
COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	16 th December 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Fairer Aberdeen Fund Annual Report 2014-15
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/15/236
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Members with the Annual Report 2014-15 for the Fairer Aberdeen Fund programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Council is asked to:

- a) Consider and advise the Fairer Aberdeen Board of the Council's comments on the Annual Report for 2014-15, at Appendix 1.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund is allocated by Aberdeen City Council, and is aimed at tackling poverty and deprivation; supporting partners to work together to tackle area-based and individual poverty; and to help more people access and sustain employment opportunities. Funding supports initiatives and services for the most disadvantaged communities and vulnerable people across the City.

In 2014-15 the Council agreed a sum of £1.625m to be managed by the Fairer Aberdeen Board on behalf of Community Planning Aberdeen. The same sum was agreed for 2015-16.

An application process is in place to ensure funding is allocated to appropriate programmes and projects. Organisations funded by the Fairer Aberdeen Board are required to meet specific terms and conditions and comply with State Aid regulations, where required, and to comply with "Following the Public Pound" financial guidance.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Personnel

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund provides funding for a Support Team currently comprising 1 FTE Programme Coordinator and 1 FTE Development Officer. This small team is responsible for fund allocation, reporting, evaluation of Fairer Aberdeen Fund programmes, projects and initiatives, partnership building, advising applicants, supporting the Regeneration Matters community representatives group, administering and managing the Fairer Aberdeen Fund on behalf of the Fairer Aberdeen Board.

Through the programme approximately 30 FTE staff posts are funded in 50 projects. In 2014-15 over 1000 volunteers contributed 110,000 volunteer hours with a value of just under £1.5m*, almost doubling the value of the Fund.

*Volunteering time is generally valued as the average hourly pay rate in the area, in Aberdeen this was £13.60. (Office of National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE))

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 The Finance and Resources Committee of the 12th November 2009 agreed that half yearly updates should be provided on the outcomes achieved through the investment in Fairer Aberdeen Fund. This report includes the Annual Report for 2014-15 at Appendix 1. The final report will be printed in colour, including photographs, quotes and case studies, and will be widely distributed.

5.2 **Annual Report summary**

The Annual Report details how the Fund was used and the impact it had during the year. Over the year £1,522,000 was awarded to 64 projects, supporting work in regeneration areas and across the City with vulnerable groups and individuals. Grants ranged from £3,000 to £147,000 in value. A total of 27,343 people were involved in, or benefited from, funded initiatives, 5,000 of them were under 16 years old. 1,040 volunteers contributed 109,473 hours of volunteering time with a value of just under £1.5m, almost doubling the value of the Fund.

2,305 people received money advice or income maximisation advice, with a total financial gain of £2,569,028, an average of £1,115 per person.

376 people moved into work. 14 access centres in areas of high unemployment offered weekly employment support drop in

sessions. 164 young people were involved in activities designed to increase their opportunities to move into positive destinations, and 81 young people moved onto employment, education or training.

68 Community Food Outlets operated in local communities, 37 of them in Sheltered Housing complexes, and 125 tonnes of free food was distributed to 95 organisations through FareShare. 12,272 food parcels were given out to 7,136 beneficiaries.

620 people accessed 4,295 sessions of counselling provision, 241 of them were under 16 years old, and counselling was provided in 7 regeneration neighbourhoods.

4,983 people participated in activities and services provided in Community Projects and Flats. Cummings Park, Seaton and Tillydrone Community Flats are wholly funded by Fairer Aberdeen, and a number of organisations use these venues to deliver services within the areas. The number of attendances to use their facilities including phone, computers, making enquiries and getting information totalled 17,842.

391 people participated in Arts activities and 916 in Adult Learning. 136 people were involved in producing community media.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund plays an important part in providing services that tackle poverty and contribute to improving wellbeing for the city's most disadvantaged communities and vulnerable individuals. The programme responds to locally identified issues and addresses unemployment, providing financial inclusion services, improving health and literacies and enabling more sustainable and safer communities.

Improving our use of Resources –

The initiatives and programmes being funded support frontline services that are provided by the Council, Community, Voluntary and other public sector partners with 90% of the fund allocated to voluntary and community organisations. The Fairer Aberdeen Board takes a participatory approach to allocating funding, with the majority of the Board being made up of community representatives, with knowledge of the regeneration areas.

During the first 6 months of 2015-16 the Fairer Aberdeen Board undertook a review of Maximising Income Advice and Information projects, a review group was set up including community representatives from the FA Board and members of the Welfare Reform Board, to ensure best value from projects, particularly in the context of welfare reform. The Board regularly monitors the programme

to ensure there is no duplication of provision and will continue to review projects as necessary and appropriate.

Corporate -

During 2014-15 the Board reviewed priorities and outcomes in line with the Single Outcome Agreement and local needs.

The main purpose for the fund is targeting disadvantaged communities and vulnerable groups and individuals. The Fairer Aberdeen Board has agreed the following outcomes:

- Maximising income
- Getting people into work
- Improving mental health and well being
- Building stronger safer communities
- Increasing skills and creativity

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund also contributes to a wide range of objectives contained within the Councils policy statement, 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City' in relation to "challenging inequalities wherever they exist and bringing our communities closer together."

Fairer Aberdeen Fund initiatives also contribute to the delivery of the Council's Anti-Poverty Strategy and have an important role in responding to Welfare Reform changes.

The Fairer Aberdeen Board, which represents a partnership, participatory approach, comprises of the Chair of Community Planning Aberdeen, Cllr Jenny Laing, three Aberdeen City Councillors (Councillors Yvonne Allan, Gordon Graham and Jim Noble), one representative from Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations, one representative from NHS Grampian, one representative from Police Scotland, seven representatives from priority regeneration areas (appointed through the Regeneration Matters Group), and three representatives from the Aberdeen Civic Forum.

During the year the Board reviewed its membership roles and responsibilities. As a result a set of 'operating guidance' is being prepared, detailing these.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Failure to continue to address the needs of Aberdeen's most disadvantaged communities would have a detrimental effect for the individuals and communities involved and potentially increased costs in the long term for public services. Supporting people into employment, maximizing people's income, providing early intervention in relation to education and health is not only a better outcome for individuals but reduces the costs involved in responding to the effects of poverty in the long run.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The information contained at Appendix 1 is based on the monitoring reports that funded projects are required to produce as part of the terms and conditions for Fairer Aberdeen Fund grant.

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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Fairer Aberdeen Fund

Annual report 14-15

The Fairer Aberdeen Fund (formerly the Fairer Scotland Fund) is allocated by Aberdeen City Council to tackle poverty and deprivation. The Fund is dispersed and managed by the Fairer Aberdeen Board, a sub group of the Community Planning Partnership, made up of representatives from the regeneration areas, the Civic Forum, the Council, NHS Grampian, Police Scotland and ACVO (Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations). In 2014-15 funding of £1.625m was made available to support initiatives fitting with the main priorities decided by the Board.

Priority themes and key actions:

Maximising income

1. Improving access to affordable financial products and services
2. Supporting the delivery of financial education initiatives
3. Delivering coordinated advice and information services

Getting people into work

1. Providing access to support and skills needed to return to work
2. Supporting personal development and training
3. Delivering in work support

Improving mental health and wellbeing

1. Reducing health inequalities
2. Improving mental health and wellbeing
3. Increasing access to affordable healthy food

Building stronger, safer communities

1. Improving access to services in regeneration areas
2. Increasing community safety
3. Supporting community involvement and participation

Increasing skills and creativity

1. Supporting learning and creative opportunities
2. Improving literacy and numeracy

Allocation of funding 2014-15

Maximising Income	£423,373	26%
Getting People into Work	£261,582	16%
Improving Health and Wellbeing	£316,927	20%
Building Stronger Safer Communities	£283,413	17%
Increasing Skills and Creativity	£236,208	15%
Community Support Fund	£18,000	1%
Running Costs and Support Team	£85,000	5%

The Fund focuses on neighbourhoods that fall within the most deprived 0-15% in Scotland according to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, as well as supporting vulnerable groups and individuals.

Priority neighbourhoods

- Cummings Park
- Middlefield
- Northfield
- Seaton
- Tillydrone
- Torry
- Woodside

Priority groups

- People living in poverty
- Lone parents and families with children
- Unemployed people
- Children and young people
- People with health issues
- Older people
- Minority groups where an identified need can be evidenced

Over the year £1,522,000 was awarded to 64 projects, supporting work in regeneration areas and across the City with vulnerable groups and individuals. Grants ranged from £3,000 to £147,000 in value. A total of 27,343 people were involved in, or benefited from, funded initiatives, 5,000 of them were under 16 years old. An impressive 1,040 volunteers contributed 109,473 hours of volunteering time with a value of just under £1.5m*, almost doubling the value of the Fund.

*Volunteering time is generally valued as the average hourly pay rate in the area, in Aberdeen this was £13.60. (Office of National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE))

Maximising Income

26% of the Fund (£423,000) was allocated to initiatives that support people to maximise their income. The main themes under this priority are access to affordable financial services and products and coordinated provision of quality advice and information services.

Over the year a total of 4,513 adults and 2,061 juniors saved with NESCU and St Machar Credit Union, depositing £1,796,041 in savings. They provided 2,984 affordable loans totalling £1,822,504.

2,305 people received money advice or income maximisation advice, with a total financial gain of £2,569,028, an average of £1,115 per person.

There were 2,538 referrals to the Cash In Your Pocket database, which supports people to access the employability and financial inclusion support they need.

17,872 people benefited from 8 funded initiatives and a total of 274 volunteers contributed 45,520 hours of volunteer time.

St Machar Credit Union improves access to affordable financial services and products. The Credit Union aims to help people who are financially excluded and those on low incomes reach financial stability, through regular savings and accessing low cost loans. They are then encouraged to access mainstream financial products such as house insurance and basic bank accounts, while continuing to use their own credit union accounts.

The Credit Union secured new premises in the building that was the Clydesdale Bank in Great Northern Road, and are due to move there from the Woodside Community Centre in 2015. The increase in credit union members has meant it became increasingly difficult to deal with customers on a one to one basis, and the new premises will give them scope to further increase their membership and give customers a new experience in credit union banking. It will also allow them to increase the number of volunteers involved.

Over the year there were 2,912 adult credit union savers and 1,304 junior savers, and total savings deposited were £1,267,182. They provided 2,610 affordable loans totalling £1,333,284, an average of £510 per loan. 9 community collection points operated and 24 volunteers contributed 8,120 hours of volunteer time.

North East Scotland Credit Union (NESCU) Access Project improves access to affordable financial services and products. They develop credit union membership, by providing and promoting easy access savings accounts for adults and juniors and low cost loans within the community. NESCU aims to assist in decreasing levels of financial exclusion within its communities, providing people with a simple to operate savings and borrowing account and knowledge about financial planning for the future.

Over the year there were 1,601 adult credit union savers and 757 junior savers, and total savings deposited were £528,859. They provided 374 affordable loans totalling £489,220, an average of £1,308 per loan. 6 community collection points operated and 41 volunteers contributed 3,950 hours of volunteer time.

Cash In Your Pocket (CIYP) acts as a central hub for the operation of its financial inclusion partners, and provides a one-stop referral system to allow access to the full range of organisations that can assist with financial inclusion issues, and other related help, to people experiencing financial difficulty and disadvantage across the City. The staff team coordinates meetings and provision regarding financial inclusion throughout Aberdeen City, acting as a forum for discussing activity, and ensuring duplication and gaps in provision are kept to a minimum.

The project aims to ensure better co-ordination of, and access to, employability and financial inclusion support services, and to work with partners and community projects to ensure that community priorities are met in relation to accessing financial inclusion services.

2,538 individuals were referred to Cash in Your Pocket Partnership and there were 70 organisations involved in dealing with referrals. 23 organisations actively participated in Cash In Your Pocket Partnership meetings.

CAB Money Advice Outreach Project provides advice and information to clients living in regeneration areas through face-to-face work in communities, providing local drop-in sessions and appointments. They help clients maximise their income from welfare benefits and reduce levels of debt, including through creditors arrangements, sequestration and negotiation.

The project aims to bring added service, through working with other statutory and charitable organisations including Credit Unions and Cash In Your Pocket, and by linking up with other CAB services that are available.

Over the year 1,877 clients received money advice and income maximisation advice with a total financial gain of £955,802, an average of £1,090 per client.

Aberdeen Illness and Disability Advice Service offers confidential, independent and impartial financial advice to anyone affected by illness, disability or a long term health condition, in the most suitable location for the client, including hospital wards and home visits.

Over the year they saw a total of 1,092 clients, this included 501 home visits, 302 hospital visits and 289 visits to their office. The total financial gain was £1,468,521, an average of £1,244 per person. 9 volunteers contributed 8,838 hours of volunteer time.

The **Care and Repair Funding Officer** provides advice and financial assistance to older people, people with disabilities and people living in regeneration areas, irrespective of tenure. They aim to maximise household income including applying for benefits and annuities to supplement income and raising charitable funding on behalf of individuals to carry out repairs, improvements or adaptations to the home. They also support social housing tenants living in the regeneration areas, who are financially excluded or suffering from mental health problems, to carry out repairs or improvements that are not covered by their tenancy agreement.

Over the year 336 households were assisted with income maximisation and charitable funding, achieving a total financial gain of £142,703, an average of £425 per household. 20% of households assisted lived in regeneration areas, and 23% lived in social housing. A total of 434 householders accessed the subsidised gardening service and 4 volunteers contributed 1,936 hours of volunteer time.

WEA Count Us In aims to improve financial literacies in the courses delivered through two WEA projects, Reaching Forward and Reach Out.

Over the year they ran three 10 week programmes and a four week summer programme made up of mainly one off events. Activities included IT, Employability, Environmental clean-ups and awareness, Walking groups, Dynamics, Environmental art, Cooking on a budget, Soap box, Arts and Crafts, Gardening plots, football, plant ID, NTS visits, Local history walks, Alternative health, Yoga and The John Muir award. They also facilitated a visioning day and an evaluation day where learners and partners got involved and told them what classes were in demand for the future and feedback for courses that were run in the past or were ongoing. 2 residentials were run, one to Edinburgh and one to Findhorn. Both required the learners to use their new found financial skills, developed within other Reach out provision, to price, book and organise the daily activities.

130 learners took part in sessions and learnt skills to improve their financial literacy and 4 volunteers contributed to the 302 volunteer hours undertaken at Reach Out.

Aberdeen Food Bank Partnership is led by CFINE (Community Food Initiatives North East). It aims to provide food for those in food poverty, and to prevent local food banks competing to obtain food from the same sources, through coordination, information and networking between organisations. The Partnership hopes to engage and involve additional organisations involved in food bank work and provide practical support and advice to those in need, and access to support and services to address issues around health and well-being, financial capability and education, confidence, skills acquisition and employability.

Since the Food Bank Partnership was initially set up, the growth and improvements seen in the delivery of this service has benefitted many individuals and families. A number of people accessing the food bank service continue to express interest in volunteering with the food bank and becoming involved in the various tasks involved.

Since FareShare 'Grampian' was put in place, tonnage of food delivered has increased dramatically and the variety of food delivered has improved. The installation of the walk in chiller and freezer has made a huge difference to the type of food that they can receive. There were approximately 35 food drives through the year with excellent donations of food. A number of companies are now running continuous food drives throughout the year. First Bus is now supporting the partnership and Technip continue with their support.

Over the year 125 tonnes of free produce was distributed and 12,272 food parcels given out to 7,136 beneficiaries. 2,000 people were referred to other agencies and 425 people accesses financial support. 186 volunteers contributed 22,320 hours of volunteer time.

Getting People into Work

16% of the fund (£262,000) was allocated to initiatives that help people get back into work. The main themes under this priority are access to support and skills needed to return to work, including initial engagement, personal development activity and in work support.

A Support Fund is available to help overcome financial barriers and this was accessed by over 150 people, providing clothing for interviews, transport, training and qualifications.

Over the year a total of 376 people moved into work. 14 access centres in areas of high unemployment offered weekly employment support drop in sessions. 164 young people were involved in activities designed to increase their opportunities to move into positive destinations, and 81 young people moved onto employment, education or training. A total of 676 participants were involved in 6 initiatives and 15 volunteers contributed 689 hours of volunteer time.

Pathways support 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 in priority areas through weekly drop-ins, work clubs, established links with partner agencies and individually tailored one to one Keyworker support.

A team of Employment Keyworkers provide support in all aspects of job search; from initial development of CVs, identification of job goals and barriers, identification and matching to suitable vacancies, help with completing application forms, and preparation for interviews. All participants are also offered in-work support once they start work to ensure job retention.

Over the year 407 people received support, which was considerably more than their target. Of these 328 moved into work, 235 into full time employment and 93 into part time employment. Weekly drop-ins were delivered in all the regeneration areas, with additional drop-ins arranged in areas identified as needing extra support. New drop in sessions were established in Kincorth and Garthdee. Keyworkers were in each priority area at least twice a week,

offering advice and help with job searches and providing laptops to enable people to complete online applications with their support. 5 volunteers contributed 150 volunteer hours.

SHMU (Station House Media Unit) delivers shmuTRAIN, offering employability support and skills development training to young people aged 14-19 using community & digital media to engage young people, increase motivation and develop core skills such as confidence, communication and team work. The aims of the programmes are to support young people to move on to a sustained positive destination, such as work or training.

The shmuTRAIN Early Interventions programme supports young people aged 14 – 16 who are identified as being unlikely to secure a positive destination when leaving school. During the reporting period the 2014 Summer Leavers courses at Kincorth, Northfield and St Machar Academies were completed which supported 36 young people, and the 2015 Summer Leavers courses in Kincorth, Northfield, Harlaw and St Machar Academies commenced.

Participants across the 2014 Summer Leavers courses worked towards their SQA Employability Award. This was a pilot, the first time they had attempted this in a school setting, and 14 pupils completing all the required paperwork and achieved the SQA.

Over the year 70 young people participated, 30 of them moved onto positive destinations; 11 into employment, 16 into education and 1 into training. 14 participants secured an interview for college and 11 for work.

The shmuTRAIN Positive Transitions programme targets and engages young people (16-19) who are not in education, employment or training, through 12-week full-time courses offering positive hands-on experiences, which participants build upon to develop both personal and vocational skills which help them move on to a sustained positive destination.

Two new SQAs were introduced into the Positive Transitions programme over the last year. Both courses (Radio Production and TV Production) were run at SQA level 5 (equivalent to a Higher/National 5) and have bedded in well to the programme.

Over the year 34 young people participated in the 4 courses held. 19 of them moved into work, 5 into education, 1 into training and 6 into volunteering. 28 secured an interview for work and 6 for college, and 28 showed improved communication skills and readiness for work.

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 and are of working age. They provide specialist support enabling people to access relevant employment, education and training opportunities and to sustain opportunities which have already been accessed.

The service offers a comprehensive and individualised package of one to one support, with tailor-made provision to enable people to enter or remain in the job market with confidence and follow a career path that is right for them regardless of their starting point. They also offer group work and activities to develop skills and confidence and liaise with local employers providing them with relevant information, advice and support.

Carrying on from their previous success in being shortlisted for a 2013 SURF Award, NESS Employment service successfully won one of the three runners up prizes in The Yorkshire and Clydesdale Bank's Spirit of The Community Awards in June 2014. This was in recognition of the important work that NESS carries out in the local Community.

Over the year 73 clients were supported; 12 of them moved into work; 24 moved onto education and training; and 8 took up work placement and volunteering opportunities. A further 27 received support to retain employment or to look at alternative options.

Prince'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 42 people took part with 27 of them completing the programme successfully. 20 participants progressed on to employment, training, education or volunteering. 27 achieved SQA units, 36 achieved Food Hygiene certificates and 35 achieved First Aid certificates. 37 took part in a community challenge, and 7 volunteers contributed 471 hours of volunteer time.

Dynamics is a series of courses run by WEA for young adults between the ages of 16-25 who are finding the transition from school to work, training or further education particularly challenging. Courses include cooking, IT, cultural tours, outdoor activities, budgeting skills, job search skills, interview skills and general good citizenship.

Over the year they ran 3 courses lasting 10 weeks each. In total 18 young people participated and 8 moved on to employment, education or training. 1 volunteer contributed 30 hours of volunteer time.

Employability is run by WEA to deliver basic IT courses with a focus on IT for employability. These include getting familiar with Microsoft Office packages as well as online job searches and applications. At the end of the courses learners are supported to access follow on courses where appropriate. They are also able to use the informal drop in provision to consolidate their learning.

Over the year 3 courses were run as well as drop in sessions. Participants learnt how to create CVs and cover letters as well as developing interview and presentation skills. A total of 32 learners took part and 6 moved onto employment or volunteering. 2 volunteers contributed 38 hours of volunteer time.

Improving Health and Wellbeing

20% of the Fund (£317,000) was allocated to initiatives that improve health and wellbeing. The main themes under this priority are reducing health inequalities; improving mental health and wellbeing; and increasing access to affordable healthy food.

Over the year 68 Community Food Outlets operated in local communities, 37 of them in Sheltered Housing complexes, and 125 tonnes of free food was distributed to 95 organisations through FareShare.

620 people accessed 4,295 sessions of counselling provision, 241 of them were under 16 years old, and counselling was provided in 7 regeneration neighbourhoods.

1,189 people benefited from 12 initiatives, and 409 volunteers contributed 26,858 hours of volunteer time.

Home-Start coordinates home visiting support to families in the regeneration areas who are identified as at risk and hard to reach, working to prevent further crisis and family breakdown. Volunteers aim to develop parent and child confidence leading to happier, healthier more enjoyable family relationships, reduced isolation and increased resilience to cope with challenges in their lives. They offer emotional and practical support as needed, building on

positive existing attributes, role modelling and encouraging increased parent/child activities and routines. They identify additional suitable support for health, further education and financial issues, and accompany people to appointments where necessary.

In the main the project met its objectives; however the complexity of families they were supporting increased. 25% of the families supported had regular GIRFEC meetings, Core Group meetings and/or Child Protection Case Conferences, and this impacted significantly on the support being offered by Co-ordinators at those meetings.

Over the year 34 families in regeneration areas were supported. 30 families reported reduced isolation, 27 reported reduced levels of family conflict or stress, and 3 families no longer required Social Work support. 19 families were supported with financial issues, 4 people moved into training, 2 people returned to work with a further 3 actively looking for work. 28 children accessed play and learning opportunities and 38 volunteers contributed 1,804 hours of volunteering time.

Street Alternatives is run by Aberdeen Cyrenians to provide a volunteer led service offering practical support to people in Aberdeen City who are sleeping rough or who have no access to cooking or personal care facilities. They offer practical help and assistance including hot, nutritious two course meals, clothing and access to showers and laundry facilities. They encourage service users to access the Advice and Information Service to address their homelessness situation, and signpost service users to other agencies.

A Volunteer Coordinator is funded to recruit, induct, train and support the large pool of volunteers. The volunteers then in turn manage the Street Alternative sessions; cooking the meals from scratch, organising incoming donations and food rotation, supporting the Fundraising team to generate income, assisting at events and appealing for gifts in kind.

Over the year 20 people attended sessions held 4 times a week. 14 community awareness raising events were held to promote the service and volunteering opportunities. 226 volunteers contributed 5,142 hours of volunteering time.

Seaton Recovery Project provides an accessible facility for residents in Seaton who have substance misuse issues, offering a rehabilitation and recovery programme tailored to individual needs. Clients are encouraged and supported to work through personal issues that have arisen through substance misuse and also deal with issues which may have contributed to drug and alcohol use in the past.

Staff help clients with form-filling, appointments, telephone calls, finances, benefits, housing, health and mental health issues - signposting clients to appropriate agencies and organisations. Working in partnership with other agencies, clients are also encouraged to develop new skills that will benefit their personal development and increase their life chances and future employment opportunities.

Over the year 46 people were involved in using the service and support on a regular basis. 12 people attended classes to support personal development and life skills, and 11 people attended classes to improve employability skills. In all, 23 people were referred to specialist debt and financial support and advisory services and 3 volunteers contributed 140 hours of volunteering time.

Community Food Development Project is run by CFINE (Community Food Initiatives North East) to maintain and develop existing Community Food Outlets (CFOs) and establish and develop new CFOs in Aberdeen. They provide support and training for existing volunteers and recruit, support and train new volunteers both in the CFINE warehouse and office, and in

the CFOs. They also organise and promote training events and courses, and raise awareness of cooking and health.

Over the year they supported 68 community food outlets, 37 of them in sheltered housing complexes, with a total of £60,000 worth of sales. They provided work experience placements for 35 people, 105 volunteers were involved, 42 of them took part in manual handling and health and hygiene training, and a total of 17,035 volunteer hours were contributed.

Give Kids A Chance (GKAC) was run by Children First and they aimed to support disadvantaged young people between the ages of 10 – 18 years to become involved in activities to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and develop social and practical skills.

Over the year approximately 17 activities were on offer, including drama, ice skating, football, basketball, horse riding, BMX biking, rock climbing and swimming lessons. GKAC received 26 new referrals, 90% of them from regeneration areas.

Healthy Roots maintain and develop Manor Park, a community-run park in Middlefield, by cutting the grass and hedges, weeding flower beds and repairing any damage that occurs in the park. They aim to improve the park by planting more flower beds, installing more benches to create more sitting areas, and developing and promoting the new allotments area.

Over the year 284 participants were involved, 100 of them under 16 years old. The number of visits to the park totalled 26,000, 20 Park Rangers were recruited and 18 allotments leased. 34 volunteers contributed 1,872 hours of volunteering time.

Pathways to Wellbeing provides immediate access to a locally based generic counselling service, improving mental health in the community through the delivery of a point of need counselling service with easy access and minimal waiting times.

Over the year the number of people receiving counselling was slightly below target but the number of counselling sessions delivered was above target and was the highest number of sessions delivered in a single year since the project began. This is representative of the complex issues which are increasingly being addressed by counsellors, with clients therefore often needing more than the previous average number of sessions.

Many of the clients now seeking counselling are referred by GP's and are often experiencing deep-rooted anxiety and depression. Counselling offers a solution to this, but in many cases referrals are being made after people experience symptoms for a number of years, which in turn leads to a longer recovery period. In addition, referrals from agencies such as Jobcentre Plus are often made because clients are experiencing issues over a long period of time as well, which has also resulted in clients receiving counselling over longer periods.

A new partnership was developed with the Duty Social Work team, which resulted in a number of referrals to the service from clients who may not otherwise have heard about the support available, but who have been experiencing multiple difficulties in their lives.

Each client is asked to complete an Evaluation Form at the end of their counselling. These evaluations showed that all clients had found the counselling to be beneficial and reported a reduced attendance at their GP as a result of counselling.

Over the year they provided counselling in 6 regeneration areas, and 80 people accessed 756 counselling sessions delivered. 5 volunteers contributed 150 hours of volunteering time.

ACIS Youth Counselling is run by Mental Health Aberdeen (MHA) and provides a counselling and information service for young people aged between 12 and 18 to address a range of emotional and health issues that can cause distress. These might include addiction, abuse, anxiety, depression, bullying, low self-esteem, eating disorders, sexual identity issues, loneliness, fear of decision making, fear of the future, relationship issues and more. They offer an early intervention service for young people in the hope that they can be supported to address childhood trauma thus avoiding significant difficulties as adults, and offer a trustworthy source for young people in emotional distress.

The waiting list for the service continued to grow during the year. MHA were successful in continuing to attract private sector money to develop a training programme for volunteers with the aim of increasing the number of therapists available to offer counselling to young people.

189 young people accessed the service, 1,597 counselling sessions were provided and 6 volunteers were involved in delivering the service, contributing 246 hours of volunteer time.

Torry Adult Counselling is run by Mental Health Aberdeen, and delivers counselling to clients in Torry, referred by GP practices and other health workers, social work, education, police and other agencies, as well as self-referrals.

189 adults completed a course of counselling provided through 998 counselling sessions. 2 volunteers contributed 221 hours of volunteering time.

Calsayseat Counselling is provided by Mental Health Aberdeen to provide a counselling service within Calsayseat surgery, addressing all mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, substance misuse, relationship issues, parenting issues, phobias, as well as problems related to unemployment, poverty and literacy and numeracy issues.

The service continued to be oversubscribed, with a large waiting list, which put pressure on the staff delivering the counselling sessions. An additional grant enabled the project to put in more staff and volunteers, resulting in reduced waiting times for clients and the waiting list moved from over 60 to 28 people..

Over the year 151 people took part in counselling, and 63% of them showed a decrease in depression as shown in the Hospital Anxiety Depression monitoring forms. A total of 998 counselling sessions were provided, and 3 volunteers contributed 342 hours of volunteering.

All in all: it's a well used and well liked service and enables some of the most vulnerable people in our town to access counselling, quickly and without too much additional effort on their behalf, effort that many of them are simply not able to make, at least at the outset of counselling – so bringing counselling 'to them' was a stroke of genius on behalf of FAF!

Tillydrone Health & Well Being Project aims to increase relaxation and wellbeing by providing Complementary Health sessions including Reflexology, Reiki and Indian Head Massage accessible to everyone within the area of Tillydrone and delivered by a qualified and experienced Complementary Health Practitioner.

All beneficiaries value this service very highly. A significant amount of service users go on to learn more about the therapies and how to perform them themselves through Reiki in the Community (which has been a subsidiary of the complementary therapies held in both the Tillydrone and Printfield areas).

Many of the people who access these treatments at the flat are also using conventional medical treatments for long standing physical, mental or psycho-social based health

conditions. They mainly state that the complementary health treatments are highly beneficial as a secondary treatment, aiding with pain and stress relief, and relaxation.

During the past year they have seen many individuals come forward who have been affected by welfare reforms, suffering with high levels of stress and anxiety. In addition to offering practical advice and support, we often encourage them to book a health treatment. Those who do so say that it helped improve their mental, emotional and physical wellbeing. The therapies provided would normally be beyond the financial reach of many of the service users.

“The increase in demand for advice on welfare and benefits reforms, housing benefit reforms and the large rise in need for food bank provision in the area demonstrates the increasing daily pressure on many local residents who struggle to maintain an acceptable quality of life for themselves and their families. The majority of these individuals would not normally be able to access therapeutic treatments and often live with persistently high levels of stress. The sessions at the Tillydrone Flat provide a chance for vital relaxation and ‘time out’ and the benefits are evident by the repeat appointments, demand and feedback provided by participants.”

56 people accessed the 380 sessions provided, and 2 volunteers contributed 40 hours of volunteer time.

Printfield Feel Good Project aims to increase relaxation and wellbeing by providing Complementary Health sessions including Reflexology, Reiki and Indian Head Massage accessible to everyone within the area of Woodside and delivered by a qualified and experienced Complementary Health Practitioner. Over the year 26 people accessed the 80 sessions provided.

Building Stronger Safer Communities

17% of the fund (£283,000) was allocated to initiatives that help build stronger safer communities. The main themes under this priority are improving access to services in regeneration areas, Community Safety and supporting community involvement and participation.

Over the year a total of 4,983 people participated in activities and services provided in Community Projects and Flats. Cummings Park, Seaton and Tillydrone Community Flats are wholly funded by Fairer Aberdeen, and a number of organisations use these venues to deliver services within the areas. The number of attendances to use their facilities including phone, computers, making enquiries and getting information totalled 17,842.

There were 892 hours of additional police patrols engaging with sex workers. The numbers of calls to the Police regarding on street prostitution for Aberdeen City reduced from 40 to 20 and for the Local Policing Areas of City Centre and Seaton from 26 to 19.

A total of 5,865 participants, 1,676 of them under 16 years old, were involved in 13 initiatives and 114 volunteers contributed 4,943 hours of volunteer time.

Tillydrone Community Flat provides a resource for community activity; a venue for a range of organisations that offer support, information and advice; and supports community capacity building and learning.

Adult Learning classes included Art, Family History, Healthy Eating, Computing for Beginners and Literacy and Numeracy. The Flat secured funding from Food Standards Agency Scotland as part of their Food Safety Week initiative. Funding granted was used to provide REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene training to local residents and was delivered at the Lighthouse Support Centre. 17 individuals achieved their certificate. This has enabled volunteers to assist in running a community café at the centre. Further to this, participants have been invited by FSAS to participate in a pilot course on Healthy Eating at the end of which they will be awarded a certificate.

The Flat has extended support to benefit claimants, with a continued increase in people accessing the Flat for support with benefit issues. As well as support and advice, partnership working with relevant agencies increases the support available for residents, including help to find work and access to financial advice and food bank services. The Flat took a lead role in organising the Tillydrone Gala, and the Community Garden project is progressing with support from Aberdeen Greenspace. The Council has given permission for an orchard to be included and local children will be invited to 'adopt a tree'.

29 agencies used the Flat to deliver advice and support services for a range of issues including Health, Education, Employability and Financial Inclusion. There were 2,181 recorded uses of the Flat facilities, including use of the washing machine, phone and access to computers. There were 82 Learning Support crèche sessions, with 36 children attending crèche sessions, and 16 children attended PEEP groups. A total of 396 participants were involved, 72 of them under 16 years old. 86 people were involved in adult learning activities, 8 people were on the Tilly Tattle editorial group and 19 volunteers contributed 800 hours of volunteer time.

STAR (Seaton Taking Action on Regeneration) Community Flat provides a resource for community activity, a venue for a range of organisations that offer support, information and advice and supports community capacity building and learning.

Local residents see the flat as a one stop advice shop to go when seeking help and advice with their problems. Some residents use the computers to search for jobs and print off CVs, others rely on the free phone line to call about medical appointments, housing issues or benefit queries.

Pathways used the flat as a base to meet Seaton residents to help them with creating their CVs, job search and job applications, whilst also identifying training needs and helping with appropriate funding.

The Credit Union operates weekly sessions providing saving and loan facilities and is always busy with regular customers. CFINE provides competitively priced fruit and vegetables and food parcels for those who need them. The flat sells fresh haddock at competitive prices and the weekly ordering service is still proving to be popular.

The art and craft class is popular with a wide age range and provides an important social activity in a confidence building environment, and the Silver Darlings classes focused on sewing and cooking for over 60s, with the cooking class based around a fishy theme to tie in with the fish that is delivered weekly. Silver City Surfers continued to be busy and their

regular sessions and drop in facilities were complimented by a range of free basic skills computer classes provided by Aberdeen City Council.

Over the year there were 3,782 attendances at sessions provided by 11 partner agencies, 36 people attended sessions supporting people to get back into work and 57 people attended adult learning sessions. A total of 736 people were involved and 5 volunteers contributed 300 hours of volunteer time.

Cummings Park Community Flat provides a resource for community activity, a venue for a range of organisations that offer support, information and advice, and supports community capacity building and learning.

15 partner agencies used the Flat to deliver advice and support for a range of issues including employability and financial inclusion. The total number of contacts accessing activities was 2841 and the number of uses of the Flat facilities, including phone, computers and enquiries was 256. The Flat was open for 25 sessions per week, and 22 volunteers contributed 1,724 volunteer hours.

Printfield Community Project provides a resource for community activity; a venue for a range of organisations that offer support, information and advice; and supports community capacity building and learning. Services for families and residents include After School Childcare, youth services, Adult Learning classes and tenants support.

20 adult learners attended 4 adult learning courses, and 50 people were involved in the Woodside Network, which held 15 meetings though the year. A total of 200 participants were involved, 150 of them under 16 years old, and 35 volunteers contributed 650 volunteer hours.

Middlefield Youth Flat supports young people, especially those with low literacy skills, low self-esteem and lack of confidence. Youth workers provide positive adult support that meets the needs of the young people by understanding the barriers they face and supporting them in working to overcome these.

Over the year the Flat was open for 248 days, providing 1,240 sessions with a total of 143 young people attending. There were 24 day trips and 1 residential trip organised and 7 Youth Committee meetings held. 40 young people had individual learning plans in place and 17 were in work or training.

Supporting Volunteers and Under 11s work is delivered by Middlefield Community Project, to encourage local people to volunteer to plan, organise and participate in play schemes & clubs. Training is provided, including First Aid, Health and Hygiene and Child Protection, and volunteers are given opportunities to learn skills and build their confidence and self-esteem to improve their chances of moving on to education or employment. The project also provides positive on going activities to children and families who are often unable to access these themselves due to not being able to afford entrance fees or transport costs. In this way the project can ensure children have positive choices.

Over the year 45 participants were involved, there were 37 sessions provided for P1-3 and 40 for P4-6, as well as 22 parent and child swimming sessions. 3 volunteers contributed 547 hours of volunteer time.

A **Family Support Worker** supports vulnerable families at Fersands Family Centre, providing regular one to one support and advice on a wide range of issues including housing, employment and child protection. They involve parents in group discussions and activities aimed at making them feel less isolated and increasing their parenting skills. Linking with

Social Work and other professionals that can offer support to the families, they provide opportunities for families to benefit from, or become more involved in, community activities or volunteering. They help individuals to access employment or educational chances, offer direct practical support and play a key role in representing families during family case meetings.

Over the year 38 families received support and 1 parent group ran weekly. More intensive, long term support was provided to 15 families who have social work involvement.

Youth Work Support at Fersands Community Project 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. They provide free alternative activities including day trips and residential camps which take the young people into different environments, new situations and new challenges, helping them become more independent and to work as a team.

Over the year 96 young people participated, 84 of them were under 16 years old. 6 volunteers contributed 160 hours of volunteer time.

The **Twos Group** at Fersands Family Centre provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating environment to deliver good quality play and learning experiences to encourage motivation, and enthusiastic learning. They target the most vulnerable families and work with parents, health visitors, education support workers and Social Work to maximise the child's development opportunities. 28 children attended and 3 pre nursery groups were held per week. 6 volunteers contributed 130 hours of volunteer time.

Relationship Revolution is delivered by Choices and works to break the cycle of gender based violence and sexual exploitation in victims and perpetrators, and potential victims and perpetrators, in areas of high level recorded incidence in the city. They deliver an early intervention programme to raise awareness and challenge prejudice and stereotypes amongst young people. Participants are provided with tools to assist them identify, avoid and navigate violent and exploitive relationships and signpost them to additional support services as required. They also provide a therapeutic support service for young people affected by violence or exploitation, along with creative support for the significant adults in the young person's life. They also deliver training in the importance of the support and development of a young person's mental health and resilience for staff groups working with vulnerable young people.

Over the year 867 participants were involved, 110 educational workshops and 118 drop in clubs were held. Around 92% of young people reported being able to identify violent and exploitive relationships and increased knowledge of existing support services following participation in the workshops. There were 10 young people trained and supported to volunteer and 502 volunteer hours contributed.

Big Bang Drumming Group at Aberdeen Lads Club provides percussion workshops for young people, to create a performance band to enhance participants' confidence, self-esteem and social skills. 12 young people were involved over the year and 2 volunteers contributed 80 hours of volunteer time.

ACT Attack provides drama classes as a means to help promote a sense of value, self-worth, and self-confidence in young people, and give them an appreciation of Arts, drama and music while having fun and enjoying themselves. Over the year sessions were held weekly at St George's Church and Riverbank School in Tillydrone, as well as Easter and October Holiday Clubs. 80 young people were involved, with some older children continuing to attend

after moving to secondary school, and helping out with the younger children. 6 volunteers contributed 50 hours of volunteer time.

Operation Begonia, delivered by Police Scotland, provides dedicated, directed patrols with the aim of tackling prostitution; by encountering, identifying and engaging with sex industry workers and offering safety advice and fast track appointments to key partners who can help to address the background causes leading to the behaviour.

The project aims to enable and empower sex industry workers to address problems that have led to them becoming involved in this dangerous work and reduce the number of women operating in the locality, thus benefitting local residents and businesses in the long-established and renowned 'red light' area of Aberdeen.

A support group continued to meet with a view to providing different types of support to the 'on street' workers. This involved representatives from various churches who offered a befriending service as well as spiritual and practical help, Teen Challenge, which is a Christian charity that offers help with addiction, Aberdeen Community Safety Partnership, an NHS Sexual Health representative, the local Community Council, and a new addition was Aberdeen University Law Project who are involved in community outreach work.

During the year patrols were used for both on and off street sex workers, as numbers of women encountered on the street reduced to 7. There were 892 hours of additional patrol time undertaken and the number of calls to the police regarding on street prostitution for Aberdeen City reduced to 20, compared to 49 in the previous year, and calls relating to the City Centre and Seaton area were 19 compared to 26 last year. 7 women were referred to partner agencies and 6 were issued with panic alarms.

Free To Succeed - Closing the Gaps works with HMP Aberdeen to provide an effective throughcare service by supporting women offenders pre and post release.

Over the year they worked with 4 female offenders and 12 volunteers contributed 977 hours of volunteer time.

Increasing Skills and Creativity

15% of the fund (£236,000) was allocated to initiatives that help increase skills and creativity. The main themes under this priority are supporting learning and creative opportunities, improving literacy and encouraging volunteering.

Over the year 391 people participated in Arts activities and 916 in Adult Learning. 136 people were involved in producing community media.

A total of 2,679 people, 608 of them under 16 years old, participated in 9 initiatives, and 243 volunteers contributed 31,476 hours of volunteer time.

Connecting Communities Through Community Media is delivered by SHMU and supports the production of community media in regeneration areas, exploring and addressing local community issues and developing skills by providing training and support. Community media aims to develop 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.

Over the year 96 volunteers were supported to produce radio programmes. Weekly hour-long community radio programmes, representing key issues and news, continued to be supported, produced and broadcast by residents of 6 regeneration areas. They were broadcast live during the day, and then repeated in the evening. These community shows are discussion based, magazine format programmes which offer a platform to each community to discuss the issues affecting their area, while also offering an insight to life within the target communities, which contributes towards tackling negative stereotypes which may exist.

The Community Newsdesk continued to gather information on events and activities specific to each of the seven target neighbourhoods and broadcast daily bulletins through the What's On guides on Breakfast Show, Packed Lunch and Cruise Control. Daily community news bulletins also continued to be incorporated into the key community shows.

4 young adults were supported in the transition from the shmuTRAIN employability course to becoming active radio volunteers. The Middlefield Matters show presenters gained employment and 2 new presenters took their place to ensure the show continued.

The Community Media team and volunteers had a presence at many community and City wide events including community galas, information events and cultural activities.

40 volunteers were supported to produce community magazines 3 times a year in 7 regeneration areas, all had editorial teams that received regular support. In all 269 organisations worked in partnership with SHMU over the year, and a total of 646 participants were involved, 85 of them under 16 years old. 136 volunteers contributed 17,645 hours of volunteer time.

Youth Media provides creative opportunities for young people (between the age of 12-19), primarily from the regeneration areas of Aberdeen, to train and take part in all aspects of the production of regular radio and television programmes (researching, writing, presenting, performing, filming, vision mixing and editing). SHMU supports young people in personal development, notably through increased confidence, communication and self-expression.

Youth Radio Project members spent the year working on their Youth Achievement Awards, 14 worked towards Bronze awards and 7 worked towards Gold awards. The group also continued to record their volunteering hours using the Saltire Award. 12 Youth Radio Project members and 1 Youth TV member achieved Saltire Awards in recognition of their volunteering hours, of these, 6 Youth Radio Project members received the Saltire Award for 500 hours of volunteering last year – the highest level awarded.

Over the past year, every Saturday from 10 am to 1pm, 29 young people worked as a team to produce and broadcast a radio show that presents a young person's perspective on a variety of issues and themes. Issues explored included education, health, employment, community safety and peer relationships. In addition, young people had the opportunity to present individual weekly shows from 4pm to 5pm Monday to Friday. These shows explored the participant's diverse taste in music and allowed for the exploration of other current topics of interest.

The group showed great commitment to the project and clearly demonstrated their ability to work as part of a team contributing towards raising awareness to other young people through the medium of radio. Over the year some of the new youth members became live radio presenters, some of the older members became peer educators and others move on to positive destinations (employment and college).

The main focus of the Youth TV project was supporting young people in a film commissioned by the Northfield Youth Action Group and the Aberdeen Community Safety Partnership, which explored the issues around car and motorbike crime. The film highlighted the issues around motor crime and the impact that this has in local communities, particularly those that experience problems with car theft and the anti-social behaviour experienced within the community.

The production was based in the Northfield area and included actors from a number of the regeneration areas of the city. Young people from the Youth Media Project were also involved in filming and as extras. This film project is now complete and an official screening took place in the Belmont Filmhouse on 25th March 2015. The film was really well received and an education pack is in development with the aim of using it across the city and shire.

A total of 78 young people participated in Youth Media, 49 of them under 16 years old. 48 volunteers contributed 7,621 hours of volunteer time.

Lift Arts and Wellbeing Project was delivered in regeneration areas and in the City Centre by ACC's Creative Learning Team to offer participants the opportunity to access free cultural and creative experiences. The project aimed to improve wellbeing and access to cultural activities amongst participants.

Four artists delivered a sixteen week programme of creative activities such as embroidery, weaving, print making, sketching, singing, poetry and story-telling. There were also awareness raising events, family workshops, an end of project celebration event which took place in the Music Hall and a group visit to Crathes Castle.

The Lift project was designed around the Five Ways to Wellbeing: Give, Keep Learning, Take Notice, Be Active, and Connect. The four artists were commissioned to design and run events which increased participants' understanding of things they could do to improve their wellbeing, guided by the Five Ways. Some artists chose to focus on Taking Notice of the world around us and had themes around 'bringing the outside in'. Others, such as the community singing groups, focused more on the Connect and Give themes. All the activities had an element of Keep Learning and Be Active in them.

Participants enjoyed working in groups, meeting new people, making connections and feeling part of something. In some cases the relationships formed around the Lift project have turned into real friendships and support networks.

In all areas the artists reported the participants becoming more comfortable discussing their wellbeing as the weeks went by. The average score out of ten for comfort discussing wellbeing went from five to nine over the course of the project. In some groups participants shared their own tips for improving wellbeing. In others frank discussions took place about participants' struggles with issues such as depression and bereavement.

227 workshops were delivered and 6 cultural events took place. 391 people participated, 130 of them under the age of 16. All those participants who were asked the question "has your wellbeing improved as a result of taking part in Lift" agreed that it had. 11 volunteers contributed 327 volunteer hours.

Positive Lifestyles is a programme run by St Machar Parent Support Project to help parents identify issues and support them to engage with the relevant agencies to deal with these before they reach crisis point, preventing future long term need for statutory services.

Project staff supported a group of young mums, who identify issues they are concerned about and take part in various activities. Over the year parents took part in sessions including

Understanding Relationships, Baby Resuscitation, Cooking, Smoking Cessation, Child Development, NHS Family Nurse Partnership Programme and Play sessions.

The project saw an increase in the number of people accessing food banks due to changes in their benefits. Project staff look at issues and offer support with budgeting or signpost people to relevant agencies. Working in partnership with CFINE allowed them to successfully distribute food to families that are most in need.

281 people participated in the programme and 48 parents were referred on to relevant agencies for further support. 9 people received help with CVs and interviews, 12 people took up volunteering opportunities and 51 people were supported to claim grants totalling £9,635. 343 young people under the age of 16 were indirectly helped by the support provided to their parents. 12 volunteers contributed 27 hours of volunteer time.

Literacies for Life is delivered by Aberdeen City Council Lifelong Learning Team and it aims to engage individuals in learning opportunities which will assist them to overcome barriers to further learning, employment, volunteering and engagement in their local community. The Team deliver a programme which is focused around integrated literacies, having the specific aims of providing adult learners with help in developing confidence; in overcoming barriers to learning; and in developing skills for life.

Over the year programmes were delivered in the target areas of Northfield, St Machar and Torry school ASG areas, and included individuals from the target groups of unemployed people; individuals on a low income, young people; homeless people; migrant workers; and offenders. The learners identified significant skills gaps in communications, basic IT, numeracy and literacy, problem solving and team working; these are collectively known as Core Skills and they underpin Employability. Using the Fairer Aberdeen funding the adult learning team was able to increase the amount of work carried out and to tailor programmes to meet individual needs, making courses relevant and interactive.

Over the year 231 learners benefitted from over 70 additional learning opportunities delivered across the regeneration areas. 112 learners were unemployed and 48 were in low paid employment, 64 undertook job search related activities and 48 received support with financial literacy. 9 volunteers contributed 56 hours of volunteer time.

Alternative Literacies by WEA provides literacy opportunities for non-traditional learners who are hard to engage in learning. They offer flexible literacy programmes which are accessible, inclusive and appropriate to learner needs and which provide progression routes to volunteering, alternative WEA provision and employment if appropriate.

Over the year 88 people participated in three 10 week programmes, a summer programme and 2 residential trips, one to Edinburgh to look at the work of the Scottish environmentalist John Muir and the other to Findhorn where the learners studied local wild life and animal life and also continued with the John Muir theme. Those who participated priced the journeys, the accommodation, events and living expenses.

Classes included the students forum, gardening, residential planning, residential participation, arts and crafts, visits to local National Trust properties, environmental art, football and environmental clean ups. 4 volunteers contributed 257 hours of volunteer time.

The **Reading Bus** delivers creative family sessions in schools and communities to increase confidence and enjoyment in reading together, with positive skills development in reading and the spoken word. It aims to promote reading as a source of life long pleasure; raise

attainment and achievement of children at risk of early failure; encourage family learning in a non-school environment; and involve and empower parents in their children's learning.

During the year local storyteller and North East Makar, Sheena Blackhall, toured four Aberdeen schools in The Reading Bus' aim to raise the profile of literacy in the city. Sheena explored global stories and Scotland's place in the world, using the platform of the project to celebrate the Doric dialect and Scots language. She worked with pupils and teachers, sharing practice and ideas. The project involved engagement with four primary schools and six classes in each establishment..

Over the year there were 160 sessions delivered, and over 400 pupils and 60 parents participated.

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

Over the year they delivered 4 sessions a week as well as a monthly information session. The number of new learners increased by 41% from 2013-14. This was a large increase and in part due to the increasing success of the well-attended monthly information talks at Satrosphere which were well publicised through local radio, including SHMU, and in the local press. They also updated their website and increased the use of social media to promote events and stimulate interest.

441 people participated and 30 volunteers contributed 5,449 hours of volunteer time.

Stockethill Step Up delivers a range of groups and classes for adults, particularly those living in poverty, lone parents, unemployed, older people and people with health issues. Classes focus on getting people back into work, improving health and support for parents.

During the year they set up two computing groups which mainly attracted older adults living in the area. This allowed them to keep in touch with families abroad, their confidence grew and there was clear evidence of this through evaluation by the tutor. The beginner's class from the previous term moved on to attend an intermediate class where they could increase their skills and confidence further.

Healthy cooking also had a positive impact on the adults and their families in terms of reducing food bills as people learned to make their own healthy low cost meals. Feedback included references to losing weight, saving money and eating a healthier diet. Due to adults from different cultures being involved with groups a greater awareness and exchange of ideas also resulted. .

64 people were involved over the year and 2 volunteers contributed 150 volunteer hours.

Regeneration Matters is a forum of community representatives from all the regeneration and priority neighbourhoods in Aberdeen City who have been meeting since November 2006 and are active in identifying and addressing issues around poverty and deprivation. The group meets monthly and as well as discussions on particular issues they also have the opportunity to share information about each of their neighbourhoods and feedback on any meetings or conferences they have attended.

Issues they covered over the year included Learning Partnerships, New housing/Potential New Build, Welfare Reform, Community Safety, housing issues and the Community Empowerment Bill. The group invites guest organisations along to meetings in which the

group can get questions answered, and the guest organisations have the opportunity to learn about the priorities, concerns and experiences of the community.

Regeneration Matters also manage the **Community Support Fund** on behalf of the Fairer Aberdeen Board, to support communications, training, community capacity building and community involvement in regeneration. Over the year this funded community magazines for 7 of the regeneration areas, gala/open days for Powis, Torry, Cummings Park and Tillydrone, as well as joint training events.

The Regeneration Matters group elect 7 of its members to act as community representatives on the Fairer Aberdeen Board, alongside 3 representatives from the Civic Forum.