

TRANSFORMING YOUNG LIVES THROUGH SPORT

**Our Strategy
2026 - 2030**

SSF★

Transforming young lives
through sport



INTRODUCTORY CONTEXT



Dougie Millen
CEO, SSF

This bold new strategy is the result of deep and deliberate consultation, with young people, our youth panel, staff, board, and external stakeholders.

We've set out clear ambitions, grounded in the realities of today's external environment, policy shifts, funding landscapes, community priorities, and the voices of young people.

This strategy defines where we can make the greatest impact in the lives of young people, in the sport sector and in communities across Scotland, as we work together to make this the best place in the world to grow up.

The challenge: Young people living in communities affected by poverty are the least likely to participate in sport and physical activity, to stay in school, achieve a positive destination and are disproportionately affected by poor health including mental health.

The opportunity: To enable more young people to experience the benefits of being physically active, supported by safe, trusted adults — transforming young lives through sport.



A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

Maree Todd MSP, Minister for Mental Wellbeing, Public Health, Sport, Alcohol and Drugs

Sport and physical activity have the power to transform lives, helping young people build confidence, improve wellbeing and develop the skills and connections they need to thrive.

I welcome Scottish Sports Futures' new strategy and its strong focus on supporting young people experiencing poverty, trauma and adversity. By bringing together sport, youth work and community partnerships, it sets out a clear vision for helping more young people realise their potential.

The Scottish Government shares Scottish Sports Futures' commitment to reducing inequalities and ensuring that every young person, regardless of their background or ability, can benefit from opportunities to be active and use sport as a foundation for wider success in life.

Through collaboration, innovation and a commitment to listening to young people's voices, this strategy will help create stronger communities and support more young people to lead healthy, active and fulfilling lives.



**Maree Todd MSP
with Patrick, SSF Young
Leader.**

A young Black male football player is shown in profile, looking towards the right. He is wearing a black short-sleeved jersey and an orange training bib. He is holding a white football with both hands. The background is a blurred football pitch at night, with stadium lights visible.

Our Vision

A Scotland where young people can harness the power of sport to overcome adversity and unlock their full potential.

Our Mission

To empower young people to use sport to build the strength and confidence they need to combat poverty, trauma and adversity.

Our Outcomes

SYSTEM OUTCOMES

Decision makers and developers in sport understand and actively drive change to improve opportunities for young people experiencing poverty and adversity.

Sports coaches, youth workers, community workers and volunteers have increased skills and confidence to design and lead inclusive, person centred sport and physical activity.



OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

More young people benefit from improved access to inclusive sport and physical activity.

Young people feel more positive about themselves, their lives or their futures.

Young people are less likely to be involved in unsafe behaviours.

More young people complete learning and achieve qualifications.



COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

Communities benefit from increased opportunities and services.

Young people are more likely to contribute positively and respectfully in their community.



Our Key Activities

- We **amplify the voices of young people** experiencing poverty & adversity to deepen understanding of the role sport can play in communities, to influence change.
- We share our learning and evidence of what works, **supporting partners to use insights in practical ways** to include more young people and communities in sport and physical activity.
- We **directly deliver combined sport and youth work programmes** in communities, using this delivery to build our experience and inform everything we do.
- We work directly with **young people to build the skills they need** to succeed in their futures.
- We **support those involved in coaching and supporting young people** to build the skills, knowledge and capability needed for effective engagement.

Local Delivery, National Impact

At every level, our work seeks to alleviate the effects of poverty and address inequality by empowering young people and communities through youth work, inclusive sport, and education.

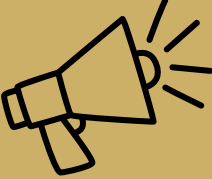
Delivered locally, shaping change nationally.

Shared Learning

Our strength lies in connecting local action with national influence. Insights from community-level delivery shape our national strategy, while our national offer helps scale what works locally. This two-way relationship ensures our work is both impactful and scalable.



Our Approach

 Amplify Understanding	 Skills, Education & Training	 Local Delivery
Deliver campaigns that highlight why change is needed.	Provide young people with training, accredited learning, and qualifications that meet their needs.	Respond to local needs by tailoring programmes informed by intelligence, consultation, and data.
Communicate powerful stories and models of practice that can be scaled.	Develop learning and development opportunities that are shaped with young people and reflect their experience.	Deliver a place-based multi-sport prevention model that connects services, organisations, and people to one stop network of support.
Share participant led research that reflects real experiences.	Equip people with the skills & tools to build trusted relationships and meaningful connections with those who may not typically participate.	Embed youth leadership at community level so young people shape decisions, activity, and local change.

Youth Voice

Partnership and Collaboration

Evidence, Impact & Communication

Belonging: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

 Transforming young
lives through sport

 **ssf_futures**

 **scottishsportsfutures**

in **scottishsportsfutures**

 **ssf_futures**

www.ssf.org.uk



SSF 
Transforming young lives
through sport