



# Action for Children Positive Choices Plus

Annual Report – 2018/19



## Introduction

This is our second year of the Phase 4 Cashback for Communities partnership. Action for Children has been contracted to deliver under the Journey to Employment Theme for young people aged 14-24 years.

The project will work with 225 young people over the 3 year contract in the following geographical areas: **Glasgow, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.**

The project will provide intensive 1:1 mentoring and group work to those young people furthest from the work force and provide follow up support to sustain positive destinations.

The project model offers an average of 9 month's needs-led/personalised support, with flexibility for longer term journeys if required.

It consists of pre-course one to one support to prepare the young people to take part in the 4 week programme.

The main activity will be a 4 week programme which involves:

- Employability & Personal Development sessions
- Practical activities/task based sessions
- Themed sessions/guest speakers, developing life skills e.g. relationships, alcohol, managing money, etc
- Employer/Workplace and college/training provider visits
- Work Experience opportunities
- Workplace Core Skills (SCQF Level 3) in Communication, Numeracy, Literacy and SQA Wellbeing Award
- Community based challenges to improve team work, communication, planning and organisation

The 4 week course will be followed by 26 weeks of progression and after-care support.

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“Most of the young people I work with have little or no aspiration. it's great therefore, to see them learn new skills and work with others. Thereafter, this often leads to them talking about apprenticeships, paid work and obtaining the things most people take for granted. These examples include aspirations with regards to independent living, purchasing a car or settling down with a partner.”

Stakeholder

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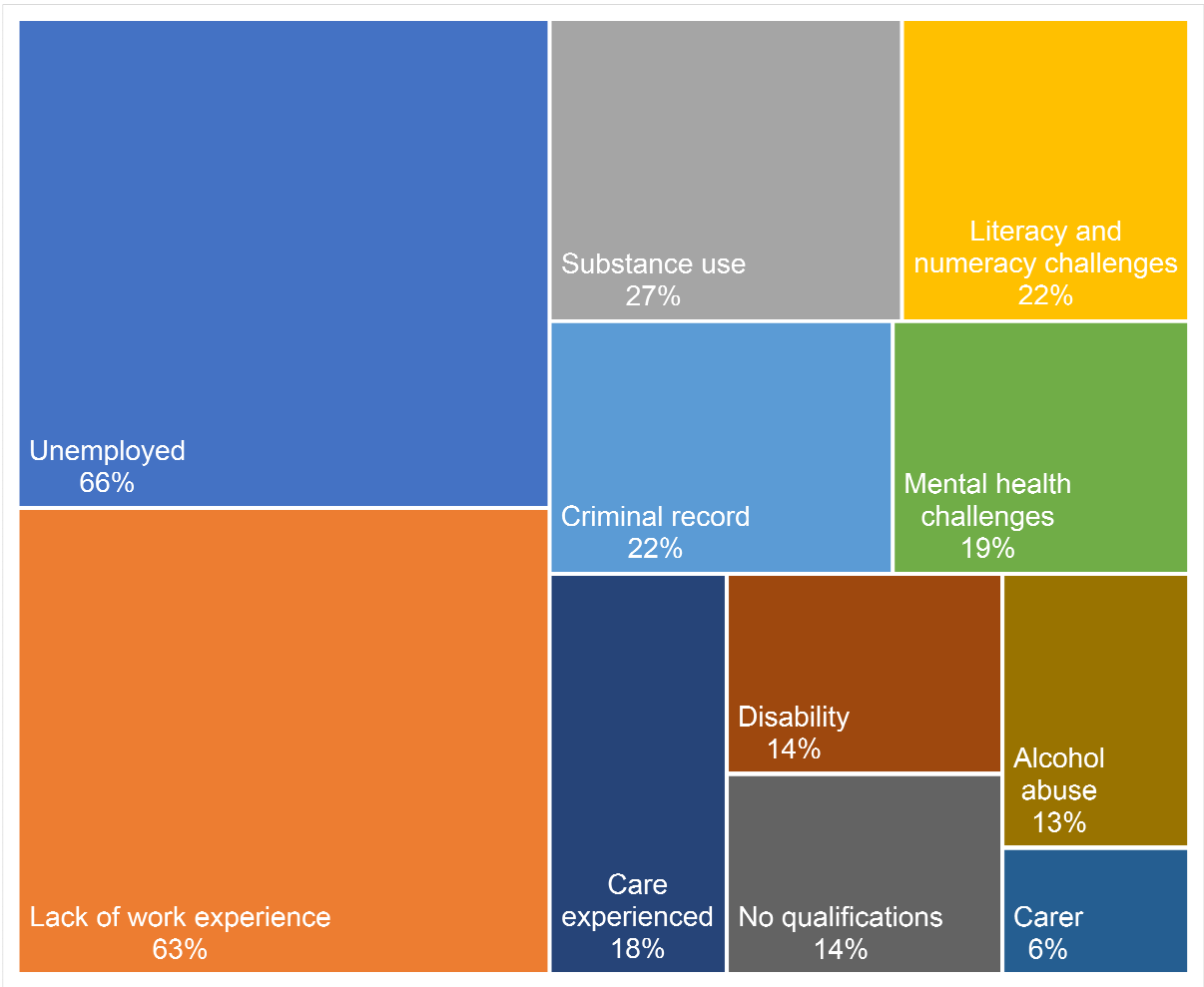
# Summary

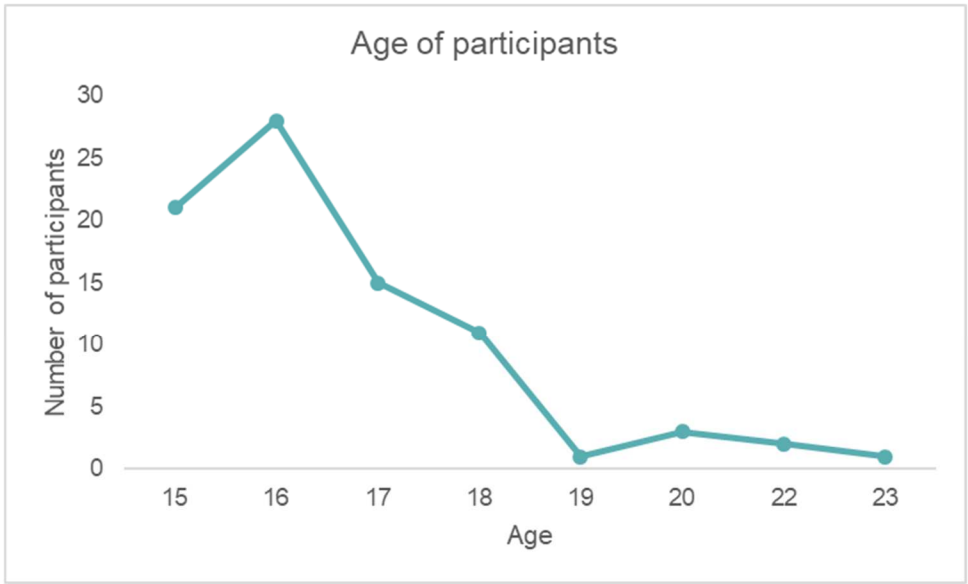
We have delivered across all 5 local authority areas this year - Glasgow, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.

We have worked with 88 young people across these areas. The chart below shows the range of challenges faced by programme participants:

“We provide them with whatever support they need at the time...that’s the reality of the baggage that young people come with. If we don’t do all of that, then they won’t engage.”

Action for Children staff





Male [70]



Female [18]





## Programme Delivery

Across the various local authority areas we have worked with a range of partners to offer a variety of sessions throughout the positive activity period.

We worked in partnership with Dame Kelly Holmes who delivered various sessions of athlete-led engagement. These sessions were delivered from the Judo Club in Edinburgh. The content was designed to support and enhance the motivation and engagement of the young people and was delivered by Sarah Clark, three-time Olympian and 5th Dan black belt in Judo. The focus of the sessions were around engagement, team work and motivation. Following the sports theme, we arranged in partnership with Street League a 5 a side football match in which the young people participated well.

The young people also participated in Army experience days where they had to work together to complete problem solving tasks facilitated by soldiers. Sessions included team work, critical thinking and communication. They also visited the Army barracks and were put through their paces!. The sessions also included the recruitment process, the various job roles, variety of weapons, vehicles, night vision equipment, command tasks, navigation, army drills and combat first aid.



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“I wouldn't really talk to people before. It helped with that, and with social skills.”

Young person

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Turner & Townsend delivered employability sessions including employers expectations, the various application processes, CV writing, interview techniques and first impressions. Barclays delivered interactive workshops on identifying positive workplace behaviours, organisational values, how to conduct yourself in a workplace and different approaches to handling situations.

Police Scotland delivered sessions on anti-social behaviour and the impact on the community, substance misuse and their recruitment process. Additionally we had a range of external agencies that delivered various sessions including The Junction – Drugs & Alcohol, Hot Team – Sexual Health, Positive Realities – Goal Setting, Fast Forward – Gambling & Internet Safety, Cryneians – Conflict Resolution, SDS – Employability, SAMH – Mental Health & Wellbeing.

In West Dunbartonshire, young people spent 3 days at a Pop up kitchen where they learned to cook banana pancakes, porridge, vegetarian breakfasts and smoothies all from fresh fruit and vegetables grown in the community garden . The also took part in a food tasting session where they were encouraged to try various foods that they have never tasted before including olives, guacamole, melon, kiwi, pineapple, honey and dark chocolate.



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“I enjoyed doing new stuff and meeting new people that I wouldn't have met if it wasn't for Action for Children.”

Young person

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Other sessions included Sexual health, exploring all forms of contraception, sexually transmitted infections, sexual consent and information on specialist agencies that could provide additional support and advice. The No knives, better lives session covered the consequences of carrying knives, potential injuries caused by knives and the affect it has on the wider community. Online and Mobile Safety covered risks and consequences associated with social media, sexting, online abuse, the Mobile & Telecommunications Act, grooming and digital footprints.

Trained staff delivered a shortened version of the ASIST programme to groups which teaches participants to recognise when someone may have thoughts of suicide and work with them to create a plan that will support their immediate safety. It helps participants to provide guidance and suicide first aid to a person at risk in ways that meet their individual safety needs, Identify the key elements of an effective suicide safety plan and the actions required to implement it and recognize other important aspects of suicide prevention including life-promotion and self-care.

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“I am able to deal with situations I couldn’t deal with before.”

Young person

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The SQA Core Skills qualification and Wellbeing Award was also delivered as part of all the programmes as well as college and workplace visits and work experience.

Throughout the year and across the various areas, the young people participated in a number of community projects.





Community Payback Day. Young people chose which organisation to work with to give something back to their local community. They chose a local housing association where they painted large planters in the community are which is accessible by all the residents.

Another example was the community champions board in Clydebank who work with care experienced young people. They had just recently moved into a new premises and needed some assistance to get the outdoor area tidied up, which involved painting fencing and benches.



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“I liked the programme, it was good to be able to do something every day.”

Young person

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In Edinburgh, young people went to Lothian Green Space for a day as they were keen to do some practical work. The works included clearing pathways, parks and other green spaces to support the maintenance and planting trees. The young people also worked with Water of Leith for a day and helped to clear logs, trees and invasive bushes, building a fire to burn the unwanted debris.



## Finance

	£		
	Actual	Target	Variance
<b>Project Activity</b>			
Staffing	102,298	111,708	9,410
Young people costs	32,571	37,776	5,205
Other staff related costs NI, pensions and insurance	19,879	7,276	-12,603
Premises related costs for delivery staff	13,531	11,864	-1,167
Rental of Community venues	3,301	2,660	-641
Telephones - rental of mobile phones for delivery staff	494	1,168	673
Postage	27	152	125
Stationery	323	1,112	789
<b>Total Project Activity</b>	<b>172,425</b>	<b>173,716</b>	<b>-1,290</b>
<b>Other Project Costs</b>			
Management and Marketing	16,627	18,880	2,252
External Evaluation	9,948	6,000	-3,948
<b>Total Other Project Costs</b>	<b>26,575</b>	<b>24,880</b>	<b>-1,695</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>199,000</b>	<b>198,596</b>	<b>-404</b>

## Outcomes

	Actual	Target	Variance
<b>Outcome 1: Young people (YP) build their capacity and confidence</b>			
YP increased their confidence/capacity	88	63	+25
YP report they are able to do new things	62	63	-1
Other stakeholders report increasing confidence in YP	100%	75%	25%
YP go on to do new things after initial CashBack involvement	58	63	-5
<b>Outcome 2: YP develop their physical and personal skills</b>			
YP increased personal skills, achieving accredited learning	72	71	+1
YP report an increase in their skills	80	64	+16
Other stakeholders report skills increasing in YP	86%	75%	+11%
Recognised SCQF - Level 3	133		
Number of non-SCQF qualifications/accreditations	74		
<b>Outcome 3: YP behaviours and aspirations change positively</b>			
YP report increased aspirations	88	60	+28
Other stakeholders report increased aspirations in YP	97%	75%	+22%
YP positively change behaviours	72	60	+12
Other stakeholders' report positive changes in YP behaviour	86%	75%	+11%

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“It opened my eyes to a range of different things.”

Young person

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	Actual	Target	Variance
<b>Outcome 4: YP wellbeing improves</b>			
YP improve wellbeing	71	60	+11
Other stakeholders make positive comments about wellbeing against one of the relevant SHANARRI indicators	91%	75%	+16%
<b>Outcome 6: YP participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations)</b>			
YP achieve positive destinations	67	56	+12
YP will access learning (including staying on at school)	6	8	-2
YP will progress to training	41	34	+7
YP volunteer following completion of programme	4	4	0
YP will gain employment	17	10	+7
<b>Outcome 7: Young people participate in positive activity</b>			
YP will participate in positive activity	84	71	+13
YP are new to the activity	75	56	+19
YP will complete a work star	88	71	+17
YP participating in/completing personal development/community-based challenge	72	56	+16
YP participating in/completing Workplace Core Skills/accredited learning	72	37	+35

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“They’ve [AfC] changed their lives for the better, by guiding them. They give them the opportunity to see that there is a bigger world out there and they can be a part of it.”

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Stakeholder

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“[Young person] has an increased desire to work. He has also been talking more about his move on plan from foster care which he previously avoided.”

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Stakeholder

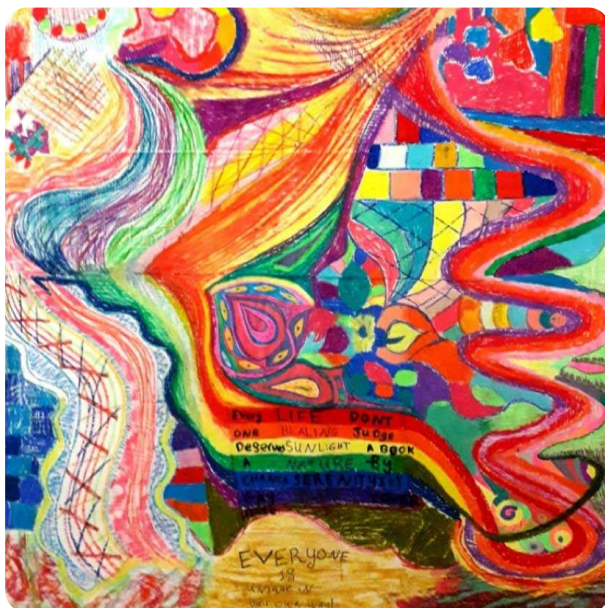
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**68 Young people achieved positive destinations**

**17 Started Employment**

**6 Young people**  
Moved into Further Education

**4**  
Young People became Volunteers upon completion of the programme.



**41 Young People progressed into Training**

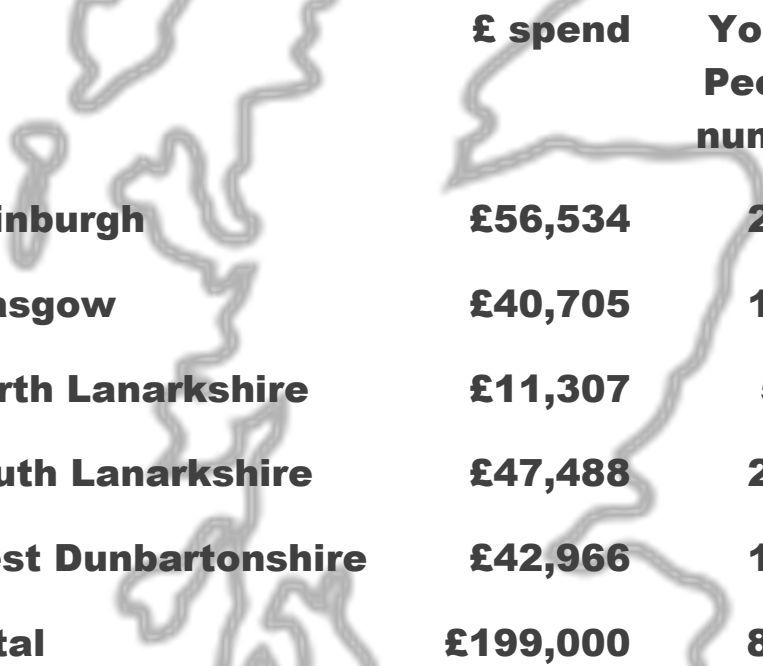


## Progression to positive destinations

Destination	Actual	Annual target	% achieved (of total participants)	Overall target	Performance against target
Training	41	34	51%	45%	+6%
Employment	17	12	21%	15%	+6%
Education/return to school	6	8	7%	10%	-3%
Volunteering	4	4	5%	5%	=
<b>Total positive destinations</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>+9%</b>
No progression	13	-	%	-	-

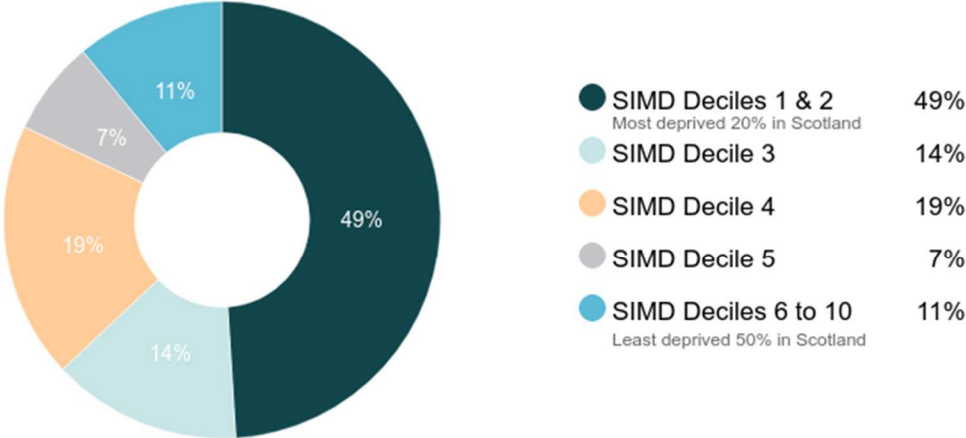


## **Expenditure and young people by Local Authority area**



	<b>£ spend</b>	<b>Young People number</b>
<b>Edinburgh</b>	<b>£56,534</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Glasgow</b>	<b>£40,705</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>North Lanarkshire</b>	<b>£11,307</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>South Lanarkshire</b>	<b>£47,488</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>West Dunbartonshire</b>	<b>£42,966</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£199,000</b>	<b>88</b>

# SIMD Profile of Participants



## Case Study

During her teens, 18-year-old CM cared for her partner who had cystic fibrosis until sadly he passed away late in 2018. She wanted to get back to work and with her previous experience in care, she felt she could help people in a similar situation.

CM sought help from Remploy, the leading disability, employment and skills specialist and was supported through Fair Start Scotland, a devoted Scottish Government Service, to upskill herself and find suitable employment.

CM from Larkhall said that when she joined the service her confidence was low but was made to feel at home and the support she received was personal to her.

After a good few meetings with Remploy, it was decided that CM could really enhance her skills and ability if she received the specialist support she needed. CM was referred to Action for Children Positive Choices Course

The Positive Choices course offers support to develop skills for training and employment opportunities. Courtney received support with managing her finances, developing her soft and core skills to get ready for employment. Through the Positive Choices course, Courtney managed to attain a Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) level 3 award in Health and Wellbeing.





***“My confidence was gradually increasing. The course was very useful, I learned about myself and it really helped me on my journey into work. I also managed to add an SQA award which added to my credentials.”***

On the back of this course, Courtney seemed much closer to the job market and said she was ready to take the next step.

***“It was great, I could go at my own pace and all the decisions were mine to make. “I was told about a position as an Assistant Support Worker at Action for Children, so I went for the role and managed to get it!”***

***“I am looking forward to helping people who need the extra bit of support like I did. The Positive Choices service was immense and helped spur me on to get this position.”***

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They (AfC) build a kind of relationship. I don't know what they do, or how they do it, but they do it. And they do it well.”

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Stakeholder

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“If I'm able to get them into Action for Children, I know they're in with a good chance.”

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Stakeholder

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## Evaluation

Research Scotland worked with key staff from Action for Children to agree an evaluation plan. We developed a logic model, outlining outcomes, indicators, targets and responsibilities for data collection. We also developed discussion guides and surveys to use with young people and partners.

Key findings of the 2018/2019 evaluation:

### Reach

The programme engaged with a wide range of young people that were disadvantaged or faced barriers to achieving their goals. Predominantly, these were young people that were furthest away from the job market – at Stage 1 or 2 of the employability pipeline. The profile of young people supported included young people that were unemployed, not in education or training and at risk of antisocial behaviour or involvement in the criminal justice system. More widely, young people had challenges around substance use, mental health, literacy and numeracy and insecure housing.

The programme has worked with more young men than young women, although data shows that the proportion of females engaging has increased since Phase 3 (2014-2017).

The programme has been designed to work across five local authority areas: Glasgow, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire. 49% of participants came from the 20% most deprived areas of Scotland.

### Impact

Action for Children has made good progress towards meeting its outcomes, and has met or exceeded most of its targets. The generic programme, and flexible approach have allowed the programme to be tailored to individual needs, as well as offering 1:1 and group work opportunities.

Young people reported that they felt the programme was worthwhile and supported them to develop their confidence, communication skills and employability skills.

The programme has demonstrated good progress towards developing young people's capacity, confidence aspirations and wellbeing. All targets relating to these outcomes were met or exceeded.

Young people completing the programme have moved into positive destinations, most often into training and education. Despite their challenging circumstances and distance from the job market, a small proportion of young people also progressed into employment.

### Areas for development

Action for Children staff are actively working to improve the diversity of participants, particularly in terms of increasing the proportion of female participants. Staff have made contact with relevant organisations to promote the programme and encourage referrals from a wider range of partners.

## Communications, Events & Ministerial Visits

We attended the Cashback at the Movies Event on the 15<sup>th</sup> May along with 3 of our young people who had participated in our Edinburgh programme.



Some of our young people also attended the engagement event with the Cabinet Secretary Humza Yousaf on Thursday, 28th February 19 and participated well.

## Plans & priorities for the year ahead

We will continue to secure positive destinations for the young people on the Positive Choices programme and meet our target number of young people for year 3. We aim to increase our social media profile this year and also host a celebration event at the end of the year to celebrate completion of Phase 4 Cashback for Communities funding.

## Organisational Update including relevant governance or key personnel issues

Our Trustees, directorate and management remain stable although we have had some changes in direct delivery staff. Action for Children celebrated 10 years of Inspiring Scotland funding which has supported the growth of our Employability Services. We have successfully completed Phase 1 of ESIF and are progressing into Phase 2. Our CSM has joined the Skills Development Scotland Apprenticeship Advisory Board Equalities group this year.

We were re-assessed and re-accredited this year for the Investment in Young People Gold Award and as a result have been asked to join a small working group looking at platinum standards.

“Your passion and commitment to providing Young staff with an employment opportunity, especially young people with barriers to work is inspiring and sets you apart as an ambassador for providing a platform to address youth unemployment and develop Scotland’s young workforce.

As a proactive employer your biggest single investment is in the future of your workforce and this is demonstrated by the support you provide to your Young staff. You are truly committed to engaging and developing your Young staff and I believe you have a ‘Young staff brand’ you can continue to be proud of.

Having carried out this assessment in accordance with the guidelines provided by Remarkable, I am delighted that you have retained the higher level requirements of the Investors in Young People Award at **Gold** level for which I offer you my deepest congratulations”.

*Nicola Dillon, Remarkable IYP assessor*





## **Stakeholder & Young People Feedback**

We have worked hard to gain feedback from Stakeholders and young people participating on the programmes over this year:

### **Young People**

“I feel I am more confident about speaking with others and working as a team to complete the tasks that we’re asked to do.”

“I wouldn’t really talk to people before. It helped with that, and with social skills.”

“Before I started Action for Children I felt I couldn’t achieve a big goal but I have been shown that everyone can succeed if you put in the effort.”

“I wouldn’t be where I am now, today. I probably would have been doing what I was doing, or in a secure unit, or at worst, Polmont. So I’m really glad I changed my life.”


“I was isolated from age 14, caring for my partner...they made me feel so welcome...It brought me out of myself.”

“The workers – they went above and beyond. I’ve been chucked out of every course I’ve ever been on, except this one. Here you can actually express yourself.”

### **Stakeholders**

“The young person I referred was quite subdued and put up a lot of barriers. Since completion of the course she seems more keen to participate in other activities.”

“Her eyes glow now. She’s got more pride in herself. She’s got a purpose. She looks at you when she talks to you. And she doesn’t bite your head off!”



“The majority of young people I have referred within a couple of months present as more confident, with self esteem and as a result, improved social skills.”

“Some of my young people have struggled to achieve and progress in the more formal environment of statutory secondary education but have flourished at AFC.”

“[Young person] has an increased desire to work. He has also been talking more about his move on plan from foster care which he previously avoided.”

“He has not been in trouble since attending the course, which is a change of behaviour and he has been attending which he didn't do at school. He is now very relaxed and not uptight.”

“She is planning ahead and looking to go back to college which was off the table before she started working with AFC.”

## **Plans and priorities for the year ahead**

Our plans and priorities for our final year are to ensure all target numbers for young people engaged are met or exceeded and to ensure as many young people progress into a positive destination.

We will be looking to increase community-based activities, particularly in a practical capacity as feedback from young people is that they really enjoy the outdoor, practical elements of the programme.

We will continue to work with a diverse range of partners to bring a varied flavour to the programme and give the young people opportunities to try new things and to develop their skills.

