

Fairer Aberdeen Annual Report 2022-23

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, a subgroup of the Community Planning Partnership, made up of representatives from priority areas, the Civic Forum, the Council, Aberdeen Health & Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland and ACVO (Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations). The Fairer Aberdeen programme is aligned with the themes from the Local Outcome Improvement Plan: Economy, Adults, Children and Young People. In 2022-23 funding of £1.5m was made available to support work in priority areas and across the city with vulnerable groups and individuals.

Funding was awarded to 36 projects within the main programme, as well as a Community Support Fund to support community engagement, and an Employment Support Fund to support costs associated with getting people back into work.

Grants ranged from £2,200 to £167,000 in value. A total of 44,228 people were involved in, or benefited from, funded initiatives, 4,319 of them were under 16 years old. 739 volunteers contributed 144,869 hours of volunteering time with a value of over £2.2m*.

*Volunteering time is generally valued as the median hourly pay rate in the area, in Aberdeen this was £15.00. (Office of National Statistics, the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE))

“The course made me want to learn again. It reignited my motivation to go out and do something and made the jump to work less scary. It was a nice stepping-stone! It helped with my communication skills, working on my anxiety, and dealing with different situations. It got me used to being around people again, getting me in contact and more used to talking to different people in a safe welcoming environment.”

shmuTRAIN Participant

The Fairer Aberdeen programme is aligned with the themes from the **LOCAL OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PLAN** and **LOCALITY PLANS** in priority areas:
ECONOMY, ADULTS & CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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Thank you to all the participants, staff, and volunteers who have contributed to this report and to the Fairer Aberdeen programme over the year

THANK YOU

FAIRER ABERDEEN FUND 2022-23

£1.5m invested
44,228 people supported
739 volunteers **144,869** hours of volunteering time
£2.2m value of volunteering

ECONOMY

260 people into work
828 people involved in employability programmes
29 sensory impaired people supported to stay in employment
4,651 people receiving money advice and income maximisation advice
£2.3m client financial gain, an average of **£1,890** per person
5,099 Credit Union savers **£1.9m** affordable loans provided
554 tonnes of free food distributed, equal to **1.3m** meals
35,307 emergency food parcels provided
1,306 food bank users referred to other services
21 community food outlets supported
5 community projects/flats supported in disadvantaged areas
238 people involved in producing community media
73,800 community magazines delivered to **24,600** households
590 contacts with older people to develop digital skills

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

4,319 children and young people supported
444 parents and families with complex needs supported
76 young people moved on to employment, education or training
203 young people accessed **2,033** counselling sessions
270 young people involved in producing youth media

ADULTS

373 people accessed counselling provision
2,716 counselling sessions provided locally in priority areas
23 offenders supported pre and post release
10 ex-offenders engaging with support services post release
21 people reducing their risk taking or offending behaviour
234 vulnerable women involved in prostitution supported

ECONOMY

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

- Mitigating the causes of immediate and acute poverty.
- Ensure those experiencing in-work poverty have access to all appropriate benefits.
- Supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups.
- Poverty affecting those with protected characteristics and in specific communities.
- Increasing the number of people in Aberdeen in sustained, fair work.

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. They exceeded their targets for the year, and saw more young people under 25yrs (20%) than in previous years. They now record whether clients move into jobs paying the living wage and all clients did so. The majority (70%) went into full time employment.

433 people received support and 238 moved into work. 7 volunteers contributed 320 volunteer hours.

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 64 clients. 7 people moved into work and 29 were sustained in their current jobs.

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.

1009 clients received money advice and income maximisation advice with a total financial gain of £1,130,559 an average of £1,119 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 they gave out affordable loans of over £1.9m, meaning 2,924 people had access to affordable credit, avoiding payday loans or doorstep lending.

- 260** people into work
- 828** people involved in employability programmes
- 76** young people moved on to employment, education or training
- 4,651** people receiving money advice
- £2.3m** client financial gain
- 554** tonnes of free food distributed, the equivalent of **1.3m** meals*
- 946** food bank users referred to other services
- 21** community food outlets supported
- 5** community projects/flats supported in disadvantaged areas



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 32 people took part in the programme, 2 moved into work and 6 into education, training or volunteering.

* Food Standards Authority calculation of 2,381 meals per tonne, used by FareShare

PATHWAYS

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

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 658 households were assisted with income maximisation, charitable and grant funding, achieving a total financial gain of £440,982, an average of £670 per household. 1,453 households received assistance with repairs, handyman services, adaptations, and energy efficiency work. 896 people who are disabled or have a long term health condition were supported.

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

There were 590 contacts to support older people and 17 volunteers contributed 4,105 hours.

CFINE (Community Food Initiatives North East) provide services to tackle food poverty. They maintain and develop Community Food Outlets and Pantries to provide access to healthy, affordable food in priority areas.

554 tonnes of food were redistributed. 193 Community Food members received FareShare food. 35,307 emergency food parcels were provided. 423 food bank users were referred to other services that CFINE provide.

21 cooperative Community Food Outlets were supported and 4,013 people benefitted from Mobile Cooperative Vehicle services.

332 volunteers contributed 79,680 hours of volunteer time.

“The service user sought support after he suffered a brain haemorrhage. He had owned a successful plumbing and heating business, but a brain injury had left him with central vision only (no peripheral vision) and poor memory and recall. He was supported to apply for out-of-work benefits and the Employment Officer secured a work placement for him. He enjoyed the social aspect of working with colleagues again and is managing the travel (four buses per day) independently. He reports that the structure and routine has helped his mental health greatly. He continues to work two days per week and is very grateful for the opportunity.”

NESS Employment Service

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 2,668 clients were engaged, 254 of them received financial gain of £1,057,835, an average of £4,165 per person.

They supported 523 people referred through the food bank and 832 referred by other agencies. 1,464 clients were from priority neighbourhoods. 183 people were seen at home visits and outreach venues. 308 people were referred to CFINE's wrap around services and 575 to partner agencies.

Cummings Park Community Flat, Printfield Community Project Tillydrone Community Flat and Seaton Community Flat 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.

Cummings Park Community Flat 11 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 868 and the number of users of the Flat facilities, including phone, computers and enquiries was 203. 100 people were referred to partner agencies.

A total of 389 people were supported and 9 volunteers contributed 1,315 hours of volunteer time.

“Last year the SAFE team engaged with 2668 beneficiaries which was a 32% increase on the previous year with no signs of slowing down anytime soon. Partner referrals to CFINE are up 232% which is evidence of our increasing collaborative work across services in the city. Those referred onto partner agencies increased by 283%.”

CFINE SAFE

Printfield Community Project

98 children and young people participated in activities in the project and 43 in the After School Club. 10 children under 3 years were registered.

70 young people were provided with healthy lunches during the school holidays. 14 residents were supported to be part of the Woodside Network.

A total of 234 people were supported, and 30 volunteers contributed 600 volunteer hours.

Tillydrone Community Flat

12 agencies used the flat to deliver advice and support services for a range of issues including Health, Education, Employability and Financial Inclusion. There were 6,400 recorded uses of the Flat facilities, including use of washing machine, phone and access to computers.

236 people got support with debt and benefit issues and 83 were engaged in activities to assist with their recovery from substance misuse.

A total of 611 participants were involved, 193 of them under 16 years old. 13 volunteers contributed 520 volunteer hours.

Seaton Community Flat there were 1,171 attendances at sessions provided by 11 partner agencies. 15 people attended sessions supporting people back into work and 42 people attended sessions aimed at increasing skills and creativity.

A total of 404 people were supported, and 8 volunteers contributed 60 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.

36 volunteers were supported to produce 7 community magazines, delivered to 24,600 households across priority areas 3 times a year. 55 volunteers were supported to produce radio programmes, including community shows broadcast weekly in priority areas.

117 organisations worked in partnership with SHMU over the year and a total of 238 participants were involved. 108 volunteers contributed 26,857 hours of volunteer time.

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

34 clients participated in the course and 4 secured employment, training or education as a result. 12 volunteers contributed 70 hours of volunteer time.

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

36 people participated in the programme, all received financial checks, 3 moved on to further employability programmes and 4 into employment. All participants reported increased confidence and knowledge to make healthy lifestyle choices as a result of the course. 5 volunteers contributed 25 hours of volunteer time.

GREC 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. The 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 14 training sessions to 221 staff and volunteers in third and public sector organisations, including 4 employability providers and 5 financial inclusion/benefit advice agencies. They developed a lived experience group to give a space for mutual, peer support, as well as an opportunity to influence policy around related issues.



“The recent resettlement of asylum seekers to Aberdeen has highlighted the need for proactive capacity building aimed at the City becoming better prepared and resourced to support people with No Recourse to Public Funds, including asylum seekers. We have delivered training to a number of third sector and public organisations around the city, covering what NRPF is and the asylum process. We also inform organisations of where to get local help when working with someone with NRPF, and have developed a website to provide further information and resources.”

GREC Tackling and Preventing Destitution

Pathways is the Lead Partner on the Torry Skills Centre, which opened in March 2022. The Centre was developed from the work of the Torry Community Council, which recognised a need to have more visible employability services in the area.

The Centre brings together a number of agencies to help make employability support as accessible as possible to residents of the area. At present the Centre is open every Tuesday, when Pathways, Aberdeen Foyer, Business Gateway and Social Security Scotland are in attendance, offering a range of support.

The centre received some initial funding from the Regeneration Matters group, but we are now in discussions with an oil company to sponsor the running of the Centre, so there has been no cost to the Fairer Aberdeen Fund, but the Fund has been crucial in enabling Pathways to help develop, run and staff the Centre.

PATHWAYS



The COVID pandemic is likely to have pushed more people into poverty and financial insecurity, with those who were already disadvantaged being most likely to experience the negative effects.

This is likely to contribute to greater levels of poverty, inequality and associated vulnerabilities and is expected to push more people into immediate and acute poverty. Throughout the pandemic, we have seen a significant increase in the requirement for support with food provision with many of those requests for emergency food provision coming from people who had never used a food bank previously.

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan

This year has been incredibly challenging for residents facing food poverty/food insecurity. The worsening cost-of-living crisis has been devastating for those already struggling, and there has been a significant increase in demand for CFINE's services. The demand for emergency food parcels has increased by 85% on the previous year and is now at the highest level since July 2020 at the height of the pandemic. Beneficiaries are reporting the increase in the cost-of-living as the main reason they require support, and CFINE continues to offer vital wrap-around support through the SAFE Team, employability and skills development programmes, community training kitchen, and other initiatives aimed at tackling some of the underlying causes of poverty.

CFINE's network of Food Access Points (Community Food Outlets), has grown this year, ensuring there are more places available to access low-cost or free fruit, vegetables, and healthy snacks. Key to this has been the development of CFINE's mobile vehicle as a way of making produce available throughout communities. There are now 20 locations throughout the city where residents can access food, both mobile and static, with a further two in development as of April.

A client attended outreach as she required help with making an application for PIP. Due to her extensive health issues, she required multiple appointments to complete the application form, and this was accommodated for. It was far easier for the client to attend the outreach location than to attend the main CAB office to attend these appointments. She was awarded the standard rates for both daily living and mobility with a financial gain of £4,487.60.

CAB MONEY ADVICE OUTREACH

CFINE



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Ensuring that families receive the parenting and family support they need.

Increasing children's knowledge and understanding of their own physical and mental wellbeing and take an early intervention and prevention approach.

Improving pathways to education, employment and training

Young people receive the right help at the right time to improve outcomes for young people at risk of becoming involved in the Justice System.

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

Over the year 96 young people participated in 870 sessions at the Youth Flat, they all took part in diversionary activities designed to reduce youth crime and exclusion rates. 15 were supported to get into work, training or education and 30 were supported with mental health issues.

68 children attended primary club sessions, 10 of them had additional support needs. 4 volunteers contributed 140 volunteer hours.

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 116 young people participated, 99 of them under 16 years old. 669 free meals were provided for young people during activities. 7 volunteers contributed 420 hours volunteer time and 12 young people were involved in volunteering.

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. 24 families reported reduced isolation, and 27 parents

reported improved physical or mental health and 28 children had improved emotional wellbeing. 4 families no longer required Social Work support. 22 families were supported with financial issues, and 4 families with no recourse to public funds were supported. 32 volunteers contributed 4,992 hours of volunteering time.

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 1,410 young people participated in the programme, 153 educational workshops and 80 drop in clubs were delivered. 98% of participants reported being able to identify violent and exploitative relationships and 95% an increased knowledge of existing support services following participation in the workshops.

There were 8 young people trained and supported to volunteer and 524 volunteer hours contributed.

Befriend A Child provide accessible group activities for children involved in the Befriend A Child scheme. One is based at Woodside Primary School, accessible to children from Tillydrone, Seaton, Fersands, Woodside and the other is in Cummings Park.

46 children attended the youth clubs regularly. 12 volunteers contributed 1,860 hours of volunteering time.

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

4,319 children and young people supported
444 parents & families with complex needs supported
203 young people accessed
2,033 counselling sessions
270 young people involved in youth media



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 270 young people participated, 249 of them under 16 years old. 24 volunteers contributed 8,112 hours of volunteering time.

St Machar Parent Support Project Positive Lifestyles provided support to young parents, helping them identify issues and to engage with the relevant agencies before they reach crisis point, preventing future long term need for statutory services.

344 people participated in the programme including 18 kinship carers. 37 people were supported to claim grants and 51 helped with benefit enquiries.

Mental Health Aberdeen provides ACIS Youth Counselling, where 128 young people accessed 1,431 counselling sessions. ACIS Youth also operates in Torry, where 32 young people accessed 488 counselling sessions in Primary schools. 941 meetings were held with teachers, parents and other referring agencies and there were 893 cases of signposting and advice from ACIS Information Officers.

shmuTRAIN (Station House Media Unit) offers comprehensive 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 teamwork, and to support young people to move on to a positive destination.

Over the year 20 young people attended the Training Academy and 9 moved onto education or training. 33 young people participated in the post-school employability programme and 20 of them moved into positive destinations, 2 into employment, 3 into education and 15 into training. 11 young people secured an SQA and all showed improved communication skills and increased readiness for work.

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 Cummings Park, Tillydrone and Torry as well as Camp Geronimo in an outdoor setting. 141 people took part in sessions, 85 of them under 16 years old.

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

Over the year 44 families received support, a total of 120 people participated and 5 volunteers contributed 480 hours of volunteer time.

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

shmuTRAIN

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 10 young people attended and 2 volunteers contributed 40 hours of volunteer time.



“Mum had long term mental health issues and had been in hospital a number of times. Just prior to being referred to Home-Start she had been hospitalised as the result of a suicide attempt. We matched the family with a volunteer who had the right skills and experience to support the family through these challenges. The volunteer started to build a relationship of trust and provided practical and emotional support. They agreed priorities and plans they would focus on to improve the family’s situation and give mum more sense of control over the issues in her life. Mum now has a much better understanding of the important role she plays in her children’s early learning and development. She talks, reads and plays more with the children and is making every effort to be more emotionally available for them. Mum says she sees herself the difference this makes to the whole family.”

Home-Start

We have two sisters who regularly attended club but after a few weeks they were not turning up which was unusual, so the youth worker decided to give mum a call. Mum informed him she had started an online evening class and found it difficult to get the girls to the club because of the timings of her class and the club and having to see to her son who has ASN as her husband worked late in the evenings. The youth worker informed her that as the children only stayed 5 minutes from the club he would easily call for them on his way and drop them off on his way back home. Mum was delighted he had offered to do this as it would enable her to continue with her studies and the children could still attend the youth club. The girls have returned once again and are glad to see their friends again and enjoy the activities provided.

BEFRIEND A CHILD



The COVID pandemic has had a substantial impact on our children, young people, and their families. In turn the services we provide and the way that we deliver them has fundamentally changed. The priorities we identified when this LOIP was first published have become more pertinent because of the pandemic. Impacting the economy, the opportunities available to our young people and their families. It has also affected their mental wellbeing and made the needs of our more vulnerable young people and the inequalities they face become even more apparent.

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan

The client attended ACIS Youth after experiencing several panic attacks whilst in school. The client disclosed they felt overwhelmed in classes especially when there were class tests and described her mind going blank and her body shaking with fear. The client had missed a significant amount of school as they often felt too panicked to attend. The counsellor initially worked with the client on developing coping strategies and how to begin to manage anxious feelings. Through discussions about how the client engaged in daily life and the quality of her relationships and connectedness to others the counsellor began to suspect the client was a neuro divergent learner.

With the client's permission the counsellor was able to discuss this with the client's guidance teacher and from this meeting there was an agreement involving the client to discuss with parents the possibility of assessment. The client was eventually assessed by CAMHS as being on the autistic spectrum and the school has now implemented support structures to help the client with school work. The client feels they have a much better insight into the difficulties they experience and has reported that their relationships with peers have also improved as those close to them also have this insight.

Some of the older girls attending the Youth Hub have recently moved into flats and were finding it hard and were unsure what they needed to do. We gave them help with benefits and getting some nice things for their temporary accommodation to make it feel more homely. They have also needed support around negative/abusive relationships. For some we are supporting them into college as they are now ready to look at this as an option.

MIDDLEFIELD YOUTH HUB

ACIS YOUTH



ADULTS

Provide individuals and communities with the social resources needed to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation.

Taking targeted interventions to reduce the impact of crime on communities.

Those who are convicted are supported to engage with relevant services and reduce reoffending.

SHMU Adult Engagement and Support Service works with ex-offenders, following their release, to create strong, supportive community networks and develop effective community based multi-agency working. The programme has expanded and now offers support to any adult volunteers or participants from the wider community that access their range of programmes for adults who require additional support due to complex needs and/or barriers to participation.

13 offenders participated in the programme pre-release and 10 with appropriate support services post release. 54 people participated in the wider community programme.

21 participants reduced their risk taking or offending behaviour. 19 people secured a positive destination, 13 volunteering in the community, 5 into education, 9 into training and 6 into employment.

Printfield Feel Good Project and Tillydrone Health & Well Being Project provide Complementary Health sessions to increase relaxation and wellbeing. 68 people accessed 328 sessions and 3 volunteers contributed 80 hours of volunteering time.



Mental Health Aberdeen provides adult counselling in Torry, where 126 clients accessed the service and 792 counselling sessions were provided; and in Calsayseat Surgery, where 156 clients accessed 1,089 counselling sessions.

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

They provided counselling for 91 people accessing 835 counselling sessions. 7 volunteers contributed 320 hours of volunteering time.

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 prostitution.

During the year 234 women were engaged with and 14 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 62 dedicated patrols undertaken in Aberdeen to address on street prostitution. 101 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.

The Fairer Aberdeen programme supported 739 volunteers providing 144,869 hours of volunteering time

373 people accessed counselling provision
2,716 counselling sessions provided locally in priority areas
23 offenders supported
10 ex-offenders engaging with support services post release
21 people reducing their risk taking or offending behaviour
234 vulnerable women involved in prostitution supported



“A number of the women we engage with have children and our partners work closely with them to improve parenting skills and to assist with contact with children where there may be social work involvement. They also provide budgeting and cooking skills.”

Operation Begonia

In all our counselling services we are recognising a worrying trend. Clients, perhaps because of lack of access to a GP or appropriate medical support, often now present at both GP or self-referral in a much more severe state of distress. We used to expect a full cross section of clients presenting issues, but now we can hardly ever say at point of triage that a client can 'safely wait' for a few weeks when we have waiting lists. Generally clients are now so unwell, and in some cases have waited or delay for so long, that they really struggle getting settled in therapy.

We also noticed that our normal contract of 6-8 sessions per person simply does not work for everyone, and it feels abusive or dismissive to let a client leave before they are at a point where they can take some charge again for their overall well-being.

The impact of the pandemic has been, and will continue to be, felt unequally. Those experiencing inequality and vulnerabilities are more likely to suffer the greatest negative social, economic and health impacts.

Mitigating the impacts of the pandemic on our citizens and communities, as well as the inequalities currently experienced can only be achieved by us working together in partnership and through targeting improvement activity at vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families, and groups.

Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan

Everyone who benefits from the treatments is struggling with poverty and affected by the cost of living crisis we are facing. This causes a great deal of stress so we help participants to have some respite from their worries, for relaxation and a safe space to alleviate stress.

"I suffer with long term insomnia and I am able to sleep better after my sessions. I do not like taking any prescription medications for this condition so I appreciate a natural approach."

MENTAL HEALTH ABERDEEN



At the start of the reporting period, we were running a peer support group which many of our participants and volunteers attended. With funding from ACVO's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund we relaunched this as a 'Wellbeing Café' in January which is open to any adults across Aberdeen, providing a safe space where people can come and chat, have a warm drink, engage with other people, play a game, and get involved in wellbeing activities. The aim of the Wellbeing Café is to support people to improve their mental health and reduce social isolation.

A number of our adults have secured multiple positive destinations, with some initially volunteering with shmu, but also going on to gain employment or accessing further training. Volunteering and group activities have begun to pick up this last 6 months with more individuals feeling ready to participate, and with wider community events and sessions opening up again.

"I wouldn't have left the house today without having shmu to go to for that event so thanks for putting it on!"

SHMU

THE DRONE COMMUNITY HAT



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

“Being on the Fairer Aberdeen Board is an important role; it has a big impact on the city. We need to represent our own communities but also see the bigger picture.”



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 3 representatives from the Civic Forum. The group continued to meet virtually 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 Community Networks, printing and distribution of Community Newsletters, IT support and communications.

For more information on joining the group email faireraberdeensfund@aberdeencity.gov.uk

PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

The Fairer Aberdeen Board allocated £25,000 to undertake a PB (Participatory Budgeting) event in Garthdee in October 2022. The Fairer Aberdeen Coordinator and Development Officer supported a steering group made up of partners and community representatives, which prioritised the funding for initiatives that would improve the community and help people feel less isolated.

PB gives local people the opportunity to decide on how funding is allocated in their area. All the applicants gave a short presentation on their proposal and then residents voted for the ones they would like to see delivered.

People who attended on the day fed back that they enjoyed the opportunity to decide where the funding went and to be involved in decision making. They also appreciated the networking opportunities, meeting other local people, seeing what was going on in the area, and hearing the presentations from the groups.

The projects supported by participatory budgeting will contribute towards achieving Local Outcome Improvement Plan priorities including providing individuals and communities with the social resources needed to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation.



“It is amazing for the community to have the opportunity to decide how public funding is used within our localities Please keep this going!”

PB FUNDED INITIATIVES

- Kaimhill Primary FC**
Training Clothes and Equipment
- Inchgarth Community Centre**
Inchgarth Youth Club
- Inchgarth Community Centre**
The Big Community Christmas Party
- Aberdeen Amateur Athletic Club**
Children's Athletics Sessions
- Kaim Court Community Allotment**
Social Group
- Friends of Kaimhill School**
Road Safety and Responsible Travel
- Friends of Kaimhill School**
Kaimhill Playground Garden and Forest
- Friends of Kaimhill School**
Cost of the School Day Initiatives
- Garthdee Community Council**
Community Benches