



ANNUAL REPORT

★ 2025-2026

“

I WAS REALLY **STRUGGLING AT SCHOOL**. SSF HAS **SUPPORTED** ME AMAZINGLY. IT'S MADE ME GO FROM NOT WANTING TO GO ANYWHERE TO REALLY **BUILDING MY CONFIDENCE** AND GETTING INTO **COLLEGE**.



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**IF I COULD GIVE ONE PIECE OF ADVICE,
IT WOULD BE TO JOIN A YOUTH PANEL
IN YOUR AREA - LARA CARROLL**

Welcome



We are delighted to present SSF's Annual Report for 2025-26

This report celebrates the incredible commitment and impact of the SSF team, who continue to work alongside young people to open up access to sport and physical activity, while providing positive alternatives to antisocial behaviour.

Our focus remains firmly on engaging those who would benefit most, embedding trauma informed approaches within our team and across our partnerships. Through this, we are creating safe, inclusive, opportunities that support young people to reach their full potential.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Kirsty McNab, who, after 13 remarkable years with SSF, moved on to take up a new role with Glasgow 2026. Last year also saw our Chair Maureen McGonigle, step down from the board after 11 years, and we thank her for her inspiring leadership, expertise and unwavering dedication to supporting our mission. We also thank Robin Gilles, who stepped down as a trustee after eight years of exceptional service. Robin's contribution has been invaluable, and we are deeply grateful for his dedication. At the same time, we were delighted to welcome Elle Covell and Martin Kelly as new trustees and look forward to the insight and energy they bring to the Board.

Finally, our Youth Panel continues to go from strength to strength. Their work to raise awareness of the impact of violence on young people and communities, alongside their leadership in promoting greater inclusion in and through sport, has been truly inspiring and remains central to everything we do.

**Dougie Millen SSF CEO &
George Walker SSF Chair**



**As a youth panel member,
I've interacted with and
taken part in many activities
that were designed to help
all sorts of young people
across Scotland.**

But what we do goes beyond discussions. The friendships gained and valuable lessons learned are imperative in shaping an innovative and creative youth panel that I'm proud to be a part of.

If I could give one piece of advice, it would be to join a youth panel in your area if you can, and take as many opportunities that they offer, because it's helped so many across Scotland, including myself, to gain confidence, communication, teamwork and leadership skills and the opportunity to actually make a change for the better for others, which is really rare and special.

**Lara Carroll,
Youth Panel Member**

★ Our Charity

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TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES THROUGH SPORT.

Our vision is a world in which every young person fulfils their potential.

Our mission is to use sport as a catalyst to help young people become healthier and more confident so they are better prepared to combat the effects of poverty, trauma, and adversity.

We work to enable young people living in challenging environments to become champions for good in society. We do this by connecting, listening, and acting; educating and enabling others to expand our impact; creating spaces where young people feel safe and welcome; and harnessing the power of sport.

Our values guide everything we do: **empathy** means we are compassionate, understanding, and always listening; **leadership** means we are decisive, ground-breaking, and experts in our field; **inclusivity** means we are diverse, equitable, and inclusive by design; and **passion** means we approach our work with dedication, love, and care.



★ Our Programmes



SSF CHANCE:2:BE

Our 24 week personal development programme. A safe environment for young people who may be finding it hard to stay in school. This programme offers one-to-one support, personal development workshops on mental health and well-being, job seeking preparation, college visits, training and SCQF accreditations. Alongside our highly trained team, young people build connections with their local communities to introduce them to activities and support networks on hand. And of course, at the heart of this programme is lots of access to sport and physical activity to develop teamwork, social skills, problem solving, resilience and building confidence.



SSF YOUNG LEADERS

This programme empowers young people to take on leadership roles and become positive role models in their communities. For young people aged 14 plus, this programme includes a two day leadership training residential with the chance to meet young people from across the country.

There's regular leadership training on topics like disability inclusion and safeguarding, the chance to volunteer at sporting and local community events with lots of games, sport and physical activity along the way. When ready, young leaders are introduced to other community environments to influence them or to start their own projects.



SSF TWILIGHT

SSF Twilight is an evening, multi-sport and youth work programme. It takes place in communities where antisocial behaviour might occur and where there may not be financially accessible activities for young people in the evening. It provides young people with a safe environment to play games, meet friends and have a hot meal. As well as sport, young people can take part in workshops on mental health, self care, well-being, conflict resolution and managing stress. On site, there are a range of community partners allowing young people to connect with other useful local services, allowing them to develop their support systems.

SSF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Our Education and Training is available throughout Scotland. It provides education, accreditation and well-being programmes for young people, and CPD training for practitioners working in sport and youth work settings. Our training modules support sport and youth work practitioners to create inclusive, supportive and positive environments so that young people have a positive experience of sport and physical activity, regardless of any other inequalities or challenges they are experiencing in their lives. Our tutors deliver learning that is practical, interactive and bespoke to the learners.

ACTIVE PLAY

SSF is an Active Play charity partner and has been delivering programmes in primary schools in North Ayrshire since 2023. The programme supports and enables children to play actively outdoors through structured games and free play; developing physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively through the process.

★ Our Team

Board of Directors Appointments

- ★ George Walker was appointed as chair of the board following the retirement of Maureen McGonigle.
- ★ Martin Kelly and Elle Covell joined the board.
- ★ Succession planning is underway for upcoming board rotation.
- ★ Working groups with board champions in:
 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)
 - Business Sustainability

Youth Panel members by Region

- ★ **Fife:** Chloe Scougall, Erynn McGrath, Sophie Balfour, Lara Carroll.
- ★ **Stirling:** Kyra Morton, Zak Simpson.
- ★ **Glasgow:** Gareth Cuthbert, Kebba Sanneh, Junior Fitzpatrick, Nikita Templeton, Craig McIntyre, Andrew Gough, Wahab Ahmed.
- ★ **North Ayrshire:** Zara Kirkwood, Bryony Sharp.

Staff Changes

- ★ Dougie Millen was appointed as CEO in March following Kirsty McNab's departure in December.
- ★ Jude Reid appointed as the Interim CEO between December to March.
- ★ Keith Gravis appointed Head of Operations and Digital Strategy.
- ★ Rohanna Irvine returned from maternity leave.
- ★ Adam Szymoszowskyj completed his secondment as Acting Head of Programmes. Our thanks to City of Edinburgh Council for their support.
- ★ Mairi Lindsay took on a new role as People, Governance & Safeguarding Manager.
- ★ Andrew Shaw is on secondment with Scottish Athletics, strengthening our partnership.

New Team Members

- ★ Emily Waugh joined the team in Fife.
- ★ Lianne Muirhead joined as Finance Manager and Kirsty Pugh appointed as Fundraiser.
- ★ Eve O'Donnell joined the Glasgow Team.
- ★ Declan Hannah joined the team in North Ayrshire.



★ Our Approach

★ Relationships and Connection

Central and key to our work is relationships and human connection to ensure people feel seen, heard, and valued. Without connection, positive relationships cannot be formed.

★ Person Centred

Our approach is person centred, we work alongside people, we co-produce solutions with young people, giving them choice and autonomy. Things are done that way because it works for them.

★ Trauma Informed

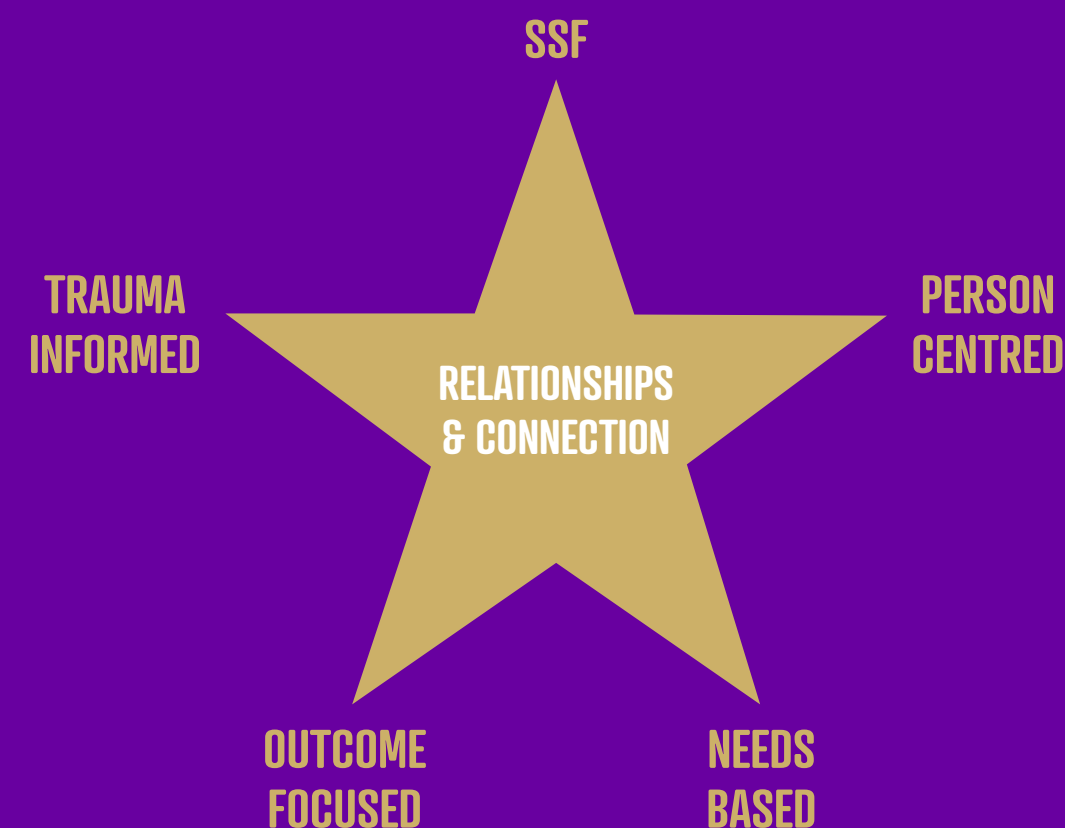
We recognise that trauma and adversity can have a significant impact on individuals and communities, affecting their ability to feel safe and build trusting relationships.

★ Outcome Focused

We focus on the changes and differences we hope to make.

★ Needs Based

We connect with young people and communities to understand their needs, what is missing and what needs are not being met.



★ Our year - Highlights & Outcomes

1,554

New SSF Participants

11,160

Hours of Youth Volunteering

2,012

Total SSF participants
(new and returning)

79

Young People volunteering in
their communities

31

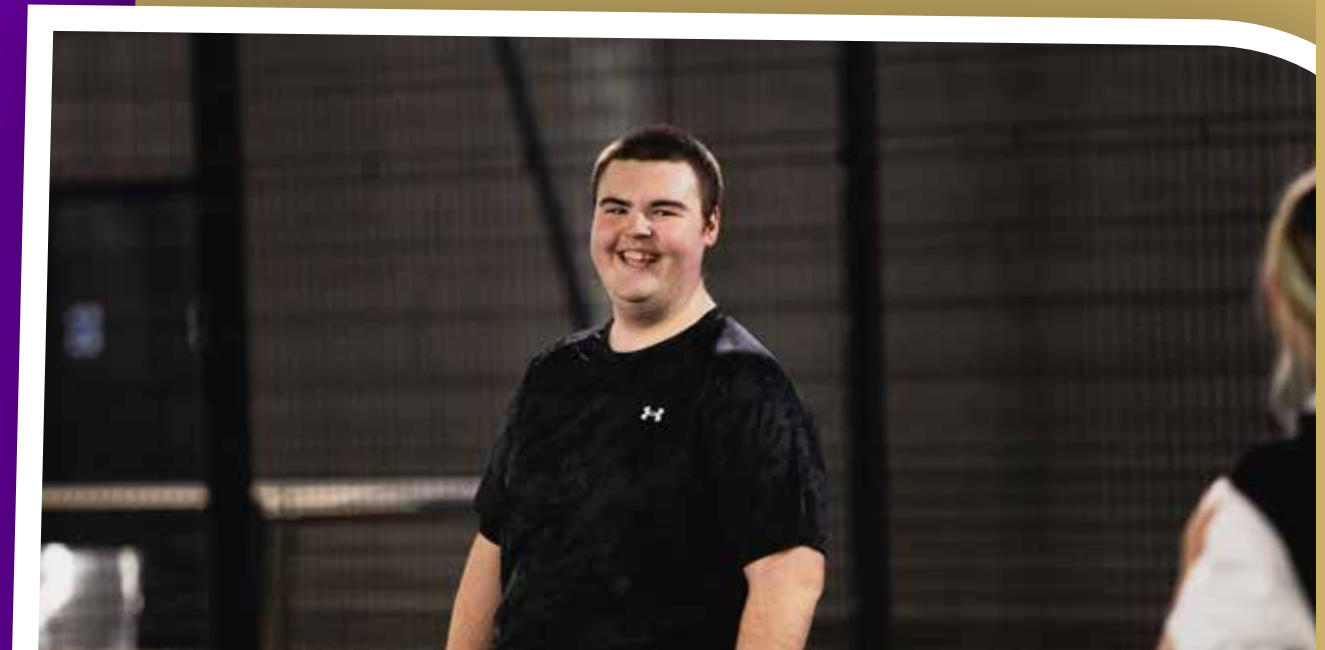
Local Authorities received
SSF Education & Training

141

Hours volunteered on
average by each young
person in their community

1,623

SCQF accreditations achieved

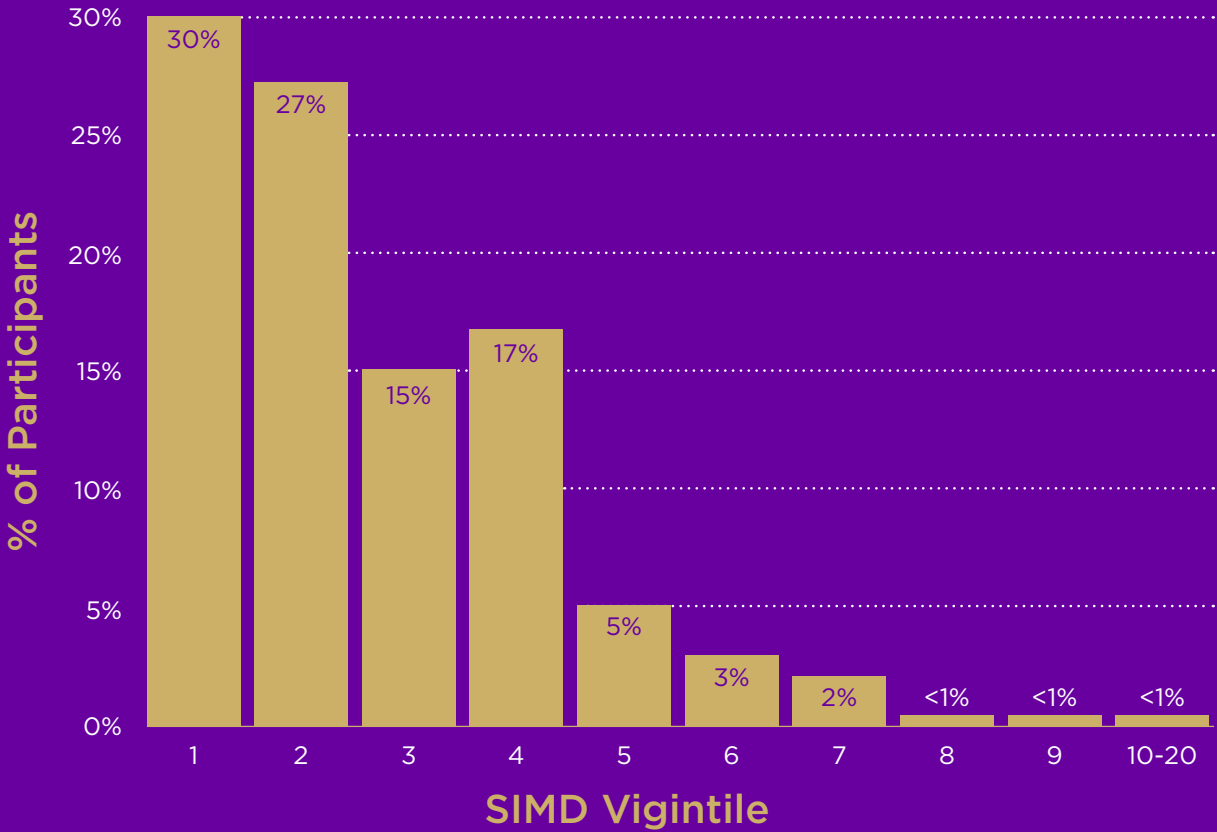


SIMD

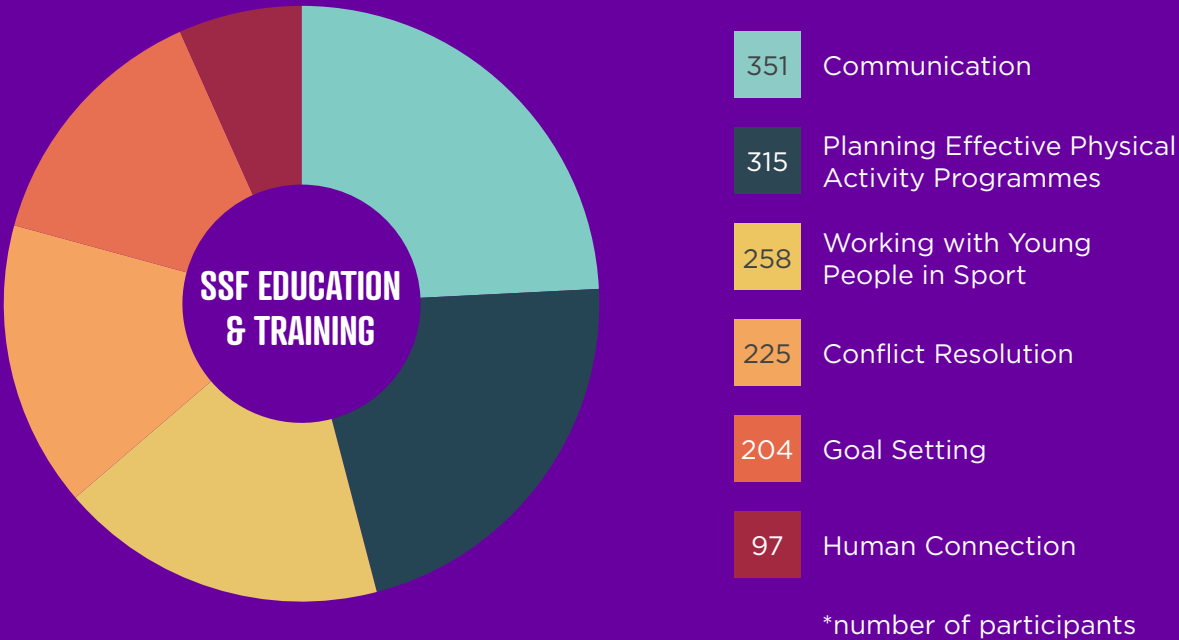
Targeting the Heart of the Community: SSF's Reach into Scotland's Most Deprived Areas

Our programme delivery shows a powerful commitment to social equity. This isn't just outreach —it's impact where it's needed most.

This distribution highlights SSF's strategic focus on bridging opportunity gaps and empowering communities that face the greatest challenges. It's a story of purposeful presence in places where support can make the biggest difference.



Breakdown of SCQF Modules Delivered



*number of participants

Our Annual Outcomes

Young people improve their confidence	
Young people report increased confidence	92%
Young people report they are able to do new things	87%
Young people build resilience and aspirations	
Young people think more about their goals for the future	90%
Young people feel more positive about themselves, their lives, or their futures	87%
Young people feel more able to tackle problems and overcome challenges	88%
Young people have strengthened support networks	
Young people build positive relationships with others	98%
Young people feel more supported by others in their community	85%
Young people report increased knowledge and access of local services available to them	60%
Young people reduce risk taking behaviour	
Young people report positive changes in behaviour	96%
Young people are more aware of the risks around harmful substances	92%
Young people report being less involved in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour	82%
Young people develop physical and personal skills	
Young people report an increase in their skills	99%
Other stakeholders report young people's skills increasing	98%
Total number of individuals completing accreditations	1,106
Total number of SCQF accreditations achieved	1,623
Young people improve their learning, employability & employment options	
Young people report their attendance and/or attainment at school improving	66%
Total number of young people progressing to employment/internships/modern apprenticeships	59
Young people improve their health & wellbeing	
Young people report increases in wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators	96%
Young people report the programme has helped with their mental health	82%
Young people report they are more active since joining the programme	96%
Young people contribute positively to their communities	
Young People volunteering within their community	79
Number of volunteer hours completed by young people	11,160
Young people complete community focussed awards	65
Young people feel their contribution, links with communities & social interaction are improving	55%

★ Our Strategic Priorities

Our mission is driven by a deep commitment to deliver meaningful, sustainable impact across Scotland.

By collaborating with a diverse network of community organisations, health professionals, educators, and local authorities, we ensure that our programmes are responsive, inclusive, and rooted in the needs of the people we serve.

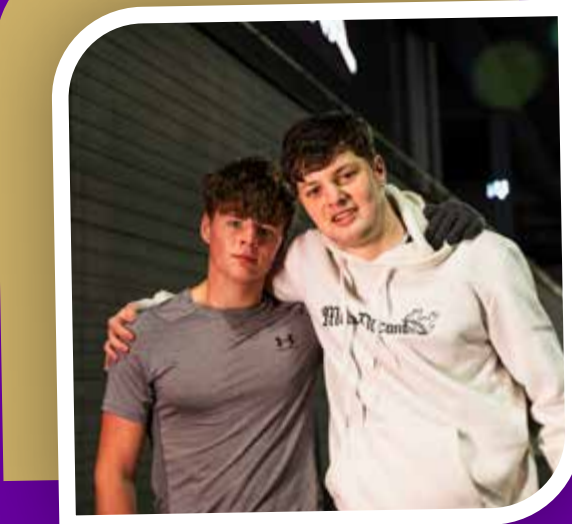
Our strategic priorities reflect our belief in the power of sport and physical activity to transform lives:

★ **Developing People:** We empower young people and those who support them through tailored training, mentoring, and leadership opportunities.

★ **Improving Health and Wellbeing:** We use sport as a tool to promote mental and physical wellbeing. We tackle health inequalities and support individuals to lead healthier, more active lives.

★ **Strengthening Communities:** Through collaborative, place-based approaches, we help build resilient, connected communities. Our work fosters a sense of belonging and collective purpose, ensuring that every voice is heard and valued.

This year's report features a series of case studies that bring these priorities to life—highlighting the real impact of our work and the vital role of our partners in making it possible.



Developing People

From Participation to Leadership: Freya's inspiring journey

At the beginning of her journey 3 years ago, Freya was drifting.

School felt like a place she didn't belong. She was disengaged from her education, lacking confidence, and uncertain about what her future might hold. The idea of trying something new, or taking even small risks, felt overwhelming. She kept herself closed off, unsure of her abilities and hesitant to trust others. Relationships with teachers, career advisors, and community professionals were strained or distant, leaving her without the support network many young people rely on.

Freya wasn't just unsure about her next steps, she wasn't thinking about them at all.

A turning point came when Freya was introduced to SSF through a school nomination to the SSF Chance:2:Be personal development programme. At first, it was simply another opportunity presented to her, but it quickly became something much more meaningful.

Not long after joining, Freya made a bold decision that would mark a turning point in her life. She signed up for the SSF Young Leaders programme and attended a residential, before she knew anyone else involved. For a young person who once avoided new experiences, this was a huge leap.

From that moment on, something shifted. Freya began showing up, again and again. She immersed herself in SSF Young Leaders activities, gradually building confidence, forming connections, and discovering a sense of belonging she hadn't felt before.

Over the next 18 months, Freya gave back to her community in a remarkable way. She volunteered more than 300 hours, supporting SSF Twilight sessions in Dalmarnock and Parkhead. Through her efforts, other young people were able to access safe, positive spaces to stay active and engaged. Freya wasn't just participating anymore, she was leading.

She became a role model. Someone others could look up to. Someone who proved that change was possible.

At the same time, Freya began to reframe her relationship with education. Despite past negative experiences, she committed herself to achieving her National 4 qualifications, knowing that doing so would open doors for her future.

Now, Freya is preparing for her next chapter, progressing onto the new SSF Youth Leadership programme from April 2026 where she'll tackle issues that matter to her and support others facing similar challenges.

Freya's journey is marked by real, tangible success:

- ★ Completion of the SSF Chance:2:Be programme
- ★ Gaining four qualifications through SSF's Education & Training programme
- ★ Progression to college to pursue her future ambitions
- ★ Over 300 hours of volunteering in her community
- ★ Recipient of the SSF Award for Inspiring Journey of the Year.

But beyond the qualifications and awards, the biggest wins are less visible:

- ★ Confidence where there was once doubt
- ★ Purpose where there was once uncertainty
- ★ Connection where there was once isolation

Without SSF, Freya's story could have looked very different. She was at real risk of fully disengaging, not just from school, but from any positive activity or support system. Without intervention, that lack of direction and confidence may have deepened, limiting her opportunities and sense of self-worth.

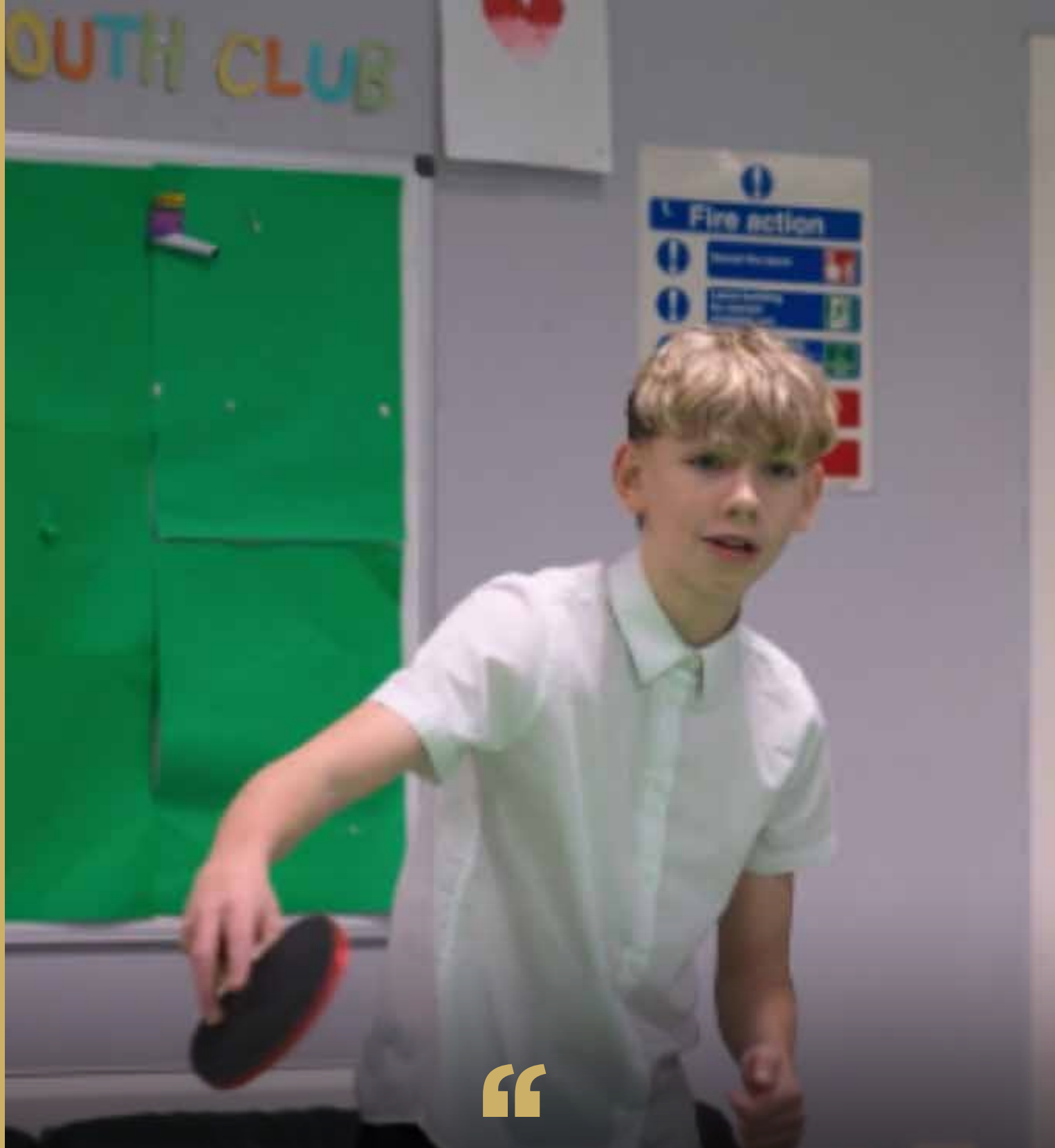
Instead, SSF provided something crucial. A safe space. A place where Freya could be herself, express how she felt, and take chances, without fear of judgment. A place where she was encouraged to try, to fail, to grow, and ultimately to succeed.

Freya's story is not just about participation in a programme, it's about transformation over 3 years. It's about a young person who went from standing still to stepping forward with purpose. From avoiding risk to embracing opportunity. From uncertainty to ambition. And most importantly, it's about discovering that her future is something she can shape, and believe in.



“
I KNOW DOING THIS WILL HELP BY GIVING ME MORE CHOICE OF WHAT I WANT TO DO AFTER I LEAVE SCHOOL, SO I'M GOING TO WORK HARD TO GET MY NAT 4S.

FREYA, 2025



“

OUR PUPILS HAVE BEEN DOING A NUMBER OF QUALIFICATIONS THROUGH SSF AND HAVE BEEN SHARING THE **POSITIVE EXPERIENCES** THEY ARE HAVING. THEIR CONFIDENCE HAS REALLY IMPROVED OVER THE LAST YEAR AND YOU CAN REALLY SEE THEM **THRIVING**. MY EXPERIENCE WITH SSF HAS BEEN **REALLY POSITIVE** AND I WOULD **RECOMMEND** TO ANY SCHOOL TO WORK WITH SSF TO GET **REALLY GOOD OUTCOMES** FOR THEIR PUPILS, WHICH WE HAVE HAD.

GARY SHEPHERD, PT PUPIL SUPPORT, BANNOCKBURN HIGH SCHOOL

Bannockburn High School: Gaining Confidence and Qualifications

Supporting young people experiencing challenges engaging with the traditional curriculum.

This 15 week programme supported six young people aged 13-14 from Bannockburn High School in Stirling who were experiencing challenges engaging with the traditional curriculum. Identified by the school as pupils who would benefit from a different approach to learning, the group took part in weekly sessions designed to build confidence, develop key life skills and achieve accredited qualifications.

Sessions were delivered at Hillpark Community Centre rather than at the school. The young people described feeling more relaxed and better able to focus away from the school. The young people were also asked to travel independently to the venue which encouraged independence and autonomy. Although this did lead to some challenges with attendance, communication with the High School was strong ensuring ongoing support around each young person.

Three consistent staff members supported the group throughout, allowing trust and positive relationships to grow. This continuity created a predictable, safe and supportive space where young people knew what to expect and who they could rely on each week.

Each weekly session included 1.5 hours of structured learning followed by lunch, helping to establish routine and clear expectations. As the programme progressed, it became evident that the group responded particularly well to structure, calm environments and opportunities for open discussion.

Across the 15 weeks, participants achieved:

- ★ Five SCQF accredited qualifications: Conflict Resolution, Communication, Goal Setting, Human Connection, and the Youth Scotland Hi 5 Award
- ★ Five SSF Well-being Workshops focused on personal development, self awareness and wellbeing

Developing People

In total, the group achieved 30 qualifications, giving each young person tangible evidence of their progress and a positive experience of learning outside a traditional classroom.

The qualifications and workshops helped rebuild confidence and re-establish positive learning habits. Group discussions became a particular strength, with young people openly sharing views, reflecting on experiences and supporting one another.

Sessions also created space to explore future pathways—discussing leaving school, setting goals and understanding how skills such as communication, conflict resolution and human connection can influence everyday life and relationships.

Although the participants did not begin the programme as a cohesive group, strong peer relationships developed over time. Their humour, energy and personalities shaped a relaxed, enjoyable atmosphere that had a positive impact on the group dynamic.

Young people played an active role in shaping the programme. They provided regular feedback, which staff used to adapt delivery to better suit their learning styles. This sense of ownership strengthened their commitment and engagement. Where additional support was needed with the academic elements of qualifications, staff provided guidance and encouragement to ensure everyone could achieve success.

Beyond weekly sessions, the group also took part in an SSF recruitment process, meeting interview candidates and sharing their feedback—ensuring youth voice is embedded in organisational decision making.

To recognise their hard work and achievements, the group enjoyed a celebratory trip to Glasgow, taking part in activities such as interactive darts and bubble football. This celebration further strengthened relationships and provided a memorable end to the programme.

Staff were consistently impressed by the young people's commitment, growth and willingness to participate. Their achievements reflect not only their effort but also the strength of the partnership between SSF and Bannockburn High School. We look forward to building on this success and continuing to support young people through future programmes.

Developing People

Celtic FC Foundation

Celtic FC Foundation: A Flexible Approach

In 2024, we began a close partnership with Celtic FC Foundation, integrating our accredited qualifications into their 'Gateway to Opportunity' project. This initiative supports individuals who have offended, are at risk of re-offending, or live in high crime communities. Celtic FC Foundation was eager to incorporate our modules due to our proven ability to engage young people—particularly those facing significant personal and social challenges.

We have delivered our 'Communication' and 'Planning Effective Physical Activity Programmes' modules to 14 separate cohorts. Delivery was facilitated by six SSF tutors across two distinct programme strands, one focusing on enhancing employability and personal development and the other designed to support young people with additional support needs.

Working with these groups required tutors with strong relational skills and the ability to create safe, supportive learning environments. Their expertise ensured that participants not only completed the modules but also developed meaningful skills, built confidence and improved their future employability prospects.

In line with our commitment to inclusive practice, we identified opportunities to strengthen our approach for groups with additional support needs. To achieve this, we:

- ★ Increased the number of tutors involved
- ★ Extended the time allocated for module completion
- ★ Introduced tailored training methods to accommodate diverse learning styles
- ★ Designed interactive, activity based sessions to boost engagement and confidence

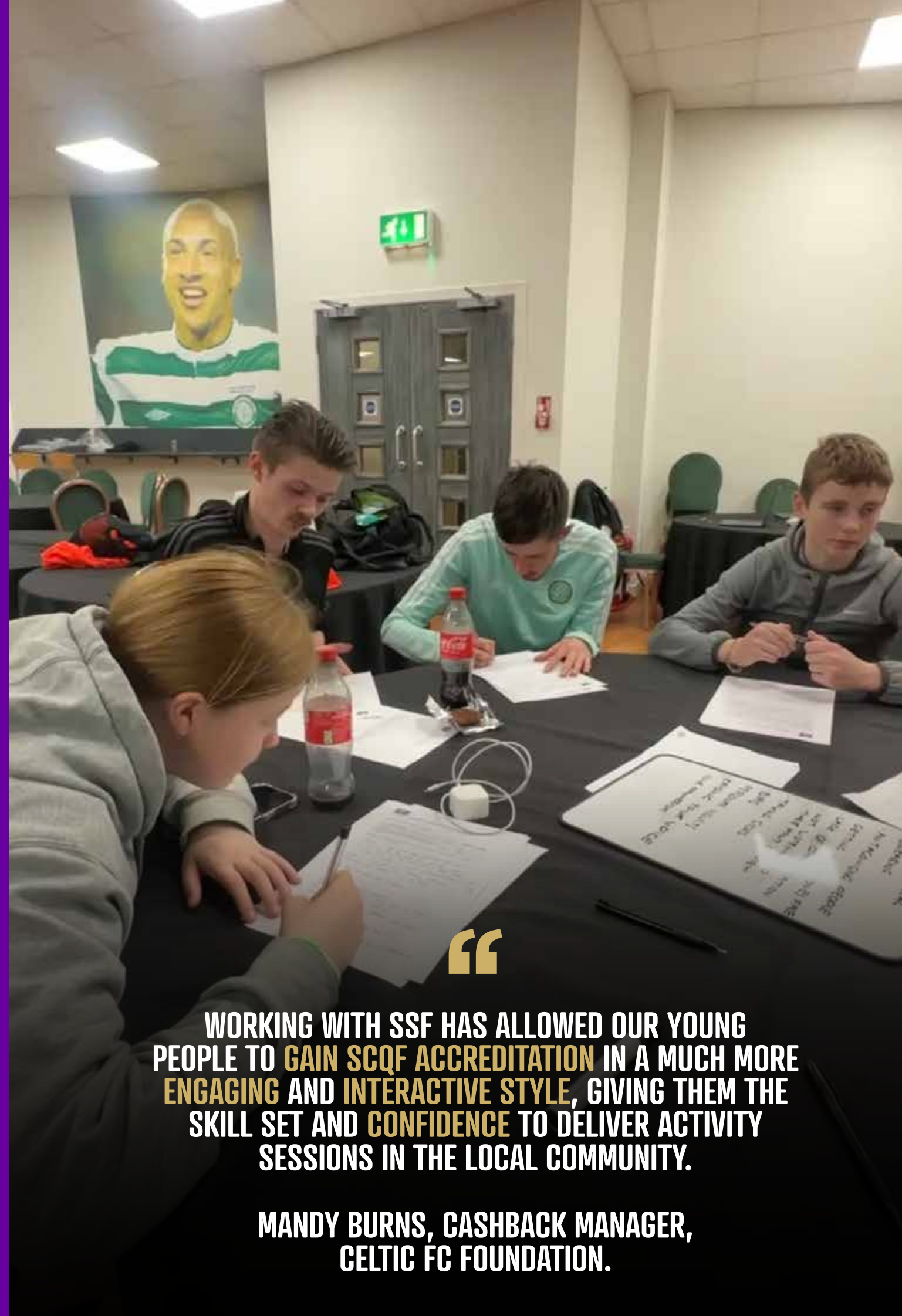


One example included setting up rotating activity stations, allowing participants to move through different tasks at their own pace. This approach significantly improved focus, enjoyment, and overall learning outcomes.

The collaboration has been highly successful, culminating in over 100 accreditations achieved by participants across the programmes. These accreditations represent not only academic achievement but also personal growth, increased confidence, and strengthened employability prospects.

We were honoured to attend the Celtic FC Foundation's celebration events, where participants' achievements were recognised and celebrated by families, staff, and community partners.

The partnership has deepened connections between our organisations. Many young people now engage with programmes across both organisations, creating a more cohesive support network around them. In addition, Celtic FC Foundation staff have completed our 'Trauma Informed Sport and Physical Activity' and 'Putting the Person First - Taking a Person Centred Approach to Coaching' modules, further aligning our shared commitment to high quality, person centred practice.



WORKING WITH SSF HAS ALLOWED OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO GAIN SCQF ACCREDITATION IN A MUCH MORE ENGAGING AND INTERACTIVE STYLE, GIVING THEM THE SKILL SET AND CONFIDENCE TO DELIVER ACTIVITY SESSIONS IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

**MANDY BURNS, CASHBACK MANAGER,
CELTIC FC FOUNDATION.**

Developing People

Creating new opportunities through education at Edinburgh College, Granton

Developing confident coaches, leaders and role models for local communities

Since 2024, we have partnered with Edinburgh College Granton's Sports Programme to embed the SCQF Level 5 Working with Young People in Sport module into the curriculum, strengthening students' learning and leadership development.

2024 Cohort

A group of 23 students (aged 16-24) from the Sport and Fitness course successfully achieved the qualification. Many were school leavers or unemployed young people preparing to work with children in their local community of Craigroyston.

During the 6 hour module, all participants demonstrated clear growth in leadership and coaching skills. They became increasingly confident, engaged positively with the content, and developed a strong understanding of the importance of building meaningful relationships with young people. Their diverse sporting backgrounds and varying levels of experience enriched group discussions and highlighted their potential as future community leaders.

This accreditation now supports their progression into employment or further education in sport and youth work.



2025 Cohort

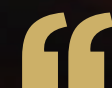
The 2025 group included learners with additional support needs, care experience, disrupted education, and experiences of homelessness. Initial activities showed low engagement and literacy levels, but tutors adapted delivery to ensure accessibility—providing extra time for written tasks, using physical activities to support discussion, and incorporating regular breaks.

Many students had not been in full time education for several years, making their commitment to completing the module particularly significant.

By the end of the course, students had developed key skills in:

- ★ Understanding the role and motivation of a coach
- ★ Recognising and responding to challenging behaviour
- ★ Applying diffusion techniques
- ★ Building positive relationships in coaching

These skills will support their upcoming placements in local nursery and primary schools.



THE STUDENTS HAVE LEARNED BY TAKING PART IN THE COURSE HOW TO COMMUNICATE TO OTHERS. THEY HAVE ALSO DEVELOPED THEIR LEARNING TO AID EMPLOYMENT DECISIONS AND TO SUPPORT THEIR DELIVERY OUT IN THE LOCAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

NICOLA MCLAUGHLAN, LECTURER

Improving Health & Wellbeing

Finding Independence through Sport: Ellie's story

When Ellie first connected with SSF, her path was anything but straightforward.

Growing up with care experience and living with a learning disability, Ellie faced challenges that often made the future feel uncertain. Stability was fragile, confidence was low, and like many young people in similar circumstances, she struggled to see where she truly belonged.

Ellie's early involvement with SSF began through the Twilight programme, before she later stepped into the Young Leaders pathway. Her engagement, however, was not always consistent. At times, circumstances beyond her control, particularly restrictions from her foster parents, meant she was unable to attend sessions, leading to long gaps and a sense of disconnection.

After leaving school, Ellie found herself at a crossroads. Without a clear direction or strong sense of purpose, she felt lost. But it was at this critical moment that SSF once again became part of her story.

Reconnecting with SSF, Ellie returned to sessions and began volunteering through the SSF Young Leaders programme. This marked a turning point. Through these opportunities, she developed a meaningful connection with her local rugby club, something that would soon become a cornerstone of her life.

What started as participation quickly grew into passion. Ellie joined both the female and inclusive rugby teams, committing herself fully. Training two to three times a week and regularly taking part in game days, she found more than just a sport, she found a community. Within that environment, Ellie built strong friendships and a support network that gave her a sense of belonging she had never fully experienced before.



As her confidence grew, so did her independence. With the support of social services, Ellie took a significant step forward, moving into supported living. It was a milestone that once may have felt out of reach but now reflected her growing belief in herself and her ability to shape her own future.

Ellie didn't stop there. She began volunteering regularly at the Stirling Reuse Hub, dedicating her time and building valuable experience. Her commitment and work ethic stood out, eventually leading to a year-long work placement at the Stirling Highland Hotel, another major achievement that strengthened her skills and opened new possibilities.

Today, Ellie's life looks entirely different. She is more independent, more confident, and deeply connected to a circle of friends who support and uplift her. Through rugby, she has embraced her passion wholeheartedly, not only as a player but as someone who encourages others on their own journeys.

Her transformation has not gone unnoticed. Ellie won the Forth Valley Disability Sport Young Volunteer of the Year Award and was nominated for the SSF Inspiring Journey of the Year Award and the Inspire Volunteering Awards Young Volunteer of the Year. Recognition that reflects just how far she has come.

But perhaps the most powerful part of Ellie's story is what might have been.

Without SSF, Ellie may have remained stuck, uncertain, lacking direction, and without the belief that she could take control of her future. She may have continued living in a difficult environment, without the confidence or opportunity to move forward.

Instead, through sport and community, Ellie discovered something life changing, a sense of purpose. She felt valued. She felt needed. And most importantly, she began to believe in herself. Now, Ellie is no longer defined by her challenges. She is defining her own path; strong, independent, and ready for whatever comes next.



Improving Health & Wellbeing

Building healthy futures with Leisure and Culture Dundee

Creating lasting impact through learning and leadership

Since 2023, we have worked closely with Leisure and Culture Dundee to provide meaningful learning opportunities that also help to improve young people's health and wellbeing. Through school based programmes and accredited learning, our tutors have supported dozens of learners to achieve SCQF qualifications and develop skills that support their wellbeing, improve confidence, and build positive relationships.

Twenty five S4-S6 pupils from all seven Dundee high schools completed the SCQF Understanding Trauma, Behaviour, and the Power of Positive Relationships module. This learning helped young people better understand their own experiences, recognise stress responses, and develop healthier ways to communicate and connect with others.

Most recently, SSF Tutors worked with 16 young people (aged 14-16) through the Game Changers programme. Following discussions with staff, delivery was adapted from the planned SCQF Level 5 module to the more suitable SCQF Level 4 Communication module, ensuring the content met learners' needs.

The module developed verbal and non verbal communication skills and explored barriers to effective communication. Young people applied their learning by completing a tutor-observed practical assessment, planning and leading games for their peers. Engagement was strongest during physical tasks, and delivery was adjusted to balance discussion, movement, and supported written work to ensure meaningful participation for all.

Many flourished in leadership roles, while others built confidence through structured support and positive relationships with tutors. These experiences helped young people step outside their comfort zones, make positive choices, and stay engaged in healthy, active learning.

In addition to direct delivery to young people, five members of the Leisure and Culture Dundee team were upskilled to deliver all six SSF SCQF modules to flexibly meet the needs of their own organisation. This will help to expand reach and create long-term impact.



THE ACTIVITIES PROMOTED TEAMWORK, CONFIDENCE, AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN A FUN AND SUPPORTIVE WAY. FEEDBACK FROM THE PUPILS WAS OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE - THEY THOROUGHLY ENJOYED THE EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSED ENTHUSIASM FOR SIMILAR OPPORTUNITIES IN THE FUTURE.

THE COURSE NOT ONLY ENCOURAGED ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BUT ALSO ALIGNED WELL WITH OUR GOALS OF PROMOTING HEALTH, WELLBEING, AND LIFELONG INVOLVEMENT IN SPORT. WE WOULD HIGHLY RECOMMEND CONTINUING THIS PARTNERSHIP TO DELIVER FURTHER PROGRAMMES

KIERAN FOY, ACTIVE SCHOOLS COORDINATOR



Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise

Strengthening Local Ties

We have been working closely with Cumnock Juniors Community Enterprise (CJCE) over the past three years to engage with young people who are at risk of becoming disengaged from education or are known in the local community for involvement in antisocial behaviour.

Multiple cohorts of young people were nominated by the local authority and secondary school. A total of 41 accreditations were awarded across the SCQF Level 5 'Human Connection', 'Working with Young People in Sport', and 'Goal Setting' modules.

Our tutors were able to adopt a person centred approach and adapt their delivery to allow the young people to take part in football-related activities, which resonated well with the group as the modules were delivered at the local football stadium. While the young people were initially hesitant, they showed great resilience to complete the required assessments and lead physical activity sessions for their peers, to achieve the qualifications.

Our tutors were invited to present the young people with their certificates at a celebration event hosted within the local secondary school. This aided in strengthening the connections between the young people and teaching staff, as well as strengthening links between SSF, CJCE, East Ayrshire Council and The Robert Burns Academy. Since completing the programme, SSF is in discussion with the school and local authority to plan additional programmes to support more young people from the community.

Strengthening Communities



"IT'S BEEN GREAT WORKING WITH CJCE FOR THE PAST 3 YEARS. IT HAS BEEN BENEFICIAL TO LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER TO IDENTIFY HOW WE CAN BETTER SUPPORT THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES. THE YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE SHOWN GREAT ENGAGEMENT THROUGHOUT, AND IT'S CLEAR TO SEE THE STRONGER LINKS BETWEEN THEM, THE LOCAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY BASED CLUB"

SSF EDUCATION AND TRAINING TUTOR



"SSF PROVIDED OUR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE PART IN THE GOAL SETTING AND HUMAN CONNECTION MODULES. THROUGHOUT COMPLETING THESE COURSES THE YOUNG PEOPLE WERE KEPT FULLY ENGAGED BY THE TUTORS. THEY WERE ABLE TO BUILD A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH ALL THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND ENSURE THEY GOT THE MOST OUT OF THE COURSES. THE COURSES WERE RELEVANT TO THE GROUP AND ALLOWED FOR THEM TO GAIN QUALIFICATIONS WITHOUT THE PRESSURE OF A CLASSROOM OR EXAM HALL, THE HANDS ON PRACTICAL APPROACH WORKED WONDERS FOR OUR GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE."

COURTNEY CARTER, ACTIVE SCHOOLS COORDINATOR, EAST AYRSHIRE.



“

FOR US IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE SOMEONE FROM THE COMMUNITY TO BE OUR AMBASSADOR FOR THAT COMMUNITY. THEY HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE BARRIERS AND CHALLENGES FACING THAT COMMUNITY, AND THEREFORE CAN GIVE US INSIGHT THAT CAN HELP US SHAPE AND GUIDE OUR INPUTS IN THE COMMUNITY. WE WANT THE YOUNG PEOPLE ATTENDING THE SESSIONS TO SEE SOMEONE WHO WAS ONCE LIKE THEM, AND WHO THEY CAN ONE DAY ASPIRE TO BE.

IT ALSO SUPPORTS THE POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WE ARE TRYING TO BUILD WITH THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND ATHLETICS. IF THEY CAN SEE SOMEONE LIKE THEM POSITIVELY TALK, TAKE PART AND ADVOCATE FOR THE SPORT, IT AIDS IN BUILDING A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM AND ATHLETICS

NATIONAL COMMUNITY IMPACT MANAGER, SCOTTISH ATHLETICS

From Community Interpreting to Community Leadership

Supporting Young People in their communities

Over the past year, SSF has worked as part of the Demonstration of Change pilot in partnership with key funder Clyde Gateway. Through the SSF New Scots Project two young people were supported to progress into meaningful employment and leadership roles within their local area. The project has demonstrated how targeted interventions can move beyond language development to create sustainable opportunities in employability, leadership, and community impact.

Both young people initially engaged with SSF through WEA Community Interpreting Course (SCQF Level 5) at St Mungo's Academy, a programme designed to reduce language barriers and improve access to education and employment. A key milestone in their journey was completing a Community Interpreting Course, which significantly strengthened their confidence, communication skills, and understanding of their community. Crucially, this experience enabled them to transition from participants to active contributors within their local community.

Building on this, both individuals progressed into paid roles within the SSF Twilight Parkhead session, marking a significant step into employment. One young person secured a position as an SSF Assistant Community Coach, supporting the delivery of weekly sport and physical activity sessions. The second progressed into a Local Community Impact Leader role through a partnership with Scottish Athletics, further expanding the reach and impact of community engagement.

To support their development, both young people completed accredited qualifications, including a Coaching Assistant Award with Scottish Athletics and a Basketball Skills Award with Basketball Scotland. These achievements enhanced their technical knowledge, leadership capabilities, and confidence, while opening pathways into sport, youth work, and community development.

Strengthening Communities

“YOU CANT BE, WHAT YOU CANT SEE.”

As relatable role models from similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they have helped increase engagement and trust among young people and families, particularly those involved in ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) provision. Their presence has contributed to a more inclusive and welcoming environment, supporting consistent participation and strengthening community cohesion.

Looking ahead, both individuals are committed to continuing their development and giving back to their community. Their ambitions include progressing into further coaching qualifications, mentoring younger participants, and supporting wider engagement with New Scots families.

This journey demonstrates the effectiveness of combining ESOL, employability, and community leadership pathways. By investing in young people and providing clear progression routes, SSF is building not only individual success stories but also stronger, more resilient communities.

“

WORKING AT SSF TWILIGHT PARKHEAD HAS BEEN REALLY ENJOYABLE. I'VE LOVED BEING PART OF THE SESSIONS, MEETING NEW PEOPLE, AND SEEING THE POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE COMMUNITY.”

LOCAL COMMUNITY IMPACT LEADER, SCOTTISH ATHLETICS

“

THE COMMUNITY INTERPRETING COURSE GAVE ME A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY IN DIFFERENT SETTINGS. I HOPE TO USE MY LEARNING SKILLS TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS AND MAKE SURE THEY FEEL INCLUDED AND UNDERSTOOD.

SSF ASSISTANT COMMUNITY COACH

Strengthening Communities

Supporting community role models at Bluevale Community Club

Increasing leadership skills for young people

We worked with a group of young people aged 15-16 from Bluevale Community Club in Glasgow's East End, an area within SIMD 1 and facing long standing social and economic challenges. The group included both school attending pupils and young people who had already left school and were not currently in a positive destination. Those still enrolled in school were experiencing significant barriers to engagement, with attendance levels at 25% or below.

Despite these challenges, the young people committed to completing four SCQF accredited modules. Although none of the participants had previous experience working with children or young people, they engaged enthusiastically in discussions and practical activities. The hands on elements were particularly powerful: many participants thrived when given the chance to lead games, organise activities, and take responsibility for others.

These experiences helped young people recognise their own potential as contributors to their community. Several began exploring opportunities to support local boxing and football sessions for younger children — a meaningful step toward building peer leadership, community cohesion, and positive role modelling within their neighbourhood.

A number of participants shared that they had not engaged in formal learning or written work for several years — some since around the age of ten. Despite this, they demonstrated strong motivation to complete the modules, recognising the qualifications as a pathway toward employment, apprenticeships, or further training.

Their determination reflects the importance of accessible, community based learning that meets young people where they are — both geographically and emotionally.

Across the group, 29 accreditations were achieved. For some participants, these represent their first formal qualifications, marking a significant milestone in their personal development. These achievements not only build individual confidence but also strengthen the wider community by:

- ★ Increasing the number of young people with leadership skills
- ★ Creating new local role models
- ★ Supporting pathways into volunteering, coaching, and youth work
- ★ Demonstrating the value of alternative education provision

Delivering the programme within a local boxing gym was central to its success. This familiar, trusted environment reduced barriers to participation and reinforced the message that learning and growth can happen within the community itself, not only in traditional educational settings.



THE TRAINING PROVIDED FROM SCOTTISH SPORTS FUTURES WAS ABLE TO TAKE A GROUP OF DISENGAGED YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAD LOST FAITH IN THEIR OWN LEARNING ABILITY AND MAINSTREAM EDUCATION. WITH PROFESSIONAL TUTORS WHO WERE ABLE TO USE A MIX OF PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL LEARNING, THE TRAINING SUPPORTED THESE YOUNG INDIVIDUALS TO INCREASE THEIR CONFIDENCE IN LEARNING GIVING THEM A DEEPER BELIEF IN FUTURE EMPLOYABILITY.

KENNY TRAINER, BLUEVALE COMMUNITY CLUB

G31 Basketball: A community-led success

Developing a safe, inclusive space to participate

The development of G31 Basketball is a strong example of how community-led initiatives, created by SSF young people, can create meaningful and sustainable opportunities within local communities. What began as an idea from three SSF Young Leaders has grown into a thriving, inclusive programme that is now making a measurable difference within the local community.

G31 Basketball was established in June 2025 as a response to a gap in accessible, local basketball provision for young people aged 14+ in the Dennistoun area. Recognising this need, three SSF Young Leaders took the initiative to design and develop a free, weekly session. From the outset, the project has been entirely youth-led, with the young leaders responsible for planning, promotion, and delivery. Sessions run every Wednesday evening with support from Basketball Scotland for two hours, providing consistent and structured opportunities for engagement.

Over the past nine months, the project has demonstrated significant growth and impact. It regularly attracts over 20 young people each week, with peak attendance reaching approximately 30 participants. Central to its success is the creation of a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment where young people feel supported to participate, build confidence, and develop social connections.

Basketball Scotland provide trained coaches who help the young leaders to deliver the session and are supporting them to gain their basketball coaching qualification.

Beyond participation, G31 Basketball has also created leadership and employability pathways, and via our partnership with Basketball Scotland we will transition two SSF Young Leaders from voluntary roles into paid employment, reinforcing the programme's long-term sustainability and impact.

G31 Basketball highlights the power of youth-led delivery, demonstrating how equipping young people with skills, trust, and responsibility can result in high-quality provision that benefits both individuals and the wider community.

Strengthening Communities



MY END GOAL WOULD BE TO BECOME A COACH AND BE ABLE TO LIVE OFF OF BEING A COACH

SSF YOUNG LEADER



I PERSONALLY WANTED TO START IT BECAUSE I USED TO GO TO A SIMILAR SESSION AND IT HELPED ME GET AWAY FROM THE STREET AND FIND A SPORT I LOVED AND I THINK IT'S REALLY NEEDED IN THE COMMUNITY TO HELP YOUNG PEOPLE.

SSF YOUNG LEADER

★ Our Communications and Recognition Highlights

An award-winning year

Youth Empowerment Project Award

This year we were the proud recipients of the Youth Empowerment Project Award at The Herald and Glasgow Chamber of Commerce's Inspiring City Awards.

The awards recognise organisations or individuals who have made a positive impact to Glasgow. The Youth Empowerment Project Award celebrated SSF's ongoing work with young people; our commitment to offering sport and physical activity and supporting young people to thrive.

Youth Community Champion of the Year Award

Our incredible youth panel member Kebba Sanneh was awarded the Youth Community Champion of the Year Award at the Glasgow Times' Community Champion Awards 2025. The award was for Kebba's commitment to coaching young people athletics at SSF's weekly Twilight session in Dalmarnock. Kebba's enthusiasm for being a sports coach, role model and person that other young people can trust made him a very worthy winner of this award.

Social Media

This year we've been investing in visual content across our social media channels.

A key platform this year has been LinkedIn supporting our brand awareness across the sport and third sectors, our engagement rate on this platform has increased by 38% this year with followers increasing by 20%.

This year we contributed to online communication campaigns: Challenge Poverty Week, Youth Work Week, Developing the Young Workforce's #NoWrongPath campaign, Pride Month and Mental Health Awareness Week.

SSF 2026 Press Coverage



★ Our Events

Women and Girls in Sport Week 2025

On 8th October 2025, SSF delivered a Women and Girls Event at the Emirates Arena in Glasgow, engaging 50 young people from Fife, Stirling, Glasgow and North Ayrshire. The event aligned with the national theme of “Celebrating Being Active” and the “Find Your Fit” campaign, with a clear focus on increasing participation and reducing barriers for girls in sport.

The event brought together a diverse group of young people, including those with previous engagement in SSF programmes and new participants. A key outcome of the event was the meaningful involvement of young people in its design and delivery. Through pre-event consultations, participants shaped the activity for the event, ensuring it reflected their interests and needs. Young people participated in a range of sports, including athletics, boccia, basketball and cycling, alongside workshops exploring gender-based violence and the barriers faced by women and girls in sport.

The impact of the girls-only environment was significant. Creating a safe and supportive space enabled participants to engage more fully, particularly those who may feel excluded or lack confidence in sport settings.

The presence of female role models further strengthened outcomes. We were honoured to have: Louisa Mahon – Chief Marketing Officer, Glasgow 2026, Emily Nicholl – Team Scotland Netball Athlete & Scottish Thistles Captain and Nicole Flynn – SSF Board Member & Glasgow 2026 Programme Delivery Coordinator who shared their stories of sport and leadership throughout their personal lives and career. Their stories helped challenge perceptions, raise aspirations, and reinforce the message that sport is accessible to all.

Overall, the SSF Women and Girls Event 2025 delivered strong outcomes across participation, confidence and inclusion. The high levels of enjoyment and increased confidence in trying new activities demonstrate a meaningful and lasting impact for girls taking part in sport.

“

I HAVE NEVER BEEN ON A BMX BEFORE AND AFTER TODAY I ABSOLUTELY LOVE IT.





SSF Youth Panel Residential

The SSF Youth Panel Residential brought together 12 members of the SSF Youth Panel for an inspiring and impactful weekend at the National Sports Centre in Inverclyde. This created a space for young people to connect, develop their skills, and lead conversations about the changes they want to see within their communities.

A key focus of the weekend was building knowledge and confidence through a series of interactive and engaging workshops. Young people took part in a United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) session, which supported them to better understand their rights and how these apply in their everyday lives.

Further learning was developed through a decision-making and creative consultation workshop delivered by Youth Scotland. This session explored how young people can meaningfully contribute to decision-making processes and represent the views of their peers. The panel also completed Actify training, which introduced young people to the “plan, do, review” approach to goal setting and project development. This provided a practical framework to help turn ideas into action.

Through open discussion and collaboration, the young people led conversations about their experiences within their communities and the challenges affecting their peers. These discussions resulted in the group identifying two key focus areas: antisocial behaviour and inactivity, with a particular focus on young women and girls. By the end of the residential, the group had begun to take ownership of these issues, working together to explore initial ideas and identify the changes they would like to see.

Overall, this was a powerful and motivating experience that highlighted the importance of creating spaces where young people feel heard, valued and empowered. Young people are vital in driving change, and the SSF Youth Panel is made up of individuals with lived experience who are committed to improving their own lives and the lives of others. The level of passion shown throughout the weekend clearly demonstrated their determination to lead and influence meaningful change within their communities.



SSF Awards 2026

This year's SSF Awards, supported by headline sponsor **sportscotland**, was a fun-filled evening celebrating the incredible achievements of young people, coaches, youth workers and partners.

This year's event was hosted by Heart FM's Adele and Grado who handed out 7 awards across the night.

The SSF Awards acknowledge the journeys that young people undertake from beginning with SSF to where they are now. These awards recognise the support they lend each other, the leadership they bring, the challenges they've overcome and the commitment it takes to make real change to their own lives and the lives of others in their community.

This year's winner of the Ian Reid Outstanding Achievement Award was Kacie Inglis. Kacie, from Fife, has been part of SSF's programmes for several years and is a keen footballer. Kacie was diagnosed with Tourette's, Autism and ADHD which initially posed barriers to sport and education due to the misunderstanding of others. Kacie found acceptance and support at SSF and her incredible attitude, kindness and humour took her through a difficult time. And through it all Kacie was determined to volunteer her time and give back to other young people.

“SSF's helped me a lot over the past few years, they've helped me stay on at school, and they've still supported me even after turning 18. I was a bit nervous about volunteering because I didn't know if they'd listen to me, but they were really supportive and helped me through how to coach younger people with the sports that we were doing.

I've managed to get myself into college which I never would have thought I would have been able to do a few years ago and they've really helped me with that and basically just helped me build a future.”

The evening's other awards were given to:

Billie Fitzpatrick (Coach/Youth Worker of the Year, Freya Campbell (Inspiring Journey of the Year), Cheyanne Flannigan (Community Champion of the Year), R (Spirit of the Year) and Jett Dawson (Positive Destination Award). The Transforming Young Lives Organisation of the Year Award was presented to The Bike Station.

Thank you to our wonderful sponsors: **sportscotland**, Clyde Gateway, Scottish Water, Weightmans, The Wiseman Family Charitable Fund, Commonwealth Sport Foundation, Actify and Caledonia Gladiators.

★ Our Finance and Income Generation

	2025/2026	INCREASE FROM LAST YEAR	2024/2025
Income	£1,549,733	9%	£1,427,888
Expenditure	£1,386,887	7%	£1,292,420
Training Modules	£83,053	53%	£54,140

Our commitment to building a more financially sustainable operating model has remained central to our work this year, with continued progress in diversifying income streams and strengthening long term organisational resilience.

We expanded and deepened strategic partnerships, generating income from a broad mix of sources, including grant funding, corporate partnerships, university collaborations, fundraising events, individual giving, and our Education and Training activities.

We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported us throughout the year.

Our Funders

- ★ BBC Children in Need
- ★ Big Lottery Improving Lives (Govan)
- ★ Christina Gould Trust
- ★ Clyde Gateway
- ★ Comic Relief
- ★ Co-op Local Community Fund
- ★ Corra Foundation (Children Young People and Families Fund)
- ★ Duke of Edinburgh
- ★ Garfield Weston
- ★ Glasgow City Council Area Partnership - Carlton
- ★ Glasgow Life
- ★ Hugh Fraser Foundation
- ★ Inspiring Scotland (Cashback for Communities & Active Play)
- ★ Scottish Government – Active Scotland
- ★ Shell UK
- ★ **sport**scotland
- ★ The National Lottery (Improving Lives and Young Start)
- ★ The Robertson Trust
- ★ The Rocco Charitable Trust
- ★ West of Scotland Housing Association



Fundraising and Learning Events

We've had staff, young people and external fundraisers participating in all sorts of events to raise funds for our charity.

★ Edrington Stride

We were absolutely blown away by the amazing fundraising effort from the team at Edrington. The 'Edrington Stride' involved 254 'Striders' signing up to walk a 25-mile route between Loch Lomond and Glasgow. The sun shone and around £170,000 was raised by the dedicated staff at Edrington to split between three charities – SSF, Antonine Allstars and 3D Drumchapel. Some of our staff had the absolute pleasure of joining the dedicated Edrington team for the walk, and despite the inevitable sore legs and more blisters than we want to talk about, a fantastic day was had by all!

★ Kiltwalk 2025

Keeping on the walking theme, our very own Robyn and Youth Panel member Bryony, took on the Kiltwalk Big Stroll, walking 14 miles and absolutely smashing their fundraising targets! We couldn't be prouder of them both for taking on this challenge.

★ Comedy Night Fundraiser

In partnership with Barclays and Chris Forbes, we delivered another successful Comedy Night at Blackfriars of Bell Street in Glasgow. The event featured an excellent line up of performers, who provided some top-quality comedy on a cold November Monday!

★ Weightmans LLP

Our relationship with Weightmans LLP continued to flourish in the second year of our charity partnership. Their staff have shown exceptional commitment, taking part in a wide range of fundraising activities on our behalf – from hiking challenges and sweepstakes to tuck shops, bake offs, a "12 Days of Christmas" initiative, a Halloween event, and much more.

They also provided generous support for the SSF Annual Awards, sponsoring the Community Champion of the Year Award, and we were pleased to welcome members of their team to the ceremony in March.

★ Commonwealth Games 2026 – Charity Partner Announcement

We were honoured to be selected as a charity partner for the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games. Alongside the Commonwealth Sport Foundation, Team Scotland Youth Trust and Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity, we will benefit from charitable donations associated with the Games, taking place between July and August 2026. Our involvement has already included several engagement activities, including a launch photoshoot with Glasgow 2014 gold medalist boxer, Charlie Flynn.

★ Glasgow Winter Wonderland

We are grateful to Scotland's Theme Park Events for their generous donation of £500 and unlimited tickets for young people to enjoy ice skating and the pantomime at Glasgow Green's Winter Wonderland. Both staff and young people really enjoyed the experience.

★ Community Learning Exchange

In February we hosted a community learning exchange in partnership with Social Enterprise Scotland and supported by the Scottish Community Alliance. The session provided valuable space for social enterprises to connect, share practice and reflect on sector wide challenges and opportunities. It also allowed us to present our approach to youth work and organisational sustainability.

★ Caledonia Gladiators

Our new partnership with the Caledonia Gladiators, Scotland's only professional Super League basketball team tipped off with the team's Bronze Sponsorship of the SSF Annual Awards. The partnership has included complimentary and discounted match tickets for staff and young people, as well as regular volunteering opportunities on game days. We look forward to developing this collaboration further.

★ Edinburgh University

University of Edinburgh supported SSF with fundraising activities from a few of their racquet sports clubs. Their Squash Club organised a Charity Ceilidh in November, alongside the Aussie and Kiwi Society. In March, they organised a joint social Racketlon event in conjunction with the Table Tennis, Tennis and Badminton Clubs. In total, the Clubs have raised £946 for SSF. We are keen to explore opportunities to expand this model of student led fundraising across additional university sports groups.

★ Barclays

Our partnership with Barclays continues to strengthen. Their support this year included contributions to our Comedy Night, participation in our Business Sustainability Working Group and involvement in the SSF Awards raffle. We remain deeply appreciative of their ongoing commitment.

★ University of the West of Scotland (UWS) – Tenner to Tons

Our Tenner to Tons entrepreneurial challenge has been firmly embedded within the Sport Management & Enterprise Module at UWS. Students were given a starting capital and the challenge to grow this through an enterprising activity.

Students worked together in groups to apply the principles learnt on the module such as entrepreneurship, project management, marketing, budgeting and accounting, to deliver and evaluate their enterprise.

The winning team created a car wash enterprise, offering options of interior and exterior cleaning. They had put a lot of thought and planning into their use of resources, time and demand for their services. We liked that they had branded themselves as a social enterprise and really considered social impact.

In total, students raised almost £1,000 which was a fantastic achievement, and a great example of putting learning into practice and raising funds for charity!



SSF Education and Training

Our evolution toward a more sustainable business model continued to gain momentum this year. By expanding the reach and uptake of our training modules, we achieved a 53% increase in income from this area compared with last year, demonstrating strong demand and growing financial resilience.

A key priority was strengthening the visibility and uptake of our SCQF modules within the education sector, with a particular focus on young people who are not thriving in traditional school settings and would benefit from alternative opportunities. Our interactive, activity based modules provide an inclusive and engaging option beyond the conventional curriculum, offering learners the opportunity to gain meaningful qualifications in a way that supports their strengths and learning styles.

To increase capacity within our Education and Training stream and meet growing demand, we appointed three new Freelance Tutors. We also upskilled a cohort of practitioners from partner organisations across Scotland to deliver all six SSF SCQF modules within their own settings. This expanded delivery network strengthens our ability to reach more communities, supports areas where direct delivery is challenging, and helps create sustainable, long term impact across Scotland.

Barrhead High School – Education and Training Programme

Over 17 weeks, a group of S1-S3 pupils at Barrhead High School took part in a tailored SSF Education & Training programme.

More than just participants, they demonstrated exceptional growth - developing transferable life skills, building confidence, and successfully achieving accredited qualifications through sport and youth work activities.

Delivered in weekly 1.5-hour sessions, the programme blended physical activity with discussion-based learning, creating a supportive environment for meaningful connection and development.

The programme aimed to build confidence, strengthen relationships, and support young people in a safe, inclusive space. While participants engaged enthusiastically with movement-based tasks, challenges emerged in classroom-based work - particularly around focus, emotional regulation, and peer dynamics. These were met with flexibility and relational support, as tutors adapted delivery methods to meet the evolving needs of the group.

A core feature of the programme is the opportunity to work towards SCQF-accredited qualifications. Collectively, the group achieved an impressive total of 54 qualifications - a reflection of their commitment, personal growth, and increasing confidence.

Alongside their qualifications, pupils explored future aspirations and career interests, linking the skills they were developing - communication, leadership, emotional awareness, teamwork - to real world pathways.

Outcomes included improved peer relationships, increased self-esteem, and clear personal development. Leadership qualities emerged, and as the programme progressed, young people began taking greater ownership of their learning - moving from close guidance to demonstrating independence, responsibility, and initiative across both practical and reflective tasks. These positive shifts extended beyond the programme, with staff reporting increased school engagement and improved attainment among several participants.

The most impactful sessions balanced activity and discussion, underscoring the value of a trauma-informed approach that prioritises voice, choice, and connection. At times there was conflict and emotional dysregulation, particularly during classroom discussions and these were recognised as expressions of unmet needs. Staff responded with patience, consistency and a commitment to understanding each young person.

The programme culminated in a celebration event where pupils were acknowledged and rewarded for their achievements, showcased their learning and were presented with their certificates.

Overall, pupils made significant progress — not only in gaining qualifications, but in confidence, relationships, and readiness for future study or employment, ultimately improving their life chances.



“ONE OF MY TEACHERS SAID I WOULDN'T GET ANY QUALIFICATIONS - AND NOW I'VE GOT SIX BECAUSE OF THIS PROGRAMME.”

SSF PARTICIPANT

“SOME OF THESE YOUNG PEOPLE WERE ONLY COMING INTO THE SCHOOL FOR THE SESSION WITH SSF - IT WAS GREAT TO SEE.”

BARRHEAD HS PASTORAL TEACHER

★ Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

This year, we have taken further steps to embed a more inclusive, equitable and diverse culture across our organisation.

We have strengthened our leadership role, both internally and externally, and ensured that the right policies and frameworks are in place to support this.

Equality has been embedded within our strategy development, with diverse perspectives contributing to shaping our future direction. We have also continued to act as active allies, supporting campaigns and amplifying inclusive messaging.

In addition, we have focused on developing and strengthening strategic relationships with organisations that advocate for protected groups. Through shared learning, training and collaboration, we are increasing our collective influence and supporting greater representation within our programmes and across communities and the sport and physical activity systems

SSF Youth Panel

We have established our Youth Panel, bringing together young people from diverse backgrounds to help inform our strategy. The panel has also connected with other national youth groups, including the **sport**scotland Youth Panel, to share experiences and ideas on how to support inclusion in sport and through sport

National EDI Group for Sport

We formed a coalition of national EDI organisations working to support inclusion in sport and ensure that all protected characteristic groups are seen, represented and supported to access opportunities. Through this, we contributed to a collaborative network that is helping to deliver EDI policies, identify and address systemic and intersectional barriers, and promote inclusive practice. The group also played a key role in supporting organisers of the Glasgow Commonwealth Games to design a more inclusive approach to delivery.

Key Highlights from This Year

- ★ Supported planning to help connect young people and communities facing adversity to opportunities for volunteering at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games.
- ★ Collaborated with Sported to deliver an education and training programme designed to empower young people with disabilities as they take their first steps into coaching and leadership.
- ★ Delivered education workshops to Modern Apprentices as part of a **sport**scotland national initiative to support more disabled people into employment in sport.
- ★ Hosted a national Women and Girls Event, bringing together young people from across Scotland during Girls' and Women's Sport Week to connect and engage with role models from community and performance sport.
- ★ Continued our commitment as a Disability Confident Employer, supporting inclusive employment practices.

These initiatives reflect our ongoing commitment to inclusive practice and demonstrate the power of partnership in widening access and opportunity.





Scottish Government Policy Areas

Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan

We remain committed to creating positive impact for both people and the planet.

Over the past year, we have continued to explore and implement initiatives that reduce emissions and strengthen our environmental practices.

Focused on improving outcomes for people and communities experiencing poverty, we are well placed to support the Scottish Government's ambition of ensuring that fairness is at the heart of climate action. Our work is aligned with national and local government ambitions, including the Scottish Government's Climate Change Plan and we continue to contribute meaningfully to a just transition.

Empowering Young People to Lead Climate Action

A key focus of our sustainability work is engaging young people in meaningful climate action

This year, we further developed our GameOn for Climate workshop. Working in partnership with involv (formerly Sustainable Pathways), we explored how to gamify the workshop to make climate learning more engaging and relatable for young people.

Together, we created an online game that places young people in real life environmental scenarios, challenging them to make decisions that lead to the most sustainable outcomes. The aim is to help young people identify practical solutions to environmental issues and feel confident applying these actions in their everyday lives.



WE'VE LOVED WORKING WITH SCOTTISH SPORTS FUTURES THIS YEAR TO DEVELOP THE GAMEON FOR CLIMATE AND COMMON GROUND GAMES. WE SHARE A PASSION FOR ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE ISSUES THAT MATTER THROUGH IMMERSIVE, INTERACTIVE EXPERIENCES AND THIS PROJECT IS EXACTLY THAT. WE'RE EXCITED TO SEE THE IMPACT IT HAS AND TO KEEP BUILDING ON IT TOGETHER.

**CIARAN ARMSTRONG,
PARTNER
INVOLV GROUP**



Reducing Waste and the Circular Economy

Our partnership with ApparelXchange (AXC) has now entered its fourth year.

This partnership continues to deliver both environmental and social benefits. This year's sportswear donation drive was another success, collecting pre loved items that AXC processes and redistributes. This work reduces textile waste going to landfill while removing financial barriers to participation in sport by providing low or no cost sportswear to young people and families.

We were supported by several organisations and businesses who hosted collection bins and donated large volumes of reusable clothing—demonstrating the strength of community collaboration in tackling environmental challenges.

“

WE WERE KEEN TO GET INVOLVED IN THE DONATION DRIVE AS SOON AS WE FOUND OUT ABOUT HOW VALUABLE THE INITIATIVE IS FOR FAMILIES IN GLASGOW. IT'S SUCH AN EASY WAY TO SUPPORT THOSE WHO NEED IT AND ALSO FITS IN PERFECTLY WITH OUR SUSTAINABILITY GOALS.

ERIN MONCUR, EMPLOYMENT SOLICITOR, WEIGHTMANS LLP

Embedding Sustainability Across Our Organisation

We remain committed to embedding sustainability into every aspect of our work.

Staff continue to look for ways to improve their environmental practices, and we have seen increased uptake of active travel, public transport and car sharing for business purposes.

Recognising the need to track progress in this area, Boxfish supported us to complete a carbon baseline assessment as a key step in supporting our long-term sustainability and reporting requirements. This provides a clear and standardised understanding of our carbon footprint through the collection and analysis of emissions data and forms the foundation for future carbon tracking, reporting and target setting. This work will help us to take informed next steps on our sustainability journey and continue to develop new and longer term environmental goals.

“

WE WERE HAPPY TO SUPPORT SSF IN ESTABLISHING A CLEAR AND CREDIBLE CARBON BASELINE ACROSS SCOPE 1, 2 AND SELECTED SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS. THIS PROVIDES A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR TRANSPARENT REPORTING, FUNDING APPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING AS SSF CONTINUES ITS CLIMATE ACTION JOURNEY.

DENISA OGOYI, SUSTAINABILITY CONSULTANT, BOXFISH



Fair Work Framework



Fair Work Systems (2026)

In 2026, we strengthened our commitment to fair work through the introduction of a formal Fair Work Policy, aligning our practices with the Scottish Government's Fair Work First criteria. This marks a significant step in embedding fair, inclusive, and progressive employment practices across the organisation.

Our approach is guided by the five dimensions of fair work—Effective Voice, Opportunity, Security, Fulfilment, and Respect—and underpinned by a commitment to continuous improvement as both an employer and a delivery partner.

Fair Work Policy and Governance

During the year, we developed and implemented a comprehensive Fair Work Policy, shaped through staff engagement and leadership oversight. The policy sets out clear organisational commitments and establishes accountability mechanisms to ensure fair work principles are consistently applied across all roles and programmes.

This includes a commitment to regular review, transparency, and alignment with national policy and legislative developments.

Real Living Wage and Fair Pay

In line with Fair Work First requirements, we continue to:

- ★ Pay all employees at least the Real Living Wage
- ★ Promote fair and transparent pay structures
- ★ Monitor pay practices to ensure equity and consistency across the organisation

We recognise fair pay as a fundamental component of tackling in-work poverty and supporting workforce well-being.

Effective Voice

We are committed to ensuring all staff have a meaningful and effective voice in the organisation. In 2026, we strengthened this by:

- ★ Expanding structured staff forums and regular engagement opportunities
- ★ Undertaking staff surveys to inform organisational development
- ★ Encouraging open dialogue between staff and senior leadership

We continue to foster a culture where employees feel confident to contribute ideas, raise concerns, and influence decision-making.

Workforce Well-being

Recognising the increasing importance of well-being in the workplace, we strengthened our support by:

- ★ Expanding mental health and well-being resources through our Employee Assistance program
- ★ Providing training for managers to support staff well-being
- ★ Embedding psychological safety within our organisational culture

Opportunity and No Inappropriate Use of Zero-Hours Contracts

We are committed to providing fair access to employment and progression opportunities. In 2026 we:

- ★ Continued to avoid the inappropriate use of zero-hours contracts, offering stable and predictable working arrangements wherever possible
- ★ Supported staff progression through training, mentoring, and leadership development
- ★ Promoted inclusive recruitment practices to widen access to employment

Security of Work and Predictable Contracts

We recognise that secure work is essential to employee well-being. During 2025/26, we:

- ★ Reviewed contracts to ensure clarity and predictability of hours and income
- ★ Strengthened our approach to workforce planning to support sustainable employment
- ★ Prepared for emerging legislation relating to predictable working patterns and workers' rights

Flexibility and Family-Friendly Working

In line with evolving employment legislation and best practice, we enhanced our commitment to flexible working by:

- ★ Supporting flexible and hybrid working arrangements where appropriate
- ★ Responding positively to flexible working requests from day one of employment
- ★ Promoting a healthy work-life balance across all roles

Respect, Equality, and Tackling the Gender Pay Gap

We remain committed to creating a respectful, inclusive, and equitable workplace. In 2026 we will:

- ★ Continue to uphold robust policies on dignity at work and anti-harassment
- ★ Deliver equality, diversity, and inclusion training for staff
- ★ Review our practices to support gender pay equality and reduce any disparities
- ★ Maintain our commitment to being an inclusive employer for all backgrounds and communities

Fair Work in Procurement and Partnerships

As part of our broader commitment, we promote fair work principles through our partnerships and supply chain, encouraging alignment with Fair Work First criteria where appropriate.

Looking Ahead

The introduction of our Fair Work Policy in 2026 provides a strong foundation for continued progress. We remain committed to fully embedding Fair Work First principles across all aspects of our work, ensuring that our people are treated fairly, supported to thrive, and empowered to deliver positive outcomes for communities across Scotland.

Increased awareness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

We have made significant progress in 2025–2026 in embedding children's rights across our work, highlighted by the publication of our Children's Rights and Well-being Impact Assessment Statement. This marked a key step in ensuring that all programmes are designed, delivered and evaluated with young people's rights at the forefront.

Central to this approach was the continued development of the Youth Panel, empowering young people to shape decision-making, influence policy, and share lived experiences that strengthen organisational practice. Their voice has been instrumental in driving meaningful change.

Alongside this, SSF introduced a child-friendly version of its safeguarding policy, making vital information more accessible and understandable for young people. This reflects a commitment not only to protecting children, but to actively involving them in understanding their rights and safety.

Together, SSF hopes these initiatives demonstrate a strong, practical commitment to well-being, participation, and rights-based practice across all levels of the organisation.

Tackling antisocial behaviour through place based sport & youth work

Antisocial behaviour cannot be viewed in isolation. As highlighted by the Independent Working Group, it often reflects deeper societal challenges such as poverty, housing instability and unmet mental health needs.

We see the impact of these issues on young people every day. Many are navigating lives shaped by uncertainty, instability and fear. Young people do not wake up intending to engage in antisocial behaviour; rather, behaviour is often a form of communication, reflecting the challenges and circumstances they face.

Taking a place-based approach, recognising that young people's wellbeing is shaped by their communities, and working in partnership with local organisations and services, we can better understand need and deliver more effective, coordinated support.

Reducing Gaps in Youth Provision

We worked with young people and local partners to deliver sport and youth opportunities where gaps exist, recognising that young people's lives extend beyond traditional hours. Our programmes operated during evenings and peak times for antisocial behaviour, providing safe spaces and positive alternatives.

Collaborative Action to Address Anti-Social Behaviour

In response to the tragic death of a young person in Barrowfield, we partnered with Medics Against Violence to deliver targeted interventions for teenagers and early prevention programmes for younger children, helping them understand the consequences of violence and make informed choices.

Safer Shores Initiative

We collaborated in North Ayrshire, as part of a multi-agency response to rising anti-social behaviour along the coastline. Providing street-based and detached youth work, diversionary activities, and participation in weekly intelligence meetings, to achieve a joined-up approach to community safety.

Tackling Gender-Based Violence

We worked with St Paul's Youth Forum to address gender-based violence, particularly its impact on young women. Through staff training and youth-led delivery, young people are supported to explore and challenge the attitudes and cultural norms that underpin this issue.

This work has been further strengthened through sessions co-designed and delivered by Young Leaders in partnership with Kyniska Advocacy for amplifying young women's voices and promoting respect and equality.

“

I AM VERY PROUD OF THE WORK OF ONE OF MY LOCAL CHARITIES, SCOTTISH SPORTS FUTURES. THEY DO GREAT WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IN MY SEAT. IN PARTICULAR, THEY ENCOURAGE YOUNG WOMEN TO SPEAK UP ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS. AND THIS MEANS THAT THE YOUNG MEN IN THEIR PROGRAMS LEARN ABOUT WHAT THEY HAVE TO DO TO TREAT WOMEN AS THEIR EQUALS AND TO TREAT THEM WITH RESPECT. I CANNOT PRAISE SCOTTISH SPORTS FUTURES ENOUGH FOR WORKING ON THIS AND GIVING THOSE YOUNG WOMEN A VOICE.

JOHN GRADY, MP FOR GLASGOW EAST

Addressing Child Poverty

Efforts to reduce antisocial behaviour are closely linked to tackling child poverty. We continued our involvement in the Calton Demonstration of Change, a multi-agency initiative focused on eradicating child poverty.

“

THE IMPACT OF LOSING MY FRIEND THROUGH KNIFE CRIME IS WHY WE ARE STILL SCARED; WE ARE STILL LOOKING BEHIND OUR BACKS CONSTANTLY.



Learning from Planet Youth

We engaged with the Planet Youth Scotland support to inform our approach to prevention. The learning reinforces the importance of early intervention, strengthening community environments and building protective factors that support improved long-term outcomes for young people.

Impact in 2025/26

Our Risk Reduction programmes continue to deliver positive outcomes:

- ★ 96% reported positive behavioural changes.
- ★ 92% reported greater awareness of substance-related risks.
- ★ 82% of young people who had previously been involved in anti-social behaviour reported a reduction in such behaviour after joining SSF.



Physical Activity for Health Framework

Active Places of Learning

We supported young people in high schools by delivering active learning, enabling them to be physically active while achieving SCQF-accredited qualifications with 66% reporting improved attendance and attainment.

Active Systems

We are actively engaged in multi-sector partnerships across sport and non-sport organisations, aligning services and opportunities to better meet the needs of young people.

In the East End of Glasgow, we are supporting a systems-based approach to tackling child poverty—using sport to drive engagement, connect people to training and employment, and improve access to services.

This work is achieved through shared insight, collaboration and coordinated delivery.

Active Sport and Recreation

We have strengthened the sport and physical activity workforce, building skills and confidence to better engage young people facing barriers, while supporting young people into volunteering roles—contributing over 11,000 hours in communities.

We have expanded access by taking sport directly into underserved areas and creating pathways into wider opportunities through partnerships with governing bodies, local authorities and community organisations. As a result, 96% of young people reported being more active.

Active Communications

We delivered national campaigns, collaborating with other national partners, targeting people who don't typically engage in sport, raising awareness of local opportunities and promoting inclusion in sport.

Active Places and Spaces

We deliver sport in community settings where access to facilities is limited, creating safe, inclusive spaces that maximise participation and support local people to be active.

★ Our Priorities

In 2026/27, we intend to further strengthen and extend the reach of our work, delivering changes for young people, communities, and the systems that support them.

We will launch our new strategy, shaped through deep and deliberate consultation with young people, our Youth Panel, staff, Board, and external stakeholders, which will set a clear direction for future impact and sustainability. We will:

★ SSF in the Community

Deliver and continue to evolve SSF in the Community, test and embed new community based models, strengthening local delivery and improving connections to wider organisations and services.

★ Education and Training

Develop flexible, responsive models of education and training that meet the changing needs and barriers experienced by volunteers and practitioners working in communities.

★ Youth Voice

Support our SSF Youth Panel to progress their priorities, ensuring more young people are safe and healthy by tackling violence, knife crime, and exclusion, and by promoting greater inclusion for excluded groups in sport and physical activity.

★ Supporting New Scots (Glasgow)

Increase inclusion by enabling New Scots whose first language is not English to engage with SSF programmes, while strengthening links to redesigned childcare, ESOL and employability services to help tackle child poverty.

★ Deepening Understanding and Influencing Change

Raise awareness of poverty and disadvantage among decision makers, leaders, and developers, helping to build the shared understanding, commitment, and collective will needed to deliver meaningful and lasting change.





Transforming young lives
through sport



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