



Annual Report

2025/2026

VISION STATEMENT

We offer easily accessible, high-quality Culture and Sport experiences delivering improved mental and physical health and wellbeing, fun and learning from mountain to sea for everyone living in, working in or visiting Aberdeenshire.

FOREWORD



Allan Rae
Head of Service

I am proud to introduce the 2025/26 Annual Report, which highlights the continued progress Live Life Aberdeenshire has made over the past year. Through meaningful conversations with communities, partners, and colleagues, we have ensured our services remain relevant, valued, and fun to use.

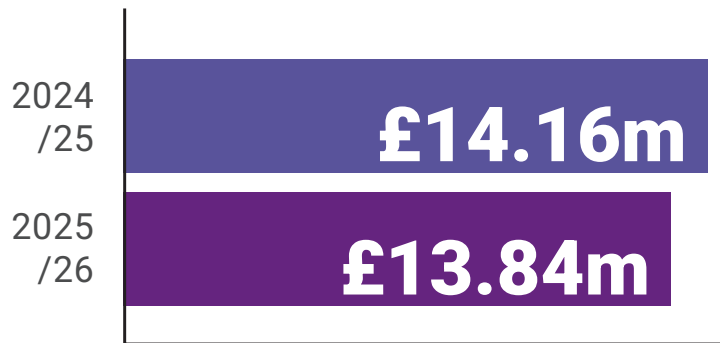
This has been a year of continual change, with teams responding positively to new challenges while maintaining strong performance and extending our reach. A clear focus on collaboration and improvement has enabled us to deliver more with the resources available.

Importantly, the value of what we deliver continues to grow. Attendances are up, cost per visit is down, and the net social value has grown 14%. Investment in our people, digital systems and programming, as well as key developments such as Macduff Aquarium and the Summer of Sport position us well to continue this trend.

I would like to thank colleagues, partners, and communities for their ongoing support and commitment

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCES


Total LLA cost*



£320k less

costs to deliver the LLA service in 2025/26

 **£4.75**
24/25 subsidy cost

 **£4.33**
25/26 subsidy cost

The subsidy per head reduced by **42p** per visit



Total income generated*



£840k more

income generated than last year

DID YOU KNOW...

A **subsidy** is how much it costs LLA to provide the service per visit



*Total values include the full LLA service, including Active Schools which sits under a different policy committee

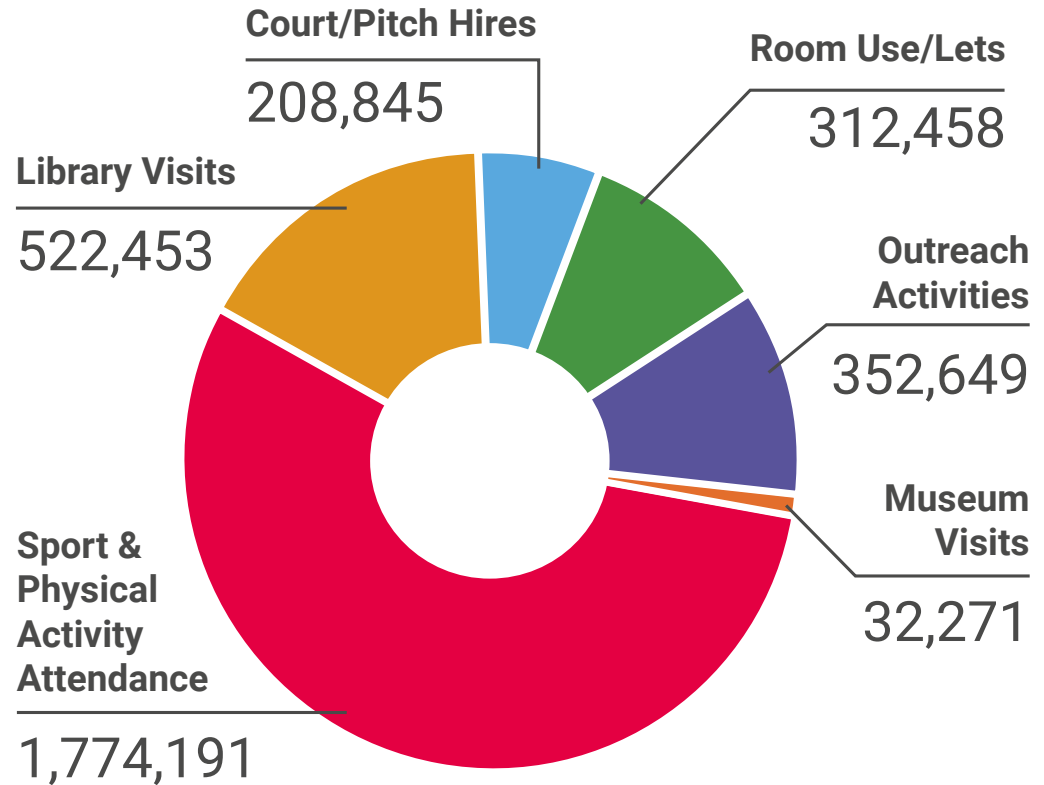
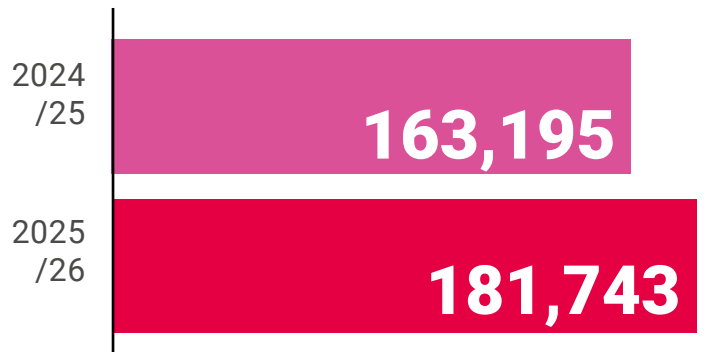
ATTENDANCE



3,202,867
physical visits
2025/2026

Physical usage of LLA facilities increased by
7.43%

Group exercise classes

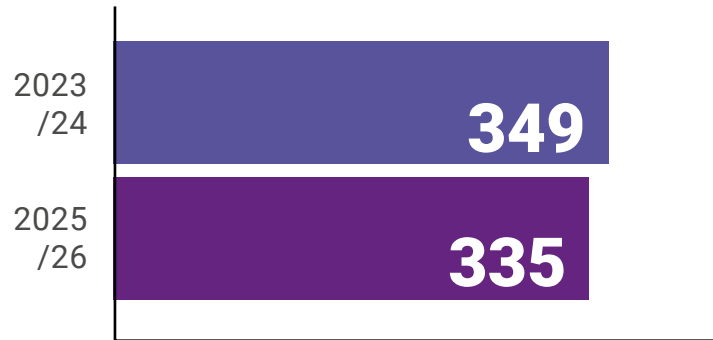


11.2% increase
in individual attendances in group exercise classes

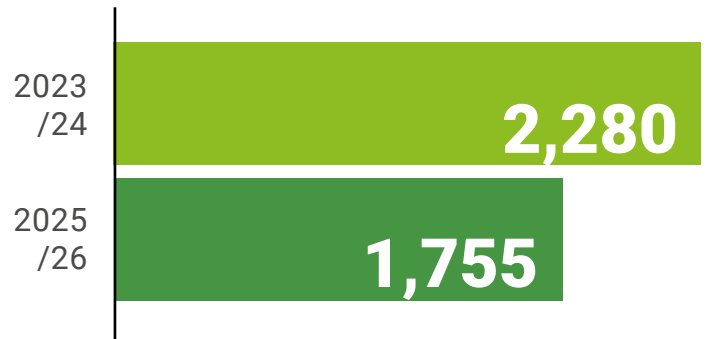


20,702
classes provided
in 2025/2026

EMPLOYEE STATS




4% reduction
in full time
equivalent (FTE)
employees
since 2023/2024



23% reduction
in posts
since 2023/
2024



1,113
employees across all
parts of the service
1,755 total posts



4.9%
absence rate



£16.87m
staff costs 2025/26

DIGITAL STATISTICS



Total orders
10,000

0.9% increase
in monthly app users

Website traffic
down by **3.0%**



43% more
revenue

£19,024
total
revenue

18,749
monthly
app users



Users up
7.9%

The reason for increase is that eMagazine provision moved from Pressreader to Overdrive



A **5% decrease** due to the eMagazine provision moving from Pressreader to Overdrive



Average number of sessions per month
51,976

Number of users joining the library service online in 25/26

1,500

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT (CARBON REDUCTION)

322 tCO₂e

saved since
March 2025



206tCO₂e

saved across the operational estate

116tCO₂e

saved from asset disposal



LED lighting
upgrade at
Deveron
Community
and Sports
Centre
swimming
pool



Upgrade
of Turriff
Pavilion
Turriff,
including
photovoltaic
panels, with
an aim of
achieving
net zero

In the past year:

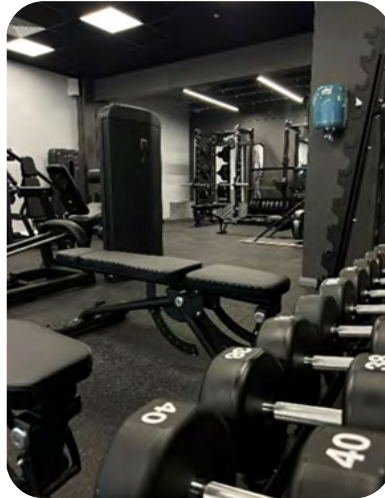
- Asset Disposal Programme
- Pool Cover replacement at Ellon Swimming Pool
- LED lighting upgrades at Catto Park, Peterhead
- Gym upgrades in Bervie, Banchory and Turriff which replaced lighting.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROJECTS



In total,
approximately
£3.2 million
was invested in Live Life
Aberdeenshire projects
completed in 2025/26.

Turriff Sports Centre gym upgrade
- **£110k investment**



Inverbervie Sports Centre gym upgrade
- **£32k investment**



Deveron Community & Sports Centre Cafe



Other investments
include:

- Flume repairs at Fraserburgh Community and Sports Centre
- Pool cover replacement at Ellon Swimming Pool

POSITIVE ACTION GRANTS - CULTURE

The 2025/26 PAG programme delivered by NEAT targeted cultural activity in

5 rural communities

(Tarves, Barthol Chapel, Fyvie, Rothienorman and Turriff)



1,166 residents

overall were engaged in new opportunities for social connection and creative expression

Activity included online training in community capacity building, skills development and group resilience, specialist artform workshops and advice, funding for locally organised cultural events including community film-screenings and concerts



"The event was such a success - our biggest to date! We had eight members of Aberdeenshire Saxophone Orchestra and 17 members of the Fyvie Community Choir attend. They played and sang for 2 hours...60 people attended the concert and we've had fantastic feedback as well as some lessons learned to improve future events"

POSITIVE ACTION GRANTS - SPORT

Sport For Change - 2025/26

supported provision of training for 18-25 year-olds

 **10**
projects

 **801**
participants

218
sessions

14
settlements

 **42**
volunteers

 **974**
volunteer hours

Positive Action Grant funding supported **10 projects:**

- Scottish Disability Sport
- Inverbervie Medical Practice
- Forget Me Not • Ramblers Scotland • Movement Bothy
- Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust
- Maud Village Trust
- Scottish Athletics • Ythan Cycling • Westhill Table Tennis

"I enjoyed learning something new and speaking to the coach"

Aberdeenshire Sailing Trust participant



"The course was great, I can't wait to get started"

Let's Go participant

"It's been an incredible experience that I'm so thankful to have taken part in"

Ramblers Scotland participant

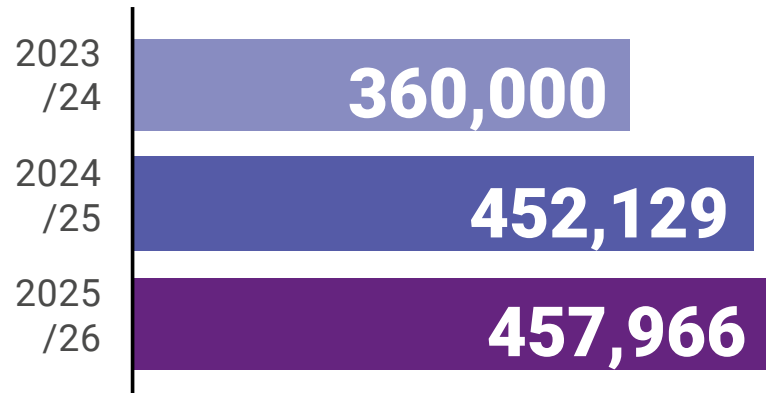


"It's great to have somewhere to come to help me keep fit and meet so many lovely people"

Maud Gentle Gym participant

LEARN TO SWIM (LTS) PROGRAMME

Swimming Lessons delivered at LLA pools per year



Capacity reduced by **3,524** whilst increased participation and delivery levels has improved efficiencies

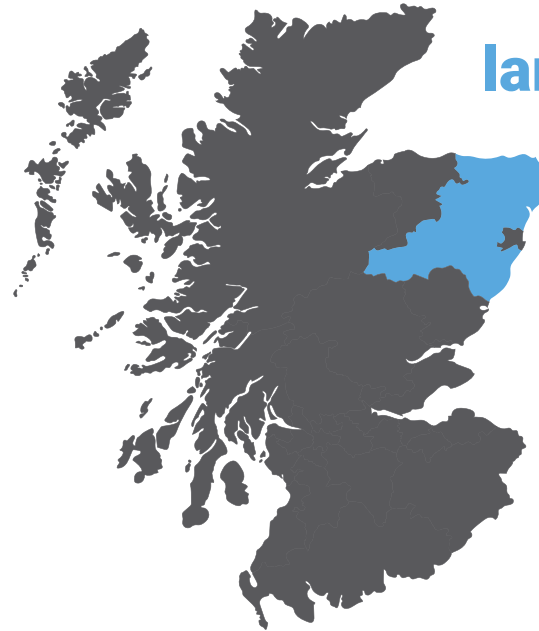


WATCH HERE!

Click [here](#) or scan the QR to find out about the impact of our ASN swimming lessons



LLA's LTS programme remains the **largest in Scotland**



Over **1,300** classes delivered every week to over **9,000** participants each year



Waiting list reduced from

3,000

to **2,463**



MEMBERSHIPS AND UPGRADES

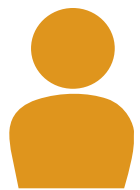


12% increase

in paid memberships

7.9% increase

in all memberships (including our free Live Life Essentials memberships)



15,036

total LLA members

of which there are almost **10,000 Direct Debit** memberships, and over

5,000 free Live Life Essentials memberships



Banchory Sports Village gym upgrade
- **£190k investment**

HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Referral Breakdown



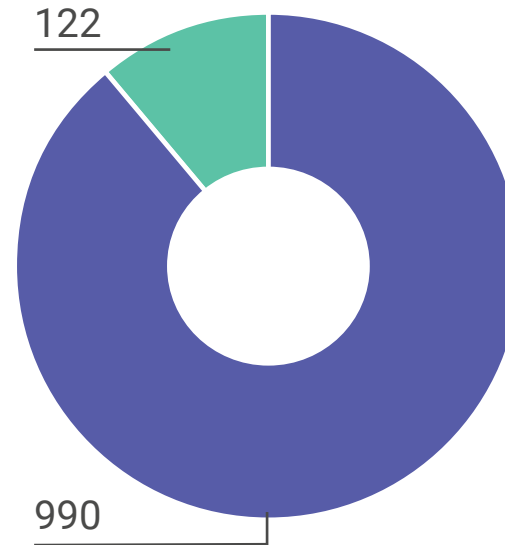
55%

of referrals progressed to activity, ongoing support or independent activity



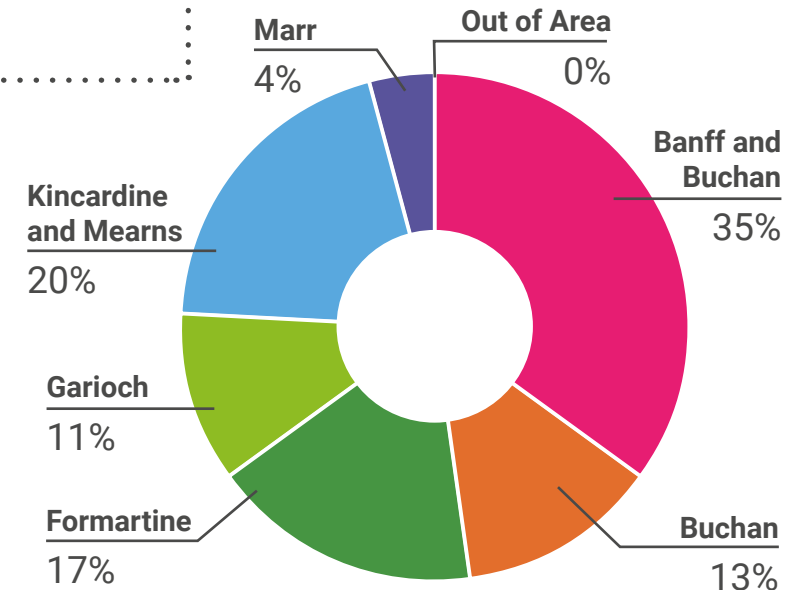
72%

of referrals came directly from or were recommended from a healthcare professional



1,112
total referrals
in 2025/26

■ New referrals
■ Re-referrals



WATCH

[Click here](#) or scan the QR to hear about Alistair's journey



Live Life Well Classes

703
unique participants

886
sessions

Total participation (**5,603** attendances)



HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Health Walks

 **42** health walks operating across **25 communities**

 **130** active trained walk leaders

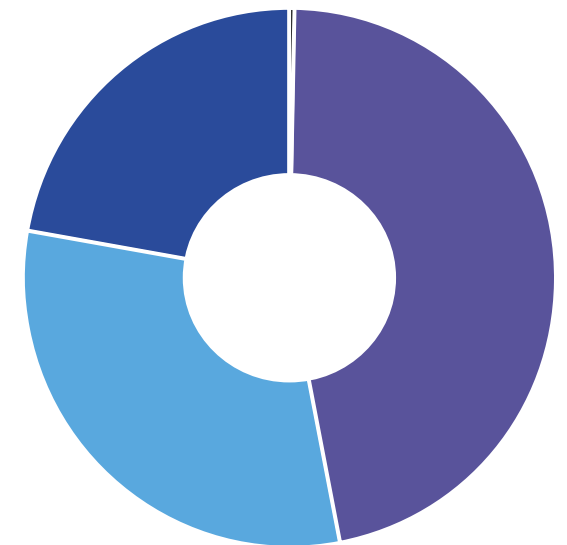
Targeted activity included an **ASN Family Walk** during the Easter holiday programme

Health Watch

 **441** **FREE** Health Checks delivered

53% had pre-high or high blood pressure readings

highlighting opportunities for early advice and intervention



■ High BP ■ Normal BP
■ Pre-high BP □ Low BP (only 2 cases)

WATCH 

[Click here](#) or scan the QR to find out more about our LLW instructors' impact



WATCH 

[Click here](#) or scan the QR to hear two of our LLW success stories



HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Counterweight

A 12-month **weight management** programme combining education, physical activity and support

WATCH 

[Click here](#) or scan the QR to find out more about our Counterweight programme



148
enrolled into the programme

4.7%
Average weight loss from starting body weight

"I am thoroughly enjoying my life now and can do so much more than I have been able to do in years" Counterweight participant

escape pain

Supported by **Orthopaedic Research UK**

A group **rehabilitation** programme for individuals with **chronic joint pain**

102 
unique participants

88% 
completion rate



Targeted health and physical activity support for **fishing communities**

1,854
engagements 

154 
health/blood pressure checks



ACTIVE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SPORTS HUBS



Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

52
courses delivered
650 deliverers

benefitted from CPD including sports coaching, first aid, child protection and inclusive practice



Active Schools



Active Schools have delivered the **Run For Fun** series and Netball, Football, Basketball and Athletics **festivals** across Aberdeenshire

Active schools launched their **leadership pathway** in August 2025 with every network delivering all stages

All secondary schools had two **Young Ambassadors** representing their school this year, and attended a launch in September, where some of last years YA's helped **share good practice**



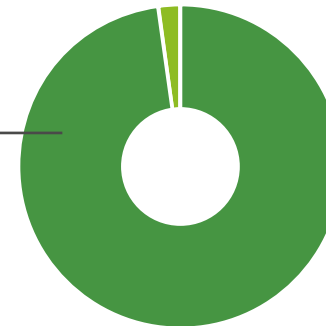
WATCH HERE!

Click here or scan the QR to hear from some of our volunteers



Volunteering

98%
of our deliverers in the current academic year are volunteers



Secondary pupils contribute to **37%** of the total

ACTIVE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SPORTS HUBS



Community Sports Hubs (CSH)

15

community sport hubs supported across Aberdeenshire

100

clubs and organisations engaged through Community Sports Hubs

Over £35k

invested in supporting community sport projects



through Sport For Change and Activation funding

Active Recovery - South: Recovery group given gym and pool access to tackle inequality, boost confidence, and reduce stigma.



34 sessions provided

Focus Projects

Partnership with Scottish Cycling: Free, local coaching course in Peterhead, upskilling volunteers, cutting travel, and keeping community cycling alive.



7 qualified

4 young people, 3 adult volunteers

"I feel less stressed, it's helped my confidence, and it's something I genuinely look forward to now."

"The quiet swim is very relaxing, but more than that it gives me a reason to get out of the house and be active."

"Getting back into exercise has given me the confidence to start swimming again. The swimming has been invaluable."

Participant Voices - Active Recovery

CULTURE - MACDUFF AQUARIUM

128

residents joined Rock Pool Ramble events



"Thank you so much... we absolutely loved it and the kids had been counting down since I booked! It was so nice to do something different in the holidays and it was a great session!"

Rock Pool
Ramble
participant

Mobile rock pools promoted ocean literacy at major events across the region attended by **thousands** of visitors

270

pupils reached online through "Aquarium in your Classroom"

Free discovery sessions attracted **289** participants

13% increase in Facebook followers to nearly **20,000**



The **redevelopment** external works are complete, interiors taking shape, themed exhibits and interactives designed, interpretation planned and a café partner sought.



WATCH HERE! 



Click here or scan the QR to visit the Macduff Aquarium Youtube channel

CULTURE - ARTS

My Time Aberdeenshire pilot

- For unpaid carers aged 50+
- Free practitioner-led creative workshops – photography, writing, ceramics – plus digital skills.
- In-person and online, scheduled around carers’ responsibilities.

“... I now have friends because of this activity.”

“Being absorbed by a creative activity, even just for an hour, means you can set aside all those everyday responsibilities”

“It was quite remarkable after being invisible for years - my status as an unpaid carer was acknowledged and apparently valued. That’s the first time that’s happened.”

My Time Aberdeenshire participants



 **56**
attendances

AHSCP Greenways Project

Artists appointed to enhance walking routes around sheltered housing.

 **5** Aberdeenshire towns supported

The Many Lives of Duff House project

- **Approach:** Academic research and local engagement to refresh interpretation.
- **Activities:** Outreach sessions, round-table, temporary exhibition to test themes.
- **Community gains:** Shared memories and artefacts; stronger local ownership; new collaboration routes; increased awareness for education and events.

CULTURE - YOUTH MUSIC INITIATIVE (YMI) PROGRAMME

19 projects

were delivered to approximately

9,600 children
and young people
aged 0-25 years old



Happy Little Tunes
delivered interactive
music sessions to
130 pre-school
children and carers

in SIMD rural deprivation areas
identified by NHS Community Nurses



Six co-designed **Upload projects** empowered 8–25 year olds to **co-create music and sound projects**, developing creative, life and employability skills from planning to delivery. Partners include YPOC, The Promise, Tackling Poverty and Inequalities, Corporate Parenting, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People and UNCRC Ambassadors

A **resources hub** was launched on the LLA website, providing teachers and tutor musicians with information, icebreakers and instrument lending guidance

CULTURE - LIBRARIES

12% more
Bookbug sessions
delivered (1,356)

Child attendance
peaked at
18,808

and strong demand
resulted in adult
attendance up by **12%**

**WATCH
HERE!** 



Click here or scan
the QR to find out about our
Doorstep Delivery Service



Libby.

Libby e-books and audiobooks

12,430
monthly
checkouts

Unique users
peaked at
4,701

Over 5,000 
residents joined the
Summer Reading Challenge



571 bookings
across the Summer
of Play programme
with **86%** attendance

Highlight of the **Author
Events programme**
was award-winning
Scottish crime writer,
Denise Mina, at
Stewart's Hall, Huntly
attended by an
audience of 80



BorrowBox launched in April 2025 and grew rapidly to
1,700+ users

CULTURE - MUSEUMS

The Cultural Tides project
delivered a programme of outreach activity:

- Ran **six** heritage group workshops, engaging **100+ participants**
- Facilitated hands-on object sessions and practitioner-led creative workshops for pupils and local residents
- Hosted **13** public drop-in sessions in libraries, engaging **314 residents**
- Delivered a Cultural Connections Day at Aberdeenshire Farming Museum



Engaged **refugees** and **asylum seekers** in Inverurie and Peterhead

The team supported **Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month** as it continues to build a relationship with the Scottish Traveller community.



Specialists have condition-assessed **1,000 objects**, carried out cutting-edge research to inform the interpretation, and digitised **50+ items** for 3D and virtual displays as part of the new museum of Aberdeenshire interpretation.

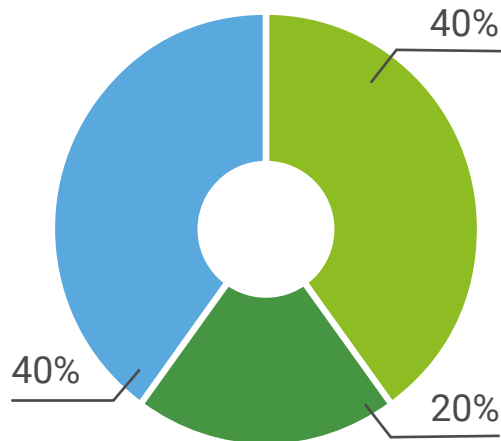
LIVE LIFE OUTDOORS



The Promise

The Live Life Outdoors Cycle Base has been supporting The Promise **since 2024**. 2025-26 saw delivery to a **range of schools** in North Aberdeenshire and Central Aberdeenshire.

Impact that the sessions have once the children have taken part and back in the classroom:



- Very settled and focused
- More settled and focused than normal
- No difference

Balance to Pedal Programme

In Summer 2025 a new product called **“Intensive Balance to Pedal”** took place in Inverurie and Banchory



Introduction of Mountain Biking

As part of the October **Holiday Programme**, the Live Life Outdoors Cycle Base began to deliver **“Introduction to Mountain Biking”**, taking advantage of the stunning scenery and options available at the Back O’Bennachie.



Community Use of Sir Arthur Grant Centre

58 community groups

(e.g. Scouts and Guides), as well as Clubs, Aberdeenshire Council Services and private lets, used the centre with over

1000 participants.

These stays were a mix of residential and day only and included over half the weekends available for hire.

LIVE LIFE OUTDOORS



All Inclusive School Residential Activity Trips

8 schools totalling **296 bed nights** spent their P6 and P7 trips at the centre



All the schools rebooked for 2026



1,288 visitors in total

Ski Centres

Huntly Nordic Outdoor Centre has delivered a fabulous **Pavement to Piste** programme in a joint work with Snowsport Scotland to deliver **cross country skiing opportunities** to Schools predominantly in the Marr Area.



6 primary schools



520 attendances

16,835 participants across ski centres



Duke of Edinburgh Award

13 volunteers recruited through the Aberdeenshire process



18 young people recruited into the programme

Live Life Outdoors Ambassadors

The Live Life Outdoors team continue to be supported by **world class athletes**



and like-minded outdoor enthusiasts. We have team members who represent Great Britain in addition to junior games and world championships.

WATCH HERE!

[Click here](#) or scan the QR to watch our Live Life Outdoors promotional video



IMPACT AND SOCIAL VALUE CALCULATOR

The analysis was undertaken using Social Value Calculator 4 provided by 4Global. The previous calculations were under SVC3 so all comparison figures have been updated to represent the new modelling within SVC4*



In 2025/6 the predicted Social Value created in LLA's leisure settings was worth
£16.94m



This is a
14% increase
on the previous year



For every £1 spent on our Sports and Physical Activity venues,
£2.90
is returned in social value

**Full guidance methodology can be shared if requested - please email llacustomerservice@aberdeenshire.gov.uk*