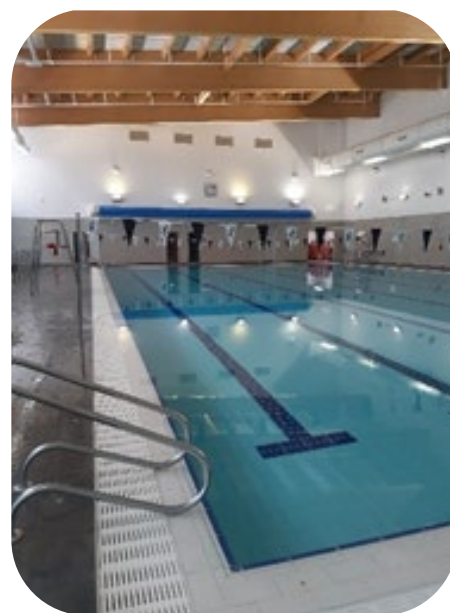
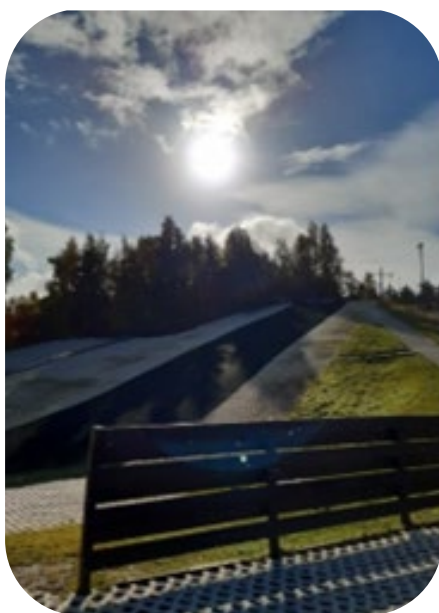
Grampian Schools Inclusive Events Programme

The Grampian Schools Inclusive Events Programme is a partnership programme between Active Schools Aberdeenshire and Active Schools Aberdeen City, with support from Grampian Disability Sport and Scottish Disability Sport. This partnership allows us to plan and deliver a programme that provides a range of opportunities for universal participation in sport and physical activity, offers more opportunities for children and young people with protected characteristics, and opportunities for schools to participate in events with peers and other schools, which forms the ASN Active Schools Festival Programme.

The festival events are for children with Additional Support Needs aged 8 to 18 years (P4–S6) who are in primary schools, secondary schools and/or special schools or home-schooled. Children with a physical disability (ambulant), physical disability (wheelchair user), learning disability/neurodivergent, hearing impairment or visual impairment can take the opportunity to try various sports throughout the year. Children can be taken to the festival events whilst being supervised and supported by school staff or directly by the child's parent/guardian/carer.

During the 2024-2025 period, children with Additional Support Needs had the opportunity to attend 13 festival events available:

- September 2024 – **Parasport Festival**, Aberdeen
- October 2024 – **Tubing, Cycling, Soft Archery Festival**, Alford (new event)
- November 2024 – **Grampian Sportshall Athletics Festival**, Aberdeen
- December 2024 – **Target Sports Festival**, Turriff
- January 2025 – **Climbing Festival**, Aberdeen
- February 2025 – **Racquet Sports Festival**, Aberdeen
- March 2025 – **Boccia Festivals** – Ellon, Alford and Mearns
- March 2025 – **Curling Festival**, Aberdeen
- April 2025 – **Snowsports Festival**, Aberdeen
- June 2025 – **Grampian Boccia Festival**, Aberdeen
- June 2025 – **Grampian Beginners Swimming Gala Festival**, Inverurie



Boccia Festivals

Aberdeenshire holds three local boccia festivals (North, Central and South) with locations changing each year to support reducing location/transport as a barrier to participation.

88 pupils from **12 schools** participated across the **3 festivals**.

Age range **P4–S6**

All schools had helpers, PSAs, and teachers in attendance to support the pupils.

9 Active Schools Coordinators and **25** Sports Development Volunteers ran the events.

Highlight: The boccia festival in Ellon had a record number of participants attending the event, over 50 pupils from 7 schools. This event was a fantastic success with 13 Sports Leaders from Ellon Academy running boccia activity stations. The Sports Leaders received training prior to the event, providing them with an introduction to disability and inclusion and the sport of boccia.

Ellon Academy has a pupil-led coffee bar who agreed to open during the timings of the event, allowing attending school staff to purchase hot drinks. This is run by staff



Over 50
pupils
from 7 schools



13 sports
leaders
from Ellon Academy

and pupils from the school's ASL department. Ellon Academy directly supported the event by providing use of their main games hall to host the festival during curricular time. This event highlights the importance of building strong relationships with schools and working in partnership to provide pupils with leadership opportunities, including those that support ASN provision.



Grampian Sportshall Athletics Festival

This event was supported by sports leaders from Ellon Academy who led groups of participants around the activities of speed bounce, javelin, shuttle runs, target throw, standing long jump, hi-stepper, and seated chest push, with additional relays at the end. Partnership working within this event was integral to its success.



46 pupils
from 6 schools

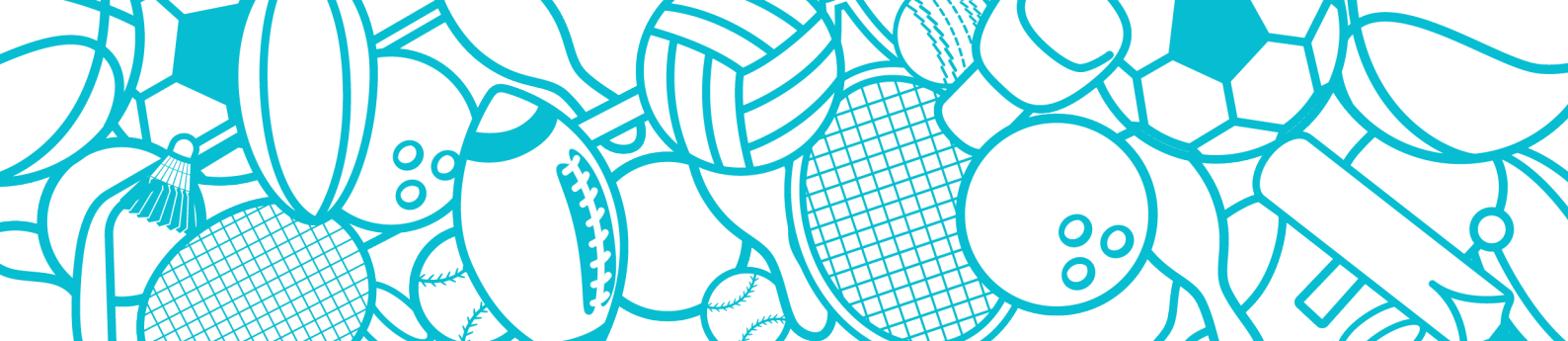


Feedback:

"Young leaders were super with the pupils. Really good team leaders."

"It went very smoothly, and the pupils enjoyed it very much. THANK YOU!"

"Pupils from Ellon were great. Excellent well-run event, suitable for everyone. Really fun! Thank you."



Volunteers

Volunteers are the lifeblood of Active Schools, and we are very lucky to have such a large number of committed and dedicated volunteers who deliver a wide variety of activity sessions for us across Aberdeenshire.



97% of
volunteer delivery



1,129
volunteers

Volunteer of the Year

Having initially begun his voluntary coaching role with Active Schools in 2016, whilst still janitor in Turriff, Michael has demonstrated incredible commitment to supporting young people in and beyond Turriff. Although he had been a keen badminton player for years, and had turned his hand to coaching previously, he was determined to up-skill and completed his coaching qualifications in 2017.

Although Michael retired in 2018, he was more than happy to continue to support the Active Schools team, recognising barriers that young people from rural schools can face. Michael was keen to incorporate sessions in these rural schools as well as cluster sessions in Turriff, to ensure rural young people get the same opportunities as those in Turriff.

Over the past year, Michael has delivered an incredible 72 hours, coaching two days a week. He splits his time between Turriff Academy and rotating around primaries. In addition to that, Michael has been on hand to support during holiday camps, transition days, sport festivals and open days.

Melanie Alexander, Active Schools Coordinator for Turriff highlights that “Michael never says no when I ask him if he can support, he is incredibly committed to creating opportunities for young people and does so much for the



community of Turriff – undertaking many other voluntary roles in addition to coaching. We are hopeful we can set up a racquet club in Turriff and Michael will be integral to the success of this.”

The young people in Turriff and district really look forward to their badminton session and are always delighted when they hear Michael is leading activities.

Portlethen

NESCOL Placement Student Becomes Regular Volunteer

Portlethen Academy alumni and NESCOL sports coaching student, Robbie Thomson undertook his work placement with Active Schools Portlethen. Robbie led a P3–P4 cluster girls' football session weekly across terms 2 and 3. Towards the end of his placement, Robbie was offered the opportunity to stay on as a volunteer to gain additional coaching experience. Robbie continued to deliver the P3–P4 girls' football, as well as being involved in many other sessions/events across the network. In addition, Robbie was put through his Emergency First Aid at Work qualification, allowing him to coach independently.

Robbie has led or supported 10 different activity sessions and events since coming on as a volunteer, including football, running, holiday programmes, assisting with the academy sports day, and primary curricular delivery. As a result, there has been a total of 65 distinct extra-curricular participants, 35 curricular participants and over 350 pupils supported across the various events/holiday programmes.



Robbie said “I have gained so much volunteering with Active Schools Portlethen, including increased knowledge and experience of coaching different sports, different environments (extra-curricular, curricular and events), age groups, abilities, and working with children with disabilities and additional support needs, I feel more confident that the skills and knowledge gained will continue to help me throughout college and for future job opportunities.”

Kemnay

Kinellar Volunteers and New Clubs

Angela and Gillian ran the P5–6 basketball club after school and they realised there was demand from other year groups wanting to play basketball.

The ladies reached out to Active Schools and by working together, we targeted P4 and now have another club up and running. They hope to make another club for P7s after summer and continue to enter the clubs in various festivals and competitions across Aberdeenshire to allow the pupils to build confidence and skills.

Participation

31 (8 females, 23 males) from **P4–P6**

1 new extra-curricular basketball club created this term

Teams entered and participated in a Cluster Basketball Festival and a local Garioch Basketball Competition

Upskilling our volunteers is crucial to ensuring our programmes are being delivered to a high standard. Throughout the year we work closely with National Governing Bodies of Sport, Sports Development staff, and Live Life Aberdeenshire to provide access to training courses and workshops. In the 2024-2025 academic year we have had 507 attendances at our numerous CPD opportunities which have included Introduction to Cricket, Netball Leaders, First Aid, Rugby Activators, Disability and Inclusion, Basketball Skills Coach Award, Pétanque Leaders, and Indoor Athletics.



Fraserburgh

Scottish Gymnastics Primary Training

Our Disability and Inclusion Officer delivered a Scottish Gymnastics Primary Training course for nine local primary teachers. To enrich the experience, 20 P2–P3 pupils from Fraserburgh schools

participated, giving teachers valuable hands-on practice and boosting their delivery techniques. All participating teachers have committed to running a minimum four-week gymnastics block as

part of the Active Schools programme—an exciting opportunity for pupils to get active, build confidence, and enjoy the benefits of gymnastics.



Feedback:

"That was really fun, I love gymnastics."

"The course was super informative."

"Fantastic! I feel so much more confident about teaching gymnastics and Jamie was brilliant! The resource sounds brilliant"

Our programmes could not function without the hard work, enthusiasm, and dedication of our parent volunteers; they are an integral part of what we do. We have so many fantastic parents out there supporting our activities and sessions week-in, week-out, always wanting to do that little bit more to ensure our local children and young people get the opportunity to experience, participate, and develop within sport.



Young Leaders

Across the year our team was continuing to deliver leadership programmes whilst also trialling new programmes as we prepare to launch our Leadership Pathway in 2025/26.

WATCH HERE! 

[Scan the QR code or click here to find out more about our Young Leaders](#)



Play Leaders (P4–7)

Play Leaders is an introduction to leadership using sport and physical activity. The programme was designed by the Aberdeenshire Active Schools team. It is aimed at older primary pupils, who learn about the safe delivery of playground games and activities to younger primary school-aged children. This year our Play Leaders programme achieved:



82 schools delivered to



2,227 pupils trained/certified

Get Ready to Lead (S1)

Get Ready to Lead is a new addition to our offer, aimed at S1 pupils, building on the skills developed in Play Leaders and is the first step on the Academy Leadership pathway. The programme develops leadership skills, builds confidence and teaches the basics of sports coaching. The culmination of the programme will be the delivery of a sports session or event planned by the pupils involved.

Three schools piloted this new course: Portlethen, Ellon, and Alford.

Number of S1s who did the course:

Alford **22**

Portlethen **9**

Ellon **6** **TOTAL 37**



The pilots provided valuable insight and learning for the team and have prepared us nicely for a full launch in 2025/26.

I Can Lead (S2–4)

I Can Lead is a sports leadership programme designed by the Leadership Skills Foundation. I Can Lead is open to pupils from S2–S4 and is a great starting point in Sports Leadership for pupils not yet involved or looking to build on previous experience as it teaches the basics of leadership, communication, planning and delivering a sport/physical activity session. All participants of the I Can Lead programme must complete five hours of volunteering within their local Active Schools programme after the training to receive the certificate.

Four I Can Lead courses ran this school year: Banff, Kemnay, Portlethen and Fraserburgh.

Number of pupils who attended both days of the course:

South **39** North **34** Central **30**

ABERDEENSHIRE TOTAL 103



I CAN LEAD

November 2024



During the course pupils are taught the basics of leading sport and physical activity sessions, providing the future leaders with the knowledge and skills required to be confident in their ability to lead in future. There was a lot of learning, activity, and laughter during the two days and all the participants are now ready to go back into their school networks and put their learning into practice!

Scottish Rugby showed their support for the programme by enlisting some of their development team. They attended and delivered part of the Rugby Activators course to tie in with the learning outcomes from the programme.

As part of the training, all young people will now embark on a volunteering journey, where each will provide five hours of practical support in local groups and clubs, organised through their local Active Schools Coordinator.

Stuart Grant – Active Schools and Community Sports Manager for Aberdeenshire commented, “We were delighted to be able to once again support young people across Aberdeenshire to develop their own confidence through the provision of the I Can Lead programme. It’s always a very popular opportunity, and is a great starting point for secondary pupils to join the Active Schools Aberdeenshire Leadership Pathway. The programme provides those taking part with a fun and practical experience, which really gets them ready for the next stage of volunteering and sports leadership.”

Pupils who attended the course really enjoyed the two days, with one stating “I now have confidence in my potential to be a good leader” and another parent saying “He was very pleased with the course and it gave him a lot of confidence.”

Young Ambassadors (S3+)

This national programme is a key element of **sportscotland's** contribution to developing young people as leaders in sport. The Young Ambassadors programme aims to build the leadership skills of young people to encourage their peers to become more engaged in sport. It gives pupils the opportunity to make meaningful and important contributions, as leaders in sport, which also reflects their interests and abilities.



Number of Young Ambassadors:

South **9** North **8** Central **13** **ABERDEENSHIRE TOTAL 30**

School Sports Award

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. 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 the aim of reaching Gold in future.

BRONZE

Turriff Primary
Strichen Primary
Strathburn Primary
Mintlaw Primary
Longside Primary
Hatton Cruden Primary
Gourdon Primary
Fetterangus Primary
Drumblade Primary
Kemnay Primary
Alford Primary
Auchterless

SILVER

Turriff Academy
St Fergus Primary
Rothienorman Primary
Pitfour
Mintlaw Academy
Fraserburgh Academy
Burnhaven
Aboyne Academy
Gordon Primary
Inverurie Academy
Glenbervie Primary
Macduff Primary

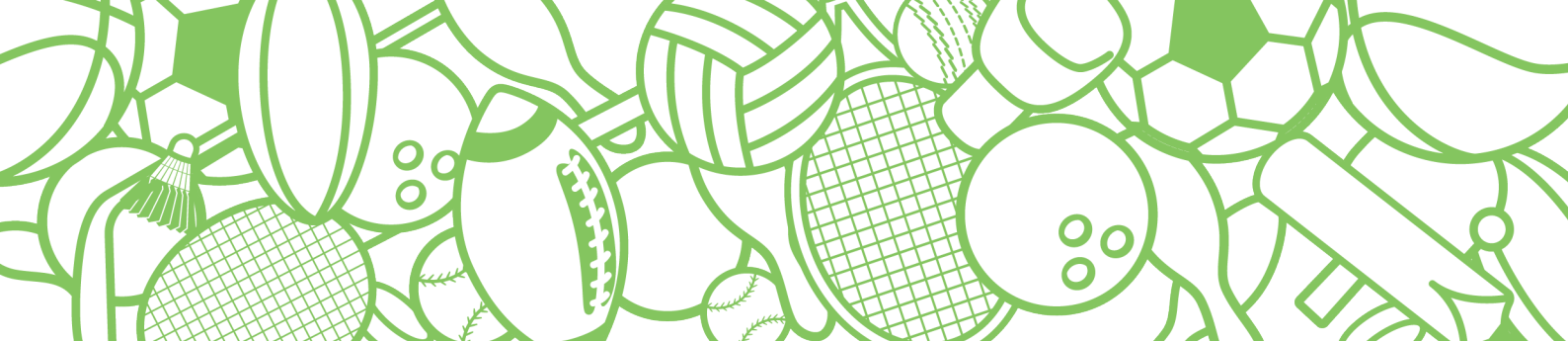
GOLD

The Gordon Schools
Midmar Primary
Kellands Primary
Bervie Primary
Banff Primary
Banff Academy
Insch Primary
Ellon Academy
Arduthie Primary School
Elrick Primary
Hill of Banchory Primary
Buchanhaven
Mearns Academy
Meiklemill Primary
Auchterellon Primary
Port Errol
Skene Primary
Westhill Primary

IN PROGRESS

Strathdon
Aboyne Primary





Whole Family Wellbeing Fund

Significant funding has been secured as part of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund as a project for Fraserburgh and Peterhead, to develop programmes that are inclusive to children and young people with a disability and Additional Support Needs (ASN). We aim for volunteers, staff, children and young people and families to gain confidence and develop self-esteem as well as learning new skills, through training opportunities. The individuals who receive training will use the skills gained within their communities and schools, whilst receiving ongoing mentoring and support.



We are looking for opportunities for children and young people to take part in inclusive activities that require no prerequisite for involvement. This will promote a healthier and more purposeful lifestyle while raising confidence and self-esteem. This has involved working with various organisations and Scottish National Governing Bodies for sport to develop a programme of training opportunities. The core aim of this project is to deliver a vast training programme to upskill through Peterhead and Fraserburgh. We are delighted that the project has now been approved to extend across Aberdeenshire, following the success shown in Fraserburgh and Peterhead.

In extension of this project, we have worked with the organisation ENABLE to provide training sessions focussing on neurodiversity and sport, open to participants across Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. These courses were significantly oversubscribed evidencing the demand for training opportunities in relation to inclusion. Due to the high level of demand we were given further funded training opportunities from ENABLE.

During the 2024-2025 period, training opportunities have included:

- ENABLE – Neurodiversity and Sport for Professionals
- ENABLE – Neurodiversity and Sport for Parents
- ADHD Foundation - Understanding and Supporting ADHD in Sport Training
- Education Staff Target Sports CPD Training
- Education Staff Indoor Athletics CPD Training
- NESCOL Disability and Inclusion Workshop
- Parent/Guardian/Carer Training to use Target Sports Equipment for Family Sessions
- Active Schools Aberdeenshire Disability and Inclusion Workshop
- Makaton Awareness (Sport) Sessions
- **sport**scotland's Sport Education Professional Development Award
- Mentoring and Volunteer Recruitment
- Scottish Gymnastics Primary Teacher Training (P1–3)



Whole Family Wellbeing Fund – Peterhead and Fraserburgh Inclusive Sporting Opportunities



enable works
Live Life Aberdeenshire
DEI Training

Neurodiversity Awareness

In this session you will:

- Learn more about neurodiversity
- Look at neurodivergent conditions
- Understand the 'social model' of disability
- Learn about sensory processing and masking
- Learn how to create inclusive sessions



ENABLE - Neurodiversity and Sport session for parents/ guardians/ carers

- Learn more about neurodiversity
- Look at neurodivergent conditions
- Understand the social model of disability
- Learn about sensory processing and masking
- Explore how to support your child when accessing Active Schools Aberdeenshire sports sessions

Fraserburgh - Wednesday 5th March 2025 - 12:45pm-2:45pm at Dalrymple Hall

To sign up for this session, please complete the online booking form at: <https://forms.office.com/e/viu0fKa5C>

Training Opportunity

ADHD Foundation - Understanding and Supporting ADHD in sport training

To sign up for this online training session, please complete the online booking form at: <https://forms.office.com/e/viu0fKa5C>

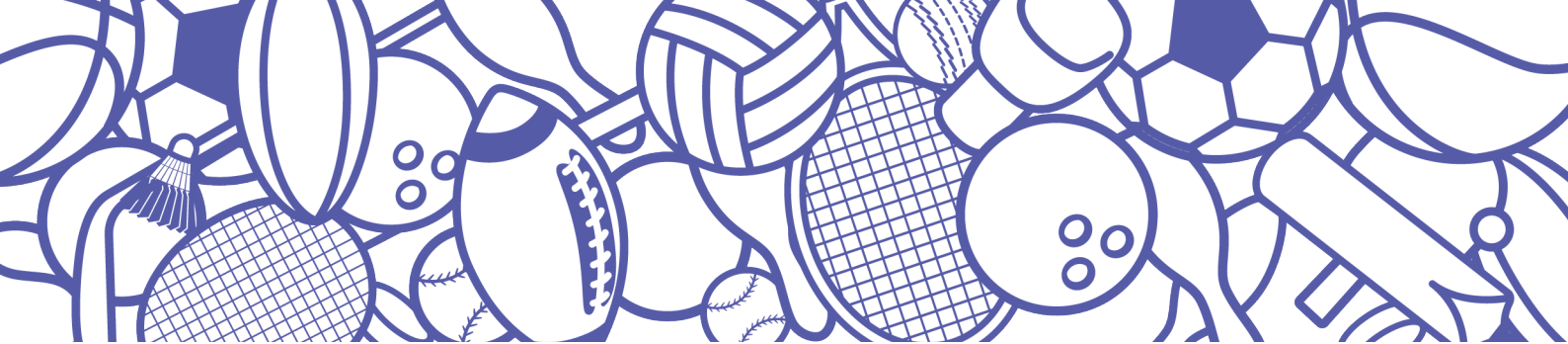
Case Study: Active Schools Mentorship Programme - Peterhead

The Aberdeenshire Whole Family Wellbeing Fund has supported a mentorship programme to enable Active Schools volunteers to enhance their coaching skills and confidence. During Term 2 in Peterhead, one of the volunteers Jamie, who is passionate about fitness, was paired with, and supported by Vanessa (an experienced coach), to support holiday programmes, events, as well as coach fitness and games sessions at his old school, Anna Ritchie Special School, and at a local primary school, Meethill Primary School.

Through one-to-one guidance, Jamie also developed the skills to coach children with additional support needs, helping them to build fitness while having fun. Anna Ritchie School has also been wonderfully supportive of their former pupil, and we have since been contacted by the school about the possibility of getting another former pupil involved in the project. It has been such a positive experience for all involved and we look forward to seeing Jamie continue to thrive in his sports coaching and make an impact on the many children and young people in Peterhead that he works with.



With funding from the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund, Active Schools Aberdeenshire will continue to support individuals committed to delivering inclusive sports opportunities—offering training and mentoring to help them grow and succeed.



Probationer Teachers Core Days

Across two days on 23rd and 25th April, Active Schools Aberdeenshire delivered bespoke workshops to this year's cohort of probation teachers in Aberdeenshire schools at Inverurie Town Hall.

Over 50 probationers participated in practical workshops focused on disability and inclusion, leadership, and activity session content. These sessions also raised awareness of the Active Schools service locally, highlighted the support available to teaching staff, and empowered them to deliver activity—demonstrating the value sport and physical activity can offer to the whole school community.

Thanks to a strong working relationship built between Active Schools and Education and Children's Services, this is the second year that Active Schools have had input as part of the probationer teachers' core training.

41 completed the evaluation form, giving very positive feedback:

"It was great, and staff are dedicated to improving the delivery and accessibility of sport."

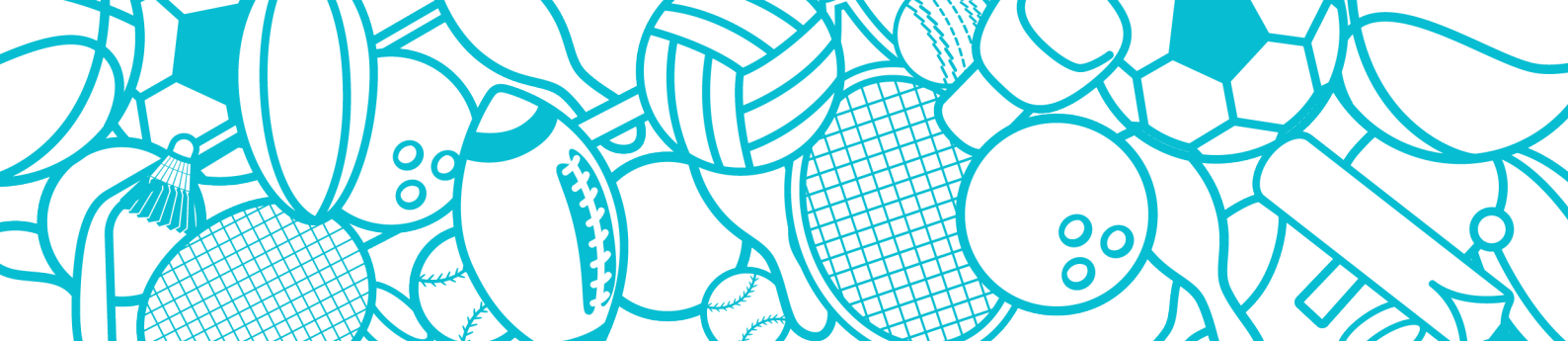
"Gave me so many good things that I will try out with my class and my lunchtime running club."

"Informative. Quick and fun ideas to engage pupils in physical activity."

"I enjoyed the hands-on, practical approach where we got to experience what was talked about."

Of the 41, 40 would recommend the workshops to future probation teachers





Community Sports Hubs

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

The Community Sport Hub approach is to support and empower local people to improve sport and 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 Collaboration

Peterhead Diversionary BMX Project

Diversionary BMX sessions were delivered this year as a follow-on from the primary school sessions in partnership with Active Schools, Peterhead Community Sport Hub, and Level Up BMX coaching. Designed to provide a positive activity on Friday nights, the project targeted young people from S1 to S6, offering them an alternative way to stay active, engaged, and connected.

A total of 18 boys from S1 to S4 attended the sessions. Many participants were new to BMX and initially hesitant, but as the weeks progressed, confidence grew, and regular attendance became the norm. The sessions proved to be a valuable space for developing physical skills, building self-esteem, and encouraging regular participation in sport.

Throughout the programme, participants consistently demonstrated respect for the coach and each other. They responded well to instruction, showed a strong willingness to learn, and engaged positively even during busy



sessions. A culture of support and teamwork quickly developed, with more experienced riders offering advice to newer participants and showing care for others during falls or setbacks.

Looking forward, there is strong potential to expand the project further. Early discussions are underway with the secondary school to explore the formation of a BMX club. This would create opportunities for more structured sessions and encourage a sense of ownership and responsibility for the track among pupils. Support from a teacher at the academy, who has expressed a strong interest in cycling, adds momentum to this next phase of development.

The BMX sessions have had a clear and positive impact as a Friday night diversionary activity, and there is considerable scope to build on this success in the year ahead.



Adaptive Bike Sessions with the Dementia Group

In collaboration with the Forget-Me-Not Club, a dementia charity, adaptive cycling sessions were delivered for a group of participants living with dementia. While facilitators had initially expected the use of tri-shaws—bikes where participants are cycled around by a volunteer—the sessions instead featured adaptive bikes designed for independent riding. This unexpected approach prompted some early apprehension from both facilitators and participants.

The sessions aimed to create a safe, enjoyable, and empowering experience, encouraging participants to re-engage with physical activity in a supportive environment. Many had not cycled in years, and the introduction of adaptive bikes offered a new opportunity to rediscover a once-familiar activity.

One participant, previously

unengaged during earlier activities that day, volunteered to go first. A former keen cyclist, he quickly became animated and enthusiastic, completing several circuits with visible joy. His response helped reassure others in the group and shifted the overall mood of the session.

As confidence grew, every participant took part—including 96-year-old Joe, who cycled energetically around the path and challenged staff to keep up. The atmosphere became one of encouragement, laughter, and visible connection.

Pictures taken captured the participants' enthusiasm and emotional responses, with many expressing a desire to attend future sessions. In response, a series of free adaptive cycling sessions have been arranged on selected weekends, allowing participants to bring family members and enjoy the experience together.

These sessions proved to be a meaningful way to support physical and emotional wellbeing.



Meeting Community Need



Boccia Project for Older Adults – Udney Green

Many older adults within the Udney Green community had become socially isolated, with some residents not having been out of the house or spoken to anyone due to the bad weather since the start of the year. Recognising this, boccia sessions were introduced to provide an accessible and inclusive activity to encourage social interaction and community engagement.

The aim was to create an opportunity for older adults to engage in a fun and inclusive activity that would help reduce isolation, promote wellbeing, and help develop connections within the community. Given the rural setting, it was also important that the activity be easily accessible, minimising the need for travel.

A boccia session was organised, ensuring that it was welcoming, with a hall committee member going door-to-door to invite those who wouldn't necessarily have access to social media along to the sessions. The game's inclusive nature meant that individuals of all abilities could take part without feeling disadvantaged. Additionally, pupils from the local primary school joined in, creating intergenerational connections and enhancing the overall enjoyment and competitiveness of the sessions.

The session was a great success, with 21 residents attending and providing overwhelmingly positive feedback. Many participants expressed their delight in taking part in an activity that made them feel included and valued. Given the success and engagement levels, the project is now set to continue on a bi-weekly basis. The positive impact was evident, as the event helped combat social isolation and strengthened the sense of community within Udney Green.



Boxing Sessions Support Asylum Seekers in Westhill

Gears Boxing Academy completed a six-week programme of boxing sessions for asylum seekers living in Westhill. The sessions took place at Westdyke Community Sport Centre every Friday evening from 8.00pm to 9.30pm, running from 14 February to 28 March 2025.

The idea came from Sym, co-founder of Gears Boxing Academy, after receiving a phone call from a local asylum seeker. The caller explained they were interested in boxing but couldn't afford gym access or training. Sym visited the group to learn more, and quickly saw there was a wider need. Many of the men were waiting on work

permits and had no access to regular exercise or community activities. He suggested starting weekly boxing sessions. The aim was to offer a space where the group could train, stay active, and feel welcome. For those involved, the sessions provided structure, physical challenge, and a chance to connect with others in similar situations. Most had no other access to organised sport. The benefits were clear early on. The sessions became something the men could rely on each week. One participant said, "I have found some new brothers. Exercising with them brings me happiness." Another said, "It makes me happy to come here and let out some



energy. My mind feels calmer.” Although the sessions took place during Ramadan, numbers remained strong. Participants continued to train with energy and focus. The sessions gave them an outlet and a sense of normality, even during a period of fasting and reflection. Many also used the time to open up and share their personal stories with Sym and the coaching team. Some spoke about the long and difficult journeys that brought them to the UK. Others talked about what it feels like to wait for decisions, for documents, for the chance to move forward.



Symballa said “They were open and honest. Listening to them made it clear that these sessions matter. It’s more than boxing, it’s time where they feel like themselves again.”

The Gears team delivered the programme voluntarily, alongside full-time jobs and ongoing responsibilities at the club. Their commitment reflects the values at the heart of Gears Boxing Academy using sport to support people where they are, with what they have.

This project is part of Gears Boxing Academy’s broader work to support community wellbeing through boxing. The sessions were free and designed around what participants said they needed: regular activity, a supportive space, and something to look forward to. The team plans to continue the programme in a way that is practical, consistent, and easy to access.

Project Empowers Women with Navigation Skills to Open Doors to Sport and Recreation

An innovative new project is transforming the way women across Deeside engage with sport and outdoor recreation. Through navigation skill workshops and confidence-building activities, the initiative, Deeside Women’s Navigation has provided a pathway for women to access the outdoors and embrace new opportunities. Designed to foster independence, resilience, and physical activity, the project has had a remarkable impact on local women of all ages.

The project was launched to address barriers faced by many women in Deeside who wish to explore the rich landscapes of the region but feel limited by a lack of confidence or skills in outdoor

navigation. The project has welcomed participants from across Deeside, focusing on teaching essential map-reading, orienteering, and outdoor planning skills. Through a series of workshops, guided excursions, and individual mentoring, participants have gained the tools they need to confidently engage in hiking, trekking, and other recreational activities.

With expert-led workshops and support from experienced guides, participants were able to build not only practical navigation skills but also a stronger sense of community and self-assurance. The programme has created a ripple effect, encouraging women to pursue other forms of outdoor recreation and physical activity, leading to

One participant shared her experience: “I’ve always wanted to explore more of the Deeside hills but didn’t feel confident enough. Through this opportunity I’ve learned to read a map, navigate trails, and most importantly, I’ve found the confidence to step outside my comfort zone. Now, I feel ready to join local hiking groups and explore on my own.”

long-term benefits for both physical and mental well-being.

Beyond individual benefits, the project has fostered a strong community of like-minded women who share

a passion for the outdoors. As participants continue to practice their new skills, they have expressed interest in forming a community-led group to promote regular outdoor activities and encourage even more women to join.



The project also aligns with broader initiatives to support women's participation in sports and recreation across the region. By removing barriers and promoting skills development, the activity is helping to ensure that women in Deeside feel empowered to take part in recreational activities they might previously have felt excluded from.

The success of the project has

highlighted the importance of targeted programmes that address specific barriers to participation in sport and recreation for women. Plans are now underway to extend the project, providing additional workshops in advanced navigation and broadening the opportunity, which will allow women to take on new challenges in the great outdoors.

"We are thrilled with the incredible interest and enthusiasm from women across Deeside," said Jill, project coordinator. "This project has demonstrated the transformative power of outdoor skills for building confidence and creating community connections. We

look forward to building on this success and inspiring even more women to embrace the outdoors."

Greg said, "It's been great to support this network of local leaders for various groups to develop this project and address a specific issue locally. The positive feedback and response have clearly shown the benefit and appetite for more activity locally."

WATCH HERE!

Video link:

[Deeside
Women
Navigation
Skills](#)



Westhill Swimming Sessions for Asylum Seekers

This project supported a group of men living in the Westhill asylum hotel to attend weekly swimming sessions at the local pool. The aim was to reduce isolation, support mental wellbeing, and encourage physical activity in a safe and accessible setting. Sessions took place once a week. Local organisations and the Sport Kit For All project helped supply swimwear to the men. Most of the men had little or no experience of swimming. Leisure staff provided informal support during sessions, but the focus was on participation. The site also provided a swim coach at the sessions to support those who couldn't swim to learn a vital life skill.

Attendance was steady, with a core group of 15 returning each week. New participants joined through word of mouth. The group was diverse in age and background. Language barriers were present but manageable. Staff used simple instructions and gestures where needed.

Participants reported feeling more relaxed

and confident. Some said the sessions helped them sleep better and were a vital outlet given their restricted means. Others valued the chance to do something normal and social. The pool environment was new to many, but over time, most became comfortable in the water. Initial barriers included lack of kit, transport, and unfamiliarity with the pool setting. These were addressed through planning and support. Cultural differences around dress and swimming were handled with sensitivity and supported by the hotel management staff and local resettlement team officers.

The project showed that regular, low-cost activity can have a positive impact on wellbeing at very little cost, initially funded by Community Sport Hub Activation budget, the sessions are now picked up by Live Life Aberdeenshire and remain free for people to attend. It also highlighted the value of partnership working between leisure staff, support workers, and community teams.



Damsels

In September 2024, The River Dee Damsels, supported by activation funding via Community Sport Hubs, developed a targeted project to encourage more women to take part in fishing along the River Dee. Fishing has traditionally been seen as a men's sport and has a high level of barriers to accessing the activity such as cost, confidence, knowledge and equipment. The River Dee Damsels have been running successful social fishing days for a number of years but were keen to try and

engage new ladies and in particular those not connected to the existing fishing world. The project went really well, with a total of eight new ladies taking part in a funded fishing and social day in Banchory. The project was supported by four volunteers and other Damsels with more experience joined the group after their session for a social lunch where they could connect, learn and build relationships with others to enable them to go back out and take part in more fishing in the future. This project connected with the navigation project mentioned above and also delivered a navigation confidence-building session to upskill ladies and enable them to venture further afield in the search for more fishing opportunities in the future.



A quote from Tara Spiers who arranged the session said, ***"It really was a great way to introduce them to our fishing community, thank you."***

Pickleball Festival – Deveron Sports Centre, Banff

The first LLA Pickleball Festival was hosted at the Deveron Community and Sports Centre on the 28th of December 2024. It was an excellent day that brought people from across

Aberdeenshire and beyond, with some travelling from as far as Nairn to participate. The festival featured a morning and afternoon session, bringing together 34 enthusiastic players for fun, yet competitive, round-robin games. This landmark event showcased the



spirit of community, healthy competition, and the growing

popularity of pickleball in Aberdeenshire.

Talented Athlete Pass

Live Life Aberdeenshire's Talented Athlete Pass supports athletes who represent their country at national and international levels. The pass provides free or discounted access to leisure venues across Aberdeenshire to assist with training and development.

In return, athletes are encouraged to support Live Life Aberdeenshire by giving back through a variety of ways. This may include engaging with Active Schools, participating in Community Sport Hubs, providing vlogs or social media content, helping to raise awareness of sport across Aberdeenshire.

Several athletes made a meaningful contribution through school visits during this year's Health Week.

Triathletes Ella Chalmers and Euan Murray visited Newburgh Primary School, where they engaged with pupils from Primary 1 to Primary 7. They spoke about their journey in triathlon, shared their training routines, and brought along their medals and equipment. The session received great feedback, with both athletes praised as excellent role models.

Similarly, surfers Callie Cruickshank and Gabe Nobel, both aged 14, visited Strichen Primary School. Callie is the current U16 and U18 Girls Junior Champion, while Gabe holds the U16 Boys Champion title. Their interactive session included stories of their surfing careers, equipment demonstrations, and hands-on activities like surfboard waxing and balance board practice. Being close in age to the pupils helped make their stories especially relatable and impactful. The head teacher was delighted, saying that both athletes did a great job on their first presentation.

These examples show how the Talented Athlete Pass not only supports the development of emerging athletes but also plays a key role in strengthening community engagement and inspiring the next generation.



Empowering Community Leaders

Sports Kit for All – Monthly Distribution at Stonehaven Farmers Market

Stonehaven Community Sport Hub runs a monthly “Sports Kit for All” stall at the local farmers market.

The stall is hosted by the Hub and the stall has been gifted by the Stonehaven Men’s Shed. Local sports clubs take turns to staff the stall, promote their activities, and hand out and collect donated kit. The project helps people access sport by removing the cost of kit. It also gives clubs a chance to meet the public and raise awareness of what they offer. The stall encourages reuse and keeps good kit in use. Each month, a different club takes the lead. They bring volunteers, sort donations, and speak to visitors. The Men’s Shed provides the stall space and helps with setup. The Hub manages the rota and promotes the stall.



Impact

- Over 300 items of kit have been given out
- Families have saved money
- Clubs have gained new members
- Volunteers have built stronger links across the community
- The project has reduced waste
- The hub has been promoted and its profile raised

Stonehaven Care Connect

Stonehaven Students Connect Generations Through Sport and Creativity at Eden Care Home

Since October 2023, four students from Stonehaven Academy have been making a quiet but lasting impact at Eden Care Home. Their weekly

visits are part of a wider S5 elective designed to build leadership through real-world experience.

The course, developed by Robbie Kupris, Active Schools Coordinator for South Aberdeenshire, and led in school by P.E. teacher Ruaridh Cain, aims to connect students with their community. It offers practical opportunities, from helping in P.E. classes and leading extracurricular clubs to delivering lessons in local primary schools.

The care home visits add another layer, taking students out of their usual environment

and into a new, more challenging setting.

Each Wednesday evening for a block of eight sessions, the students ran inclusive sports sessions for residents. After an induction that helped them understand the needs and limits of those in care, the students took full responsibility for planning and delivery. A short team discussion began each session; then the students took the lead.

Many residents used wheelchairs or had limited mobility. The



students adapted their activities to suit everyone. Games like bocchia and balloon volleyball were popular.

Simple balance and coordination tasks helped keep sessions active but accessible. The goal was participation, not performance.

“The staff gave glowing feedback,” said Mr. Kupris. “Residents looked forward to the visits. The girls brought energy and warmth. They made a genuine impression.”



In December, two students returned to lead arts and crafts sessions. These Monday visits focused on making Christmas cards and decorations. The activities were simple, but the impact was clear.

They created space for conversation, and for many residents, that mattered most.

Eden Care Home offered part-time work to the students who took part. One student has said she wants to keep volunteering, despite a full school schedule.

The school is now looking at new ways to grow the partnership. Future plans may include inviting residents to school events and performances. It’s a small step—but one that keeps the connection strong. This work shows what’s possible when schools, students, and communities come together with purpose.



When asked about the experience, the pupils stated **‘Seeing the residents laugh, smile, and genuinely enjoy the games we prepared made the experience really special’**

and **‘Listening to residents share their life stories and experiences was incredibly moving and insightful; it reminded me how valuable intergenerational connections can be’**



1. Why did you want to be involved in this opportunity?

I wanted to gain hands-on experience in a caring environment and explore something new after previously supporting younger age groups in primary schools and activity clubs.

I’m considering a future career in healthcare, possibly nursing, so this felt like a meaningful step toward understanding that kind of work.

I also wanted to challenge myself by stepping outside my comfort zone and seeing how I would cope in a completely different setting.

2. How did this experience benefit you?

I had the opportunity to work with older adults, some of whom had complex physical or cognitive needs, which was a completely new experience for me.

It gave me a taste of what it's like to be in a care setting, helping to build confidence and understanding of how such environments work.

I developed stronger communication skills by interacting not only with the residents but also with the care home staff and my peers.

Planning and running activities taught me how to take initiative, think creatively, and adapt plans to meet different needs and abilities.

3. What was your most challenging experience?

Designing and delivering activities that were inclusive and suitable for a wide range of physical and cognitive abilities.

Making myself heard and understood clearly when there were distractions or when residents had hearing difficulties.

Encouraging active participation, especially from those who were more reserved or less mobile, was also a key challenge.

4. How did you overcome this?

I made an effort to speak with residents individually to understand their preferences and build personal connections.

By establishing trust and rapport, it became easier to tailor activities to their interests and make participation feel

more natural. I asked staff for feedback and advice on how to support residents effectively, which helped me improve each week.

I also stayed flexible—adjusting games on the spot and ensuring we had a range of materials to keep things accessible and engaging.

5. What was the most rewarding experience?

Seeing the residents laugh, smile, and genuinely enjoy the games we prepared made the experience really special.

Discovering creative ways to include everyone in the activities felt fulfilling, especially when quieter residents became more engaged.

Watching the group interact positively with each other brought a strong sense of community.

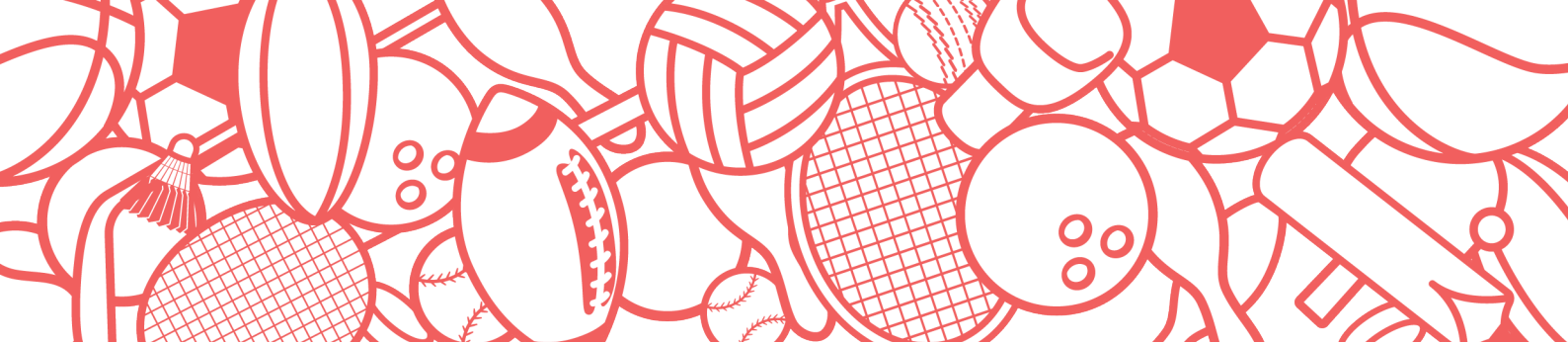
Listening to residents share their life stories and experiences was incredibly moving and insightful—it reminded me how valuable intergenerational connections can be.

6. What feedback did you receive?

Many of the residents looked forward to our weekly visits and would ask when we were coming back, which was really encouraging.

Staff told us we were doing a great job, and their support led to us increasing our visits to twice a week, where we also introduced arts and crafts sessions.

The overall feedback was very positive—from both the staff and the residents—which made us feel like we were really making a difference.



UCI Community Cycling

For 2024-2025 we used the Community Cycling Fund for the following:

- UCI focused “Cycle Schools” for 345 pupils from rural, coastal or SIMD areas in partnership with Active Schools Aberdeenshire and Live Life Outdoors
- Cycling-focused Outdoor First Aid training for 27 individuals involved in the delivery of cycling activity in Aberdeenshire
- Event support was provided to Ythan CC, who hosted a round of the Scottish National Youth Road series, with the provision of winners’ yellow jerseys
- Event support to the first ever SXC MTB Series event at Tarland Trails
- Provision of a Cycle Ride Leader course for eight individuals
- Provision of a Disability Induction Training course focused on cycling
- Equipment provision to enhance the delivery capability of the Live Life Outdoors Cycle Base and its “Bringing The Bike To You” programme
- A small grant to the Grampian Inclusive Bothies programme to ensure delivery of adaptive sessions at special schools in Aberdeenshire

The delivery of the above programme ensured that we linked at all times to the legacy from the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Glasgow and across Scotland. The funding covered the following:

- The Ythan CC hosted round of the Scottish Youth Road Series was supported by the provision of winners’ 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. The yellow jerseys enhanced the delivery of the Scottish Youth Road Series in Ellon.
- Tarland Trails opened in June 2023 as Scotland’s newest trail centre and we provided support to the first ever SXC MTB Series race in June 2024 via the provision of event equipment to create the start/finish area and the race village
- Cycle Ride Leader training for staff from a teaching, leisure and community development background
- Our Cycle Schools visited several coastal and rural locations:
 - Largue Primary School and Forgue Primary School (joint day)
 - Crathes Primary School
 - Catterline Primary School and Kinneff Primary School (joint day)
 - Balmedie Primary School
 - Mackie Academy (Discovering Cycling “confidence” session)
- Disability Induction Training for council staff, Grampian Inclusive Bothies and local cycling coaches
- Updating and upgrading some of the delivery equipment used by the Live Life Outdoors Cycle Base such as low-level ramps and cycle storage options.

The earlier sections of this report shine a light on the areas of impact, just as the impact of a young racing cyclist receiving a yellow jersey cannot be underestimated. The new delivery equipment has already had a significant impact on the delivery of “The Promise” sessions for care experienced children across Aberdeenshire.

With a further 345 school pupils having taken part in cycling sessions the overall numbers for the entire Community Cycling Fund period now exceeds 1,000 participant sessions. The focus on coastal and rural schools in 2024-2025 means that we have aligned to the quantitative data in relation to demographics in Aberdeenshire, targeting where the need is.



The continued investment and commitment to training opportunities has ensured that a further 35 individuals are able to continue to move forward with the delivery of cycling activity. As we have highlighted across the funding period, we strongly believe that our approach has had a focused strategy that has gone beyond simple participation.

With the announcement of the Tour de France visiting Edinburgh and Scotland in July 2027, we will continue to embed the legacy of the multiple visits to Aberdeenshire by the AJ Bell Tour of Britain and the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships in Glasgow and across Scotland, and would be delighted to assist and engage in the social impact programme that will accompany the Tour de France visit in 2027.

WATCH HERE!

Video link:
[Community
Cycling
Fund
Reflections](#)



Neah Evans

Cycling Aberdeenshire Women's and Girls Cycling Ambassador

Next stop.....

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Olympic Games

July 2024

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