



# Fairer Aberdeen Fund

## Annual Report 2024-25

**£1.5m**

invested

**36**

projects supported

**52,120**

people supported

**752**

volunteers

**137,210**

hours of time  
volunteered

**£2.3m\***

value of volunteering

**5,566**

people received  
money advice and  
income maximisation  
advice

**£2m**

client financial gain

**£1,350**

average financial  
gain per person

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund is allocated by Aberdeen City Council to tackle poverty and deprivation. The Fund is dispersed and managed by the Fairer Aberdeen Board, made up of community representatives from priority neighbourhoods, with representatives from the Council, Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland and ACVO (Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations)

**806**

people involved in  
employability  
programmes

**227**

people into work

**5,602**

children and young  
people supported

**91**

young people moved  
on to employment,  
education or training

**166**

families with complex  
needs supported

**562**

tonnes of free food  
distributed

**47,266**

emergency food  
parcels provided

**488**

people accessing  
counselling in local  
communities

**4,348**

counselling sessions  
in priority areas

**£679,000**

match funding  
secured by funded  
initiatives

**SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES TO TACKLE  
POVERTY & INEQUALITIES**

\*Volunteering time is generally valued as the median hourly pay rate in the area, in Aberdeen this was £16.55 (Office of National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE))

# Employment and training

96% of people supported by the Fairer Aberdeen Fund are affected by poverty, living in the most deprived neighbourhoods or in low income households

**Pathways** supports people into employment by providing tailored support for people from the first stages of job seeking through to securing and maintaining employment. They identify and encourage participation of hard to reach residents through weekly drop-ins, work clubs, established links with partner agencies and individually tailored one-to-one Keyworker support.

Support sessions took place in community centres and projects in areas with an identified need, linking in with other support services like food provision, to ensure that immediate referrals can be made for people who are looking to get back to work.

The changes to National Insurance had an impact on the labour market, with fewer vacancies being advertised in the final quarter of the year.

They now record whether clients move into jobs paying the National Living Wage and all clients did so. The majority (70%) went into full time employment.

407 people received support and 185 moved into work.

**Social return on investment for every £1 of funding received by Pathways there was a return of £4.67**

PATHWAYS

**shmuTRAIN (Station House Media Unit)** offers comprehensive employability support and skills development training to young people and adults, using community & digital media to engage people, increase motivation and develop core skills such as confidence, communication, and teamwork, and to support people to move on to a positive destination.

Over the year, 21 young people attended the Training Academy, and 56 people participated in the post-school/adult employability programme. 14 of them moved into positive destinations, 1 into employment, 4 into education and 9 into training.

34 participants reported an increase in aspirations, 41 an increase in health and wellbeing and basic skills, and 18 people reported an increase in job search skills.

**NESS (North East Sensory Services) Employment Service** provides an employment service to blind, visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing people who live in Aberdeen City. They provide specialist support enabling people to access relevant employment, education, and training opportunities and to sustain opportunities which have already been accessed.

They worked with 50 clients. 2 people moved into work and 22 were sustained in their current jobs.

**King's Trust Team Programme** provides a 12 week personal, social and employability skills development programme for participants aged 16-25 who are disadvantaged, with a high proportion having complex needs including offending behaviour, drug and alcohol issues, behavioural issues, problems with literacy, numeracy, mental health, and homelessness.

Over the year 51 people took part in the programme, 18 moved into work and 33 into education, training or volunteering.

**Aberdeen Foyer Reach** delivers personal, social, wellbeing and employability skills development programmes, aimed at participants who are in recovery from any long-term condition, including substance misuse, mental illness and physical illness.

38 clients participated in the course, 10 secured employment, and 4 moved into training or education as a result.

shmuTRAIN

**Social return on investment for every £1 of funding received by shmuTRAIN there was a return of £3.69**

“I gained so much when we went to Kincorth and decorated a room. I didn't think it was something I'd do, but I pushed myself and loved it. I gained more confidence during New Experiences Week too—we went to places I never thought I would go, but I pushed myself and had so much fun.”

Aberdeen Foyer REACH participant



**Aberdeen Foyer Families** is an employability and personal development programme for parents facing multiple and complex barriers to sustainable, living wage employment.

10 people participated in the programme, 8 participated in financial literacy sessions and received financial health checks. 3 moved on to further employability programmes and 4 into employment. 8 participants reported increased confidence and knowledge to make healthy lifestyle choices as a result of the course.



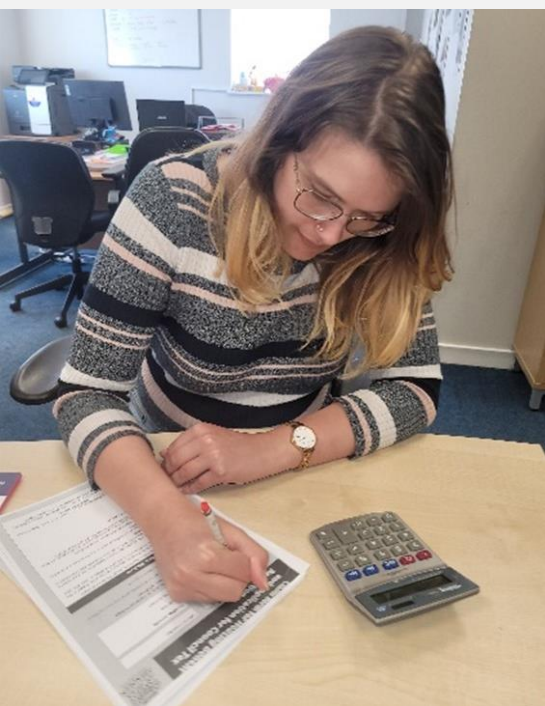


# Income maximisation

There is a return of £7.11 for every £1 invested in income maximisation services

**Care and Repair** provides advice and financial assistance to older people and people with disabilities, to maximise household income and raise charitable funding on behalf of individuals to carry out repairs, improvements, and adaptations to the home.

Over the year, 1,088 households were assisted with income maximisation, charitable and grant funding, achieving a total financial gain of £585,358, an average of £538 per household. 1,634 households received assistance with repairs, handyman services, adaptations, and energy efficiency work. 1,875 people who are disabled or have a long term health condition were supported.



**CAB Money Advice Outreach Project** provides advice and information using community centres as drop-in centres, assisting clients to maximise their income from welfare benefits and to reduce levels of debt.

342 clients received money advice and 473 received income maximisation advice with a total financial gain of £656,761 an average of £979 per client.

**St Machar Credit Union** improves access to affordable financial services and products, and develops credit union membership by providing and promoting easy access savings accounts for adults and juniors and low-cost loans within the community.

Over the year, 5,018 savers deposited £3m of savings. They gave out 3,013 affordable loans totalling £1.9m, meaning people had access to affordable credit, avoiding payday loans or doorstep lending.

**CFINE SAFE** (Support, Advice, Financial, Education) provides financial capability support on benefits, budgeting and debt, and a referral system to direct beneficiaries to agencies who can support them to resolve issues. SAFE provides a holistic, person-centred response to the multiple and complex needs of people on low incomes and reliant on emergency food provision.

Over the year 3,385 clients were engaged, 428 of them received financial gain of £1,111,165, an average of £2,596 per person.

They supported 1,530 people referred through the food bank and 677 referred by other agencies. 1,926 clients were from priority neighbourhoods. 202 people were seen at home visits and 497 at 119 outreach venues. 2,538 people were referred to CFINE's wrap around services and 1,692 to partner agencies, such as SCARF and Pathways.

“A lot of people are struggling and feeling desperate. Sometimes it can feel like there's nowhere to turn. Just knowing there's a place where you'll be welcomed and treated with kindness - that can mean everything. That kind of support changes lives.”

Credit Union member for 20 years

“I could not have completed this process without help, I was worried about asking anyone for help, but a friend recommended the advisers at CFINE, and they were able to see me during school hours and helped me to apply for UC, they gave me some advice about how to manage until my first payment. The pantry membership has also helped me a lot, especially to have some extra food during the holidays for the kids and the energy vouchers saved me worry about the electric and heating costs.”

Lone parent of 3 migrating to UC



# Supporting communities

The Fairer Aberdeen programme supported 6 Community Hubs and Flats. 752 volunteers provided 137,210 hours of volunteer time

## SHMU Connecting Communities Through Community Media

supports the production of community media in regeneration areas, exploring and addressing local community issues and developing skills by providing training and support, developing opportunities for underrepresented voices to be heard across the city; creating a wide range of benefits for individuals and communities, fostering a spirit of engagement and partnership working; developing transferrable skills in participants; and contributing towards increased social capital.

34 volunteers were supported to produce 7 community magazines, delivered to 24,600 households across priority areas 3 times a year. 106 volunteers were supported to produce radio programmes, including community shows broadcast weekly in priority areas and issue based shows.

226 people participated over the year, 180 organisations worked in partnership with SHMU, and 104 volunteers contributed 25,233 hours of volunteer time.

**Silver City Surfers** provide one-to-one computer tutoring for over 55s in the City Centre and priority areas, so they can confidently learn how to use the computer and surf the internet safely in a welcoming and social environment.

124 older people were supported through 151 sessions, and 24 volunteers contributed 2,512 hours of volunteer time.

**Printfield Community Project Tillydrone Community Flat, Seaton Community Flat and Tillydrone Community Campus** provide resources for community activity; venues for a range of organisations that offer support, information and advice; and support community capacity building and adult learning.

They support people with the Cost of Living crisis and help to address social isolation and loneliness.

## Printfield Community Project

80 children and young people participated in activities in the project and 78 participated in out of school care and youth services. 8 children under 3 years were registered.

45 young people were provided with healthy lunches during the school holidays. 12 residents were supported to be part of the Woodside Network.

A total of 200 people were supported and 30 volunteers contributed 600 hours of volunteer time.

**Tillydrone Community Campus** is in the process of transferring to a group of local residents who have formed a SCIO to take over running the community side of the building. They have started to offer activities and drop in sessions and supported 82 people over the year. 40 people attended sessions addressing health and wellbeing and 5 volunteers contributed 350 hours of volunteer time.

## Tillydrone Community Flat

12 partner agencies used the Flat to deliver advice and support services for a range of issues including health, education, employability and financial inclusion. There were 7,280 recorded uses of the Flat facilities, including use of washing machine, phone and access to computers. 223 people got support with debt and benefit issues and 193 were engaged in activities to assist with their recovery from substance/alcohol misuse.

A total of 652 participants were involved, 125 of them under 16 years old. 15 volunteers contributed 1,050 hours of volunteer time.

## Seaton (STAR) Community Flat

10 partner agencies used the Flat to deliver services, with 936 attendances at these. There were 109 uses of Flat facilities and 249 uses of information and advice provision. 26 people attended sessions supporting people back into work and 19 people attended sessions aimed at increasing skills and creativity.

A total of 439 people were supported, and 4 volunteers contributed 40 hours of volunteer time.

**St George's Community Centre** was awarded funding to carry out upgrades and maintenance to the building which was once the local church. A group of local residents now run the building to provide activities and events for all ages.

“I’m 19 years old and I am a full-time wheelchair user due to having cerebral palsy. I left school in 2022 and have since tried to find social groups and groups to challenge my mind and make use of my cognitive ability. I first heard about shmu when I saw a flyer about their services. I emailed to ask if they had any courses that I could get involved in or if I could volunteer. I wanted to be involved because I was keen to do media training as it’s something I have been interested in since school and the short courses at shmu were more manageable for me. I was also keen to volunteer my time and support other young people going through the difficult transition from school to studying or working. The skills I have gained, from being a volunteer, is not to give up when it gets hard, and I am more resilient than I think. I’ve become confident in speaking in public because the staff see the potential I have and value my input. shmu has definitely helped my wellbeing by giving me the confidence to believe in myself and giving me a purpose while making new friends. I feel supported, understood and valued by the staff and others attending.”







### **No Recourse North East (NRNE) Partnership: Tackling and Preventing Destitution**

provides a coordinated approach in Aberdeen to tackling and preventing destitution experienced by people with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF), including asylum seekers. They aim to achieve this via a wide range of activities, including the training of third and public sector organisations (particularly those with roles around housing, welfare and domestic abuse), support to organisations (particularly those delivering employability services) to improve their service in a way that mitigates barriers relating to NRPF, and engaging with policy makers and relevant forums to advocate for the rights of people with NRPF.

Over the year, they delivered 21 training sessions to over 260 staff and volunteers in third and public sector organisations, including 5 employability providers and 5 financial inclusion/benefit advice agencies.

9 people with NRPF participated in a lived experience group to give a space for mutual, peer support, as well as an opportunity to influence policy around related issues.

### **CFINE Tackling Food Poverty**

provides support for those experiencing food insecurity. They maintain and develop Community Food Outlets and Pantries to provide access to healthy, affordable food in priority areas.

562 tonnes of food were redistributed, equivalent to 1.34m meals. 89 organisations received FareShare food. 47,266 emergency food parcels were provided. 1,251 food bank users were referred to other services that CFINE provide.

7 cooperative Community Food Outlets were supported and there were 3,527 shops at the Mobile Cooperative Vehicle and pantries.

A total of 32,222 people were supported and 336 volunteers contributed 80,640 hours of volunteer time.



**“Following our advice and signposting, many clients have been able to access immigration advice, emergency financial support or advice about housing rights. In this last year, we have seen several cases which have tested new boundaries in the support available to people with NRPF who are facing destitution.”**

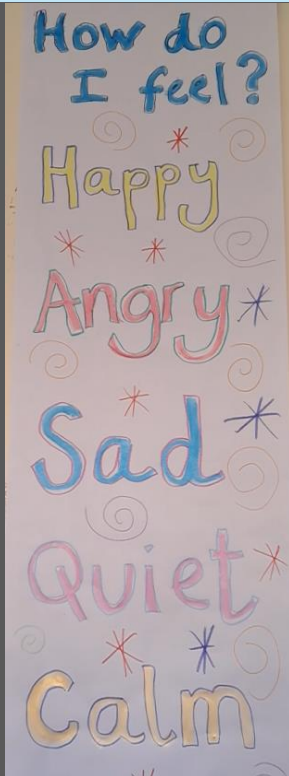
### **No Recourse North East Partnership Community Training event at Seaton Primary School**





# Health and wellbeing

96% of people supported by the Fairer Aberdeen Fund are affected by poverty, living in the most deprived neighbourhoods or in low income households **CHANGE**



**SHMU Adult Engagement and Support Service** supports vulnerable adults with complex needs and/or barriers to participation, including justice experienced individuals. As a result of the challenges experienced, many of the adults supported are at an increased risk of antisocial or risk-taking behaviours.

Practical and emotional support is provided through one-to-one sessions, as well as through wellbeing and social activities, including a weekly Wellbeing Café, Wellbeing Walks, and a monthly Wellbeing radio show, giving organisations and those with lived experience a platform to share their stories.

78 people participated in the programme. 15 participants reduced their risk taking behaviour. 17 people secured a positive destination, 6 volunteering in the community, 3 into education, 6 into training and 2 into employment.

**Printfield Feel Good Project and Tillydrone Health & Well Being Project** provide complementary health sessions to increase relaxation and wellbeing. 79 people accessed 320 sessions and 2 volunteers contributed 80 hours of volunteering time.

**Mental Health Aberdeen** provided adult counselling in Torry, where 260 clients accessed the service and 775 counselling sessions were provided; and in Calsayseat Surgery, where 137 clients accessed 1,021 counselling sessions. Additional funding was provided to engage and support Torry residents affected by impacts of RAAC being found in their homes.

**Pathways to Wellbeing** provides locally based, easily accessible counselling services.

They provided counselling for 91 people accessing 780 counselling sessions. 7 volunteers contributed 336 hours of volunteering time.

**ACIS Youth Counselling** was provided by Mental Health Aberdeen, where 188 young people accessed 1,226 counselling sessions. ACIS Youth also operates in Torry, where 42 young people accessed 466 counselling sessions in Primary schools. 388 meetings were held with teachers, parents and other referring agencies and there were 1,201 cases of signposting and advice from ACIS Information Officers

**Police Scotland Operation Begonia** is a joint initiative involving Police Scotland and partner agencies with the two aims of preventing sexual exploitation and supporting those who find themselves involved in selling or exchanging sexual activity. It provides dedicated, directed patrols with the aim of using a trauma informed approach to signpost those involved towards services and more positive destinations.

Begonia was set up to reduce harm to women involved in the on-street sex industry and to protect communities from any real or perceived threat, risk and harm caused by commercial sexual exploitation.

During the year 216 women were engaged with and 6 new women encountered through street work patrols and referred to partner agencies. Begonia patrols access rape alarms, toiletries, and snacks to give out when needed. There were 52 dedicated patrols undertaken in Aberdeen to address on street prostitution. 66 male perpetrators were stopped, educated, or charged regarding kerb crawling offences to try and discourage males from frequenting identified areas, in support of local communities.

A turning point came when Neil was introduced to the Tall Ships Sail Training opportunity. Encouraged and supported by our staff, he applied and was accepted as a Sail Trainee. This boosted his self-belief and further motivated him to build on his newly developed skills. By the end of the course, Neil was full of gratitude for the opportunity and expressed a strong desire to remain involved. We look forward to supporting Neil as he captures film content during his sailing expedition.



As a result of the continued use of the area being used by vulnerable females, Street Pastors attend the area on Thursdays to provide additional support to the persons without a Police presence as this can often be deemed as a softer approach.

I noticed there was a need for medical assistance for a lot of the females who struggle to attend appointments due to their chaotic lifestyles. Turning Point Scotland was approached and asked if they would be interested in providing their Nurse Practitioner to enhance the service. They now attend the first Thursday of every month to provide triage and minor injury treatments.

# Children and families

Many more children and young people will benefit from the Fairer Aberdeen Programme through the provision of food, employability and financial inclusion support for parents

**Home-Start** coordinate home visiting support to families identified as at risk and hard to reach, working to prevent further crisis and family breakdown.

30 families in priority areas were supported. 27 families reported reduced isolation, 22 parents reported improved physical or mental health and 26 children had improved emotional wellbeing. 6 families no longer required Social Work support and 1 care experienced parent needed reduced support. 19 families were supported with financial issues, and 4 families with no recourse to public funds were supported. 30 volunteers contributed 3,900 hours of volunteering time.

We are deeply humbled by and very proud of the contribution of all of our volunteers. This year we chose to nominate Jenny, our longest-serving volunteer, for awards within Home-Start and through Celebrate Aberdeen. Jenny has supported families with us for 22 years, including several supported by Fairer Aberdeen Funding.

Jenny was shortlisted for the Celebrate Aberdeen award and attended the awards dinner and celebration with the parent she supported. This was a highlight for both, who spoke of the significance of this celebration and recognition of her contribution.

“Jenny's biggest achievement is hard to single out, but her ability to calm me down when my anxiety gets too high, when my PTSD kicks in, when I'm scared and struggling with my physical health is unbelievable. Not many people, even psychiatrists, can get through to me during these episodes. But Jenny can and she doesn't judge me. She just lets me ramble on, cry and do whatever I need to do. She gives me reassurance that no matter what it is we'll work through it together. Jenny is fantastic with my soon-to-be 4-year-old & adores my dog, Brussel too!

Jenny is one of a kind, but the world absolutely needs more people like her. She is truly an incredible woman.”

Parent supported by HomeStart

**Middlefield Youth Flat and Under 11s work** supports young people, especially those with low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

Over the year 300 children and young people were supported. 220 participated in diversionary activities designed to reduce youth crime and exclusion rates. 20 were supported to get into work, training or education and 45 were supported with mental health issues.

98 children attended primary club sessions, 12 of them had additional support needs. 6 volunteers contributed 176 volunteer hours.

**Choices Relationship Revolution**

delivers an early intervention programme to break the cycle of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and to raise awareness, challenge prejudice and stereotypes amongst young people.

Over the year 2,500 young people participated in the programme, 140 educational workshops and 75 drop in clubs were delivered. 96% of participants reported being able to identify violent and exploitative relationships and 92% an increased knowledge of existing support services following participation in the workshops.

There were 5 young people trained and supported to volunteer and 600 volunteer hours contributed.

**Befriend A Child** provide accessible group activities for children involved in the Befriend A Child scheme. Youth clubs cover priority areas and provide indoor and outdoor activities after school, for children who are experiencing difficulties at home and are feeling socially isolated.

55 children attended the youth clubs regularly. 15 volunteers contributed 1,816 hours of volunteering time.

**Geronimo – Time to Play** is delivered by Aberdeen City Council's Creative Learning for parents and their early years children (0-5 years) to play and be creative together. Through play, creativity and risk Geronimo aims to improve parents' confidence in taking part in their children's learning and to be confident in their own ability to think creatively and be able to find opportunities to play in any environment; a supermarket queue, at home when feeling busy, or out in the rain.

Sessions open to all residents of priority areas were delivered in Mastrick, Middlefield, Tillydrone, Torry, Woodside and Kincorth as well as in outdoor settings at Springhill Community Garden. 269 people took part in sessions, 143 of them under 16 years old. 100% of parents/carers reported improved relationships with their child, improved wellbeing, and an increase of time spent playing with their children.

“It's given us protected time to engage in imaginative play and focus on strengthening our bond.”







**SHMU Youth Media** provides creative opportunities for young people (between the age of 12-19), primarily from the priority areas of Aberdeen, to train and take part in all aspects of the production of regular radio programmes.

A total of 261 young people participated, 187 of them under 16 years old. 30 volunteers contributed 3,800 hours of volunteering time.

**Fersands Family Centre** supports vulnerable families, providing home visits, one to one support and group work.

54 families received support, a total of 155 people participated and 3 volunteers contributed 360 hours of volunteer time.

**“It was amazing to see the young people come together empowering and supporting each other to overcome fears and reach goals.”**

### **Fersands Youth Work Support**

provides a wide range of youth work services to encourage young people to experience new activities, gain new skills, build relationships, and learn about health issues, employment, and other issues relevant to them.

Over the year 104 young people participated, 84 of them under 16 years old. 840 free meals were provided for young people during activities. 8 volunteers contributed 350 hours volunteer time and 18 young people were involved in volunteering.

**Big Bang Drumming Group** provides drumming workshops for young people in priority neighbourhoods, enhancing social skills and supporting participants to become active and productive members of their communities. The group supports young people with varying abilities and needs and aims to enhance their confidence and self-esteem.

Over the year 15 young people attended and 2 volunteers contributed 80 hours of volunteer time.



## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

£20,000 was allocated to a PB (Participatory Budgeting) event carried out by the Locality Planning Team in priority neighbourhoods. The process was led by a steering group including 6 community members. 35 applications went to a public vote and events were held in each priority neighbourhood.

There were 24 voting roadshows held at various community locations to maximise the opportunity for people to get involved and vote. There was also online voting for those unable to attend an event.

Following the public vote 23 projects were fully funded and 3 projects were partially funded. Projects included activities for children and young people, mental health and wellbeing support, recreational and environmental initiatives, cultural events and activities to tackle food insecurity.

**88%**  
of participants felt that **UDECODE** is a fair way to allocate funding and would like to be involved again in the future.



Regeneration Matters is a forum of community representatives from all the regeneration and priority neighbourhoods in Aberdeen City who nominate 7 members to sit on the Fairer Aberdeen Board along with 1 representative from the Civic Forum and 2 from Aberdeen Youth Movement. The group has been meeting since 2006 and is supported by the Fairer Aberdeen Development Officer. They meet every month to discuss issues of interest across all the communities, as well as managing the Community Support Fund to support community engagement and empowerment.

Over the year the Fund supported the printing and distribution of Community Newsletters, volunteer events and training, health and wellbeing activities, and cultural activities and celebrations.

