

South Ayrshire Council

**Report by Director of Communities and Transformation
to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel
of 17 September 2024**

**Subject: Community Learning and Development Plan (CLD)
2021-2024 - Year 3 End of Plan Progress Report**

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel with the CLD 2021-24 End of Plan Report.

2. Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that the Panel approves the report and notes the progress made by the CLD Partnership during 2021 – 2024.

3. Background

3.1 Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013 [CLD Guidance](#) place a responsibility on every local authority in Scotland to work with Partners and Communities to 'secure' Community Learning and Development (CLD). The process put in place should:

- identify target individuals and groups;
- consider the needs of the targeted individuals and groups;
- assess the degree to which those needs are already being met; and
- identify barriers to the adequate and efficient provision of relevant CLD

3.1.1 The Educational Authority is required to publish a Plan every three years setting out how the Educational Authority and Partners will coordinate CLD provision, what action will be taken to provide CLD provision over the period of the plan and identify any unmet needs during the period of the plan.

3.1.2 The CLD Partnership is responsible for the development, management and monitoring of the CLD Plan. The Partnership includes representatives from South Ayrshire Council, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), Health and Social Care Partnership, Community Planning Partnership, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and Ayrshire College.

3.2 On 21 September 2021 South Ayrshire Council's Leadership Panel approved the CLD Plan 2021 – 2024 [CLD Plan LP September 2021](#).

- 3.3 On 13 June 2023 the CLD mid-term Progress Report was presented and approved at Service, Partnership and Performance Panel [CLD Plan Mid Term Report](#).
- 3.4 During 2 to 4 October 2023, HM Inspectors visited South Ayrshire and carried out a progress visit of Community Learning and Development and progress made against the CLD Plan 2021-2024.
- 3.5 Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of the CLD Partnerships approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and considered progress made against five identified priorities:
- Youth Work;
 - Mental Health and Wellbeing;
 - Employability and Volunteering;
 - Adult and Family Learning; and
 - Community Empowerment and Engagement.
- 3.6 The HM Inspectors progress report was published on Education Scotland website 14 November 2024 [Education Scotland CLD Inspection South Ayrshire](#).
- 3.7 [Cabinet February 2024](#) approved for the CLD Partnership to start consulting on the priorities for a new CLD Plan 2024-2027 that will be presented at Cabinet on 24 September 2024.
- 3.8 On 5 March 2024, the Service and Partnerships Performance Panel [SPPP March 2024](#) approved the findings from the CLD Progress Visit.
- 3.9 A National Independent Review of CLD was carried out between December 2023–June 2024 by Ms Kate Still. Graeme Dey MSP, Minister for Further and Higher Education and Veterans announced the findings of the review on report on 17 July 2024 [Learning for All for Life \(www.gov.scot\)](#).

4. Proposals

- 4.1 Members are asked to:
- 4.1.1 approve the CLD Plan End of Plan report (Appendix 1);
 - 4.1.2 agree that the findings from the report be shared with Partners and published in October 2024;
 - 4.1.3 note the findings from the Independent Review; and
 - 4.1.4 note that the draft CLD Plan 2024-2027 will be presented at Cabinet on 24 September 2024.

5. Legal and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.
- 5.2 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable.

7. Human Resources Implications

7.1 Not applicable.

8. Risk

8.1 *Risk Implications of Adopting the Recommendations*

8.1.1 There are no risks associated with adopting the recommendations.

8.2 *Risk Implications of Rejecting the Recommendations*

8.2.1 There are no risks associated with rejecting the recommendations.

9. Equalities

9.1 The proposals within this report have been assessed through the EQIA scoping process and there are no significant potential positive or negative equality impacts in agreeing the proposals, therefore an EQIA is not required.

10. Sustainable Development Implications

10.1 ***Considering Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)*** - This report does not propose or seek approval for a plan, policy, programme or strategy or document otherwise described which could be considered to constitute a plan, programme, policy or strategy.

11. Options Appraisal

11.1 An options appraisal has not been carried out in relation to the subject matter of this report.

12. Link to Council Plan

12.1 The above recommendations relate to Priority 1 - Spaces and Place, Priority 2 - Live, Work, Learn and Priority 3 – Community and Civic Pride

13. Results of Consultation

13.1 There has been no public consultation on the contents of this report.

13.2 Consultation has taken place with Councillor William Grant, Portfolio Holder for Education, and the contents of this report reflect any feedback provided.

Background Papers [**Report to Leadership Panel of 21 September 2021 – Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-24**](#)

[**Report to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of 13 June 2023 – Community Learning and Development \(CLD\) 2021-2024 Plan \(Mid-Term Progress Report\)**](#)

**Report to Service and Partnerships Performance Panel of 5
March 2024 – [Community Learning and Development \(CLD\)
Progress Visit 2023](#)**

**[The Requirements for Community Learning and Development
\(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#)**

Person to Contact

**George Hunter Assistant Director Communities
County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR
Phone 01292 612994
Email George.hunter@south-ayrshire.gov.uk**

**Jamie Tait, Service Lead – Thriving Communities
County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr, KA7 1DR
Phone 01292 559398
Email Jamie.tait@south-ayrshire.gov.uk**

Date: 10 September 2024

South Ayrshire Community Learning & Development Partnership 3 Year Plan

September 2021- August 2024

End of Plan Report



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Introduction

We are delighted to introduce you to the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Partnership end of plan report. In September 2021, we published our 3-year plan CLD which set out our priorities for the CLD Partnership and agreed an action plan to meet these priorities and support our communities in South Ayrshire.

In South Ayrshire the CLD Partnership is made up of representative from South Ayrshire Council, Police Scotland, South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, Ayrshire College, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP), Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Skills Development Scotland (SDS).

Over the past three years, we have made significant progress in supporting individuals, families, and communities facing various barriers to reaching their full potential, improving their life chances, and raising their aspirations. Our efforts have been focused on key areas including Youth Work, Adult & Family Learning, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), Employability, Volunteering, Community Empowerment and Community Engagement. In this report, we highlight the substantial work carried out under each of these priority areas.

Our CLD partnership and associated Learning Community Partnerships has been key in addressing the diverse needs of our community, ensuring that our support is inclusive, impactful and we have created environments where individuals and communities have the opportunity to thrive.



Priority 1

Youth Work - Improving Outcomes for Young People

Our Thriving Communities team aim to empower and support young people to improve their life chances and opportunities so as they can plan for a better future. We believe that every young person should have the opportunity to realise their potential whatever their life circumstances. We work collectively to provide our young people with the skills, confidence and resilience required to achieve the very best they can. Our Youth Work takes place in a variety of settings including community centres, schools, youth cafés and on the street.

Key Youth Work Data:

Number of young people engaged by youth work theme:

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Holiday Programmes	422	778	298	158
Community-based Youth Work	1263	968	613	390
Work in schools	412	376	125	206
Total	2097	2,122	1,036	754

Background information:

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Care Experienced	59	58	61	14
Young Carers	29	13	49	7
SIMD 1-3	893	1,104	500	260
Referred Group	147	119	103	134
Outwith target group	969	828	323	340
Total	2097	2,122	1,036	755

Learner Hours by theme:

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Holiday Programmes	3755	6,931	1,977	1,488
Community-based Youth Work	19,484	15,182	14,911	3,683
Work in schools	6,567	9,453	3,528	4,548
Total Hours	778	31,566	20,416	9,719

Learning Outcomes:

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Positive Relationships	388	494	362	106
Safe and Welcome	403	512	376	113
Have a Say	376	466	346	100
New Experiences	361	467	343	103
Skills and Knowledge	357	429	318	106
Better Informed Decisions	343	440	328	78
Positive Futures	358	459	358	107
Total number completed	404	513	378	113

Work Accreditation:

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Hi5! Award	88	184	18	9
Dynamic Youth Award	53	76	30	21
John Muir Award	29	17	27	15
Saltire Award	57	95	42	21
Youth Achievement	0	2	0	0
Duke of Edinburgh - Bronze	11	3	8	5
Duke of Edinburgh - Silver	0	6	0	0
Princess Trust Achieve L4	1	3	0	0
Princess Trust Achieve L3	2	10	0	0
SQA Personal Development	0	0	12	6
Total Awards Completed	241	396	137	77



Thriving Communities

Through the 'Have Your Say' and 'Social Media' survey and further focus groups, Community Planning partners now have an improved and shared understanding of how young people wish to have their voice heard, communicated and how information should be shared.

The consultation highlighted that young people would prefer to be part of local youth voice groups to engage in youth voice relating directly to their community/ area they live in.

As a result Thriving Communities have set up various local Youth Voice Groups and through these platforms young people's views and opinions are better heard to empower and support in advocating issues that affect their lives



The groups take place in the following localities:

**Ayr North | North Carrick | Glendoune |
Plans are in place for Prestwick and Troon and Ayr South**

The local Youth Voice Groups are open to young people aged 11 years up, to informally meet every fortnight with a mix of fun interactive activities to support building relationships and opportunities to have a say and influence within their community.

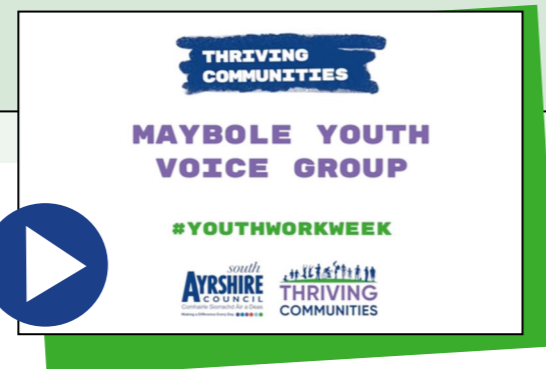
Young people participating so far have been involved in developing new facilities in their area (local Skate Parks), planning and fundraising for the local youth activities available in their area, planning South Ayrshire wide events or local fun days and part of research and having a say on the refurbishment of local Youth Centres.

The North Carrick Youth Voice Group was involved in the development of the new Skate Park in Maybole. The young people created and carried out a consultation with over 300 young people across North Carrick and collated and presented the results. Construction has now finished and the final design was directly informed by young people. The group are now planning a Graffiti Art project and launch event.

This group have also contributed towards South Ayrshire wide events such as Bounce and Question Time.



Click here to view video



Youth Work Summer Programmes

Over the past 3 years, Thriving Communities have delivered Holiday Programmes which were designed to support disadvantaged families and young people during the school holidays by providing healthy meals and enriching activities. All activities were free of charge, accessible and offered young people and families exciting new experiences which were rooted in opportunities for informal learning. People who engaged in programmes often tried and enjoyed new things they would not otherwise have taken part in, such as trips, STEM and drama. There were positive signs that our Holiday Programmes helped to improve socialisation and confidence, with most young people and their parents reporting they felt more confident because of participating in activities.



Key Strengths:

- Place-based approach to identifying and addressing need
- Effective partnership working
- Fun, healthy and free educational activities
- Communities were stakeholders in the programme
- Effective engagement with young people and families who are amongst the most vulnerable in our communities

Youth Work Holiday Programme data:

	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Holiday Programmes	422	778	298	158

Click here to view video



South Ayrshire Youth Awards 2024

The South Ayrshire Youth Awards took place on 17th April 2024 to recognise and celebrate the achievements of local young people aged 11 to 25 years across South Ayrshire.

The planning and delivery of the awards was completely youth led, with 100 young people from local youth clubs participating in a survey to vote on the theme/categories and entertainment.

The youth led planning group included 18 young people, including youth volunteers and members from locality groups who designed the nomination form, category descriptions, invites and decorations.

The ceremony was a fun and vibrant experience for the 80 young people who attended the event. The locality youth voice groups made an amazing effort with designing the neon themed decorations and co-hosted and presented the awards to their peers.

Young people were recognised across a variety of categories including volunteering, mental health and wellbeing, community service, skills and development, digital and arts and culture.



The feedback from partners, elected members and young people was extremely positive. There was a wide representation of young people across South Ayrshire demonstrating the impact that young people have in our communities.

Young people's comments:

“ It was the best day I had in a long time. ”

“ I loved it so much – I had to talk – I was petrified – everyone is so kind. ”

Youth Voice Youth Council and Youth Strategy

Our Voice Group, partnered with young people have been pro-active in identifying and taking action to overcome structural and individual barriers to participation within Youth Voice.

Data and information gathered from the 2022 'Have Your Say' Survey and further focus groups identified existing and emerging needs to review priorities to improve opportunities for young people. In order to make decisions at a strategic level and have a voice and influence in services that affect young people.

Between 2023 to early 2024 there have been a range of interactive consultation events and roadshows to gather views of children and young people.



This approach has ensured there was a variety of accessible settings to gather views of young people to help shape the new Youth Council and Youth Participation Strategy that will be published in 2024/25.

Activities delivered were fun and interactive to suit the needs and styles of young people participating.

Tour of Parliament and First Minister's Questions

In April 2023 a total of twenty young people had the opportunity to visit the Scottish Parliament, observe the First Minister Questioning, and meet with local MSP Siobhan Brown. Young people represented a wide range of Youth Voice Groups such as North Carrick Youth Voice, Young Carers, Champions for Change and Queen Margaret Academy Rights Committee. This was a new experience for many, a chance to see democracy in action and to witness first-hand the power of speaking up and being heard. Young people listened to debates around poverty, misogyny and tackling youth violence. Young people also recorded their Rights Respecting School Award evidence with the backdrop of the Parliament. "This was an unforgettable experience to see key decisions taking place and it was great to meet other young people from other Schools and groups" *QMA pupil*.



The newly established Youth Council is informed and developed together with 700 local young people, with young people having a say on the final representation members and of the election process. Young people are involved in all steps from the final decisions of the setup to the delivery of the promotion and selection through a democratic vote.

The Youth Council expression of interest opens in May 2024, with a ballot and celebration following. Through partnership and collaborative working this new approach will ensure the voices of young people influence service design across services.

Bounce Festival

In August 2022 Thriving Communities hosted the first ever youth work festival for young people in South Ayrshire, 'Bounce Festival 22'.

The main aim of the event was to provide local young people aged 10 to 16 with an opportunity to engage and enjoy a wide range of positive activities, including live music, entertainment, street food, health and wellbeing workshops and a Youth Voice consultation.

Thriving Communities recognised that engagement levels of young people aged 10 to 14 were lower than expected in our Childcare Hubs when compared to that of young people aged 5 to 10. Anecdotal evidence suggested that older young people were reluctant to participate due to the large age gap and their differing needs hence why we created, developed and delivered #BounceFestival22!

Since 2022, we have continually built on the success of Bounce Festival, engaging over 300-year people each year. Young people from as far as Ballantrae to Dundonald attend the event with transport and support being provided by Thriving Communities staff.



Detached Youth Work

Working closely with colleagues across Thriving Communities and Police Scotland, we have continued to develop our Detached Youth Work offer across South Ayrshire over the past 3 years.

Our role is to deploy skilled Youth Workers to engage positively with young people in their local community to challenge their attitudes and actions in an attempt to alleviate antisocial behaviour and support critical discussion around alcohol consumption, personal safety, and drug use. Detached Youth Workers respond quickly to emerging themes by facilitating informal issue-based inputs on the street. It's also a great opportunity for us to build relationships with young people who aren't engaged in traditional youth work provision and support them to make informed choices.

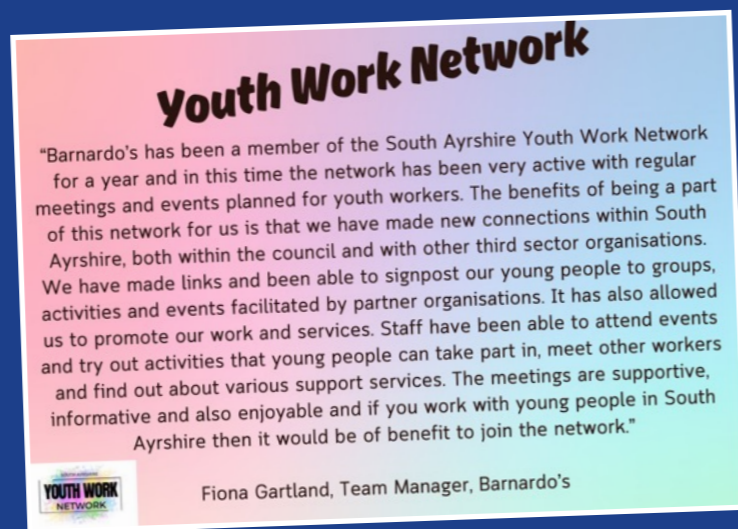
Areas targeted by youth workers are directly informed by local data and trends.

Youth disorder has fallen by 14% in 2022/23 from the previous year. We have delivered a total of 101 detached youth work sessions on Friday evenings in 2022/23.



Youth Work Network

In August 2022, we set up our Youth Work Network with the intention of bringing local youth work organisations together. The network provides partners supporting youth work for young people aged 8-18 in South Ayrshire with an opportunity to engage with other practitioners, plan collaboratively, develop their skills, knowledge and practice and inform local and national youth work strategy. The group also supports the planning and delivery of South Ayrshire wide events, identifies staff training needs, champions innovative practice and highlights youth work funding opportunities. Over the next year, we are excited to see the network grow and develop and plans are at an advanced stage to create a Network Small Grants Programme! The networks continue to meet between 6-8 times a year and all the meetings are in person and take place in the evening. We agreed to have an alternative chair to share responsibility of leading the group with partners. This group feeds into the wider South Ayrshire Youth Services Strategic Group. The South Ayrshire Youth Work Network currently has 45 member organisations including South Ayrshire Council – Thriving Communities; Uniformed Youth Groups; Girvan Youth Trust; The Ark; VASA; Room 60; Champions Board; South Ayrshire Befrienders; South Ayrshire Young Carers Centre; LGBT Youth Scotland; The Gaiety and Voluntary Youth Work Groups.



The Weekender Diversionsary Youth Work Programme

We devised an aspirational diversionsary programme targeted at young people of secondary school age involved in anti-social behaviour and underage drinking on Friday evenings and during the weekend. The programme has a focus on off-site activities which offer young people new experiences and opportunities to participate in exciting activities, out-with our centre-based provision. Young people have been identified through targeted local youth club provision, street work and discussions with other key partners. This initiative complements our TAYP (Targeted Approach Young People) project which is usually facilitated during the school day.

Local MATAAC reports/youth incident reports highlighted that ASB and underage drinking have been an issue across Ayr and that there was a need for positive alternatives at targeted weekend times. This data informed the basis of the format and times of the programme, helping to meet this need.

The programme offered free recreational activities which enhanced the social and emotional wellbeing of the young people engaged. All of the young people who completed the evaluation recorded that they had built positive relationships on the programme. For example, one young person said they had "made new friends." All of the young people also recorded that they had gained new experiences. This is important as it can help the young people develop self-confidence/communication skills in working with others whilst engaging them in positive diversionsary activities. The feedback from the young people involved in the programme captures the impact and how the activities have helped them make better choices at weekends.

Alongside this, quantitative measures show that the programme offered 265 learner hours of positive youth engagement at targeted evening and weekend times along with 20 young people registered from our targeted group.

An important contributing factor to the success of the programme was the partnership work with Ayr Academy Pupil Support Department.



By working closely with the school department, the young people who were most vulnerable were able to be identified, many of which were not known to the Thriving Communities service. After the young people were identified, our staff were able to link in with the young people on a weekly basis to build up relationships with them. This helped enable the participation of the young people in the programme.

one young person said the programme has helped them by

“ stopping them making bad decisions” while another said, “it’s stopped me getting drunk and getting in trouble.”

The Targeted Approach to Young People (TAYP)

The TAYP programme is delivered by South Ayrshire Council Thriving Communities Team, and aims to engage young people who are involved in, or on the periphery of antisocial behaviour/crime in the community, or who are not engaging at school in the normal manner.

TAYP is an activity-based initiative, including outdoor activities focussed on challenging young people whilst building confidence, self-esteem and teamworking skills. This is followed up with ongoing support to enable the young people to engage in additional activities and established youth work activities in their local community, further education and employment opportunities.

A range of agency inputs aimed at stimulating discussion around a variety of issues relevant to young people are also included as part of this programme. These include issues such as antisocial behaviour and its impact on the community, drug and alcohol misuse, addictions/recovery, sexual and mental health, knife crime and domestic violence. This work has been supported by representatives from a range of agencies and departments including, Community Learning and Development, NHS, Police Scotland, South Ayrshire Women's Aid and Recovery Ayr.

This reporting period saw the continuation of TAYP Xtra programme developed in conjunction with Kyle Academy. South Ayrshire Alcohol & Drugs Partnership funding helped support this longer-term engagement with 4 young people that the school had referred due to increased support needs. This engagement will continue into its third year, with the aim of supporting young people involved through to positive destinations at the end of 4th year.



Success Story - Ryan Clowes

“Although from South Ayrshire from the age of 8 – 15years I had lived in a children’s unit in East Ayrshire and attended school in Glasgow. My social worker thought it would be a good idea to start to reintroduce me to other young people from South Ayrshire in a group setting and suggested I might like to join the care experienced Duke of Edinburgh award group at the Domain Youth Centre.

At first I was not sure about this as I did not know anyone but the group leader rang me up and explained that it was a new group, all care experienced, and a lot of the young people did not know each other. I decided to give it a go.

At the first session I met the other eight young people and have not looked back. All of them were really friendly and over the next two years I built strong friendships. At the weekly group sessions we completed tasks for our section awards and went out on practice hill walking sessions as training for or expedition section.

Over the two years I learned new skills and together took on the challenges of our expedition. I have now completed my Bronze and Silver awards and have enrolled for my Gold award.

The confidence I gained from taking a chance and meeting new people made it a lot easier for me to go to college last year and I have now moved back to South Ayrshire to live with my grandmother and be nearer my new friends.”

YOUTH WORK IN SCHOOL

Braehead Fun Friday's



The Fun Friday's project was developed following discussions with Braehead Primary School who had identified a reduction in attendance and engagement of Primary 7 pupils on Friday afternoons.

CLD staff identified an opportunity to deliver a learning offer to promote meaningful engagement and participation to the whole class of 26 pupils, which also aligned to the Curriculum for Excellence area of Health and Wellbeing.

A 12-week programme involving 4 weekly workshops was devised and included: outdoor learning, STEM, expressive arts and crafts, and cooking. The project was planned to take place in the nearby Lochside Community Centre to help young people feel more engaged in their local community by utilising community spaces. The class would be allocated to the 4 different workshop groups to allow more individual support and relationship building and would rotate around the workshops every 3 weeks. Young people were also offered the opportunity to complete the Youth Scotland Hi5 Award.

Nearly all young people reported that Fun Fridays became a much-anticipated part of their week. The class teacher reported an increase in pupil attendance on a Friday for the duration of the Fun Friday's Programme. She stated that she feels this was because the children were looking forward to their workshops on Friday afternoon! The pupils have demonstrated that they have learned new skills and strengthened their relationships with each other and youth work staff. This project also helped them to feel more connected and engaged within their local community.

Thank you for making our Fridays fun. You guys made us excited for school. Thank you.

Thank you. I have really enjoyed all the activities and have been able to learn with them.

Thank you for taking the time out of your day to do these fun activities. These past few Fridays have been the best!

Thank you for having us every Friday, it has been the best and thank you for the time for my class. You made me try new things and it helped me as I am now cooking at home.

Two local youth clubs (Lochside and the Domain Youth Centre) had 10 pupils from the Fun Friday Project sign up and attend their youth clubs due to the young people and staff being able to build positive relationships. All 26 pupils completed their HI5 award and gained a certificate.

Please scan the QR code to watch our Fun Friday video!



SCAN HERE



FRIDAY NIGHT FITBA

Girvan Football Club (GFC) approached Thriving Communities regarding issues of littering and vandalism within the stand area of their football park. They were very keen to try and address these issues and were prepared to assist in any way they could. A meeting took place in the autumn of 2021 and an initial partnership was established with Thriving Communities, GFC, and the Campus Police Officer where the initiative of Friday Night Fitba was born.

Friday Night Fitba' was run on Friday nights, when anti-social behaviour was at its highest from 7pm to 9pm at Hamilton Park in Girvan (GFC's ground) on the all-weather floodlight pitch. Thriving Communities provided a coach, youth worker and project lead. The initiative ran successfully through the winter months from October to March with average nightly attendances of 25.

Throughout the project the partners negotiated access to the clubs portacabin and served hot drinks and biscuits to young people not only taking part in the football but that were coming into the football grounds. Additional partners also became involved including Community Sports Hub and Girvan Youth Trust.

This preventative approach to ASB has paid dividends with a 22% drop in youth related anti-social behaviour on Friday nights in Girvan since the initiative began in 2021. There has also been follow-up activity, with 3 of the partners implementing additional programmes. The partnership also re-invigorated an annual Summer Cup football tournament which takes place at the end of June as part of the town's Civic week celebrations. With this partnership, GFC is replaced with Girvan Youth Football Club (GYFC) as the tournament takes place on Victory Park.

This initiative would not be able to run without a partnership approach. In March 2024 the initiative was nominated for a National Youth Work Award and made it to the final. In June 2024, at the awards ceremony in the Hilton in Glasgow, the initiative won the National award for "Inclusion and Prevention". This award was sponsored by a national Scottish initiative called No Knives Better Lives. Our coaches are young people themselves and enjoyed their moment on the red carpet, celebrating their success as if they had just won the Summer Cup!

Priority 2 Mental Health & Wellbeing – Building Healthier Communities



ESOL & Multiply Gardening Allotment Projects

The gardening and allotments projects engaged ESOL and Multiply learners to support health & wellbeing by taking learners out of their traditional learning environments and into open-air spaces in their localities.

The aim of the allotment project was to develop language and numeracy skills using sustainable teaching and learning strategies. Multiply funding allowed the creation of an enterprise opportunity, where the women used their prior knowledge to grow vegetables. These vegetables could then be used or sold within the community. Numeracy skills were enhanced by weighing produce, budgeting to buy starter plants, and handling money, enabling the women to feel confident when selling their produce at the local farmers market.

From a language perspective, this was a great opportunity to expand contextualised language relevant to the project. The women benefited from recognising the names of vegetables in English, negotiating which vegetables to grow, and feeling empowered to know this was their project.

The allotment project also provided the women with a space to use their prior skills and knowledge. Most of the women had grown their own vegetables in their home countries, so they felt confident and happy to demonstrate this knowledge. The allotment

became their wellbeing corner, where they felt confident, relaxed, and part of the community. They contributed their knowledge and, in turn, learned English language skills while having the opportunity to make sustainable food choices for their families.

The allotment was a drop-in and fluid experience over the summer months, often including children and extended family members. Learners used the space independently of staff, dropping by to water plants, assess growth, and use the green space as they wished. Formal class attendance exceeded 20 learners weekly.

The summer of 2023 saw an overhaul of the outdoor space and flexible, drop-in attendance at the allotment. This flexible approach respected childcare and other commitments during the holiday period and allowed outdoor work to be the focus.

ESOL and Multiply staff embedded and reinforced allotment numeracy and language work in the indoor class setting. Joint facilitation formed a curriculum basis that captured various elements of the outdoor work. Worksheets and reflective practice allowed language learning to be centred around tools, plants, foods, seasons, and similar topics. Multiply input consolidated work around measurements, volume, distance, space, time, and basic calculations.

LEARNER PROFILE



Iqra pictured, middle of group

Iqra Zeshan, from Pakistan, was referred by her health visitor to the all-women’s group in March 2022. At the time, she had three small children and felt quite isolated due to her limited English language skills. She joined the ESOL provision and quickly made friends with the other women. Gradually, her English language skills improved, and she participated in various wellbeing activities such as Zumba and Walk and Talk sessions. As her confidence grew, she volunteered to help at the monthly ESOL Chat Café.

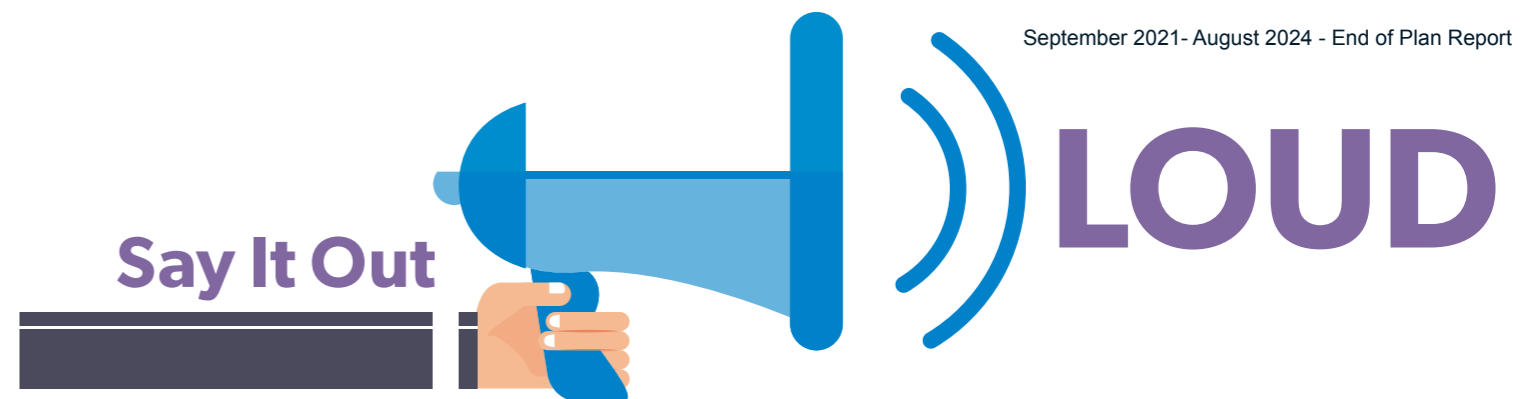
Iqra was also involved in the production of the ESOL recipe book. She contributed by writing and compiling her own recipe for Chicken Biryani. The recipe book was published and has become a valuable resource for our CLD cooking classes. By March 2023, Iqra was ready to progress into other CLD provisions while continuing her

ESOL classes. She was referred to the PACT group at St John’s Primary School in Ayr. With increased confidence, she now attends other CLD programmes and participates enthusiastically, often alongside her children.

Iqra is particularly enthusiastic about the allotment project. She frequently checks on the allotment and encourages her children to water the plants. She has shared that she sometimes visits the allotment to sit in the wellbeing area, enjoying some time for herself. Keen to grow her own vegetables, Iqra appreciates the opportunity as she does not have a garden, similar to many women involved in the project. She continues to benefit from our local CLD provision and feels confident to engage in additional projects.



The group also produced a video, please see link below:-



The Say It Out Loud Award supports local young people to develop meaningful programmes, activities and resources that are well matched to learner needs. Young people taking part in the award have a say on sufficient decisions relating to improving mental health support available within their school; this includes creating key initiatives to reduce barriers felt by local young people.

All young people participating gained valuable skills to set up Mental Health Wellbeing (MHWB) Committees within their School/Community and to become MHWB Ambassadors. Effective foundations have been laid to support MHWB Ambassadors to gather views of their peers and identify key areas to

lead programmes and shape the MHWB action plans and policies.

Through the use of evaluations and consultations majority of young people participating within the SIOL award reported an improved understanding and awareness of their rights, felt their rights are respected and supported, and are participating in positive opportunities to build friendships and join new groups. Video evidence reported that the role of Mental Health Ambassadors have helped young people feel more comfortable to talk about their feelings/concerns, increase understanding of their feelings/emotions, improve knowledge of support available and feel calmer in school environments and hall ways.



15 Primary Schools and 5 secondary schools registered with SIOL Award taking a whole school approach in order to promote mental health effectively.

9 Schools achieved and evidenced meeting the needs of the 8 principles of the Scottish Government Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing.

5 Schools completed level 2 of the Award and working towards level 3 (2 Primary and 2 Secondary)

Salus Occupational Health, Safety & Return to Work Services

SALUS is a pan-Ayrshire project that aims to support people back with health barriers back into employment.

The Working for a Healthy Economy initiative was launched in May 2021 to support Ayrshire residents who cannot contribute to the economy fully due to poor health.

Teaming up with NHS Salus, Working for a Healthy Economy provides individuals immediate contact with a health professional who can assess their circumstances to better manage any new/existing health conditions.

This support is fully funded by the Ayrshire Growth Deal with no charge to individuals or local businesses. Working for a Healthy Economy can support people who are in employment and also people who are unemployed.

Over the next five years, the AGD team hope to support around 7,500 Ayrshire residents. By offering an integrated Ayrshire health & employability support service, 4629 unemployed individuals and 2871 employees with the aim of at least 25% securing sustainable employment and at least 85% retaining/safeguarding employment.

SALUS has supported the following individuals from 2021 – 2024:-



Project Year	Referred	Engaged
2021/2022	169	101
2022/2023	279	150
2023/2024	290	153
April to 24/06	47	19

Priority 3 Employability & Volunteering - Support Our Communities to Progress



South Ayrshire's Local Employability Partnership (LEP) is a well-established partnership and has clear links to local strategic plans, including Community Learning and Development plan and South Ayrshire's Volunteering Strategy 2021.

The LEP is made up of representative from South Ayrshire Council, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Ayrshire College, Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce & Developing Scotland's Young Workforce (DYW), NHS and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), as the Third Sector Interface.

The LEP are fully committed to improving volunteering, training and employment opportunities for young people and adults and lead the planning, decision-making and implementation of volunteering and employability provision across South Ayrshire to ensure individual needs and labour market demands are met.

The LEP ensures local data informs decisions and reflects service delivery priorities to make best use of resources that maximises value for participants whilst contributing to local and national policy ambitions.

In line with the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind and UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund priorities the LEP ensure there are real, meaningful, work experience and training opportunities available.

Thriving Communities and LEP Partners develop and deliver a range of and employability programmes that help residents of South Ayrshire gain skills, confidence and access to support to help them achieve their employment goals, relevant to the local labour market.

We recognise the benefits of volunteering in a participants' learning and employability journey and utilise the knowledge, expertise and reach of the third sector, via VASA, in the design and delivery of services.

A wide range of programmes are offered that are tailored to meet the needs of individuals with enhanced support provided for care experienced young people and young carers, those who require specialised supported employment, parents from priority family groups and ex-offenders.

Our focus is on the impact service delivery has on participants with emphasis on progression through the employability pipeline. There are robust monitoring and tracking systems in place allowing the LEP to report on the outcomes of all participants.

Main Objectives:-

- To reduce levels of child poverty by supporting parents from the priority family groups to increase their income from employment;
- To reduce inequality in the labour market by supporting those further from the labour market to increase their income from employment.
- Ensuring employability support is embedded within a wider range of services that wrap-around the individual, including building relationships with various stakeholders and partnerships locally
- Employability support is embedded within a wider range of services that wrap-around the individual; developing place based, integrated offers of support for participants- especially parents, in line with Best Start, Bright Future ambitions.
- Build relationships with various stakeholders and partnerships locally, including Child Poverty Leads



- To increase the number of local people engaged in volunteering opportunities.
- To work with Volunteering Engaging Organisations to create a diverse range of volunteering opportunities to suit all.
- Increase the number of young people registering for Saltire.
- Encourage Volunteering Engaging Organisations to work towards best practice standards

School Leaver Destination Report (SLDR)

Over the past three years South Ayrshire have been in the top four councils across the country for the number of young people progressing to a positive destination on leaving school (SLDR)

- **98.1%** 2022/23 (Published Feb 24) surpassing national average 95.9%
- **97.3%** (Follow Up Report Published 18 June 2024) national average 92.8%
- **98.6%** 2021/22 (Published Feb 23) surpassing national average 95.7%
- **96.9%** (Follow Up Report Published August 23) national average 93.5%
- **98.3%** 2020/21 (Published Feb 22) surpassing national average 95.5%
- **97.6%** (Follow Up Report Published June 2022) national average 93.2%

Participation Measure

Reports on the number of 16 – 19year olds participating in education, training or employment. Since 2022 Thriving Communities have had a real focus on ensuring young people aged 16-19years are supported into further education, training or employment and the work of the team since 2022 is reflect in the undernoted data:

- Published data (August 23) notes South Ayrshire’s rate of **96.6%** surpassing the national average of 94.3%
- Published data (August 22) notes South Ayrshire’s rate of **93.7%** surpassing the national average of 92.4%
- Published data (August 21) notes South Ayrshire’s rate of **91.8%** which was just below the national average of 92.2%

Tailored Jobs

Since 2021 Thriving Communities have created **14 tailored, part-time jobs**. These jobs were specifically created for people with additional support needs who are ready to progress into the world of work. Thriving Communities work with colleagues across the council to create job opportunities specifically designed to suit each individual person’s circumstances. The jobs are designed around the skills, interests, and capabilities of the person, and supported throughout by a dedicated Thriving Communities Officer.



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Evolve Programme

The Evolve Programme offers parents 6months paid employment within the local authority or with 3rd sector organisations, giving them the experience of fair and flexible employment and enhancing the prospects of permanent employment to suit their individual needs around parental responsibilities. Since 2021 **74 parents** have taken part in the Evolve Programme.

Employer Recruitment Incentive (ERIs)

Over the last 3 years Thriving Communities have supported 137 local businesses to take on an individual through a permanent contract of employment.

Employer Recruitment Incentives play an important role in not only supporting local businesses but supporting individuals to gain sustainable employment.

Modern Apprentices

South Ayrshire Council offer Modern Apprentices to young people aged 16 to 19, or up to 29yrs for people who are care experienced/young carer and/or have an additional support.

Whilst completing their apprenticeship the MA works towards the relevant work-based qualification. Modern Apprenticeships are available at a variety of levels, all mapped to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

From 2021 Thriving Communities have supported **187 MAs** in a range of occupational areas including the recruitment of our first Adult Craft Trade Apprenticeships within Property Maintenance.

South Ayrshire Council	Care Experienced MAs	National Average
2020-21	12.5%	1.7%
2021-22	12.7%	2%
2022-23	5.5%	2.1%

Stats show Thriving Communities have well surpassed the national average over the last 3years

Please scan the QR code to hear about Lauren’s journey into employment.





It has been a long journey to try and get local people once more engaged in volunteering post COVID. VASA have worked using different methods including road shows, social media and by attending events to promote volunteering.

Over the last three years:-

- Over 700 people have been interviewed looking to volunteer
- 918 local people have received a South Ayrshire Volunteer Award
- 683 young people have signed up for a Saltire award
- Young people have volunteered 18,892 hours
- 19 Saltire Summit awards have been achieved
- 842 individual volunteering opportunities have been advertised – in most cases each individual opportunity requires in excess of 5 volunteers.
- 4 organisations have achieved Volunteer Friendly
- 2 Organisations have achieved Investors in Volunteers
- 1 intergenerational event took place

South Ayrshire Volunteer Awards

An amazing army of volunteers were honoured on Thursday 6th June 2024 for their tireless work across South Ayrshire. To celebrate the 40th Anniversary of National Volunteers' Week, Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) hosted the South Ayrshire Volunteer Awards event in Ayr Town Hall to say 'thank you' to the local heroes who step up to support people in communities across South Ayrshire.

More than 500 nominations were received, with each nominated volunteer receiving an award certificate. Volunteers were nominated by 31 local and national organisations. Around 200 volunteers attended the awards ceremony, where they enjoyed refreshments, a light buffet, entertainment, and a round of applause as their names were read out in a roll of honour.

This year's awards also recognised and valued not only the organisations offering volunteering opportunities but also the significant contributions made over long periods. In commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of National Volunteers' Week, the awards highlighted the achievements of thirteen organisations that have been operating in South Ayrshire for forty years or more. The event underscored the vital role that volunteers and organisations play in fostering strong, supportive, and vibrant communities in South Ayrshire.



Darren's Journey



Darren was referred to VASA for volunteering by the Carers Centre in Ayr in February 2024. He had not previously volunteered, and was interested in gaining more experience in the community and building his confidence. Darren has additional support needs and had previously had some difficulty finding opportunities to volunteer independently.

Darren came into VASA with his mum, Diane, and met with Sarah. They had a chat about Darren's different interests and support needs, and shortlisted some ideas of voluntary opportunities based on Darren's passion and interest for healthcare. Darren was supported by VASA to prepare for volunteer interviews, and after a few visits to different organisations, he was successfully placed with St John Scotland as a CPR volunteer. At the volunteer induction meeting, Darren's mum, Diane, was inspired to also sign-up as a volunteer. Both Darren and Diane are ecstatic about their volunteer placements and look forward to the opportunity to share CPR knowledge with the next generation in local schools and academies.

Intergenerational Event



The Age Without Limits Action Day was an event which sought to contest the often adverse and stereotypical depiction of older individuals which can be prevalent in our society. Belmont Academy volunteers joined forces with South Ayrshire's Ageing Well Champions Board to bring together a mix of over 50s and S2 pupils.

The day was filled with activities and dialogues, bringing together over 70 individuals to participate in walking football matches, 'new tech' demonstrations, craft activities, a Trishaw demonstration from Cycling Without Age, and even enjoying a showcase of historic and retro items from local library collections.

The day ended with stimulating debates on ageism, a fun game of Beetle and a certificate of participation for everyone present. All young people at the event received a Saltire Award for their voluntary contribution to the day.

The event was a great success and fostered connections that might not have occurred otherwise thanks to the efforts of volunteers spanning various generations.

Health & Wellbeing



Thriving Communities offer a variety of volunteering opportunities and programmes to support young people and adults to develop skills for life and employment. The Active Schools Leadership Academy begins with the Junior Coaching Academy in P7 and offers opportunities through leadership in sport, dance and ambassadorial roles through to S6. Young people will volunteer their time to complete a range of qualifications and support the delivery of sport and physical activity across schools and communities, they will also receive the Saltire Award to acknowledge their contribution as volunteers.



There is a placement programme in place to support students from Ayrshire College, UWS and other FE/ HE establishments out with South Ayrshire providing the environment and opportunities for students to satisfy their course requirements and progress to other volunteering opportunities in schools and across South Ayrshire communities. Each placement is varied to provide each student

with the best experience in addition to real time work experience to help support and influence future career paths. Dolphin House routinely provided day and residential placement opportunities for pupils attending school within South Ayrshire, Scottish and International students studying at Moray House and beyond, and volunteers via The Outdoor Partnership and Project Search. (infographic / case study attached plus figures in chart below).

Young people taking part in The Duke Of Edinburgh's Award will complete their volunteering section which can be anywhere between 3 and 18 months depending on the level of the award. Volunteering opportunities often include support to local communities for social action, within local organisations such as youth groups or sports clubs, or within charitable organisations.



Targeted support to individuals and groups to access volunteering opportunities across the full team are provided via Employability's Workout programme, Project Search, Family First referrals and via other internal and external partnerships as required.

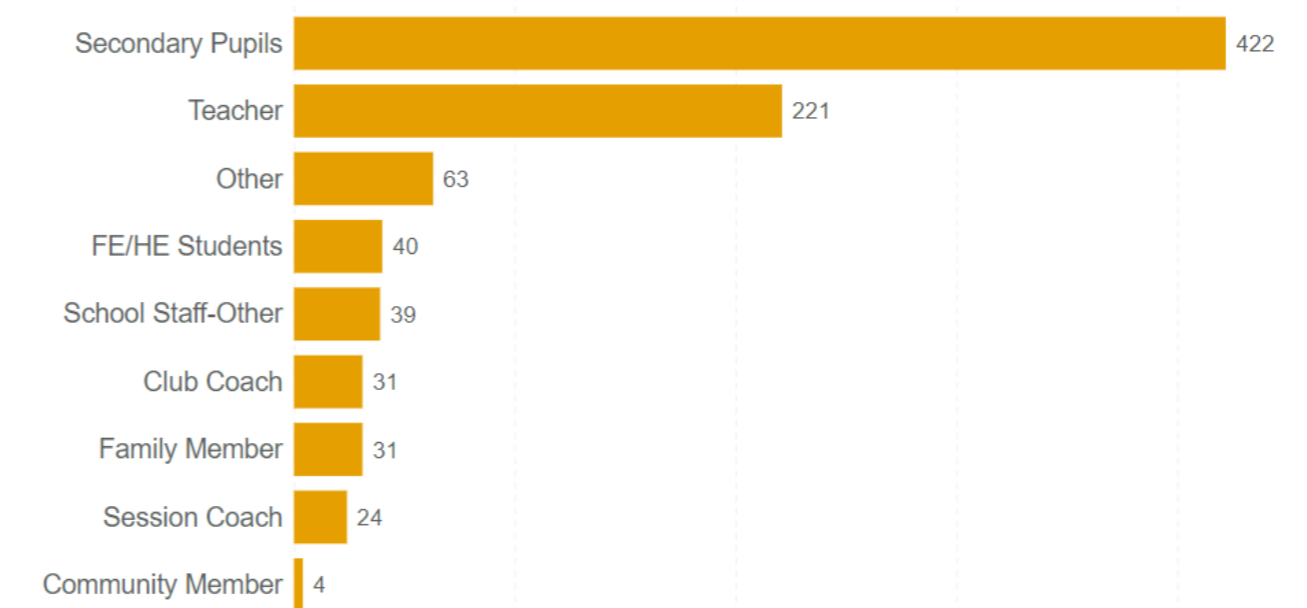
Thriving Communities provide a wide range of volunteering opportunities for adults to volunteer as sport and physical activity coaches, event support, expedition leaders with the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Cycling Without Age and Walking for Health Leaders. The team offer a range of coach education and training opportunities to volunteers such as National Governing Body Awards, first aid training, walk leader training, safeguarding, CLPL for school staff and ongoing mentoring and support. (152 volunteers took part in training opportunities during 22/23 in addition to 35 current qualified walk leaders)

An annual Sports Awards is held to recognise and celebrate the contribution volunteers make to a huge variety of sport and physical activity provision across South Ayrshire.



The total number of volunteer opportunities within the Active Schools programme reported to Sport Scotland in 22/23:-

Number of deliverers by type



Priority 4

Adult & Family Learning - Improved Outcomes for Adults & Families

Adult Learning happens in a variety of places, in a range of ways for any number of reasons. We continue to develop and deliver programmes that are relevant and accessible to our communities. We want all learning to be life long, life wide and learner centred. We aspire to establish adult learning as a route into community involvement and personal empowerment. CLD, will facilitate the development of digital skills that adult learners in the community may need, to access all opportunities to further learning, employability, or involvement in their community. We continue to cultivate digital confidence in parents, to ensure that each child thrives in their home, social and school environment.

Over the course of the past 12 months, the local authority has delivered a range of interventions to improve outcomes for adults and families. Some of our achievements are noted below:

- 258 programmes delivered over the last 3 years
- 37% learners highlighting an improvement in their skills
- 75% participants have increased knowledge
- 23% people have improved their employability outcomes
- 340 accredited learning places were delivered between 2021 - 2024
- In addition, the use of Social Media channels, course bulletins, and posters/flyers as well as open day events and consultations continue to be utilised to increase awareness of opportunities available to our local communities.

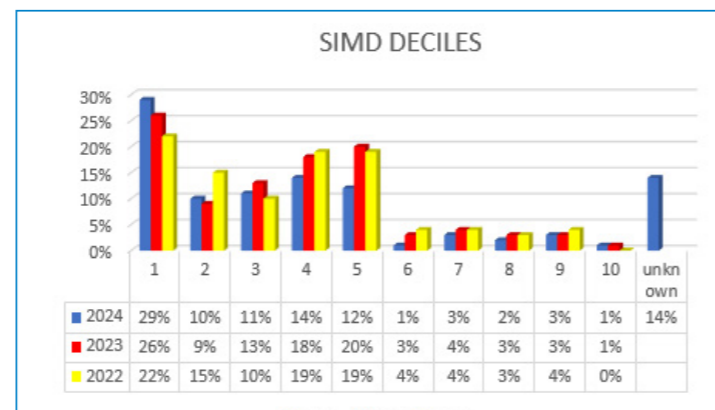
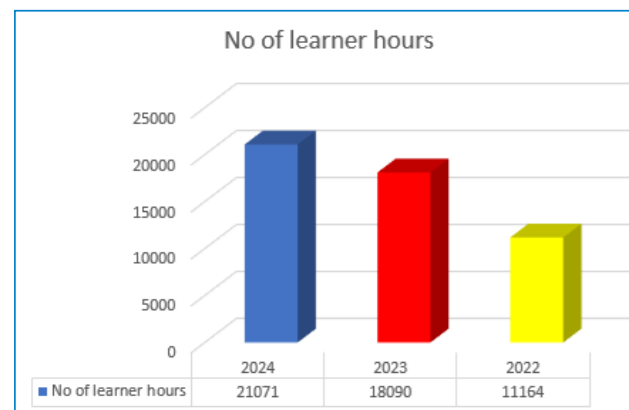
In addition to the above, these stats below demonstrate the impact our work is having on learners:

Learner Hours

These learners took part in 50,324 learning hours which included the SWAP programme and HNC Childhood Practice courses in Girvan as well as South Ayrshire wide adult literacies and ESOL provision. Over the three year period 113 family learning programmes were delivered involving 479 parents.

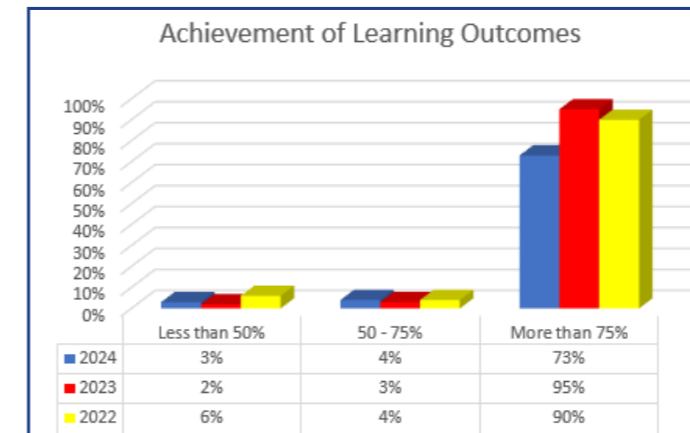
SIMD Data

Between 2021 – 2024, 47% of learners resided in the Deciles 1 - 3 and 83% resided in Deciles 1 – 5. This demonstrates that learning programmes are targeted at the areas of greatest need.



Learners Achieving Learning Outcomes

Of the learners completing the programmes, 92% of learners achieved more than 75 % of learning outcomes.

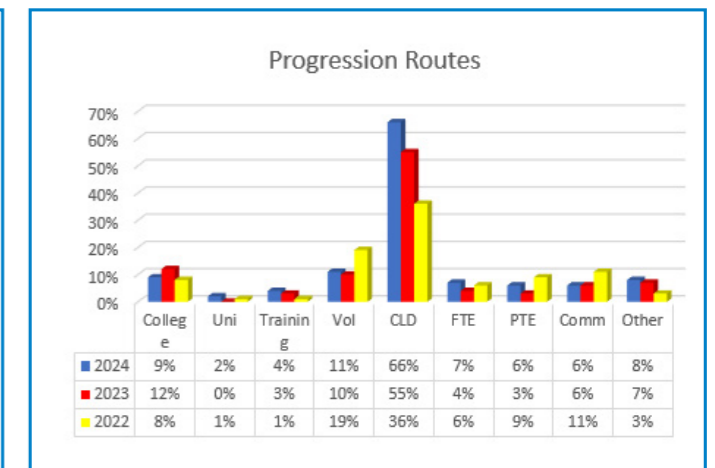
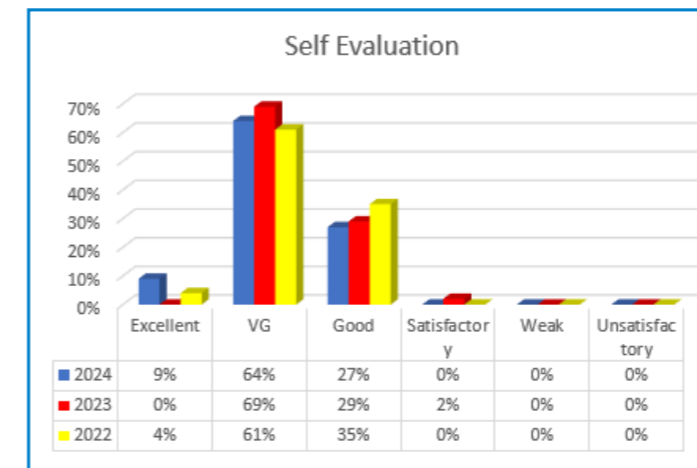


Overall Learning Experience

Learners rated their overall learning experience highly. 99% of all learners, rated their Learning Experience as Very Good or Good.

Self Evaluation

Using Quality Indicator 5.1 (Delivering the learning offer with learners) from the How Good is our Learning and Development in our Community framework, key workers evaluated all work carried out in South Ayrshire as very good or good.



CBAL Annual Report 21-24 - Key Stats

Number of programmes	258
Family Learning programmes	113
Number of learning places	3066
Hours of learning	50,324
Numbers completing	2752
Accreditation	38%

Learner Progression:

College	167
Uni	12
Training	48
Volunteering	204
CLD	903
FTE	85
PTE	86



Community Based Adult Learning Recovery Fund

The Scottish Government provided a Covid-19 recovery investment for community-based adult learning (CBAL) to support local adult learning recovery needs in the financial year 2021/22. The investment was issued to VASA with the expectation that they collaborate with South Ayrshire Council’s adult learning and CLD leads. Together, through the Employability and Lifelong Learning Partnership, we agreed how the investment could best support local adult learning needs as identified in our CLD plan.

Our CBAL Recovery Fund met the following outcomes:

- Adult learners shaped and informed decisions on the diverse opportunities and support they needed to help them recover from the impact of COVID-19 and re-engage in learning.
- Increased engagement, re-engagement and support for adult learners and communities who needed it most, including those disproportionately disadvantaged by COVID-19.
- Increased access to face to face learning opportunities with a focus on supporting educational, social and emotional recovery and renewal.
- Increased digital inclusion through the development of digital skills and the improvement of digital infrastructure for learning.
- Improved support for adult learners’ mental health and well-being.
- Increased opportunities for adult learners to improve their health and well-being.
- Stronger social connections between adult learners, their communities and wider networks to tackle isolation and loneliness.
- Improved partnership working across providers which supports the delivery of education recovery and renewal.
- Improved outcomes for adult learners through, for example, the achievement of qualifications and the provision of positive pathways that build confidence and develop skills for learning, life and work.

Please scan the QR code to watch our videos on Adult Family & Learning support:-



Key Achievements

- 12 people successfully gained Food Hygiene certificate and are now able to use community kitchen for events in community and support local Food Pantry
- 11 successfully completed course and now able to support community events as first aiders
- 12 local people attended NHS “I CAN COOK” course
- 36 learners noted they had improved family learning support
- 6 families with complex needs participated in an intensive family engagement programme and benefited from having positive family interaction where peer support was evident - 1 child who hasn’t been to school for a significant period was supported by his parent to start to try attending for two hours - 1 care experience family reported better communication with the young person – 2 families reported they had a good family experience that they have not experienced before
- 66 Industry recognised certificates gained by learners through the REHIS, Emergency First Aid courses and Bar Licence
- Improved employment situation -12 learners; Improved volunteering situation - 29 learners
- Learned new knowledge - 29 learners; Gained Skills – 23 learners
- Improved Mental Health & wellbeing – 23 learners
- 14 community volunteers gained First Aid in the Workplace certification
- On the practical kitchen skills course 4 of the group gained their first SQA qualification with 4 others achieving their first qualification at SCQF Level 6; 2 were able to continue their employment as a result of passing both exams and 1 gained new employment at a higher rate of pay (previous employment at minimum wage)



Pathway to a career in Early Years A Partnership Approach

In February 2020 we piloted a SWAP – Access to Childhood Studies course delivered by Ayrshire College in The Carrick Opportunities Centre in Girvan.

Through the pilot 10 students started the SWAP – Access to Childhood Studies course delivered by Ayrshire College in The Carrick Opportunities Centre in Girvan. SWAP is the Scottish Wider Access Programme aimed at supporting adult learners into Higher Education and is specifically designed for adults who are returning to education after a gap, and who have the motivation and ability to go on to study at university or for a higher-level qualification at college. Students were drawn to this course as it was local, and it worked around school hours. Due to covid restrictions a large part of the course was delivered online with students being supported to do so with access to laptops and online support. As restrictions began to ease the students returned to face to face learning one day a week whilst the rest of the course was delivered online. This wasn't easy for students, but they supported each other and worked hard to complete the course.

On successfully completing the SWAP programme, Ayrshire College delivered a 'Preparation for Childhood Studies course. This course supported the SWAP learners in preparing for an HNC course. Five of these students progressed on to the HNC Childhood Studies course and another 8 learners joined.

All 13 students have successfully passed the course and are now fully qualified Early Years' Practitioners. The students described this course as "life changing" and said that if it weren't for this course, they would either be unemployed or working in a job that they didn't enjoy, and which was unfulfilling. The students are very grateful for the support that they received from Ayrshire College staff and South Ayrshire Council's Thriving Communities team who supported learners from the start of their journey and continue to do so as they now progress into employment. Students had the opportunity to go on a placement to gain

experience and to build their confidence one student said that "placement has given me a vast amount of knowledge and experience". The students have grown throughout this course in many ways with one student saying, "this course have given me the confidence to believe in myself for the first time ever." Elizabeth Lyon the lecturer for the course has said "I am thrilled at the hard work, determination and commitment the students have shown and I am so proud of their success throughout this educational journey".

One student is furthering their learning and is moving on to university to Study Primary Teaching and feels that this course has giving them the confidence to progress on to university. All other



students have signed up to South Ayrshire Council's Thriving Communities Employability and Skills programme where they will receive support to secure a career in Early years.

The course has continued for new cohorts throughout the period of this plan due to the success of the initial pilot. Through delivering more courses further progression routes have been identified with a number of people successfully gaining a place at the University of the West of Scotland to study Childhood Studies.

Literacies



The Adult Literacies team of 6 Literacies Development Officers continue to deliver critical programmes to adults looking to improve their reading, writing, spelling, numeracy, and IT skills.

We are currently working with 28 learners registered with the service

As part of the Ageing Well focus in South Ayrshire we have been delivering support to sheltered housing units across localities

For those learners who, for a variety of reasons, have not been able to attend our groups, we provide one to one tuition. This has very much been learner led and has been taught to a variety of needs, levels and interests.

Each learner has a bespoke programme of work designed to tackle exactly the literacy issues they face whether that is budgeting, reading official letters, measuring and weighing or simply reading for pleasure.

Learners are paired with their own tutor and meet throughout Thriving Communities localities.

We have delivered 12 bespoke training sessions for Literacies and ESOL volunteers and currently have over 70 active volunteers on our database. Many of the current volunteers have moved into sessional employment in the Literacies/ESOL team. They have benefitted from workforce development and have been supported in achieving the PDA ITESOL at Ayrshire college and more recently at Dundee.

ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)

Thriving Communities are currently supporting 119 active learners across South Ayrshire. Tutors have supported small groups or provided one to one support to people to help build confidence, improve their chances of employment and at the same time, integrating into the community. Thriving Communities have worked with 15 different linguistic profiles over the period of the plan.

Thriving Communities have provided pre-literacies programmes up to and including SCQF Level 4 with accreditation at Levels 1, 2 and 3 (SQA approved support arrangement with Ayrshire college)

The ESOL programme has seen significant engagement and expansion:-

- **Ukrainian Cohort:-** The Ukrainian learners have transitioned from hotel accommodations to social housing. Many of these learners require support for IELTS and equivalence of Ukrainian qualifications for professional purposes. Collaboration with Skills Development Scotland facilitates these needs, with structured evening sessions to support higher-level accreditation.
- **Separated Children:-** Access to mandatory education supports wider learning needs and



linguistic development for separated children. Due to the increased demand from the Ukrainian crisis, the English as an Additional Language (EAL) offer in schools is limited. Thriving Communities have provided ESOL support to initially 9 children, this number has risen to 23. The objectives for this group include language development, socialisation, and integration

- **Community Interpreting Course:-** South Ayrshire has pioneered the development and delivery of an accredited SCQF Level 5 Community Interpreting course, a first in Scotland. This initiative, in collaboration between South, North and East Ayrshire with WEA and Fife College, has produced six community interpreters who now support language, settlement, and integration efforts across various services.



Learner Profile

Ali was referred to South Ayrshire CLD ESOL provision by the local EAL department in September 2023. He came under the category of a young unaccompanied person. He was separated from his country in Africa and his family. Ali was 16 and did not understand any English. This disadvantaged Ali at school, as he was placed in the year relevant for his age but he did not have the required language skills to immerse himself in the school curriculum.

Ali was placed at Kyle Academy where the EAL department gave him language support within the school environment. However, he needed exposure to everyday reading and writing, along with contextualised speaking and listening opportunities. In September 2023, he started attending the ESOL community classes at the Wallace Tower, Ayr. This provision follows an ESOL methodology and targets literacy gaps which most separated children encounter.

Ali started to learn the alphabet, sounds of letters, symbols, how to write on lines and copy accurately. He soon progressed onto reading simple texts and writing basic sentence structures.

Within class Ali offered peer support to other young people. He has gained confidence and has decided to leave school to allow him to attend a full time ESOL course at Anniesland College in August 2024. He has commented how the ESOL CLD Wednesday sessions have helped him and he wishes he had had longer sessions rather than the 1.5 hours once a week.

The team have made substantial progress in delivering adult literacies and ESOL programmes, responding adeptly to the challenges posed by fluctuating learner numbers and diverse community needs. Continued collaboration and innovation will ensure the sustained impact of these initiatives.

Priority 5 Community Empowerment & Engagement – Supporting our Communities to Thrive

A key role for CLD practitioners is Community Engagement. Over the past 12 months, we have supported and encouraged our communities to share their views on how their needs are best met and influence how services should be delivered, which has given communities the power to make and share decisions on how services are delivered. We have made significant strides to improve placemaking and create local place plans by listening to our communities, empowering them to take control and enable greater choices in how they lead their day to day lives.

We have made progress in supporting our local Community Councils to flourish. We have 23 active Community Councils being supported by Thriving Communities Officers from South Ayrshire Council. The Community engagement team have delivered a range of supports including:-

- Carrying out a contested election in 7 areas. This included issuing 19,000 ballot papers and overseeing the counting process
- Delivered Link officer training, facilitated for TC staff
- Finalised the new Scheme of Establishment and Guidance for Community Councils
- Delivered training for new and existing Community Councillors – 6 sessions, afternoon and evening in Troon, Ayr and Girvan as well as upskills Community Council office bearers from various community councils to support independent panels processes for complaint panels.
- Processed all Admin Grants/Accounts
- Finalised dissolved Community Councils who never established after the elections
- Worked with Community Councils to ensure they had an updated Constitution
- Consultation with 2 Community Council areas regarding a change to boundaries
- Consultation with Community Councils’ regarding amendments to the Scheme for Establishment.

Thriving Communities have been supporting Community Councils to develop Community-led action plans.

Since Sep 2023, Thriving Communities has been:

- Developing surveys based on ‘How Good is Our Place’ for the communities with questions adapted to the village/town.
- Developing surveys for children in P4, P5, P6, P7 to encourage discussion about ways to improve their place and community.
- Supporting Community Councils with consultations to develop an action plan with a list of priorities and aspirations for their communities, with short, medium and long term objectives.
- Engaging with local primary and secondary schools for the promotion and administration of village and/or town consultations.
- Supporting community councils to forward their action plans to council officials and teams for project development.
- Making sure that the shift to developing a local place plan is easy.

Towns/villages currently at different stages in the process of developing a community-led action plan.

Towns/villages who have been contacted but process is currently paused.

We have also supported local community groups with funding support and have continued to build good working relationships with community groups and social enterprises across all of our localities, developed connections with key funders (NCCBC, ARIA, Grant Nav System, Foundation Scotland, Scottish Land Fund, Robertson Trust, National lottery), redesigned and launched the new updated Funding Alert which has had positive feedback, designed and launched new grant making processes and developed further the positive partnership work between South Ayrshire Council and VASA.

Some strengths include:-

- 55 Dedicated funding reports developed
- £699,748k investment to communities (int)
- £4.9m of external funding delivered
- Regeneration Capital Grant Fund – we supported 2 applications proceed to Stage 2 which were successful for Pinwherry & Pinmore Community Development Trust who received £197, 633 and the Maybole New Stables Lane Scheme who received £959,807.
- In January 2023 an additional Funding Officer was appointed to support the final 2 years provision from the UKSPF for Community Empowerment Fund and contribution towards Participatory Budgeting:-
 - Participatory Budgeting – In 2023, £15,000 was allocated to South Carrick. In 2024 a total of £89,036.00 has been allocated, panel decisions will be made in August.
 - For 2024 a total of £105,000 has been allocated to the Community Empowerment Fund, panel decisions are currently in process.
- Coastal Communities Fund – we managed the CCF grant process and since 2021 27 groups were awarded funding totalling £350,296
- We submitted a proposal to access LACER funding to establish a Social Enterprise Growth & Resilience Fund (SEGAR) and a Cost of Living Grant fund. £200k was allocated for the development of the SEGAR Fund and £100,000 for the Cost of Living grant. A total of 13 groups have been successful obtaining SEGAR funding with a total of £171, 189 being allocated. For the Cost of Living grant a total of 13 groups were successful and the full £100,000 was allocated
- We provided support to 97 organisations over the period of this plan.



Partnership work with



Funding Extravaganza

A funding extravaganza was developed to take place in Ayr Town Hall in October 2023. This consisted of significant national funders being invited to South Ayrshire to take part in presentations to our community groups and then participate in a Q&A session.

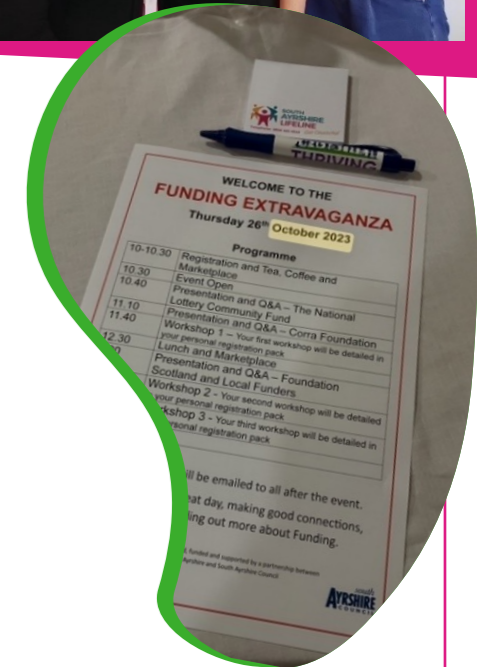
Presenting on the day were The National Lottery Community Fund, The Corra Foundation and Foundation Scotland.

As well as the Presentations we developed a number of workshops that our community representatives could take part in, these included:-

- Funding Ready
- Application Form Hints and tips
- Fundraising
- Community Benefits
- Evaluation Ready

There was also a market place stall during the intervals and at lunch time where the groups could go and introduce themselves to funders and ask questions.

Over 100 community representatives attended on the day and the feedback from the evaluations was very positive.



Locality based Funding surgeries

In 2024 a total of 5 localised funding surgeries have been held. Community groups have been invited to attend half hour slots to meet face to face with our dedicated National Lottery Funding Officer.

To date 45 groups have managed to speak directly with the National Lottery to discuss their funding bids, as well as with VASA staff and Thriving Communities Funding Officer for additional capacity building support and advice.

Impact statements from community organisations:

“We have received tremendous support from Thriving Communities, this has helped us navigate the challenges of fundraising for our charities and has resulted in successful funding awards.”

“Navigating through potential funding sources can be very challenging and time consuming for community volunteers. Thriving Communities has been, and continues to be extremely helpful to us as we try to identify sources of funding. As a result of Thriving Communities guidance and advice we have submitted a number of successful grant funding applications.”

“The support and guidance we have received from Thriving Communities has been crucial to our success in acquiring vital funding for our projects development. Thriving Communities have engaged with us extensively by visiting the building, recommending suitable funds, and delivering detailed guidance on how to navigate the funding process. This has resulted in receiving funding for architectural development and then progress with a subsequent successful application to bring our beloved building into community ownership for the first time!”

Kincaidston Action

Thriving Communities have been supporting the Kincaidston Action Group Committee to develop a plan for refurbishing the Community Centre. The group has a community lunch drop in and a foodbank on a Wednesday and many community groups use the space including Scouts, dancing fitness classes and the local Church. The Group have a long-term lease of the building and refurbishment of the building was required.

Thriving Communities assisted the group to make a funding application to EB Scotland a landfill tax credit for the upgrade of the all the windows and doors and cushioned flooring all of the corridors and the office in the centre. This was successful and they were granted £25000.

These upgrades will make the building more energy efficient as they have single glazed windows and poorly fitting doors. Through advice from Thriving Communities they also made an application to Community Benefits Scheme and from this they have had a local company who will refurbish the toilets, including the disabled toilets.

The group have planned for the further refurbishment, including upgrading of the heating system to an environmentally friendly option, looking at the internal spaces of the building and insulation for the building to ensure the building is energy efficient as possible.





Lochside Neighbourhood Group

Thriving Communities support the Lochside Neighbourhood Group to advocate and provide services for their Community. The group advocates to services on the community's behalf around issues in the neighbourhood.

Through discussions with community members the group decided that they would like to run a cosy space for people within the community that were struggling with the cost of living crisis. The group, with the assistance of Community Development staff, have applied for funding to run the Cosy Space in the Lochside Community Centre. Initially the group successfully applied to the Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund administered by VASA, their funding from pot was extended to cover March 2023 until March 2024. In addition to this the group were assisted to make a successful application to the Scottish Government's Social Isolation and Loneliness fund for £40000, split over 3 years. They were awarded £6500 to support the Cosy Space and set up a group where people can meet on a weekly basis to develop relationships. This funding will last for 3 years.

The Cosy Space has on average 50 people coming along two days per week. Over the winter months the group were supported to make an application to the South Ayrshire Charitable Trust to purchase food vouchers

and blankets to hand out to people who were particularly struggling at home through the colder months.

The Happy Mondays Group which has been set up in conjunction with Thriving Communities CLD to relive social isolation and loneliness. The group have had 46 people registering to come along with the group averaging 25 people a week. Due to the success of the group and the evidenced need for people to have this type of activity in the area. In March 2024 Thriving Communities Community Development Staff have assisted the group to apply for additional funding to the Robertson Trust's Wee grant programme to help with the additional costs as the group has been more successful than anticipated and to explore other funding sources.



Glendoune – Girvan

The CLD partnership and South Carrick Learning Community Partnership are committed to improving outcomes for people living in Glendoune in Girvan.

During the life of the CLD 2021-2024 plan, significant progress has been made with a sharper focus in improving outcomes for young people and adults while also trying to build capacity within the community.

The appointment of a dedicated Senior Communities Officer has helped address some of the barriers in the area while also coordinating other services who can support mental health, drugs and alcohol and food insecurity.

The 'Glendoune Route Map' that was developed and allowed the community to codesign a plan that would help improve their local area. This plan has ensured an increase in community engagement, increase in funding for the local community while also providing employment and family learning experiences.

The work in Glendoune is something the CLD Partnership are extremely proud of and demonstrates how communities can work together to improve their local area.



Parent

“I have lived here all my life and never saw anything like this happen before. I didn't even know what a Community Worker was until now, it's great to see things like this happen in our community!”





Brian Cooper is far more than just a Community Worker. He is a role model, an advocate for young people and a lifeline to families living in Ayr North. Brian has been the backbone of the Domain Youth Centre for over two decades and has supported thousands of young people from three generations of families to thrive. He has made the Domain far more than just a youth centre, it's a safe community hub where problems are solved and people feel valued, respected and loved.

young people's rights and champions the life changing impacts of youth work.

Although often branded as 'Mr. Domain', Brian's work extends well beyond the four walls of the building. He's maintained close links with social work to support young people most at risk; worked with schools including Ayr Academy and Dalmling Primary to offer alternative curriculum opportunities which support attendance and educational attainment; and engaged young people in their own territory on the street.

Nothing is too much trouble for Brian and he goes out of his way to help anyone who needs it. He is extremely well known, liked and highly respected in the local area and his calming influence is invaluable.

Brian's extensive knowledge of the local area has allowed him to sensitively navigate a complex

Brain was formally recognised as an Outstanding Employee at this year's The Outstanding People Awards after winning the Gold award.

Brian works collaboratively with key community stakeholders to facilitate high quality, universal and targeted youth work opportunities for young people living in some of the most deprived communities in South Ayrshire, and indeed, Scotland. He is a fervent ambassador for

community landscape, utilising his relationships to often have the 'hard conversations' to positively affect change. He truly cares about the bigger picture and seeing young people grow into confident, happy and independent adults is his driving force.

Brian's annual Summer Programme's at the Domain are legendary, offering young people exciting new experiences which are rooted in opportunities for informal learning. There's always a palpable buzz when Brian produces his characteristically analogue Summer Programme display board.

Brian's youth work approach is unapologetically old school but his passion for supporting young

people is infectious. He has skilfully mentored several budding community workers into competent and principled CLD practitioners. People go the extra mile for Brian, simply because he's one of life's good guys.

The staff team's adoration for Brian is immeasurable, everyone only has good things to say about his strong work ethic and loyal nature. He is a highly regarded by community partners but most importantly, by the young people he works with and supports.

Brian's hard work has literally changed the lives' of countless young people. Below is a quote from Lauren, now aged 28, who Brian worked with:

‘That guy. School can be hard; home life can be harder but after a night at the Domain you left full of laughter. The man behind it all is the definition of a gentleman, he made everyone feel so special and welcome. He would open those doors and we would all burst in, excited to hear the next adventure he was planning. Seems so long ago but the memories don't go away, but what I love the most is that guy is still doing it to this day. I see the kids go in on my way home from work and can't help but smile knowing those kids have that guy as their rock. That guy is amazing and his name is Brian, thanks for everything you're one in a million.’

Workforce Development

Thriving Communities have supported 4 members of staff to attend University to gain their CLD qualification.

Senior staff from Thriving Communities took part in Education Scotland's Professional Learning Programme looking at self-evaluation, evaluative writing, improvement actions and improvement planning.

All staff and partners have been upskilled in the new "How Good is our Community Learning and Development 4" framework with sessions delivered to frontline staff, Youth Services Strategic Group, Employability & Lifelong Learning Partnership and the CLD Partnership.

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