

**COMMUNITY LEARNING &  
DEVELOPMENT**

**CASE STUDIES  
2023/24**

**YOUTH WORK**

**ADULT LEARNING**

**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**





## Family Learning - Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service Input 2024

**Outcome: Work with partners from the Family Wellbeing Hubs to provide early intervention support to children, young people and families.**

*“Family Learning have the capacity to be flexible to suit the needs of a family, they have a wide variety of supports they can offer, and this encourages positive engagement from the beginning. They fully support and adhere to the guidelines for early intervention and their positive input often supports families to reduce their risk of escalation to statutory services.” - Children 1st*

The Fit Like Family Wellbeing Team are a collection of support services in Aberdeen working with families to support mental health and wellbeing, offering whole family support.

As part of the Fit Like team, Family Learning offer targeted support and learning around parenting models, managing family life, additional support needs and building peer connections whilst connecting families into existing universal community provisions and a variety of local services.

The Initial Conversation with families starts by gaining a whole-family picture of the needs of the family. These phone calls can be lengthy, and often can be quite emotionally sensitive, focusing on where the family have identified a need for support and how Fit Like Family Wellbeing can help.

Families who are referred to Family Learning will be allocated when a worker becomes available, this will be for 1:1 direct support with a target of support being in place in 16 weeks due to current waiting lists/capacity. We have a separate waiting list for groupwork which can also be included in referral outcomes if applicable.

Family Learning staff attend weekly Huddles that take place in three areas of the city although they are accessible online. The Huddles focus on linking all the different service professionals together, they are a good opportunity to grow professional networks and vital partnership working.

### Family Learning - Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service Input 2024

Prior to Family Learning's involvement with Fit Like, we were a relatively small team of 7 now grown to 23 (11 staff members are allocated through Scottish Equity Funding/Whole Family Wellbeing Fund provision). The expansion of the offer to families has resulted in a 33% increase in the number of them being supported in April 2022 compared to 2021, this continues to grow in 2024. Of the 109 families currently receiving direct 1:1 support from Family Learning in July 2024, 34 have been referred through Fit Like Family Wellbeing Service. Of the 32 families who are currently on our waiting list for 1:1 support, 13 are families who have been referred through the Fit Like Hubs pathway.

Since our partnership with Fit Like began, we have been identified as valuable contributors to projects including Education Recovery Grant, The Promise Pilot, and the Kinship Project Charter. This expansion has increased the staff base of the Family Learning team and increased the volume and value of our CLD voice across the city.

The Family Learning team have 34 Fit Like families currently receiving 1:1 direct support. We have 13 Fit Like families on our current waiting list (July 2024). We are working alongside other Fit Like partners where appropriate, to ensure that adequate scaffolding is in place for families to prevent escalation to Tier 3 in line with Aberdeen City's GIRFEC Model of Tiered Intervention.



## Social Media and Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM)

**Outcome: Support Community Planning Aberdeen's work to promote and protect Children's Rights.**

When AYM was set up, one of the key asks to the group is how do they represent and engage with the 32,000 12-25 year olds within the city in an authentic and youth friendly way. It was agreed that AYM should create such a social media platform that would engage with young people, provide a place to share information and gain views. The aim was for the AYM logo and posts to be a kitemark, recognised by young people within the city as being trustworthy and credible. It was agreed that to be authentic there needed to be a shift from adults writing posts for young people to young people taking control of these platforms.

*"Don't let the adults loose on social media that is for young people. "Adults need to recognise where their skills start and end and collectively with young people work together on common goals" – youth worker*

All the AYM posts are produced by the AYM members and the role of the staff is to support safeguarding ensuring anything produced is legal and won't cause offence. By empowering the young people to come up with solutions, take control and ownership and develop social media posts that were 100% by young people for young people AYM took a key step in its development as an authentic youth empowerment group.

Numbers have spiked since the young people took over the posts with people liking and reposting. AYM posts have been shared by and used by other local authorities and Scottish wide third sector organisations which demonstrates the strength of the posts made by the group.

AYM created a video for International Women's Day, in the first 2 days, the video had 982 plays on Instagram and 711 plays on the AYM twitter account!

### Social Media and Aberdeen Youth Movement (AYM)

**General Elections** - AYM created 3 youth friendly videos to promote registration and the photo ID campaign amongst a younger demographic in partnership with the ACC elections Team. Over the first 7 days of the videos being released they had a total of 14,185 views across Twitter/X, Instagram and YouTube. 22.5% of people who watched the videos rewatched them on Instagram.

To gather the views of young people within the city to help shape the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) key priorities for the next 2 years the six SYP members used social media and gathered the following over 4 days:

- 88 respondents aged 12-25 engaged via a Social Media Campaign
- 99% respondents lived, worked or studied in Aberdeen
- Top 3 issues they highlighted were
  - (a) Invest in and protect youth work services
  - (b) increase mental health training and support
  - (c) use a housing first approach to address homelessness
- Quote “Better mental health training would reduce the risk for younger generations to reach mental health crisis levels”
- Quote “I feel Aberdeen should have more activities in town and around that teens will be able to have fun in instead of walking up and down Union Street every day”
- Data captured and recorded to inform work across the AYM key priorities.

**<https://linktr.ee/aberdeenyouthmovement>**



## The Promise Project

**Outcome: Support young people’s mental and physical wellbeing and increase the number of young people who report that they feel mentally well.**

The Promise Projects are multi-agency partnerships that work with care experienced young people. The projects include young people that are looked after at home, looked after away from home and were previously looked after. An important principle within our project is “Children grow up to be loved, safe and respected”.

Each young person is supported to work towards their own personal achievements, both in and out of school. The project work with young people builds their confidence, supports returning to education and with attendance, in securing post school positive destinations and developing emotional literacy. Sessions with young people are in small groups or in 1:1 sessions generally once a week unless there is a need for multiple sessions.

The Promise Pilot team at Northfield Academy is made up of youth workers, family learning workers, social workers and education practitioners who have worked with 16 young people, with 3 having progressed to the point where they access only universal support, 2 have moved on to a positive destination, with one securing employment and the other advancing to further education. Others have been moved on to alternative support pathways or continue to work with Promise staff.

One young person lacked opportunities for socialising, developing social skills and meeting young people at school. Youth work and social work staff worked together to support a weekly small horse-riding group, and then supported the transition to, and the first term at, the links course at NESCOL. The young person was supported to travel independently and to make friends within the group. This has very much been a team effort. The young person with the support of Craigielea and the multi-agency team, has now moved onto a full-time course at NESCOL, made friends, is independently getting to college and is positive about their future.

### The Promise Project

Having the youth work team within the project provides more safe and trusted adults in school for the vulnerable young people and enhances the bespoke learning opportunities available. The promise staff come from different professional backgrounds with unique approaches, that work well together, this has benefitted the young people involved.

“The youth team as part of the Pilot Project has been essential to its success, setting a template for future multidisciplinary working in schools.” – Family Resource Worker

“Hey Symone just wanted to let you know I have a full-time job in a nursery would you be able to write me a reference please?” - Promise young person (16 years)



# Problem Solving Courts – Bail Supervision

**Outcome: Develop and deliver a targeted learning package for those whose employment opportunities have been hardest hit by Covid-19**

Participants who are given bail supervision by the courts and are required to attend Spring Garden social work three times per week can access Adult Learning as one of the three weekly contact sessions. This provides an opportunity for participants on bail supervision to work with Adult Learning tutors to improve core skills and ICT, gain SQA qualifications, progress with employability and further advance life skills. This engagement with education develops confidence, builds agency and sets individuals on a personal improvement trajectory, aiming to help break cycles in reoffending.

Learners start by discussing and identifying their own learning goals with tutors, they break down the steps towards these goals and get going. These have included one learner working towards their ICT core skills level 3 SQA qualification, another working on creative art and writing, with others focussing on employability or improving their life skills. Due to the often chaotic lifestyles of the learners, engagement can be varied within the sessions. Often other needs such as access to food or other matters are to be addressed before learning can take place.

From this pilot group:

- A was supported to apply to college, although not successful in the application it developed his confidence enough to make plans for future steps
- B improved confidence to begin college and improved creative writing and drawing skills
- C began SQA core skills and completed tasks up to assessment standard.
- D successfully applied for Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card
- E attended and developed confidence in organising and attending upcoming appointments.





### Healthy Minds – Community Support

**Outcome: Improve the Mental Wellbeing of adults in our communities.**

*“One of the best things was learning that I can grow my skills and grow as a person.”*

M was referred to Healthy Minds by her psychologist as she was nearing the end of her treatment and the need for a progression route was identified to prevent regression. A Healthy Minds worker met with M and her referrer to ascertain if the Healthy Minds service was appropriate and to start to tease out potential goals. As this was a vulnerable point in her recovery, the referrer decided to continue contact until a relationship was established with Healthy Minds to ensure a smooth transition.

The Healthy Minds worker allowed time to build their relationship, as M had difficulties building trust and any potential opportunities were only progressed once relationships had been established between M and the worker and support levels agreed. M had a wide range of interests and was open to suggestions giving her worker plenty to work with.

M identified gaps in her IT and cooking skills as things that she wanted to work on. Fortunately, we were able to use the local community centre to deliver 1-1 sessions in both subjects, using our Development Worker. These focused on her specific needs, building up confidence alongside skills.

M progressed to small groups with the Adult Learning team supporting her to further develop her IT skills in a learner centred way. The Healthy Minds team secured funding to enable work with a small group of parents focusing on adapting recipes for their children to encourage a wider, more balanced diet. This allowed M to grow in confidence and develop friendships, as well as feel more positive about meeting her family's needs.

### Healthy Minds – Community Support

M also attended short courses with CFINE that reflected her interests and set of new challenges with bigger groups and unfamiliar settings. Although not always easy, this helped her see her progress and gave her the motivation to keep building on it.

Volunteering was the next step, with M supporting an event with the Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership and also got involved with the Community Development team who recognised M's potential and worked with her to get more involved with her local community. At this point Healthy Minds felt that their support was no longer necessary.

M's experience with Healthy Minds has inspired a family member to self-refer, recognising the impact this work has had on M and seeing the same potential for themselves.

Self-motivation and a successful partnership approach were key to M's progression. M's desire for a better life alongside positive flexible partnership working enabled M to take the next step at the right time, relevant next steps were available, crucially at the right level of challenge allowing her to be stretched but not to break. Although M feels that her recovery journey is far from complete she is keen and able to give back to her community, and in addition to the work with the Community Development team she would like to start a youth music group in the area.

***“I'm not scared to try new things or meet new people anymore. I feel more confident and assertive to get what I want and need.”***

## PRIORITY 3 | COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



### Ukrainian Community Hub Outcome: Provide capacity building

**Outcome: Provide capacity building support to communities to create, develop and sustain programmes and activities which address emerging priorities and provide increased opportunities for citizens**

*“With the support of Aberdonians and the City Council, we are able to run the Ukrainian Hub and host the Ukrainian School in the Rosemount Community Learning Centre, helping hundreds of refugees and supporting over 100 children in adjusting to their new lives in Scotland.”*

- (Daria Shapovalova, chair of the Ukrainian Community Hub Association)

Aberdeen City Council worked with local community planning partners to support the UK Government’s Homes for Ukrainians and the Scottish Government’s Super Sponsor programmes. Initially around 1800 Ukrainian Refugees arrived in Aberdeen.

Responding to the Ukrainian crisis in 2022 involved the relocation of vulnerable displaced individuals and families to Aberdeen, some with family visas and others under the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme. Challenges for individuals and families included varying degrees of trauma and mental health distress associated with being displaced when fleeing from war including acute social, language and economic obstacles.

Welcoming Hubs were established in hotels to provide resettlement support and developed the Ukrainian Hub, approximately 25 Ukrainian volunteers were recruited to help with food and clothing donations, translation, welcoming, developing a programme and establishing a Steering group (which became the Ukrainian Association SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation)). The Ukrainian Community Hub co-produced the provision of Employability and ESOL services, Skills Development Scotland Drop-Ins for young people aged 16 to 18.5 years old English classes taught by volunteer teachers, ESOL assessments, financial inclusion services, orientation activities (Countryside Ranger outings), free bus passes and phone cards,

## PRIORITY 3 | COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Ukrainian Community Hub Outcome: Provide capacity building

Police Scotland community engagement and war crime reporting support, Mindfulness Crafts, Citizens Advice and legal drop-ins, bus trips (e.g. Edinburgh National Museum). Additionally, support was provided for mental health which was achieved through the CLD team sitting down with the Ukrainians in a real crisis to work towards co-produced solutions which became the To Be OK In Anyway Project to support traumatised Ukrainian women and men through a qualified Ukrainian Psychiatrist and Yoga Therapist (employed by the Ukrainian Association). Before Ukrainian children are allocated to schools, multi sports activities were organised weekly (through Active Schools and Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust) to help the children stay active and engaged. Dance and music classes, all provided by Ukrainians, were also set up.

Notably a Ukrainian Tae Kwon Do World Champion volunteered to provide free classes on Sundays to children. Overall, the Ukrainian Community Hub played a crucial role in enhancing the coordination and effectiveness of ESOL and Employability services for Ukrainian refugees, ultimately improving their chances of successful integration.

“In June 2024, 64.5% of Ukrainian households report themselves as self-reliant when it comes to the support of their family and children including access to education, with a further 15% stating they are close to self-reliance. 5% of the community have reported urgent need for support in this area, though this could relate to family dynamics rather than access to education.” (Sheona Bell –Refugee Project Manager)



## Middlefield Community Project

**Outcome: Provide capacity building support to communities to create, develop and sustain programmes and activities which address emerging priorities and provide increased opportunities for citizens**

125 young people were supported and took part in activities that increase skills, confidence and resilience. 96% reported that their confidence has increased and they feel they can influence decision making.

Middlefield Community Project supports adults, families, children and young people in one of the most disadvantaged areas of the city. They deliver childcare and early years, after school clubs, holiday activities playschemes, family support, adult learning, youth work, and community capacity building. They provide support on fuel poverty and access to free food, financial inclusion, employment, health and wellbeing, isolation social exclusion, and volunteering.

Many people are experiencing financial difficulties, and the project has given out 3,600 food parcels and 300 meals over the year. They supported 150 low-income families through the year and were successful in getting support from The Giving Tree and Northsound Cash for Kids, providing Christmas presents for over 300 children. Two parent and toddler groups ran through the year, with parents attending adult learning classes and the wellbeing café. Some parents required additional support through structured interventions to develop confidence. 60 adults took part in CLD activities, and 40 reported improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes.

The men's group meets weekly, engaging in social, informal, and educational activities as well as excursions. The Bike Hub has generated a lot of interest, providing basic bike repair and maintenance training in partnership with Sustrans. Families who have received bikes are now going out for family cycle rides, improving intergenerational relationships.

## PRIORITY 3 | COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Middlefield Community Project

Work has developed with a group of older people from local sheltered accommodation, supporting them to identify issues and be more involved in decision-making in their building and the local community. Professionals working with them have reported a big increase in their self-esteem and confidence. A group of young people with autism, find some youth sessions too loud or busy. They have worked with some of the elderly group and provided activities and a Christmas buffet for them. Both groups got a lot out of this and enjoyed communicating and learning from each other.

Young people plan their activities in the Youth Hub and are supported to engage in learning and development programmes and to plan for their futures. They continue to work with schools to support those with difficulties and ensure learning plans are in place. 125 young people (10-18 yrs) were involved in CLD activity, as well as 100 children (5-9 yrs). 120 young people took part in diversionary activities, and 10 school leavers took part in employability-related programmes. 10 young people moved on to positive destinations (education, employment, training, or volunteering). 5 youth workers took part in 20 training sessions.

**Over the year, 21 volunteers participated, contributing 3,280 hours of volunteer time. They all took part in training sessions, have volunteer plans in place, and received volunteer awards.**

