

# 2024/25

## Thriving Communities Progress Report



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**THRIVING  
COMMUNITIES**

*south*  
**AYRSHIRE**  
COUNCIL  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir a Deas  
Making a Difference Every Day

# Our performance during 2024/25

## Youth Work

### Number of Young People Engaged in CLD Provision 2024/2025:

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Holiday Programmes	293	442	778
Community-based Youth Work	1280	1263	968
Work in Schools	469	412	376
Youth Voice Groups	94	-	-
<b>Total Number of Young People</b>	<b>2136</b>	<b>2097</b>	<b>2122</b>

### Engagement Levels:

- › 2,136 young people engaged in regular CLD Youth Work in 2024/25 (4+ weeks).
- › Participation remained stable over three years, with a 1% rise (+39 young people) in 2024/25 despite shifting focus to ages 10+.

### 2024/25 Breakdown:

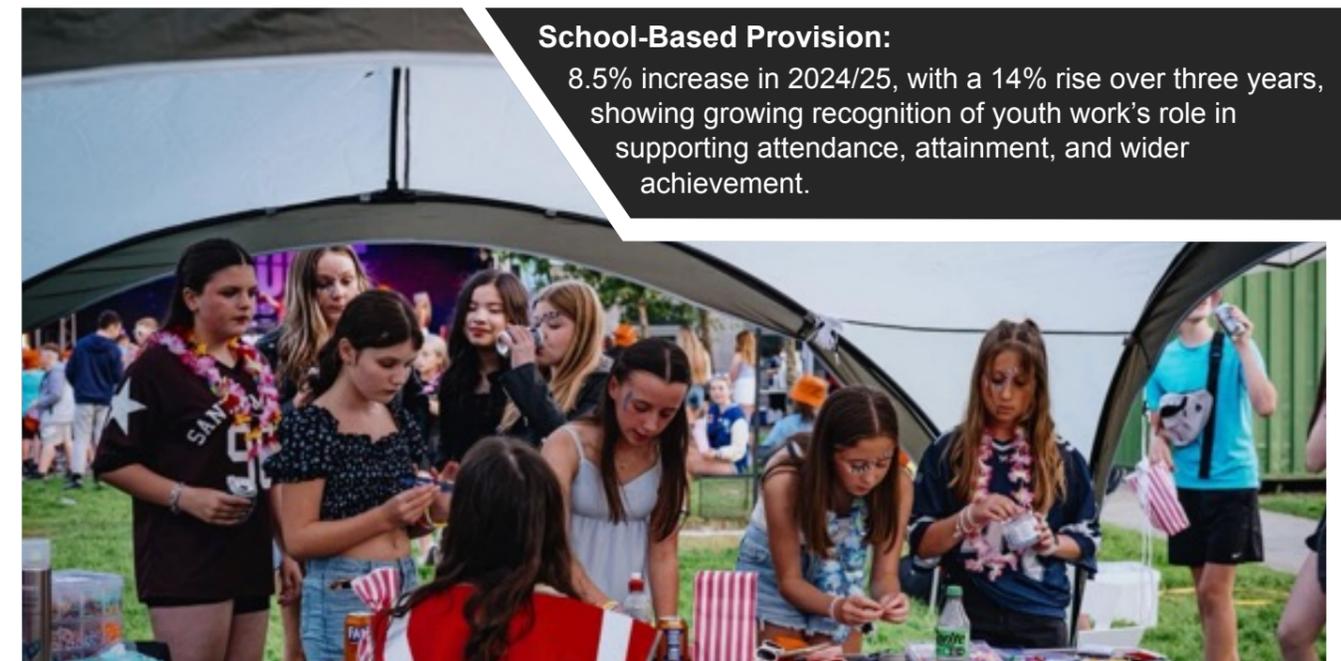
- › 1,280 young people in community-based provision
- › 293 young people in holiday programmes
- › 469 young people in school-based provision
- › 94 young people in youth voice projects

### Trends & Shifts:

- › Holiday programme participation declined since 2022/23 due to reduced funding and less interest from older age groups in traditional formats.
- › Community-based engagement sustained through external funding (South Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership, Alcohol & Drug Partnership), enabling more detached and diversionary activities.

### School-Based Provision:

8.5% increase in 2024/25, with a 14% rise over three years, showing growing recognition of youth work's role in supporting attendance, attainment, and wider achievement.



Thriving Communities (TC) was established in 2021 bringing together South Ayrshire Council's community-based services including, Community Learning and Development, Employability, Community Safety and Health and Wellbeing.

Over the past four years, TC has continued to evolve, maximising resources available to support both local and strategic priorities across South Ayrshire

TC has developed strong thematic teams across Health and Wellbeing, Communities, and Employability, all of which are supported by an invaluable multi disciplinary admin and business support team

In addition to our main three main thematic areas, TC is also responsible for the Ayrshire Rural and Island Fund (ARIA).

In April 2025, the Service Lead for Thriving Communities also took on responsibility for the Economy and Regeneration Team, now known as the Thriving Economy Team. It is hoped by aligning the Thriving Economy team, it will create further opportunities to enhance economic activity and Community Wealth Building (CWB) across South Ayrshire.

Work in our local communities is planned and delivered by our locality teams, supported by strong collaboration with partners and with the communities themselves.

### Locality Teams:

- › North Ayr
- › Troon / Prestwick
- › North & South Carrick
- › Ayr South and Villages

TC also support and lead a wide range of priorities across the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) including Financial Inclusion, Population Health, Community Safety, Children's Services and Sustainability.



### Gender Breakdown

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
♂ Male	990	983	956
♀ Female	1140	1108	1138
🗳️ Prefer Not to Say	6	6	28
👤 Total Number of Young People	<b>2136</b>	<b>2097</b>	<b>2122</b>

Between 2022/23 and 2024/25, youth work provision saw slightly higher engagement from females than males. This suggests that youth work services are successfully attracting and retaining female participants, while engagement among males has remained relatively stable but slightly lower in comparison. The difference may reflect the types of activities and programmes currently on offer, with some approaches or themes potentially resonating more strongly with female participants.



**Detached Youth Work**  
Our Youth Work Team delivers a structured programme of detached youth work each Friday evening across Ayr, Maybole, Prestwick and Troon. This provision is designed to ensure that young people are engaged in environments where they naturally meet, enabling early intervention, meaningful relationship-building and responsive support.



**Our Data-Informed Approach**  
The deployment of staff is underpinned by a data-informed approach. Locations are identified through analysis of community intelligence, youth service referrals, partnership reporting, and feedback from young people themselves. This ensures that youth workers are present in areas where need is evident or emerging, allowing the service to remain flexible, targeted and aligned with local priorities.



**During Friday evening sessions, youth workers provide:**

- › Informal support and guidance
- › Access to information on services, opportunities and rights
- › Early identification and escalation of emerging concerns
- › De-escalation, reassurance and safety-focused interventions
- › Signposting to appropriate provision within the wider youth work service

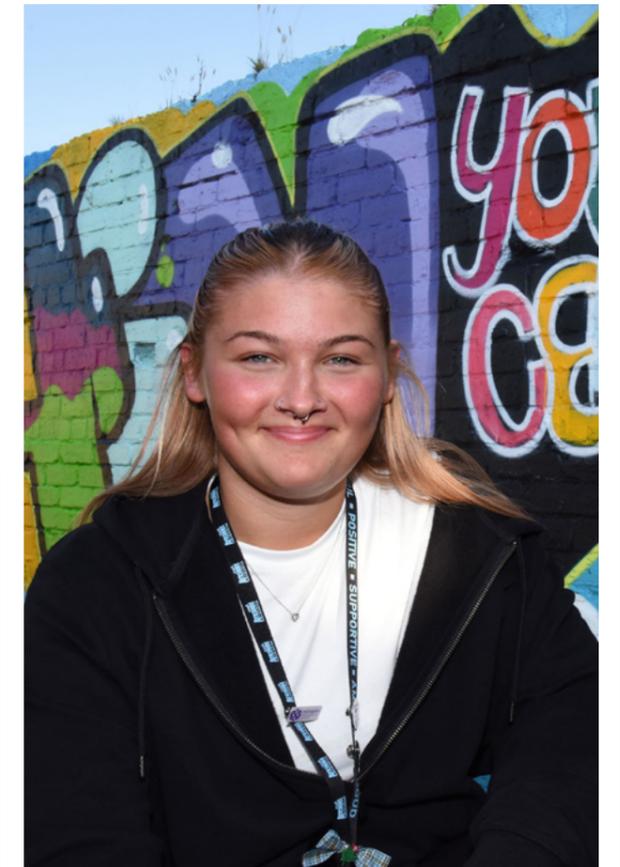
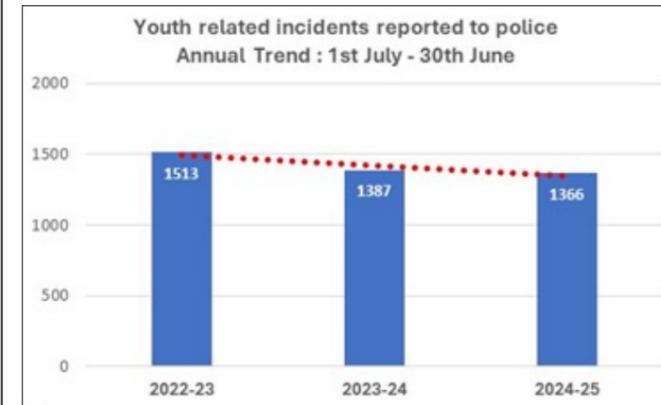


**Engaging Young People in Their Own Spaces**  
Detached youth work operates on the principle of engaging young people within their own spaces - public areas such as parks, transport hubs and town centres. By positioning staff within these environments, barriers associated with formal settings are reduced. Young people are more likely to interact voluntarily, enabling authentic engagement, the development of trust, and more accurate insight into the issues affecting them.

### Outcomes and Impact

The consistent visibility of youth workers across South Ayrshire has strengthened relationships between young people and local services. This approach has contributed to:-

- › Improved awareness of support pathways
- › Reductions in reported antisocial behaviour in identified areas
- › Enhanced partnership working with schools, community safety teams and local organisations
- › Increased participation of young people in shaping local decision-making



### Background Information

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Care Experienced	134	59	58
Young Carers	38	29	13
SIMD 1-3	934	893	1104
Other Referred Group	138	147	119
Out with Target Groups	892	969	828
<b>Total</b>	<b>2136</b>	<b>2097</b>	<b>2122</b>



In 2024/25, **1,244 young people** were identified as belonging to targeted groups, accounting for **58%** of all young people engaged in CLD youth work provision. These targeted groups included those living in **SIMD deciles 1–3, young carers, care experienced young people**, and individuals referred from other priority groups.

There were notable positive shifts within these groups. The number of care experienced young people involved in CLD youth work provision increased significantly, **rising by 78%** in 2024/25. In addition, the number of young carers engaging with CLD youth work provision also showed a modest but meaningful increase from **29 to 39** young carers over the year.

### Learner Hours

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
	6602	3755	6931
Community-based Youth Work	25,936	19,484	15,182
Work in Schools	7141	6567	9453
Youth Voice	2357		
<b>Total Hours</b>	<b>42,036</b>	<b>29,806</b>	<b>31,566</b>

In 2024/25, young people participated in **72 youth work programmes**, collectively contributing to **42,036 hours of learning** and engagement across the authority. Of these programmes, **30** were community-based youth work activities, accounting for **25,936 hours**. These sessions provided young people with opportunities to develop skills, build relationships, and access support within their local communities. In addition, 7 holiday programmes were delivered, offering **6,602 hours** of structured learning and fun during school breaks. A further **28 programmes** were delivered in school settings, contributing **7,141 hours** of youth work designed to complement the curriculum and support wider wellbeing and achievement.

Across all programmes, the average young person engaged in **19.6 hours of learning** over the year.

Staff feedback indicates that the nature of youth work delivery is continuing to evolve, with a growing focus on diversionary activity, events, and residential experiences, young people are now participating in longer, more intensive sessions than the traditional 1.5-hour youth club model. This shift reflects both the increasing complexity of young people’s needs and our commitment to providing deeper, more meaningful learning experiences. As a result, young people are spending more sustained periods of time engaged in activities that promote personal development, confidence building, and social connection.



### Learner Outcomes

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Positive Relationships	539	388	494
Safe and Welcome	543	403	512
Have a Say	526	376	466
New Experiences	472	361	467
Skills and Knowledge	457	357	429
Better Informed Decisions	508	343	440
Positive Futures	519	358	459
<b>Total number completed</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>404</b>	<b>512</b>

We use the National Youth Work Outcomes and Skills Framework as a common language for setting goals and tracking progress with young people participating in youth work. The primary reason we measure progress is to support the development of young people’s skills and learning. Through a learning conversation with their Key Worker, young people were asked to reflect on their involvement in youth work and

consider what difference this had made. This dialogue encourages young people to explore the language of skills and experiment with a variety of approaches to support reflection on learning.

In 2024/25, Learner Journey forms were completed by 550 young people. a 27% increase in the number of young people reporting Learning Outcomes compared to in 2023/2024.



### Volunteer Hours

Adult and youth volunteers contributed 2,580 hours to youth work programmes in 2024/25- an 80% increase from 1,100 hours in 2023/24. This growth marks a major recovery in volunteer engagement following COVID-19, addressing a priority set by the Youth Work Development Group. Increased hours have strengthened community involvement, restored pathways for emerging youth workers to gain vital experience and mentoring, and improved workforce capacity. As a result, the service is better positioned to sustain a skilled workforce and ensure long-term stability in youth work provision.

### Youth Awards



The South Ayrshire Youth Awards were held on 3rd April 2025 to celebrate the achievements of young people aged 11–25 across the region. The event was entirely youth-led, with 100 local club members shaping the theme, categories, and entertainment through a survey.

A planning group of 18 young volunteers designed nomination forms, category descriptions, invitations, and decorations. The ceremony welcomed 80 attendees and featured vibrant neon-themed décor, created and presented by locality youth voice groups.

In total, 107 individuals/groups were nominated, with 27 finalists recognised across 9 categories, including volunteering, mental health and wellbeing, community service, skills development, digital innovation, and arts and culture.

### South Ayrshire Youth Events Group

The South Ayrshire Youth Event Group, made up of 10 volunteers, meets fortnightly to plan and deliver events shaped by local young people’s interests, including the Youth Awards, Bounce Festival, and Eclipse under-18’s rave. The group helped organise the first diversionary rave, securing police support and volunteering on the night with neon paint designs and DJ meet-and-greets. Working alongside other Youth Voice groups, they influenced every aspect of the Youth Awards-from theme and host to decorations, playlists, and interactive games. Young people presented the awards, voted for the overall winner, and received goodie bags, while local businesses contributed raffle prizes, ensuring the event was vibrant and community-driven.



The Say It Out LOUD Mental Health and Wellbeing Award, is designed for South Ayrshire Primary and Secondary Schools. It is a youth led framework created by young people to ensure pupils are part of key decisions to improve mental health and wellbeing support within their schools.

The Award is separated into three different levels which are peer accessed by schools who are achieving the award.

Currently in 2025, there are: -

- › 9 schools achieving level 1
- › 7 Schools achieving level 2
- › 4 Schools are working towards level 3

### Catching Confidence

In 2024/2025 Catching Confidence was undertaken by **198** of these young people. Of those completing this, **89%** achieved more than **75%** of their learning outcomes.

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Less than 50%	12	0	42
50 – 75 %	10	25	43
More than 75%	176	198	57
Total Number of Young People	198	223	142

### Youth Work Accreditation

	2024/2025	2023/2024	2022/2023
Hi5! Award	156	169	184
Dynamic Youth Awards	84	53	76
John Muir Award	0	29	17
Saltire Award	58	57	95
Youth Achievement	0	0	2
Duke of Edinburgh Bronze	13	11	3
Duke of Edinburgh Silver	0	0	6
Princes Trust Achieve L4/L5	0	2	3
Princes Trust L3	0	2	10
Community & Volunteering	2	0	0
SQA Animal Care L3	6	0	0
Total Awards Completed	319	323	396



Our youth work programmes provide opportunities to formally recognise young people's hard work, commitment and achievements through the facilitation of accredited Youth Awards.

In 2024/25, 406 young people registered their participation

in various youth awards. 319 of these young people successfully achieved an award, which is a completion rate of 79%. 57 young people are continuing to complete their award. The most popular youth awards were Dynamic Youth Awards, Hi5! Awards and Saltire Awards.

There has been a marginal reduction in the total number of awards delivered in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24.

No John Muir Awards were completed this year due to a temporary pause in the programme. However, the award remains highly popular among young people, and

we are pleased to confirm that it will be offered again in 2025/26, with strong interest already anticipated.

In 2024/25 there has been a service-wide focus on ensuring our targeted school-based provision supports wider achievement. The support young people require from youth work staff can often be more intensive, but it allows young people to gain a recognised qualification when they may not otherwise be able to.

Of the 74 Youth Projects delivered in 2022/2023 accreditation was offered in 23 of these.

### SA Youth Council

South Ayrshire Youth Council were elected in June 2024, and represent all secondary schools, additional support needs school, Virtual School and over 16 school leavers.

They represent the views of local young people and have set the following priorities:

- › Cost of Living
- › Opportunities to have voice heard with local key decision makers
- › Increase Mental Health and Wellbeing Support
- › Improve awareness for those with Additional Support Needs



### In one year, the South Ayrshire Youth Council Members have taken part in:

- › 4 in person Youth Council meetings with Elected Members and Senior Leaders to discuss relevant issues. One of the meetings was hosted as a Cabinet style meeting
- › Joined two online Youth Council meetings
- › 5 additional sub group sessions to discuss actions for their priorities
- › Attended 3 SAC Cabinet Meetings
- › Delivered two presentations, one to all Head Teachers and another to Children Service Plan Partners
- › Had a say on 7 different local or national policy/outcomes/processes
- › Led a Cost of Living survey to over 600 young people
- › Set up the 'Body Essentials Project' where a range of local youth groups and 31 schools have signed up to receive funding to purchase a range of toiletry products (deodorant, body wash, hair products etc) tailored to the needs of local young people to access for free



Through our rights-based approach we have supported 366 young people to have the opportunity to express views and meaningfully shape service delivery. We carried out 7 different focus groups supporting to have an improved and shared understanding of issues and priorities felt by local young people and better knowledge of how they wish to have their voice heard, communicate and share information.



**Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs)**

Our Ayr MSYP's, Evie and Matthew have participated in a range of training, consulted with local young people around the Scottish Youth Parliament 2026-2031 Manifesto, including presenting to Youth Council and Elected Members, hosting information stalls at various events and attending youth voice groups.

In November 2024 Evie presented a motion stating that more should be done in schools in order to educate young people on racism and xenophobia. In preparation for her presentation, Evie consulted with over 200 young people to explore issues around her motion. The motion was successfully passed and Evie has since worked closely with Community Planning and the Scottish Refugee Council to develop a pilot lesson plan addressing this important issue.

In March 2025, the South Ayrshire MSYPs organised a gathering with MSYPs across the West Coast. This event provided an opportunity to share best practice and support one another in consulted for the upcoming SYP Manifesto.

Our MSYP's are both actively involved with their local Community Councils and played a key role to develop a consultation on supporting increased youth involvement within Community Councils.



## Adult & Family Learning



with over 90% reaching at least 75% of their intended learning goals. There is a broad reach across age groups, and a significant proportion of learners are from the most deprived areas. Learner self-evaluations remain positive, and we have reported impacts on skills, knowledge, health and wellbeing underline the wider value of provision.

Over the past three years, Adult and Family Learning within Community Learning and Development in South Ayrshire has continued to provide a wide range of opportunities for learners. The three-year data demonstrates both the scale and the depth of impact achieved through Adult and Family Learning in South Ayrshire. Participation levels have remained robust, with consistently high completion rates above 89% and a marked rise in accredited achievements in 2024/25.



Learners are not only completing programmes but also achieving meaningful outcomes,



**Literacy and ESOL Support**

The Literacy Development Officers have worked with 128 ESOL learners and 64 literacy learners between 1st June 2024 and 31st July 2025. During this period, there has been an overall 8% increase in male learner participation, reflecting progress against last year's identified action to increase male involvement. This shows that the majority of male learners are engaged in ESOL and literacies provision, with 150 out of 278 male learners (54%) participating in these areas, highlighting the strong role of ESOL and literacy programmes in engaging men.

**There has been an overall 8% increase in male learner participation**

	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Adult Learning programmes	95	69	84
Family Learning programmes	46	35	35
Learning Places	1382	998	990
Hours of Learning (Volume of Delivery Sustained)	18090	21071	19790
Completion Numbers (Strong and Consistent Success Rates)	1230/1382 (89%)	894/998 (90%)	898/990 (91%)
Accreditation Achieved	128/1382 (9%)	45/998 (5%)	141 (16%)
Learning Outcomes 75%+ (High achievement of intended outcomes)	975 (95%)	898 (90%)	829 (92%)
Progression College	97 (12%)	41 (10%)	70 (11%)
Progression Volunteering	85 (10%)	52 (13%)	76 (12%)
Progression Employment	53 (7%)	64 (15%)	107 (17%)
Age Range 16 – 30 years (Youngest Learner Group)	414 (30%)	184 (19%)	190 (19%)
Age Range 31 – 50 years (Largest Learner Group)	675 (49%)	363 (37%)	522 (52%)
Gender Female (Majority of Participants)	998 (72%)	780 (79%)	709 (72%)
Gender Male	372 (27%)	200 (20%)	278 (28%)
SIMD Quintile 1 (Most Deprived)	347 (26%)	287 (29%)	292 (30%)
Self-Evaluation Very Good/Excellent (Positive Learner Satisfaction)	65 (69%)	49 (71%)	63 (75%)



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### Internal Funding Invested

Alongside external funding support, Thriving Communities has also invested directly in communities through a range of funding opportunities since August 2024.

### Financial Inclusion Funding

Thriving Communities is committed to supporting Financial Inclusion Projects that aim to reduce poverty and improve quality of life for communities.

Name of group	Amount awarded
Dailly Community Development Trust	£1000
Carrick Rugby Football Club	£750
Ayr & Prestwick Mens Shed	£1000
Mossblown Matters	£1000
Girvan Town Team	£600
Vasa pantry	£1000



## Community Development

### External Funding Support

#### Funding support to community Groups

From 1st July 2024 – 30th June 2025 the External Funding Officer has provided advice and information to a wide range of community groups and organisations to help identify both external and internal funding opportunities.

- > 72 dedicated funding reports were prepared and issued to groups.
- > 24 bi-weekly funding alerts have been circulated to community groups across South Ayrshire since August 2024.

Social media has also become an important communication tool. The Thriving Communities – Community Learning and Development Facebook page now provides up-to-date information on funding opportunities, with an average of 18 posts per week.

Additional support has been provided to groups requiring help with applications, alongside information and advice sessions on how to prepare strong submissions to funders.

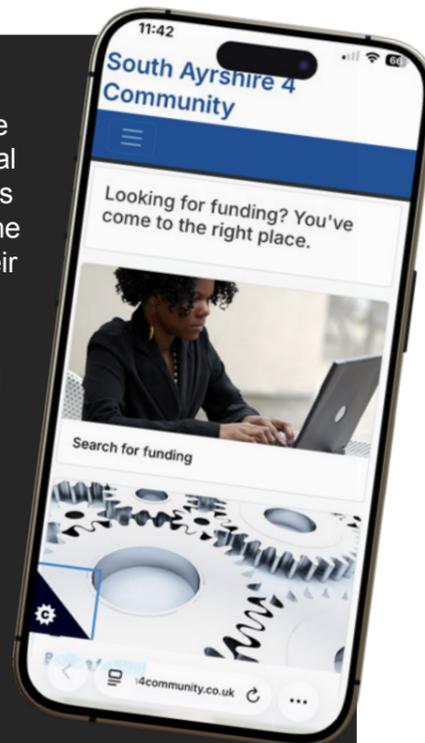
As part of the Council's commitment to supporting community and voluntary groups, charities, and social enterprises in accessing external funding, a free online resource — South Ayrshire 4 Funding is available:-

This resource provides a cohesive approach to external funding and enables groups to identify the best funders for their projects.

- > 1,391 searches have been carried out in the past year.
- > 279 groups are currently registered as users.

To date, the service has helped generate over £700,000 in funding for the region, delivering a return of £20.39 for every £1 invested.

These searches cover a wide range of community funding needs, as illustrated by the accompanying keyword word cloud.



Following approval by Councillors at Cabinet, additional funding was allocated for 2025/26, allowing a second Financial Inclusion Fund to be launched.

Name of group	Amount awarded
Ayr Gaiety Partnership	£2500
The Honeypot Childrens Charity	£4142
The Ballantrae Trust	£1000
Ayr United Football Academy	£3000
Vics in the Community	£4142
SeAscape	£4142
Recovery Ayr	£2000
Broken Chains	£3642
The Carrick Centre	£4142
Glendoune Community Association	£3250

A total of £60,000 was also distributed to support the work of food pantries:-

Name of group	Amount awarded
VASA – Ayr	£35,000
VASA – Girvan	£12,500
The Carrick centre	£12,500



### Community Empowerment Funding

The Community Empowerment Fund (CEF) is part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and supports community groups in taking ownership of land or assets, completing capital or development projects, and achieving priorities identified within their Place Plans or Community Action Plans. Applicants can apply for:-

- › Small Grant: up to £4,950 – to address barriers to sustaining a group or to fund smaller development projects.
- › Development Grant: up to £15,000 – for groups taking ownership of land/assets, going through a Community Asset Transfer (CAT), or taking the lease of an asset.

#### 2024/25 Awards

- › Budget: £105,000 (Capital £55,000, Revenue £50,000)
- › Applications received: 22
- › Successful applications: 12, with grants ranging from £2,600 to £15,000

Name of group	Amount awarded
Friends of Dundonald	£4,950
ACE	£4,588
Ballantrae Trust	£15,000
Carrick Rugby Football Club	£2,600
Vics in the Community	£15,000
Friends of Broadway Prestwick	£6,146
Biosphere Bikes	£15,000
Overmills Allotment Assoc	£4,950
Girvan & District Attractions	£4,950
Kincaidston Action Group	£9,200
Peter Boyle Bowling Club	£14,030
The Ayr Ark	£8,585.13



#### 2025/26 Awards

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- › Successful applications: 12, with grants ranging from £2,600 to £15,000



Name of group	Amount awarded
Annbank Comm Association	£8,600
Ayr Sea Cadets	£6,500
Ayr United Football Academy	£3,300
Dailly Comm Dev Trust	£2,400
Forehill Bowling Club	£15,000
Friends of the Broadway Prestwick	£12,000
Harbour Ayrshire	£1,794
Maybole Women's Group	£950
Peter Boyle Bowling Club	£14,958
Pinwherry & Pinmore Comm Dev Trust	£3,785
Prestwick Cricket Club	£608
Prestwick St Cuthbert Archery Club	£997
South Ayrshire Access Panel	£1,240
The Iris Ayr	£9,765
Troon Men's Shed	£10,276
Vics in the Community	£7,827

**The purpose of the club is to provide a sporting and social space for members and the public to participate in activities and enhance their physical health and mental wellbeing.**

**This grant has enabled the club to enhance the social space and reach out to members and the wider community to make a valued difference to their health and wellbeing.**

Michelle - Peter Boyle Bowling Club

## Participatory Budgeting Funding

The Participatory Budgeting Fund (PB) is also supported through UKSPF and aims to empower local communities to influence how funding is allocated to projects that meet local health, wellbeing, and community priorities.



### 2024/25 Awards

- › Budget: £90,000, in partnership with the Health and Social Care Partnership
- › Local allocation: £15,000 to each of the six localities:
  - › Ayr North
  - › Ayr South & Villages
  - › Girvan & South Carrick
  - › Maybole & North Carrick
  - › Prestwick & Villages
  - › Troon & Villages
- › Grant range: £500–£3,000 per group
- › Groups funded: 66

Name of group	Amount awarded
Ukrainian Community Group	£3,000 UKSPF
Carers Gateway South Ayrshire	£3,000 UKSPF
The IRIS	£3,000 UKSPF
Peter Boyle Bowling Club	£2,400
Ayr ARK	£2,800 UKSPF
Harbour AYRSKIRE	£1,800 UKSPF
Riverside Community Trust	£3,000
Overmills User Group	£2,100
Ayr North Exc Womens Group	£3,000
RecycleAyr	£3,000
Overmills Allotments	£2,000 UKSPF
Lochside Gardening Group	£900
HoneyPot Childrens Charity	£2,789 UKSPF

Name of group	Amount awarded
Ayrshire Hospice	£3,000 UKSPF
Spotty Zebras	£2,000
RecoveryAyr	£3,000 UKSPF
Carers Gateway	£3,000 UKSPF
Annbank Comm Assoc	£3,000 UKSPF
Broken Chains	£3,000
Mosssblown Matters	£2,850
NLADYS	£3,000
Mindfully Present	£2,060
Tarbolton Community Council	£1,500
Kincaidston Action Group	£801
Girvan Youth Football Club	£3,000 UKSPF
Girvan & District Attractions SCIO	£3,000 UKSPF

Name of group	Amount awarded
Girvan Development Group	£3,000 UKSPF
Carrick Resilience Team	£3,000 UKSPF
Girvan Youth Trust	£1,900 UKSPF
Sacred Heart Primary School Parent Council	£1,000 UKSPF
Girvan Community Garden	£2,994
Stumpy Corner Steering Group	£3,000
Girvan Opportunities Planning Committee	£3,000
Biosphere Bikes	£631
Z1 Girls Group	£500
Ballantrae Scouts (2nd Ayrshire)	£3,000
Colmonell Parent Council	£2,100
Colmonell Community Association	£1,950
Girvan & District Mens Shed	£500
Barrhill Events Group	£500
Carrick Resilience Team	£3,000 UKSPF
Maybole Youth Club	£3,000 UKSPF
Carrick Tots Playgroup	£1,700
Maybole Events Committee	£3,000 UKSPF
Carrick Rugby Football Club	£3,000 UKSPF
The Carrick Centre	£2,100 UKSPF
McCandlish Hall - Straiton Club	£3,000
Community Wellbeing Hub	£3,000
Growing Together Kirkmichael	£750 UKSPF
Carrick Walking Football Club	£3,000 UKSPF
Dementia Friendly Prestwick	£3,000 UKSPF
Ayr & Prestwick Men's Shed	£3,000 UKSPF
Age Concern Prestwick (65Club)	£2,400
Symington Bowling Club	£2,800 UKSPF
Glenburn miners football club 2015's	£1,800 UKSPF
Friends of the Broadway Prestwick (FotBP)	£3,000
Glenburn Miners Welfare FC	£2,100

Name of group	Amount awarded
Domino playgroup	£3,000
Monkton Community Council	£3,000
Carers Gateway - South Ayrshire (Carers Centre)	£2,000 UKSPF
Diamonds (New Life Trust)	£900
Ukrainian Community Group ( UCG) South Ayrshire	£2,789 UKSPF
Keeping the wheels turning	£3,000 UKSPF
Start Up Funding	£2,000
Dementia Cafe and Staying Ahead of the Curve	£3,000 UKSPF
Chocolate - More Than Just A Sweet; International Badgework culminating in a trip to Blair Drummond Safari Park	£3,000 UKSPF
Wellness for Carers in Employment - Troon, Loans & Dundonald	£3,000 UKSPF
G. C. SCHEDULE 24/25	£3,000
Health and Fitness group	£2,850
More Than A Journey	£3,000
Ukrainian Community Centre	£700





**2025/26 Awards**

- › Fund Launched:- 19th May 2025
- › Fund Closed:- 12th June 2025
- › Budget: £70,000, divided by population across four Thriving Communities Localities:
  - › North Ayr
  - › Troon / Prestwick
  - › Girvan
  - › Ayr South and Villages
- › Grant range: £500–£2,000 per group
- › Focus areas:
  1. Adult and Family Learning
  2. Financial Inclusion (Cost of Living Support)
  3. Youth Work
  4. Community Development
- › Groups funded: 42

Name of group	Amount awarded
Alloway Tunnel	£2,000
Annbank Community Association	£1,982
Annbank United FC	£2,000
Carers Gateway	£1,783
Community Gift Exchange - Ayr South	£2,000
Coylton Family Fun Day	£2,000
Doonfoot After School Services	£500
Mossblown Matters	£2,000
Newmarket Street Dev Trust	£2,000
Night Before Christmas Campaign	£2,000
Oshay's Brain Domain's	£1,025
Recycle Ayr	£2,000
The Ayr Ark	£970
Ayr Academy Parent Council	£2,000
Carers Gateway	£600
Community Gift Exchange - Ayr North	£2,000
Morrison Gardens Residents	£1,350
Dalmilling Primary Parent Council	£570
Overmill Allotment	£2,000
Sea Cadets	£2,000
The Iris Arts	£1,410

Name of group	Amount awarded
Vics in the Community	£2,000
Ballantrae PS Parent Council Y	£2,000
Carrick Centre	£520
Carrick Rugby Football Club	£1,900
Community Wellbeing Hub	£830
Kirkmichael Village Renaissance	£1,965
McCandlish Hall	£1,840
Maybole Charity Shop	£2,000
Stinchar Connections	£2,000
BSL Sign Language	£900
Carers Gateway	£1,220
Friends of the Broadway Prestwick	£1,430
Friends of Dundonald Castle	£2,000
Loans Gala Committee	£1,630
Loans Village Hall	£2,000
Prestwick Community Cafe	£379
Prestwick Tennis & Fitness	£2,000
Symington Community Projects	£1,596
Troon Development Trust	£2,000
Troon Men's Shed	£2,000
Troon Scouts	£1,600
Troon Water Sports	£2,000

**South Ayrshire Charitable Trust**

The South Ayrshire Charitable Trust was set up to assist and improve the lives of South Ayrshire residents who are in need because of poverty, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or other disadvantage. The available funding is split geographically.

In November 2024 the Ayr Fund councillors agreed to split the remaining £3500 by a donation system. The following groups were awarded:-

Name of group	Amount awarded
Ayrshire Cancer Support	£1500
Newton Primary School	£1000
Wallacetown EYC	£500
Compass Drop In centre	500

In March 2025 the Girvan Fund Councillors agreed to split the remaining £2000 by a donation system. The following groups were awarded:

Name of group	Amount awarded
C.A.N	£500
Ayrshire Hospice Shop	£500
O.I.R	£250
Cosy Spaces	£250
Girvan Mens Shed	£250
Duff Street kitchen	£250

In November 2024 the Prestwick Fund Councillors agreed to split the remaining £2500 by a donation system. The following groups were awarded:

Name of group	Amount awarded
Monkton Community Council	£500
VASA	£190
Age Concern (65 Club)	£500
Dementia Friendly Prestwick	£500
Diamonds Lunch Club	£500
Night before Christmas Campaign	£310

**Partnership Working (Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) & The National Lottery Community Fund)**

Close partnership working between VASA, the local Third Sector Interface (TSI), and the Council's External Funding Officer has strengthened support for South Ayrshire's 3rd Sector. By sharing knowledge of local groups and funding opportunities, partners have improved signposting, reduced duplication, and provided more rounded support to organisations.

**“Closer partnership working between VASA, the local TSI, and SAC External Funding Officer has led to better intelligence overall of the 3rd Sector in South Ayrshire. Shared knowledge of the remit of partners as well as shared knowledge of groups in the community has led to a more rounded support for these groups when signposting and identifying duplication. By working in partnership we can also offer more support to the sector by sharing resources and taking that support out to the communities across SA.”**

*Angela McWhinnie, Depute Chief Officer, VASA*



### Locality Based Funding Surgeries

Thriving Communities has developed a strong working relationship with the National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF) in Scotland. Working with TNLCF's South Ayrshire officer, Lauren Farquharson, and in partnership with VASA, a series of local funding surgeries were introduced.



These surgeries provide community groups with the opportunity to book 30-minute face-to-face appointments with the funding officer to discuss project ideas and receive direct feedback.

- › 5 surgeries have been held since August 2024.
- › 54 community groups have participated.
- › As a result, £1,499,090 has been distributed to groups in South Ayrshire since August 2024.

**“Funding surgeries enable me to provide face-to-face support and advice about TNLCF’s programmes, while also giving groups the chance to receive honest feedback on their project ideas. The involvement of Thriving Communities and VASA has strengthened this model, ensuring groups can access specialist local support alongside National Lottery advice.”**

*Lauren Farquharson, National Lottery Funding Officer for South Ayrshire*

### GOOD NEWS STORIES SUPPORT TO GROUPS (QUOTES)

#### KINCAIDSTON & BELMONT BOWLING CLUB

“Just to say thank you very much to Thriving Communities for the support given to our club. As you know, we had no idea where to start, and they helped us step by step in finding funding and understanding the application forms.

Thanks to this support, we secured a grant of £2,000 which will allow us to purchase disability equipment for the club. This will make a real difference to our members.

*A. Pottinger, Kincaidston & Belmont Bowling Club*

#### TROON MEN’S SHED

The support Thriving Communities have provided to Troon Men’s Shed has been invaluable for us. From the face-to-face meeting we had in January at the Walker Hall, to the advice and signposting since then, the ongoing support regarding funding has been critical. Thriving Communities have identified funding opportunities appropriate to both our current and ongoing activities, as well as our longer-term HPP CAT acquisition and redevelopment plans.

Through this support we received a £9,766 grant towards the eventual purchase of Hosiery Park, plus a £5,000 donation from the R&A Legacy Fund, which Thriving Communities put us forward for. The direct support and wider advice have given us the confidence to “keep going” with our search for additional funding opportunities in line with our larger redevelopment costs (circa £200k).

The funding landscape is a real challenge for groups new to it, and honestly, without Thriving Communities’ support, I don’t think we could have navigated it successfully on our own. Thanks very much for all Thriving Communities have done for us, and we look forward to working with them in future.

*Owen, on behalf of TMS*

#### CRAIGIE ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

Thriving Communities’ support has been brilliant. They attended our AGM to let us know about possible funding sources and later visited the allotments to find out more about who we are and what we do. With their support, we secured Destination South Ayrshire funding, which we used to hold a social event for all plot holders, their families and friends. It was well attended, helped new members get to know others, and allowed visitors to learn about the opportunities of taking on an allotment in South Ayrshire. We have also been accepted to take part in this year’s Doors Open Day on 13 September 2025. Without the funding, our social day would have been a much smaller affair and we would not have been able to take part in Doors Open Day.

We have also recently been awarded funding from the Mushroom Trust, which will help us achieve a longer-term aim of providing bulky gardening supplies such as compost and manure at a sustainable cost to plot holders. Many of our members are retired, and some don’t drive, so accessing these supplies can be a barrier to working their plots effectively.

We would not have known about these funding sources, or had the confidence to apply for them, without Thriving Communities’ support. Thank you!

*Joy Hill (Secretary)*

#### ANNBANK COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

*Funding for Annbank Community Centre – Toilets Renovation Project*

“We received valuable support from Thriving Communities in preparing our application to renovate the toilets at Annbank Community Centre. They helped us to draft the application, ensuring it was clear and met the funder’s requirements. This guidance made the process far less stressful and gave us confidence in putting our project forward.

As a result of this support, we were successful in securing funding to carry out the renovation. Thriving Communities’ advice was extremely helpful and made a real difference in enabling us to achieve this improvement for our community facility.

*Natalie Baird, Volunteer*

#### VE80 COMMITTEE

“Thriving Communities immediately understood the scope, scale, and value of our project and were able to suggest several sources of funding that might help, including the National Lottery Communities Fund, Destination South Ayrshire, and South Ayrshire Council’s Community Benefits scheme. They offered clear guidance on how to apply and who to speak to in order to improve our chances of success.

Our situation was unusual, as the events we were planning had to take place in early May 2025, meaning some funding sources might not have been open or in funds until very close to when we needed to pay for services. Thriving Communities were proactive in ensuring we were alerted as soon as applications opened, that we used the right processes, and that the right people were contacted about our proposals. They were an excellent and highly knowledgeable resource, helping us pitch our application for the best chance of success.

We were successful in securing funding from the National Lottery Communities Fund, Destination South Ayrshire, and from companies connected to the Community Benefits Scheme.”

*Nick Slane, Committee Member*



**Community Development – Building Capacity and Empowering Communities**

Thriving Communities balances empowering groups to operate independently with providing targeted support where needed, ensuring sustainable community-led activity, strong networks, and ongoing engagement in local initiatives.

- › Ayr North Time Team – Supported to become self-sufficient from June 2025.

- › Wallacetoun Women’s Group – Progressing towards self-sufficiency, aiming for independence by 2026.
- › Kincaidston Women’s Group – Supported to become a constituted group, linking with other groups and staff for guidance; expected to operate independently in 2026.
- › Ayr North Exclusively Women’s Group – Running independently, requesting support as needed and engaging with campaigns.
- › Violence Against Women Joint Action Group (JAG) – Carried out a scoping exercise led by Thriving Communities. This exercise identified groups and support for women with long term wider local networks. This resource supports groups who are not ready to make the steps to become independent.



Thriving Communities has been leading the review and update of the Scheme of Establishment for Community Councils to ensure it remains fit for purpose and continues to strengthen local democracy across South Ayrshire.

There are currently 23 active Community Councils across South Ayrshire, representing 218 members.

The revised scheme will provide a stronger framework to support Community Councils role in giving local people a voice in decision making.

The consultation process has been designed to maximise participation and transparency:-

- › February 2025 – Report presented to Cabinet to gain approval to start the consultation process.

- › March 2025 – Stage 1 Consultation – Online survey launched via Your Area Your Voice Your Choice, with additional opportunities to provide feedback on paper at local libraries.
- › May 2025 – Working group established, supported by Thriving Communities to collate consultation responses and draft the revised scheme.
- › August 2025 – Draft scheme will be presented to Cabinet, approval sought to begin Stage 2 of the consultation.
- › September 2025 – Stage 2 Consultation – Online survey will be launched on Draft Scheme via Your Area Your Voice Your Choice, with opportunities to provide feedback on paper at local libraries. Locality drop-in sessions will also be available and promoted across South Ayrshire.
- › December 2025 – Scheme of Establishment to be presented to full Council. The new scheme is due to be launched in April 2026.

**Community Safety**



Thriving Communities, through the Home, Road & Water Safety Joint Action Group (JAG), has led a wide range of initiatives across South Ayrshire to reduce risks and promote safer communities.

**Home Safety**

- › Supported 12 national campaigns locally, focusing on slips, trips, and falls in the home.
- › Funded fire-retardant materials, with 11 referrals and 15 items issued to vulnerable residents.

**Water Safety**

- › Delivered 9 school and community sessions, engaging 1,600 young people.
- › Promoted World Drowning Prevention Day with RNLI and partners at Troon Beach.
- › Installed windsocks at three Troon locations to improve beach safety.

**Road Safety**

- › Delivered the Combining Ayrshire’s Road Safety programme in all 8 secondary schools, reaching around 3,000 young people.
- › Ran car seat safety checks in Ayr, Girvan and Troon.
- › Hosted events for older drivers (156 attendees) and motorcyclists (“Biker Down” in June 2025).

**Community Safety Events**

- › In May 2025, Thriving Communities coordinated S1 Safety Events across five secondary schools, reaching 793 pupils. The key topics covered were fire safety, road safety, water safety, smoking & vaping, and safe relationships.

**Safer communities**

Thriving Communities, through the Safer Communities Joint Action Group (JAG), has coordinated multi-agency work to tackle anti-social behaviour, environmental concerns, and fire safety across South Ayrshire.

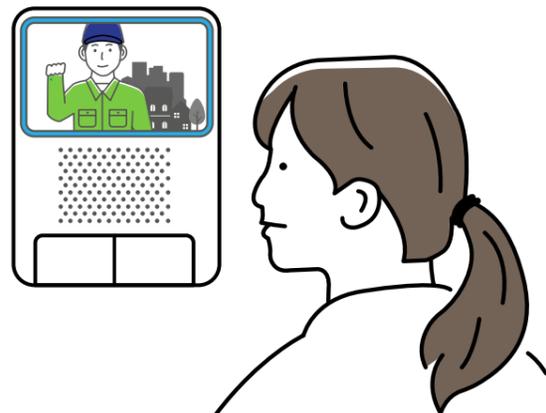
**Youth Programmes**

- › 15 targeted programmes delivered in schools, colleges, and communities, engaging 1,700+ young people.
- › Weekly Targeted Approach to Young People (TAYP) sessions at Kyle Academy, Queen Margaret Academy, and Marr College.
- › FEVA environmental audit with Primary 5 pupils at Forehill Primary.
- › Inputs to Ayr College’s Police Studies Group and parent/community sessions on internet safety.



### Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

- › Regular detached youth work has taken place in Ayr, Prestwick, Troon and Maybole, and emerging hotspots – (see graph under detached Youth Work for anti-social behaviour stats)
- › 17 parent alert letters have been sent out since 30th June 2024 – 1st July 2025. This is in line with Thriving Communities, Youth Disorder process.
- › Bonfire Watch 2024: 14 bonfires prevented/ removed, saving £9,000 in costs.
- › Within Wallacetown 16 Ring doorbells were purchased and issued by Thriving Communities to improve safety and deter anti-social behaviour.



### Reducing Violence

Thriving Communities, through the Reducing Violence Joint Action Group (RVJAG), has coordinated multi-agency work to keep Ayr and Prestwick town centres safe and welcoming during peak night-time activity.

- › Taxi Marshals:- 150 hours per quarter at Boswell Park; extra cover at Smith Street during Ayr Races/County Show; weekly usage 152–156 people, 120 per night at Smith Street.
- › Street Pastors:- 156 volunteer hours per quarter; provided water, flip-flops, blankets, glass clean-up, incident de-escalation; portable defibrillator introduced April 2025; supported vulnerable individuals and Under-18s events.
- › South Carrick First Responders (SCFR):- Delivered reassurance and first aid; assisted intoxicated/collapsed individuals, supported paramedics, treated head injuries, responded to suspected drink spiking; volunteer contribution valued at £2,106 per quarter.



### Violence Against Women

Thriving Communities, through the Violence Against Women Joint Action Group (VAW JAG), has coordinated multi-agency work to prevent and respond to gender-based violence across South Ayrshire.

- › Delivered Hystayria programme in schools, libraries, and communities; Mentoring Violence Prevention training (Nov 2024).
- › Commercial Sexual Exploitation (CSE) awareness sessions have been delivered to staff.
- › Thriving Communities have led on four national campaigns locally – 16 Days of Action, White Ribbon, CSE, and Don't Be That Guy.
- › Developed a library of 23 local resources on violence against women.
- › VAW branding displayed on South Ayrshire bin lorries with QR links to resources.
- › 16 Days of Action: Annual programme delivered In November 2024, highlights included Reclaim the Night march, Jonet statue launch, and partner events.
- › International Women's Day 2025: Successful event on Friday 7th March with strong participation from local women's groups and partners



## Employability

### LEP / Commissioning

Through the review of local data South Ayrshire's Local Employability Partnership (LEP) identified the need to commission a range of training and employability support to meet the needs of clients inline with local labour market demands. During 2024/25 the LEP invested £257,155 to commission the following:

- › Four Sector-Based Work Academies (SBWA) in Hospitality
- › One Sector Based Work Academy (BDWA) in Care
- › Support for those who are Economically Inactive
- › QTS Rail Skills Academy
- › Employment opportunities with the 3rd Sector via Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA)

A total of 115 clients participated in the sector specific training. 90% completed the training with 56% progressing to employment thereafter. The remaining 44% continued to receive employability support from Thriving Communities and LEP Partners.

### Thriving Communities Employability Programmes

During 2024/2025 a total of 1065 people were registered on our employability programmes, these programmes are funded by South Ayrshire Council, No-One Left Behind and UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

- › Youth 511
- › Adult 212
- › Parents 238
- › Modern Apprenticeship 104
- Total Participants: **1065**



### Evolve

Evolve supports clients to progress to employment within South Ayrshire or with Third Sector organisations, via South Ayrshire's TSI - Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA).

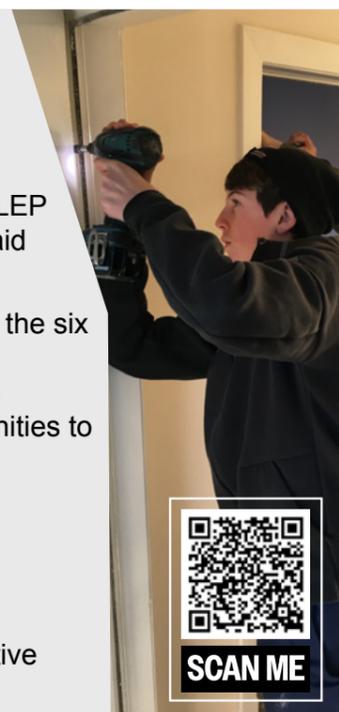
Evolve ensures all employment opportunities are fair and flexible and the LEP subsidising salary costs for the first six months in employment, which is paid direct to the employer.

17 employment opportunities we created within the Third Sector, following the six months:

- 11 employees sustained employment or enrolled in Further Education
- The remaining 6 continued to received support from Thriving Communities to identify pathways to alternative employment

12 employment opportunities were created within South Ayrshire Council, including Facilities Management, Active Schools, Education and Grounds Maintenance

On completion 9 remained in employment with South Ayrshire Council. 3 continued to receive support from Thriving Communities to look at alternative career pathways.



### School Leaver Destination Report (SLDR)

Thriving Communities and Education, in partnership with Skills Development Scotland (SDS), are committed to ensuring young people, on leaving school, progress to a positive destination. South Ayrshire have not fallen below the top four local authorities in the last 4 years and have been the top of Scotland in February 2021 and February 2025.

SLDR – YEAR	Snapshot	National Average	Follow Up	National Average
2023/24	Feb 2025 - 98.7%	95.7%	June 2025* - 96.8%	93.1%
2022/23	Feb 2024 - 98.1%	95.9%	June 2024 - 97.3%	92.8%
2021/22	Feb 2023 - 98.6%	95.7%	Aug 2023 - 96.9%	93.5%
2020/21	Feb 2022 - 98.3%	95.5%	June 2022 - 97.6%	93.2%
2019/20	Feb 2021 - 98.4%	93.3%	June 2021 - 96.9%	92.2%

\*Stat available at time of publication

### Participation Measure

The Scottish Government's Opportunities for All commitment offers a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old who is not in employment, education or training.

The [Annual Participation Measure](#), has been adopted in the Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework-gov.scot](#) as the measure of young people's participation.

Since 2022 Thriving Communities have had a real focus on ensuring young people are supported into further education, training or employment and the work of the team since 2022 is reflected in the undernoted data.

Participation Measure	Published	National Average
2024/25	August 2025 - 95.6%	93.3%
2023/24	August 2024 - 95.3%	92.7%
2022/23	August 2023 - 96.6%	94.3%
2021/22	August 2022 - 93.7%	92.4%



South Ayrshire are currently 5th in Scotland for young people, aged 16-19years, engaging in education, training or in employment:

- › 4,749 16-19 years in local authority cohort
- › 95.6% participating
- › 51% Male and 49% Female
- › 16.5% identify as disabled
- › 19.2% residing in 20% most deprived SIMD Quintile

### Pathways for Adults Volunteering in Education (PAVE)

PAVE is an 8 week programme that gives participants an opportunity to volunteer within a school setting, either within the classroom or supporting with clerical tasks within the school office.

Participants are supported by their Employability Key Work to gain an employability related qualification at SCQF Level 4 as well as work-based qualifications including Emergency First Aid at Work. Participants are also supported to develop CVs, complete job applications and plan a structured pathway to future employment following the 8 week programme.

During 2024/25 five PAVE cohorts ran with 26 participants. 18 of participants progressed to a positive destination on completion, including Further Education or secured contracts with South Ayrshire Council.



#### Employer Recruitment Incentive

Thriving Communities Employability provide financial support to local businesses to help them recruit individuals, some of whom may face barriers to employment, such as long-term unemployment, disability or a lone parent.

19 local businesses were supported to recruit 11 individuals into permanent contracts of employment; this was an investment of £53,100

Priority groups supported were Parents, Care Experienced Young People and people with Additional Support Needs (ASN)

### South Ayrshire Modern Apprenticeship Programme

South Ayrshire Council offer Modern Apprenticeship opportunities to young people aged 16 to 19, or up to 29yrs for people who are care experienced.



[click to view](#)

Whilst completing their apprenticeship the MA works towards the relevant work-based qualification. Modern Apprenticeships are available at a variety of levels, all mapped to the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) and accredited by the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA).

[William Andrew - Service Lead for Property Maintenance](#) talks about his experience in support the Modern Apprenticeship Programme

[South Ayrshire Council was commended](#) for their commitment in supporting individuals from under-represented equality groups onto the MA programme. This includes the 'Care Experience Guarantee' and SACs guarantee to interview candidates who have a disability, can evidence they meet the competence-based requirements of the role and are aged 16-19 years. Supports in place are reflective in our equality stats:



### South Ayrshire Council Modern Apprenticeship Equality Stats

Year	South Ayrshire Care Experienced stats	National Average	South Ayrshire Disability stats	National Average
2020-21	12.5%	1.7%	33.3%	13%
2021-22	12.7%	2%	33.6%	13.3%
2022-23	5.5%	2.1%	33.3%	15.3%
2023-24	6.0%	2.3%	49.0%	17.0%
2024-25	12.5%	2.6%	23.7%	16.7%

## Health and Wellbeing



Our Active Schools programme offers free sport and physical activity sessions within every school across South Ayrshire inspiring more young people to be active. This is a universal and free offer to all pupils and sessions are delivered before school, during lunchtime and after school by a network of over 500 volunteers.

From August 2024 until June 2025 nearly 7,000 different young people took part in the programme across all schools with a total of 130,419 visits to sessions over the full year.

**6909** pupils participated in our Active Schools programme

**47** different types of activities were delivered

**49%** of our participants were girls

**39%** of pupils participating had an additional support need from August 2024 until June

**249** pupils came from an ethnic minority background

**165** young carers accessed our Active Schools Programme

**1243** pupils who attended our sessions lived in SIMD 1&2



Comparison to previous years	2021/22	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Active Schools participation *distinct participants	4081	5664	5893	6909
Different activities delivered	21	25	29	47
% female participants	47%	48%	49%	49%
No of participants with an additional support need	1237	1888	2125	2556
No of participants from an ethnic minority background	198	267	246	249
No of participants who are young carers	23	87	175	165
No of participants who live in SIMD 1/2	788	1002	954	1243

Our Active Schools team also provide support during the curriculum delivering 2 school-based leadership programmes across all primary schools:

### JUNIOR COACHING ACADEMY

Our Junior Coaching Academy programme equips pupils in P6/7 with foundational leadership skills to lead playground games for younger pupils. Over 24/25 939 young people successfully completed the programme.



### SPIRIT OF SPORT

Delivered in P6 this programme supports young people to develop key values such as resilience, teamwork and sportsmanship. Over 24/25 615 young people completed this programme.



### Closing the Gap

Our Closing the Gap programme is delivered through our 4 Active Schools Assistants (ASA's) to break down barriers which prevent people in our communities to get involved in sport and physical activity.

Our ASA's play a key role in supporting young people through South Ayrshire's Family First forums, with over half of all young people being referred for support with our team. This support has, amongst other things, supported young people to build positive relationships, experience wellbeing activities and re-engage with the school curriculum. The ASA's are an important resource to support improved attendance and attainment.

ASA's deliver a range of free community-based sport and physical activity breaking down barriers to participation such as transport, cost and confidence and to build relationships with young people and their families and support them to access other opportunities within their communities.

## Case Study

### Intergenerational project



An intergenerational project was developed and delivered in partnership with Dalmling, Newton and St Patricks' primary schools, and local sheltered housing units to build confidence in identified pupils whilst tackling social isolation among older adults. This initially launched as a COVID-recovery pilot in North Ayr but has expanded due to the impact of using physical activity to connect generations and foster meaningful relationships within the community.

Over a 6-week period, pupils and older adults engaged in low intensity activities such as boccia, archery, golf and sports themed bingo. Each session paired a pupil with a resident encouraging interaction, confidence building and companionship. The sessions included refreshments and created a welcoming atmosphere where both groups looked forward to their weekly time together. The impact was clear, children grew in confidence and social skills, while residents formed bonds that brightened their daily routine. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with requests for more sessions already in place.

"I would just like to thank Lewis and Veronica for bringing the children from St Patricks' school to interact with some of the tenants here at Bradan Road Sheltered Housing, I must say it was a pleasure to meet such pleasant and well-behaved children who interacted well with the tenants and hopefully had fun into the bargain. The children were a credit to St Patrick's." Housing Support Worker, Bradan Road.

### Keeping the Promise

Our continued commitment to Keeping the Promise ensures that young people with care experience continue to access a wide range of activities through tailored programmes taking place within the curriculum and out with school. These include a range of different sport and physical activity opportunities plus outdoor learning with Dolphin House and free holiday activities. Highlights this year included our annual Christmas event at the Citadel, dedicated biking sessions and access to free bikes through the Rock Up and Ride programme, and mental health workshops with SAMH.

#### Pupil Feedback:

I really enjoy trying new sports that push me out of my comfort zone.

I had a great time at the Christmas fun day where I got to swim with my friends and play on the bouncy castles and have fun at Christmas time.

### Care Experienced Rowing Project

In partnership with Scottish Rowing we continue to deliver the Learn to Row project for young people with care experience. This initiative offers a welcoming and supportive environment where participants can socialise, build confidence and develop new skills, both on and off the water. Weekly sessions take place from the River Ayr access steps with participants developing their rowing skills and enjoying the calming experience of being out on the water taking in the scenery. The project ensures everyone feels included and empowered to participate at their own pace.

Jennifer Wyper Welfare Officer (Primary) said:

This is a great experience for the pupils to engage in new sports and to receive an NHS booklet which they can take home and read up ways to help them outside of school too.

### School to Club/Community Pathways

Active Schools work in partnership with schools and local sports clubs to develop effective pathways between school sport and club opportunities in the local community. During 24/25 21 different sports clubs were linked with local schools, building relationships, and promoting opportunities locally.

Our partnership with Scottish Golf introduced golf to young people in Troon as we delivered the Unleash Your Drive project highlighted below:

### Fairways to the Future: Golf Grows in South Ayrshire

Golf continues to grow among school pupils in South Ayrshire, supported by the Active Schools programme and the area's rich golfing heritage. This year focused on developing skills, creating competition opportunities, and promoting mental wellbeing through golf.

#### Competitions & Participation

Active Schools held three secondary school golf competitions in partnership with Royal Troon, Troon Welbeck, and Seafield Golf Clubs. These inclusive events engaged 146 pupils (140 boys, 6 girls), building links with local clubs, Scottish Golf and schools to create these opportunities.

#### Unleash Your Drive (UYD)

Delivered in five primary schools in partnership with Scottish Golf, UYD introduced 51 pupils (41 P4-P5, 11 P6-P7) to golf through activities focused on focus, resilience, and emotional wellbeing. Teacher feedback highlighted strong pupil engagement and positive behaviour changes, along with the integration of golf into wider health and wellbeing curriculum.

#### Pathway Progression - GolfSixes Project

Following UYD, pupils progressed to weekly PGA-led sessions at Kilmarnock Barassie Golf Club through the GolfSixes initiative. This helped advance skills, boost enthusiasm, and strengthen links between pupils and the golf club.

#### Inclusion & Targeted Groups

Efforts were made to include underrepresented groups—girls, rural pupils, inactive pupils, and those from low SIMD areas. Fifteen girls participated (two from rural areas), and three pupils joined GolfSixes with transport provided to support them to sessions. Eight ASN pupils also took part with tailored support provided.

**LOOKING AHEAD** In 2025-26, the programme aims to expand UYD, increase competitions across age groups, and further inclusive access, while continuing to build strong school-club pathways.

**CONCLUSION** Thanks to partnerships with local clubs and schools, golf is thriving in South Ayrshire, offering pupils physical, mental, and social benefits as a valued part of the Active Schools programme.





Active Communities is a fun and accessible programme that runs all year across South Ayrshire offering 40-50 weekly sessions of sport and physical activity for both young people and adults. Sessions take place every day of the week, over 30 different community facilities to ensure there is something for everyone, in every area.

This programme helps support young people move from school sport into local sports clubs, giving them a chance to make friends, grow in confidence and learn new skills. We also offer sessions for adults and families so everyone in the community can enjoy being active together. Thanks to support from sportscotland, Scottish Cycling and Walking Scotland all of our sessions are low-cost with many being free of charge. We provide discount codes for identified people, Young Carers and those with care experience to ensure they can access the opportunities free of charge. We work closely with local services to make sure everyone can take part, especially those who might need a bit of extra help.

**5965** attendances at our Active Communities sessions over the year

**1292** sessions were delivered by our coaching team

**817** people have attended

**36** different activities were offered over the year

**22** pupils came from an ethnic minority background

**22** care experience young people participated

**246** people who took part have an additional support need



Comparison to previous years	2021/22	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
Total Attendances	660	761	3756	5965
No of participants *Distinct participants	527	444	495	817
Different activities delivered	17	18	36	36
No of participants who are young carers	11	13	11	22
No of participants with an additional support need	266	222	265	246
No of participants who are care experienced	18	15	18	22



Our Inspire South Ayrshire programme is an inclusive programme which provides opportunities in school and community settings, through our Competitive Sport events calendar and in partnership with local sports clubs. Inspire sessions are delivered in a variety of locations throughout South Ayrshire and form partnerships to provide new experiences. Over the last year we delivered 238 weekly Inspire sessions with over 900 attendances recorded.

We focused on expanding Inspire opportunities within our school holiday programme. This enabled us to offer more than 10 Inspire-specific camp sessions, including multi-sport camps, football, canoeing, and outdoor adventure activities in partnership with Dolphin House. Over the summer holidays, we recorded a total of 116 attendances.



## Walking Development

Our South Ayrshire walking programme is an initiative which aims to increase participation in walking across South Ayrshire, and promotes the physical, mental and social benefits of walking while fostering a sense of community. The walking project gives people an opportunity to explore the vast array of paths, trails and coastlines South Ayrshire has to offer, encouraging a reduction in car use, promoting the environment through nature recording walks and support for conservation.

**398** walks have taken place

**3,612** attendances at the range of walks over 12 months\*

**49** new walk leaders trained

**1,728** volunteer hours contributed

**85%** of participants report improved mental wellbeing and feelings of reduced isolation

**78%** of attendees say their physical fitness has improved since joining



## Cycling Development



Partnerships with Scottish Cycling and Ayrshire Roads Alliance have supported us to develop community cycling opportunities over the last year.

One example is the Rock Up and Ride initiative which was launched in South Ayrshire in October 2024.



Rock Up & Ride is a partnership between South Ayrshire Council and Scottish Cycling. The programme is a national, inclusive initiative aimed at reducing barriers to cycling for disadvantaged and underrepresented young people.

It provides free access to bikes through a hybrid bike library and gifting model, alongside fun, safe, and engaging coaching sessions. Delivered in partnership with local schools and organisations, the flexible and adaptable programme encourages active travel, promotes bike ownership and maintenance skills, and supports the long-term use of cycling facilities through a sustainable delivery approach.

The project started with 10 cycling taster sessions across the October school break and has expanded to deliver over 70 free sessions from October to June inspiring young people to learn BMX and mountain biking skills. Delivered in partnership with Dolphin House the project used local community spaces to profile the amazing opportunities we have for cycling in South Ayrshire.

A new exciting partnership with SHRED Skatepark allowed us to promote BMX alongside mountain biking engaging different young people in sport.

Over 100 FREE bikes and safety equipment was provided to the young people taking part increasing their access to cycling and independent travel. Following the success of this programme we are now able to offer a full summer programme providing people of all ages with free cycling opportunities.

### Quotes from parents:

I would like to thank you all for the sessions. My child has had an amazing time and this has brought on his confidence greatly in learning BMXing which he is showing a great interest in. He's had so much fun and has even made some new friends,

My child attended the mountain bike sessions and really hope there will be more on.

### RUAR Statistics:

**205** attendees (167 M/ 38 F) **13** Young Carers  
**587** participant sessions **73** ASN  
**77** sessions delivered **100+** bikes supplied  
**11** care experienced **13** venues used across South Ayrshire



## Holiday Programmes



We run a range of holiday programmes over Easter, Summer and October school holidays to support young people to stay active and keep in touch with friends when school is out.

Alongside our popular multi-sport camps we offer a wide variety of activities for all ages and abilities in partnership with Dolphin House which include; free community pop up sessions, cycling, watersports, walking, beach days and activities for children and young people with additional support needs.

### Holiday Programmes

**700** took part in our summer programme  
**144** sessions offered  
**15** looked after pupils  
**21** young carers  
**226** participants have an additional support need



## Competitive sport

Our school competitions and festivals provide young people with the opportunity to take part in fun and competitive events throughout the year. Our team deliver events across a variety of different sports including athletics, volleyball, tennis and golf. We work closely with National Governing Bodies and local sports clubs to ensure there are inclusive and accessible pathways to compete and participate in club sport as well as regional and national events.

We also strive to enhance the profile of South Ayrshire by hosting regional, national and international events for all age groups using our fantastic facilities, as well as our green and blue spaces.

Throughout 24-25 South Ayrshire hosted a diverse programme of local, regional, national and international events. A strong infrastructure is now in place to support all levels of events and future growth.



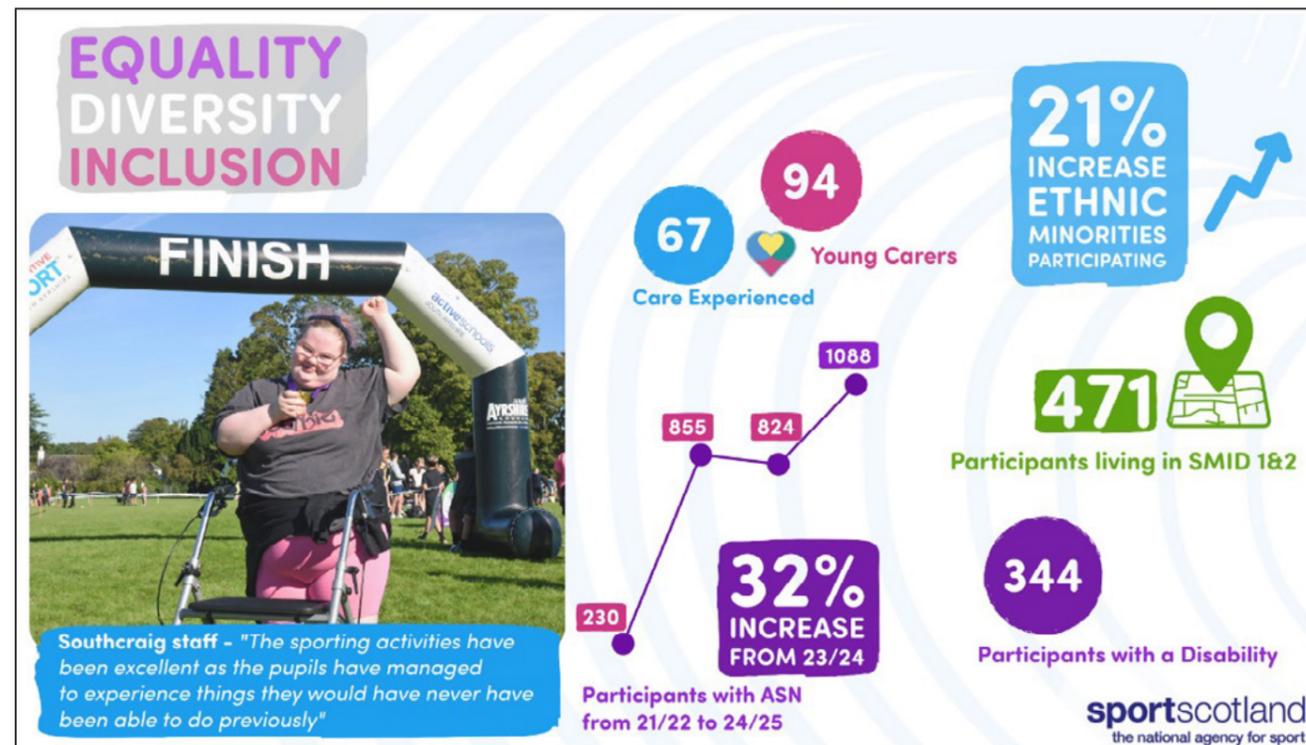
### School programme

57 events were hosted as part of our Competitive School Sport programme with 25 taking place as cluster competitions to help reduce barriers to participation and provide a valuable transition experience into high schools and local club facilities. 31 events were held as South Ayrshire wide events throughout the year with nearly 3000 young people taking part in the programme – a 36% increase from 23/24!

Comparison to previous years	2021/22	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025
No of primary competitions	8	39	15	16
No of secondary competitions	3	31	14	15
No of cluster competitions	0	14	21	26
No of pupils participating *distinct participants	950	2079	2137	2911
No of participants with an additional support need	239	855	824	1088
No of participants who are care experienced	14	62	78	67
No of participants who are young carers	13	63	89	94
No of participants who live in SIMD 1/2	112	371	344	471



We're delighted that the programme supports a diverse range of young people to take part as below:



This year marked a significant milestone when Active Schools Assistant Eoin Yates collaborated with pupils from Southcraig School to represent South Ayrshire at the Scottish Disability Sport National Cross Country Championships in March 2025.

We are delighted to have established an inclusive sporting pathway for disability sport athletes in South Ayrshire, enabling them to compete at the national level. The South Ayrshire Cross Country competition was adapted to run alongside the mainstream event, incorporating pupils from Southcraig and Invergarven schools with appropriate modifications. These included a wheelchair-accessible route and adjusted race distances for the ASN category.

A subsequent qualifying event for the SDS championships was held, where three pupils from Southcraig successfully secured their places. Following qualification, the Active Schools Assistant continued to support these athletes by focusing on race preparation, confidence building, and skill development in advance of the national championship.

This has had a positive impact on disability athletics within South Ayrshire, creating a clear and accessible pathway from local to national cross-country competitions. It has also led to increased participation by pupils in other events, such as the Active Schools Triathlon.

### Regional Competitions

We were selected to host a variety of regional events and competitions during 24/25. In partnership with Ayrshire Sportsability we hosted the Regional Boccia competition at the Citadel with 3 South Ayrshire pupils qualifying to attend the Scottish Disability Sport finals.

We hosted the first ever pan-Ayrshire Sportshall Athletics final at the Riverside Sports Arena welcoming 6 schools from East and North Ayrshire to compete following their local qualifying rounds.

Other examples include the SPAR Future Starts Cup and the Regional Handball competition which served as a qualification for the National Championships as below:

**REGIONAL SPAR Future Stars**

**28 SCHOOL TEAMS**

**OVER 200 PARTICIPANTS**

The SPAR Future Stars Football Cup is a national girls' competition spanning all six Scottish FA regions. Open to girls aged 12-16, it provides an exciting opportunity for young players to represent their schools in a fun, inclusive, and competitive environment.

Since 2022, South Ayrshire's Health and Wellbeing team has organised the SPAR Cup locally, with schools advancing to regional and national levels. Each year, the programme has grown in both participation and engagement.

This year marked a major milestone as South Ayrshire hosted the Southwest Regional Round for the first time at the Riverside Arena. The event brought together 28 school teams and more than 200 girls from Dumfries & Galloway, South Lanarkshire, and North, East, and South Ayrshire.

Three teams from each age group secured qualification for the National Round, including Kyle Academy (S1/2) and Belmont Academy (S3/4). Partnering with the Scottish FA to deliver this event at one of our world-class facilities was a proud achievement—helping to grow the game locally and create meaningful opportunities for girls in sport.

**REGIONAL Handball**

**SCOTTISH HANDBALL ASSOCIATION**

**6 SCHOOLS PROGRESSED TO NATIONALS**

**NEWTON PLACING 3RD NATIONALS**

This year's South Ayrshire Handball Competition, which also served as qualification for the National Championships, was held at the Citadel Leisure Centre, Ayr. A total of 130 pupils took part, with the event featuring 9 girls' teams and 11 boys' teams from 7 schools across South Ayrshire. The competition was supported by pupils from local secondary schools and club coaches from Troon Handball Club.

Following a competitive day of matches, three boys' teams and three girls' teams secured qualification for the National Handball Competition at Ravenscraig. The successful schools were Troon, Heathfield, Ayr Grammar, Coyton, and Newton.

Newton Primary achieved a podium finish, securing 3rd place. This represents a fantastic achievement for the pupils involved and a positive step forward in showcasing South Ayrshire schools at a national level.

### National and International Competitions

South Ayrshire were selected to host the following national and international events during 24/25 thanks to strong partnerships with Scottish Rowing, British Kitesurfing and Scottish Volleyball.

- › Scottish Rowing Beach Sprints and Offshore Championships, Ayr beach. 141 athletes over the weekend were competing representing 57 different clubs across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, Jersey and Italy. 52 different clubs and all volunteers/officials used accommodation in Ayr over the weekend.
- › British Kitesurfing event, Troon  
The event attracted competitors/spectators of all ages from around the UK and Europe, including professional riders from Cyprus, with many of the spectators and competitors stayed within Troon for the full weekend.
- › CEV SCA Beach Volleyball Zonal Tour 2025, Kyle Academy  
54 athletes from 9 countries took part over the Friday-Sunday of the event with 350+ spectators attending to watch in addition to a live stream of the event on Youtube attracting 1500+ spectators.

**INTERNATIONAL**  
CEV SCA Beach Volleyball Zonal Tour

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**  
11 Leadership Academy pupils gained hands on experience by volunteering at the event, boosting confidence, networking and developing skills to use in sport, education and life.

**EXPOSURE**  
350 spectators attended on site and the event was watched by 1,500+ via the live stream. South Ayrshire showcased to a worldwide audience of 1850

Significant positive impact on at least 4 local businesses. Providers benefited by supplying food and lodging for staff, athletes, and spectators. Additionally, South Ayrshire Council benefited through the hire of the facility, generating revenue and supporting the local economy.

**NATIONAL**  
Visitor Experience

Ayr's coastal setting, accessibility, and hospitality created a positive impression for athletes, officials, and supporters, increasing the likelihood of future event bids.

141 ATHLETES OVER THE WEEKEND

5 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

**Community Engagement**  
Local residents, volunteers, and clubs gained valuable experience from involvement in a national event on their doorstep. Volunteers from Leadership Academy supported the event alongside the Health and Wellbeing team & Ayr United Football Academy who provided beach sports for athletes and spectators.

**Economic Impact**  
Substantial income for local hotels, serviced apartments, restaurants, and shops, with further potential through repeat visits and tourism.

£42,000-£52,000 CONTRIBUTED LOCAL ECONOMY

**Sporting Profile**  
Ayr Beach showcased as a premier coastal venue capable of delivering high-quality national competitions, strengthening the area's reputation within Scottish sport. This was the second event taking place in Ayr with a third event scheduled for 2026.

**INTERNATIONAL**  
CEV SCA Beach Volleyball Zonal Tour 2025

**SOUTH AYRSHIRE & SCOTLAND SUCCESS**

54 ATHLETES FROM 9 COUNTRIES

2 South Ayrshire Talented Athletes winning gold.

Returning to Ayr for a second time, Scottish Volleyball hosted an international beach competition at the Kyle Beach Courts. South Ayrshire was selected over other Scottish locations due to the proven success and strong partnership working demonstrated in previous years. The Health and Wellbeing Team, together with other council services, were pleased to provide support for the event

### Talented Athlete Programme

The South Ayrshire talented athlete programme is designed to support the region's most promising national and international level athletes as they work toward reaching the top of their sport.

Delivered in partnership with South Ayrshire Sport & Leisure the programme provides a range of benefits that complement and enhance athletes' existing training schedules.

Core support includes:

**FREE gym and swim membership:** Full access to local leisure facilities to support general fitness, recovery and performance training.

**Strength and conditioning programme:** Individualised support developed to complement sport-specific training.

**Financial Support:** Athletes can apply for a grant of up to £200 to help cover the costs associated with attending National or International competitions.

Over 24/25 the programme supported 22 athletes from 13 different sports with a total of £2,882.28 provided. 55% of these athletes were 18 years old or over.

Some notable achievements this year includes:

Lewis Macdonald (figure skating) – crowned British Intermediate champion last year and bronze at the Advanced Novice Championships in November and won the National Qualifier in March 2025, one of the best skaters in his age group in the country.

Laura Logan (swimming) – represented Down Syndrome Great Britain at the World Championships in Antalya last year

Tom Campbell (basketball) - represented Team GB in the Over 70's Basketball World Championships earlier this year.



### Developing Potential programme

This year for the first time we delivered the Developing Potential programme in partnership with Sport & Leisure, UWS, AUFA, ARFC, Dundonald Gymnastics Club and Ayr Seaforth Athletics Club. 25 young athletes from 12-14 years of age were selected to take part in the 8 month programme during which they took part in fitness testing, weekly strength and conditioning sessions, sports psychology, sport nutrition and other related workshops.

24 of the 25 athletes completed the programme with many going to represent their club regionally and nationally.



# Community Sport Hubs

The Community Sport Hub programme is built around the following 5 principles:

- › Growth in participation
- › Understanding community need
- › Supporting community leadership
- › Ensuring all the right people are working together
- › Offering a range of sports

There are five Community Sport Hubs (CSH's) in South Ayrshire; Girvan, North Carrick, Ayr North, Prestwick and Troon. The CSH network support local sports clubs and organisations to develop their club and the provision within local communities. Examples of work happening over the last year are below:

## PROGRESS

### Community Sports Hubs

#### North Carrick and Girvan Community Sport Hub

**Successful Launch and Growth of Pickleball in North and South Carrick**

This year has seen an exceptionally positive response to the introduction of Pickleball across North and South Carrick, marking it as a notable success within our communities.

**South Carrick:** Throughout 2024-25, we implemented Pickleball sessions in Barr, Barrhill, and Colmonell. As a result, permanent weekly clubs have now been established in both Colmonell and Barrhill. These sessions cater to children, adults, and mixed-age groups—supporting inclusivity and active community participation. Given that some residents in these villages face obstacles to engaging in sport, Pickleball has been warmly embraced as an accessible and enjoyable option.

**North Carrick:** In Maybole, we have launched a weekly Pickleball session, now regularly attracting 10-15 participants. A massive thank you goes to our dedicated volunteer, Anne Gerard, whose enthusiasm and commitment have been instrumental in expanding Pickleball across both North and South Carrick.



#### Game, Set, Match: Tennis Thrives in Girvan...

Thanks to the significant facility improvements to the Girvan Tennis Courts from South Ayrshire Sport & Leisure Service under the Lawn Tennis Association's Park Tennis Project – tennis is now emerging as a thriving community sport in the area. The upgraded courts feature improved surfaces, upgraded fencing, new nets and posts, enhanced drainage, and smart gate-access technology enabling online booking. These enhancements have made tennis more accessible, engaging, and sustainable for residents.

Although still in its early stages, interest in tennis is already growing. Our free Saturday morning sessions are attracting over 20 children each week building real momentum in community engagement. Building on this, we are working toward establishing a formal Tennis Club to grow the sport locally.



#### Look out for

- Club Development
- Coach Education & Leadership
- School Engagement & Taster Sessions
- Ballantrae Courts

#### Levelling the playing field

### Expanding Sport Access in Rural Areas

**Maybole Badminton Club (North Carrick CSH)**

A major success for the North Carrick Community Sport Hub has been the launch of an adult badminton club in Maybole. This weekly recreational club consistently attracts around 17 participants per session, with over 30 individuals attending regularly, reflecting strong engagement, free-to-access sessions provide young community demand for engaging, fun physical activity opportunities. The club offers adults aged 16+ a relaxed, accessible environment to stay active and meet other people.

**Village Sport Programme**

Addressing the barriers to sport participation in Girvan, Maybole, and surrounding villages remains a core priority for both Community Sport Hubs. The lack of opportunities in Sport remains within the villages with Sport not being as accessible to those who live within urban areas.

We deliver weekly Village Sport sessions across multiple communities—including Barr, Barrhill, Ballantrae, Dailly, Kirkmichael, Crosshill, Maidens, and Dunure—using outdoor facilities such as MUGAs or village green spaces. These people with opportunities to play sport with friends right on their doorstep. This is designed to break down participation barriers through locally-based, community-informed offerings.

Over 80 children now participate weekly in Village Sport—many of whom would remain completely inactive without this accessible programme. By bringing sport directly to rural areas, the Hubs are successfully bridging the urban-rural divide, promoting early engagement in physical activity, and reinforcing positive community networks.

## IMPACT

### Troon Pupils Team up for a day of Sport, Sun and Friendship

This project brought together Primary 4 and 5 pupils from St Patrick's and Troon Primary Schools to foster teamwork and build social connections across the two school communities. Rooted in values of equality, respect, inclusion, and trust, the initiative created positive shared experiences through sport at Troon Beach. With support from local Community Sports Hub clubs – Troon Patanque and Caledonia West Volleyball – pupils took part in activities designed to encourage cooperation and bridge differences.

The success of this project has sparked a shared commitment to developing further inclusive and collaborative opportunities between the schools moving forward.

**Teacher quote:**

I really thought it was an excellent opportunity for the children. You and your team had this all well organised, the children loved the stations, and we had the sun on our side. I feel this was a great transition opportunity too, my pupils have some friends out-with the school so they enjoyed joining in teams with the other groups and for the pupils who feel more that declined to split up from their peer groups, this opportunity really helps build on their resilience. Thank you so much for organising, I did feedback to my team that this is something we would think about coming out for staff to do too for our St Pats pupils.

**Pupil quotes:**

I love how we get to try new sports at the beach with new people, I've got to make new friends

My favourite part of the day was volleyball and getting to have fun at the beach

I usually wouldn't speak or even say hi to the pupils at the other school, but they're actually fun to be with

**Changing Lives Through Sport and Physical Activity**

Evidence shows that being active brings about positive changes beyond participation in sport and can impact positively on the health and wellbeing of individuals, on their skills and learning, and on communities, ensuring a more inclusive and healthier nation. Sporting and non-sporting organisations can proactively use sport & physical activity as an intentional tool to achieve both increased participation and wider social outcomes. In 2024/25 the Health and Wellbeing team worked with clubs and sporting organisations in South Ayrshire, through the Club Ready affiliation scheme, to offer opportunities to our communities to participate in sport. These opportunities would focus on those who face barriers to participation. Club Ready members were invited to attend a Changing Lives Through Sport workshop delivered by our Changing Lives Champion.

Clubs who received funding in 2024/25 were Carrick Rugby Football Club, Ayrshire Tigers Powerchair Football Club, Kyle Kayak Club, Prestwick Bowling Club and Whittletts Vics in the Community. These Clubs delivered projects which focused on the key themes of changing Lives Sport for Inclusion, Sport for Skills, Sport for Communities and Sport for Health and Wellbeing.



# Changing Lives Through Sport and Physical Activity

Our Changing Lives programme is delivered through our Community Sport Hub network providing funding to clubs to develop new projects designed to be more inclusive and support local communities. Evidence shows that being active brings about positive changes beyond participation in sport and can positively impact on the health and wellbeing of individuals, on their skills and learning, and on communities, ensuring a more active, healthy nation.

Over the last year a total of £9,300 of funding has been distributed to the following sports clubs:

- › Ayrshire Tigers Powerchair Football Club
- › Carrick Rugby Club
- › Kyle Kayak Club
- › Prestwick Bowling Club
- › Whittletts Vics in the Community

These clubs delivered projects which focused on the key themes of Changing Lives; Sport for Inclusion, Sport for Skills, Sport for Communities and Sport for Health and Wellbeing.

## Case Study...

### Kyle Kayak Club: Expanding Paddle Sports Access Through Equipment Investment

**PROJECT SUMMARY:** With the support of funding, our club invested in a multi-purpose trailer to both transport and store boats. This trailer plays a key role in supporting club trips and provides secure on-site storage at the Access Steps at UWS on the River Ayr, enabling kayak polo sessions to take place. In addition, we were able to purchase a new canoe to replace our only other club canoe, which had become unsafe for use.

**PROJECT IMPACT:** This project has been instrumental in kickstarting canoeing within the club. It has attracted a wide range of participants, particularly those who are new to outdoor activities or less confident on the water, while also engaging more experienced paddlers interested in exploring white water canoeing as a complement to kayaking.

Flat water sessions have been delivered at:

Irvine Estuary

Loch Doon

River Ayr

As skills and confidence have grown, newer paddlers have progressed to more challenging rivers, including the Upper Ayr, Nith, Teith, and Tay.

# Club Ready

South Ayrshire Club Ready is an accreditation award scheme designed to recognise and support the work of clubs and sporting organisations that have a desire to be the very best they can be. The scheme helps clubs to improve and is a good indication to parents and participants that the club is safe, fun and a good place to participate in sport.

During 24/25 44 local clubs and organisations signed up to our Club Ready affiliation scheme where they accessed benefits such as free coach education, support for talented athletes, access to Changing Lives funding and wider club development support.



## Coaching and Volunteering



We support young people and adults to develop the skills, confidence and qualifications needed to deliver sport and physical activity across South Ayrshire. Our team heavily relies on the support of over 500 volunteers annually to deliver a range of programmes in schools and communities.

During 24/25 the following groups supported school and community sport in South Ayrshire:

**580** volunteers and coaches (87% volunteers)

**175** young people within our Leadership programme

**141** members of schools staff

**45** students from Ayrshire College and UWS

In partnership with National Governing Body partners, we delivered a wide range of coach education courses between September 2024 and March 2025. These opportunities were made available to Club Ready coaches, South Ayrshire Council coaching staff and volunteers enabling them to develop their skills and receive support to deliver high quality sport and physical activity programmes. We also worked in partnership with UWS to deliver a wide range of sport-related workshop to coaches, volunteers, athletes and their families.

Courses included:

Motivation and Goal Setting, Resilience and injury recovery	Archery
Badminton Basics	Performing under Pressure in Sport
Coaching Female Athletes	Disability Inclusion Training
Changing Lives Through Sport	Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport x2
Leading Athletes	Sport Specific First Aid x2

A total of **92 coaches** and volunteers accesses these learning opportunities representing **38 teams** from **21 different Club Ready clubs**, and gaining **183 qualifications**.

## Developing Young Workforce



The South Ayrshire Active Schools Leadership Academy offers young people a dynamic programme focused on coach education, employability skills, marketing and event planning. Through a combination of training, mentoring and access to nationally recognised qualifications, participants gain hands on experience in areas such as sport and dance leadership, event organisation, officiating and decision making.

During 24/25:

**1114** pupils were part of our leadership pathway

**939** primary pupils completed the Junior Coaching Academy programme

**175** secondary pupils were selected to be part of the 24/25 Leadership Academy

**191** pupils who are part of our full leadership pathway live in SIMD 1/2

**44%** of young leaders have an additional support need

**1739** qualifications and certificates were achieved



### Chloe Campbell

Chloe began her leadership journey in S4 through Sport and Recreation, volunteering to lead sporting and team-building sessions for peers and younger pupils. Her role as a Young Ambassador inspired her to join the Leadership Academy to build her CV and gain experience toward her dream career. The programme offered the perfect opportunity for personal growth and skill development.



Since S4, I've led sports and team-building sessions for peers and younger pupils, which inspired me—through my role as a Young Ambassador—to join the Leadership Academy. The programme boosted my confidence and skills in teamwork, time management, and resilience. I volunteered with Active Schools at clubs, festivals, and events, and led a volleyball block where pupils from St John's Primary went on to win a competition. I also gained several qualifications, including Safeguarding Young Leaders, Scottish Volleyball Ambassador, and Disability Inclusion Training. The experience was rewarding, especially the coaching opportunities, and I'd highly recommend it to other young people.

# SOUTH AYRSHIRE SPORTS AWARDS

We held our annual South Ayrshire Sport Awards night in December 2024. It was a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the amazing contributions of parents, coaches, athletes and officials who help make sport possible across South Ayrshire. We attracted 11 local sponsors to support the cost of the awards evening.

There were 15 awards presented during the evening and this year for the first time we had 3 recipients of the Lifetime Achievement Award due to the sheer quality and depth of each nomination.

**Mike Boles:** Nominated for his remarkable contribution to swimming for more than 30 years. His coaching journey began at Troon pool and has spanned decades helping to shape what would later become the South Ayrshire swim team. His unwavering commitment has made a lasting impact on the local swimming community.

**Jess Reid:** Jess has given up countless hours to support young people to find a love for volleyball sharing her own passion, she now even coaches her own granddaughter. She works with Active Schools and local schools to make community connections

providing extra weekend training sessions and encouraging girls to experience games at their age level and higher.

**Tom Campbell:** Tom is a national league basketball player and started the basketball programme at Marr College many years ago. He then went on to establish Troon Tornados Basketball Club and turned them into a force in the Scottish National League. Tom still represents Team GB as part of the Over 70's Basketball team and recently competed in the World Championship.



## Workplace Wellbeing

In response to a council wide wellbeing survey Thriving Communities started a Wellbeing Working Group and have delivered the following activities over 24/25:

**RED JANUARY** A national initiative encouraging daily movement to boost mental health. We provided a range of opportunities in partnership with local clubs promoting community connections and showcasing the wide range of physical opportunities available across South Ayrshire.

**SPRING STEP CHALLENGE** An annual step challenge with weekly themes around wellbeing and nature, the challenge boosts mood, reduces stress and promotes team bonding. 35 SAC staff took part, walking toward better physical and mental health together.

**WELLBEING EVENTS** Spring, Winter and Locality Days took place with activities such as winter charity walks, glow in the dark dodgeball, yoga, archery, and mindfulness sessions. Wellbeing days have become a core part of the team's culture offering staff time away from desks to encourage connection, relaxation, and wellbeing.



## THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD

We're proud to report continued growth in both participation and achievement across the Duke of Edinburgh's Award this year.

Enrolments increased from **484 to 551 (14% increase)**

Completions rose from **285 to 309 (8% increase)**

Started:	<b>Bronze 402</b>	<b>Silver 117</b>	<b>Gold 32</b>	<b>TOTAL 551</b>
Achieved:	<b>Bronze 237</b>	<b>Silver 49</b>	<b>Gold 5</b>	<b>TOTAL 309</b>

This positive progress reflects our commitment to expanding access and improving quality across all levels of the Award. Growth has been particularly strong in rural areas, where targeted support has helped engage more young people than ever before.

Additionally, the introduction of higher-quality opportunities at Silver level has supported smoother progression from Bronze, encouraging participants to continue their DofE journey with confidence.

These figures represent more than just numbers — they reflect the resilience, ambition, and dedication of young people who are choosing to challenge themselves, give back to their communities, and develop valuable life skills.

We continue to support expeditions at all levels of the award with 35 individual expeditions taking place in 24/25 and over 350 young people taking part in training, a practice and a qualifying expedition. The expedition programme also relies heavily on our DofE leaders and volunteers, with 26 people supporting the programme during 24/25.

Some notable developments and achievement within the programme include:

- › Silver qualifying expeditions exploring historical lead mining and gold panning within the Lowther Hills area
- › Exploring the Galloway Forest Park including scenic camps by Loch Doon and Loch Bradan
- › 8905 hours were spent volunteering by DofE participants over 24/25. Popular volunteering activities including supporting youth clubs and organisations, sports clubs, animal care and support and many local charitable initiatives continue to benefit.



## EXPEDITION SPOTLIGHT

### SILVER DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD SUCCESS



As part of our ongoing commitment to youth development and outdoor learning, this year we successfully delivered a Duke of Edinburgh's Silver Award Qualifying Expedition programme involving multiple teams of young people.

The expeditions took place in the Lowther Hills in Dumfries and Galloway, with routes passing through Wanlockhead, the highest village in Scotland. This location offered both a physically demanding environment and a unique opportunity to explore Scotland's rich mining history, helping to connect participants with the landscape in a meaningful way.

#### Key Outcomes:

Multiple teams completed their Silver Qualifying Expeditions, demonstrating strong levels of independence, teamwork, and resilience.

Participants effectively applied skills in navigation, camp craft, and route planning, many under testing weather conditions.

Teams showed commitment to environmental responsibility, following Leave No Trace principles throughout their journeys.

The experience fostered personal growth, with noticeable development in leadership, communication, and problem-solving.

Despite periods of adverse weather, all teams remained focused, supportive of one another, and engaged fully with the challenge. Feedback from participants and leaders highlighted the sense of achievement and pride felt by all involved.

#### IMPACT AND REFLECTION

This expedition experience was not only a significant milestone in participants' DofE journeys but also a powerful example of how outdoor adventure and structured support can help young people grow in confidence and capability.

We are proud of the way each team approached the challenge, and of the dedication shown by both participants and leaders in making the expedition a success. These kinds of experiences continue to underpin our mission to provide inclusive, enriching opportunities for all young people.

## VOLUNTEERING IMPACT

### DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD PARTICIPANTS

#### APRIL – MARCH REPORTING PERIOD

DofE participants continue to make a significant contribution to local communities through their commitment to volunteering. Over the course of the year, **8,905 hours** were dedicated to volunteer service by young people taking part their Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

#### VOLUNTEERING HOURS CONTRIBUTED

**8,905 hours** across Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels

#### POPULAR VOLUNTEERING AREAS

- › **Youth clubs and community organisations** – supporting younger children and peers through structured programmes and activities, trips, and training.
- › **Sports clubs** – assisting with coaching, events, and administration
- › **Animal care and support** – volunteering with shelters, farms, and pet and animal care facilities
- › **Local charities and fundraising initiatives** – helping with events, fundraising for projects, and awareness campaigns

These contributions not only support a wide range of community services, but also provide meaningful personal development for participants. Through volunteering, young people have developed **responsibility, teamwork, and communication skills** - all while making a real difference in their communities.

The positive impact of this volunteering is felt across local networks, with many organisations benefiting from the enthusiasm, dedication, and new ideas brought by DofE volunteers

#### LOOKING AHEAD

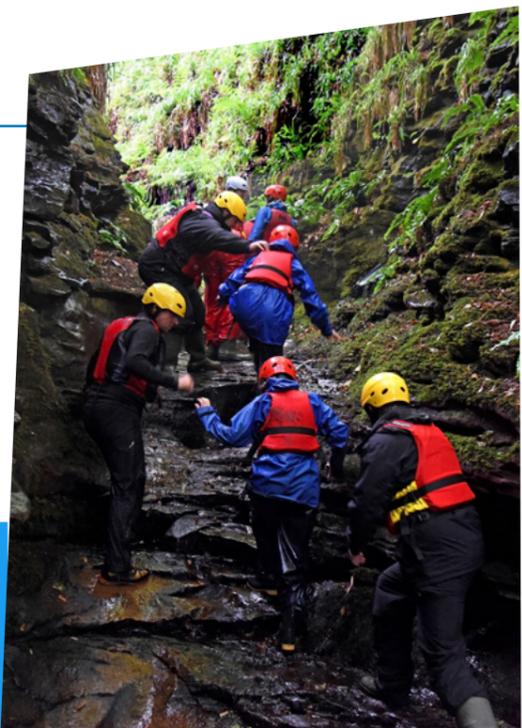
We remain committed to promoting volunteering as a core part of the DofE programme and will continue to build partnerships with local groups to offer diverse and inclusive opportunities for young people to get involved.



In 24/25 Dolphin House generated £300,062 of income (2% over the income target). We continue to negotiate a lease extension with the National Trust and hope for a 25 year lease to be secured soon. We continued to work with the Health

and Safety Executive to ensure safe practice and submitted an application to extend our current Adventurous Activities Licence (AALA) from September 2025-28. This allows us to deliver the following adventure activities for young people:

- Rock Climbing
- Coasteering
- Mega SUP
- Caving
- Abseiling
- Gorge scrambling
- Hill and Mountain Walking
- Canoeing
- Stand up Paddleboarding
- Kayaking





## Schools Residential Programme – Learning, Adventure and Lasting Memories

This year, our Schools Residential Programme once again provided pupils with rich, meaningful experiences that combined environmental education, outdoor adventure, and the chance to build lasting memories with their peers.

Hosted at Dolphin House Outdoor Centre, our residential offers more than just a break from the classroom — they provide a fully immersive learning environment where young people develop a deeper connection to nature, grow in confidence, and strengthen important life skills such as teamwork, resilience, and communication.

Over 24/25 nearly

**1000** young people from 24 South Ayrshire schools and 11 schools from out with South Ayrshire attending over 24/25.

From those attending from South Ayrshire we welcomed

**353** young people with an additional support needs, 138 young people in receipt of free school meals and 137 young people with a disability.

### Key Highlights:

Pupils took part in hands-on environmental learning, exploring local ecosystems, understanding sustainability, and engaging with real-world environmental challenges in a way that connects directly with their curriculum.

A wide range of adventurous activities were delivered, including hillwalking, climbing, bushcraft, and water-based challenges — designed to stretch comfort zones and encourage personal growth.

Evenings were spent around campfires, reflecting, sharing experiences, and enjoying the social side of residential life — helping pupils create positive, lasting memories with classmates.

### Impact:

Feedback from schools and pupils continues to reflect the value of these experiences — not just in terms of fun and adventure, but also in supporting personal development, wellbeing, and connection to the natural world.

Many pupils return from the programme more confident, more curious, and more connected to their learning, local community, and their peers.



## New Development: The Sundew Badge – Connecting Young People to Nature

This year saw the exciting development of a new initiative at Dolphin House Outdoor Centre — the Sundew Badge, a bespoke environmental award designed to deepen young people's connection with the natural world through hands-on learning, reflection, and action.

Named after the sundew plant — a remarkable carnivorous species found in local habitats — the badge encourages participants to observe, understand, and care for the natural environment in a meaningful and memorable way.

### About the Sundew Badge:

- › The badge is structured around key themes:
- › Observation and Discovery: Encouraging curiosity about local flora, fauna, and ecosystems
- › Environmental Action: Promoting responsible behaviours and practical steps to protect nature

Reflection and Connection: Creating space for young people to reflect on their role within the natural world and what it means to them

Participants earn their Sundew Badge by engaging in a series of environmental education activities, guides explorations, and small-scale conservation tasks during their time at Dolphin House.



### Why it Matters:

At a time when many young people have limited access to wild spaces, the Sundew Badge provides a valuable opportunity to:

- › Foster a lifelong appreciation for nature
- › Develop critical thinking about environmental issues
- › Inspire positive, informed environmental behaviours beyond the residential experience

The badge has already been well received in its pilot phase, with schools and pupils praising its hands-on, thoughtful approach to learning.

## Group residentials and day visits (weekend and holidays)

**432** visitors took part in group residential programmes over the weekend and during school holiday periods in 24/25.

Group residentials included visits from Midlands Girlguiding, New Cumnock Development Trust, Ukrainian Family Support, Young Carers, Ayr North PACT, Crosshill Guides, Girvan Brownies, Glendoune, Carrick Centre, Welfare Team, Prestwick Beaver Scouts, Lochside Youth Club, Marr Rugby Club, Carers Gateway, and our Gold DofE participants.

Groups taking part in day visits over 24/25 included Ayrshire Sportsability, Workout Programme, Crosshill Rangers, Ayr Academy, Doonfoot PS canoeing, Ayrshire College, Ayrshire Walking Festival, QMA Mentoring Group, Welfare team, Scottish Sports Futures, Young Ambassadors, CLD, Spotty Zebras, Girvan Youth Trust, Champions Board, ADP, Troon Watersports Hub, East Ayrshire Council Youth Services, Recovery Ayr, Education Services SAC





## Summer of Adventure at Dolphin House

This summer, Dolphin House Outdoor Centre was a hub of energy, learning, and unforgettable experiences as we delivered two exciting programmes designed to challenge, inspire, and empower young people.

### Adventure Week

Our brand new Adventure Week programme was a great success with nearly 100 young people taking part.

Over five action-packed days, we welcomed an incredible group of young adventurers who took on a series of outdoor challenges with enthusiasm and determination. Activities included:

- › Paddleboarding and coasteering
- › Caving, gorge walking, and mountain biking
- › Team-building and problem-solving challenges

There was a mix of sunshine and showers, but the energy and engagement remained high throughout. We were delighted with the interest in this new offering and would like to thank everyone who took part for making it such a memorable week.

More Adventure Weeks are planned for the future — watch this space.



### Junior Paddlesports – River Ayr

A true highlight of the school holidays, our Junior Paddlesports sessions welcomed 74 young people aged 8–16 to the River Ayr. Participants developed paddling skills, built confidence on the water, and enjoyed sessions in canoes, sit-on-top kayaks, and on paddleboards.

Thanks to the recent installation of new river access steps, we were able to offer fun, safe sessions for a wide range of participants, supporting our wider Thriving Communities work.

We are proud to report that:

- › 33 young people earned their Paddle Start Award
- › 7 went on to complete their Paddle Discover Award

These are fantastic achievements and reflect the commitment and enthusiasm shown by all participants.

Both programmes highlight our commitment to providing high-quality outdoor learning experiences and support our local communities.



### LEAP

Leadership Education Adventure Programme – Success for Carrick and Girvan Pupils

Pupils from Carrick Academy and Girvan Academy completed our 12-week Leadership Education Adventure Programme.

This dynamic programme offered young people a valuable opportunity to:

- › Gain industry-recognised qualifications
- › Develop a wide range of transferable leadership and teamwork skills
- › Engage in a positive, supportive learning environment based in the outdoors

Through a mix of practical challenges, skills development, and guided reflection, participants built confidence, resilience, and a greater understanding of their potential — both as individuals and team members.



## Wellbeing Days at Dolphin House

As part of our ongoing commitment to supporting the health, wellbeing, and professional development of the workforce, Dolphin House Outdoor Centre hosted a series of 12 Staff Wellbeing Days throughout the year.

These sessions welcomed staff from a wide range of departments across the local authority and partner organisations, creating valuable opportunities for reconnection, reflection, and resilience-building in at our coastal setting.

### Key Features of the Wellbeing Days:

- › Time in nature to unwind, recharge, and disconnect from day-to-day pressures taking part in a range of engaging activities
- › Team-building and reflection activities focused on personal and collective development and wellbeing
- › Safe, supportive space for colleagues to connect with each other informally across services and roles

Departments represented included education, social care, youth work and community development showing the need for wellbeing support in the workplace.

## Workforce Development –Staff and Volunteers

At Dolphin House, we recognise that the quality of our programmes depends on the knowledge, confidence, and skills of the people delivering them. That's why we continue to invest in the ongoing training and development of both staff and volunteers.

Over the past year, we have provided a wide range of opportunities designed to improve programmes, build capacity, and ensure a consistent, high-quality experiences for everyone taking part.

- › NGB Outdoor activity qualifications (e.g. paddlesports, hill walking and navigation, coasteering, mountain biking )
- › Safety awards (e.g. first aid, child protection)
- › Environmental education and sustainability (e.g. John Muir Award and Biosphere Sundew Award)

Training was delivered through a mix of internal and external tutors, ensuring accessibility for new and experienced staff members and volunteers. A total 16 different NGB Awards were offered with 91 staff/volunteers participating and achieving qualifications.

### Impact:

- › Increased staff confidence and capacity to deliver diverse, high-quality experiences
- › Strengthened safety standards and inclusivity across a range of activities.
- › Greater volunteer retention and engagement
- › Clear progression routes to employment supporting personal and professional development



## Thriving Economy Service 2024-25

Thriving Economy became part of the Thriving Communities Service in April 2025 therefore the information available is limited. The team delivered advice and support to start-up clients, SME's and organisations/businesses relating to Community Wealth Building pillars.

### Our support

- › Business Gateway Surgery (3 hour one to one session with consultant covering various subject areas)
- › Business Gateway Workshop (face to face 2-hour sessions with business expert in subject field)
- › Business Gateway Webinars (online 2 hr sessions with business expert in subject field)
- › Ambition Programme (Expert Help, Grants) to SME's and CWB organisations/businesses.

Funding covered by external funds from UKSPF and Ayrshire Growth Deal - Community Wealth Building Programme.



### Key Achievements

Business related enquiries received		841
Meet the Advisor (Planning to Start Clients)		158
Engagement (Application for funding) from SME businesses		115
Engagement (Application for funding) from organisations/social enterprises relating to Community Wealth Building		52
Business Gateway Surgeries completed		79
Business Gateway Workshops NINE held in South Ayrshire.	Attendees	26
Business Gateway Webinars 46 held	Attendees	283
Ambition Programme Start-up Grants		17
Ambition Programme Growth Grants		33
Ambition Programme Expert Help Support		76
Community Wealth Building Grants		34
Community Wealth Building Expert Help Support		29

Note – applicant businesses/organisations may have received more than one Expert Help and grant support, or only Expert Help or only a grant.

### Funding

Total amount Grants	£460,603
Total amount Expert Help	£141,567
No. of jobs safeguarded	424
No. of forecast new jobs created by 2027	105

## CASE STUDIES



### ETEK, PRESTWICK

A local business was supported during 2024 with their own investment to create a digital training and service hub. Online demonstrations of their machines are now used as a sales tool to provide current, new and potential customers with a portal of information and access to real time discussions with Etek service engineers, sales staff or access to specific pre-recorded videos covering regular maintenance and training issues.

As part of this digital training hub, Etek developed some of their warehouse space as a demo and training room to facilitate both visiting and virtual customers and suppliers with access to their professional sales, maintenance and repairs environment. The virtual demo/training rooms required the relevant hardware and software to support streamlined demonstrations and provide participants with an enhanced experience equivalent to a face-to-face experience. This development allows Etek customers with the ability to access their various reports and for Etek to control all of their services, spare parts, training etc. from anywhere in the world.

Director Joanne Nelson said:

**“The support provided by South Ayrshire Council’s Ambition programme has allowed the business to achieve its ambition of creating a 21st century solution to meet our current, new and future customer’s needs. The SAC Business Advisor worked closely with us to understand our development needs. We will stay in touch with the Business team to keep them informed about how this funding investment in our company translates to business benefits.”**

### THE REBEL BAKER, AYR



The Rebel Baker is a new craft bakery specialising in allergen-free products, which offers training and employment opportunities to people who are recovering from addiction.

Founded by Rachel Munro, it is run under a social enterprise model from premises in Ayr’s North Harbour Industrial Estate.

South Ayrshire Council’s business team supported Rachel to set up her new venture, which is the first of its kind in Ayrshire.

Owner Rachel said:

**“From our first conversations, our Business Advisor was very receptive to my business idea, which gave me a lot of confidence, knowing that they genuinely believed it would work. I found them to be completely on the ball, helping me to access grants and an entire range of resources very quickly. I was awarded an Ambition to Start (UKSPF) grant and received expert help from consultants, including that of an accountant, and was given advice on procurement. I also received help with my marketing strategy and was directed towards really useful resources at Ayrshire College on how to best promote the business. With the support from the Council, I’m now going to be producing specialist baked goods which there is a demand for, while giving people who have troubles in the past a chance to work and create a better future for themselves.”**

## Conclusion

### Thrivng Communities - Year 4 Conclusion

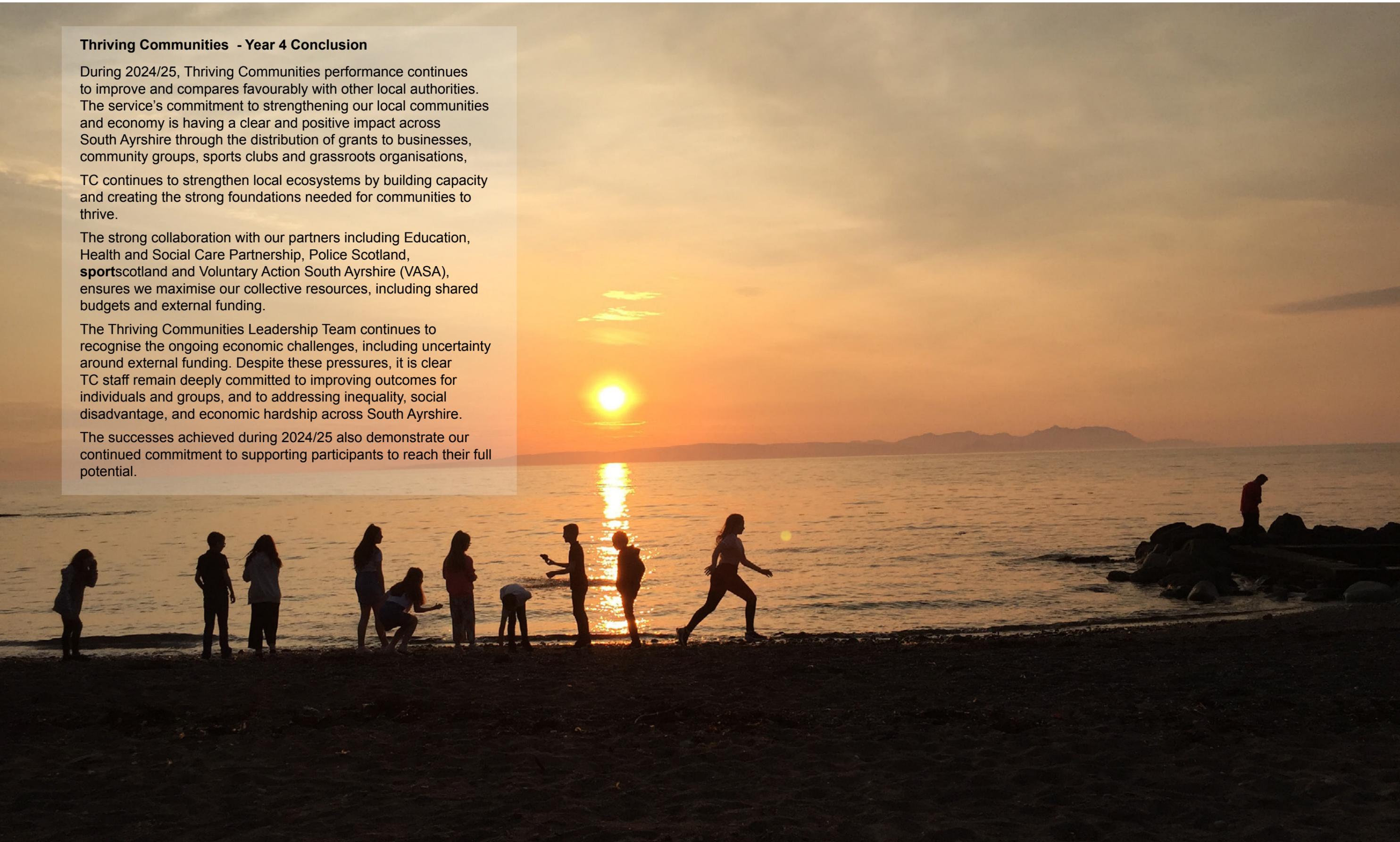
During 2024/25, Thrivng Communities performance continues to improve and compares favourably with other local authorities. The service's commitment to strengthening our local communities and economy is having a clear and positive impact across South Ayrshire through the distribution of grants to businesses, community groups, sports clubs and grassroots organisations,

TC continues to strengthen local ecosystems by building capacity and creating the strong foundations needed for communities to thrive.

The strong collaboration with our partners including Education, Health and Social Care Partnership, Police Scotland, **sportscotland** and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA), ensures we maximise our collective resources, including shared budgets and external funding.

The Thrivng Communities Leadership Team continues to recognise the ongoing economic challenges, including uncertainty around external funding. Despite these pressures, it is clear TC staff remain deeply committed to improving outcomes for individuals and groups, and to addressing inequality, social disadvantage, and economic hardship across South Ayrshire.

The successes achieved during 2024/25 also demonstrate our continued commitment to supporting participants to reach their full potential.



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