

CASHBACK HIGHLANDS



**Annual Report
2022 - 2023**

> PHASE 5, YEAR 3

**Eden
Court**
HIGHLANDS



Contents

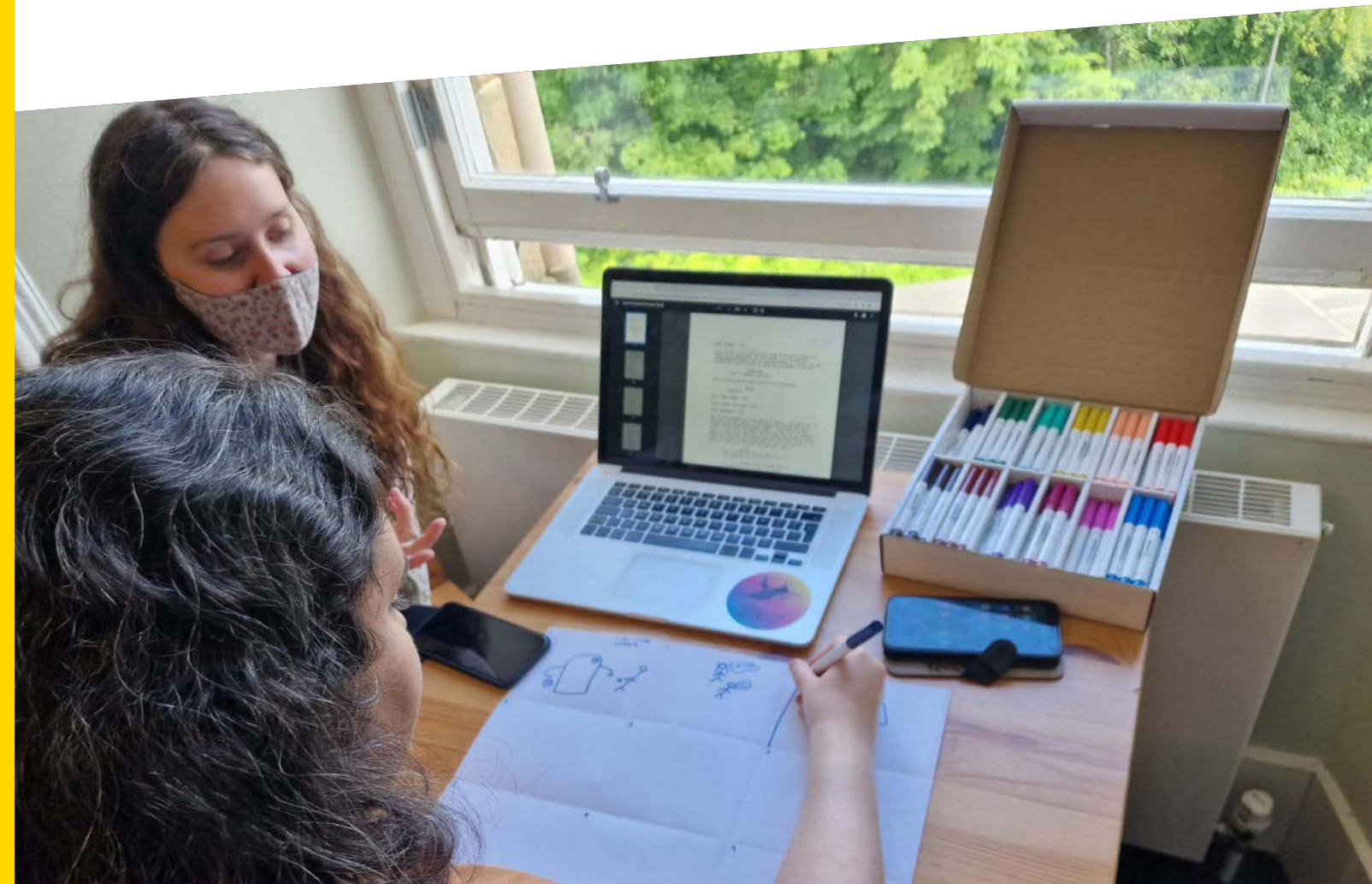
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CashBack Highlands is Eden Court's flagship youth engagement programme for young people aged 12 –24; designed to empower young people to feel more confident, to learn new skills and increase their aspiration.

The programme is embedded in the Highlands, enabling the region's young people to develop their creative skills and contribute to the region as its next generation of cultural producers.

We work with a network of project partners who support young people and their families.

CashBack Highlands is part of CashBack for Communities; a unique Scottish Government programme which takes money seized from criminals under the proceeds of crime legislation and invests them in our future – our young people.



> YEAR 3 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Our third and final year of CashBack for a Creative Highlands was the only year of our Phase 5 programme that wasn't deeply impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic – our building was open for the entire year, and although we made necessary changes to our staffing and to our opening hours, the CashBack programme was unaffected by these.

In April, we were well into the rhythm of delivery with Open Studio sessions and Partner Referral sessions happening weekly. Open Studio provision increased in line with demand. The facilitating team spent a term in residence at Golspie High School as part of our Artists in Communities programme. We also continued our work with Highlife Highland Young Leaders from Alness.

The summer months saw us deliver a Next Steps Programme at Eden Court, and we partnered with Youth Highland for a 2 week long Youth Club Tour in which we visited: Grantown, Merkinch (Inverness), Alness, Bonar Bridge, Balintore, Thurso, Wick and Helmsdale. We partnered with Surge Street Theatre again to support a group of participants to attend Belladrum Festival.

In the autumn term, participants prepared their films for our Film Showcase as part of Inverness Film Festival in November, as well as continuing with their regular weekly Open Studio sessions. We worked in residency

at The Clay Studio in Merkinch, delivering weekly sessions building relationships with young people we met in the summer. And as a festive treat in November, we hosted 125 Care Experienced Young People, Young Carers and participants of other programme areas at our pantomime Peter Pan.

In February, we completed our final Partner Referral project with Connecting Young Carers, supporting young people with caring responsibilities to make two short films about their experiences, with a view to challenging the negative perceptions that often come with being a young carer. These two films were released and promoted as part of Young Carers Action Day.

As we entered our final month of programme delivery, energies turned towards succession planning, and preparing for the final live Showcase Event. It is vitally important to us that we ensure that the participants who have come to depend on our provision can find support, and space to be creative elsewhere.

The final Showcase Event was a really special one – we discuss it in more detail later in this report.

Amongst the successes this year, we worked with 469 young people, from communities across the Highlands. The programme worked with and engaged 18 artists and facilitators.



OUR PARTICIPANTS

We work with young people via referrals and open calls from across the Highlands.

We have a person-centred approach, focusing on the creative strengths of young people, often working 1:1 and in small groups in order to build lasting positive relationships.

We want our participants to feel at home within Eden Court and we pride ourselves on offering support to young people at various points in their lives fostering a long-term love of creativity and the arts!

Some of our participants have worked with us over the course of a number of years; demonstrating that the relationships we have with them are long term and meaningful and through taking part they want to do more with us.

This year we watched CashBack alumni further develop their skills, and move onto Qualification Courses at Eden Court, join our Youth Theatre, start college courses, volunteer with us on events and festivals and some move into paid employment as freelancers supporting the delivery of CashBack.





OUR PARTNERS

Across our programme we work with a number of partner agencies including; Who Cares? Scotland, Highland Council Placement Services Change Team, Connecting Young Carers, Highlife Highland's Youth Development Team.

Needs identified by our partners:

- Boosting young people's confidence to reengage with formal education
- Improving life skills for independent living (self-confidence, pro-social attitudes) Individualised learning plans and one to one support
- Strong relationships between out of school providers and schools

"Most of these young people have never been to Eden Court, this is a big deal and exciting for them. They are finding joy in what they are producing and opening up as social individuals. The team at Eden Court are the real champions of the young people, and unfortunately this is often rare in their lives."

Referral Partner

"The programme at Eden Court has been invaluable for our young person who has found it very difficult to find an appropriate learning environment, and therefore is greatly appreciated."

Referral Partner

OUR PEOPLE

The CashBack Highlands team are a committed and skilled group of artists and facilitators who are dedicated to inspiring and motivating our participants. They encourage a love of creative working where confidence, resilience and wellbeing are at the core of all activities.

Our facilitators including award winning film-makers, djs, theatre makers, dancers, hip-hop artists, graffiti artists and producers.

This creative mix in expertise and skills allows us to bring music production, live performance, film, animation, photography, film making, poetry, script writing, editing, project management and live music mixing to our programme.

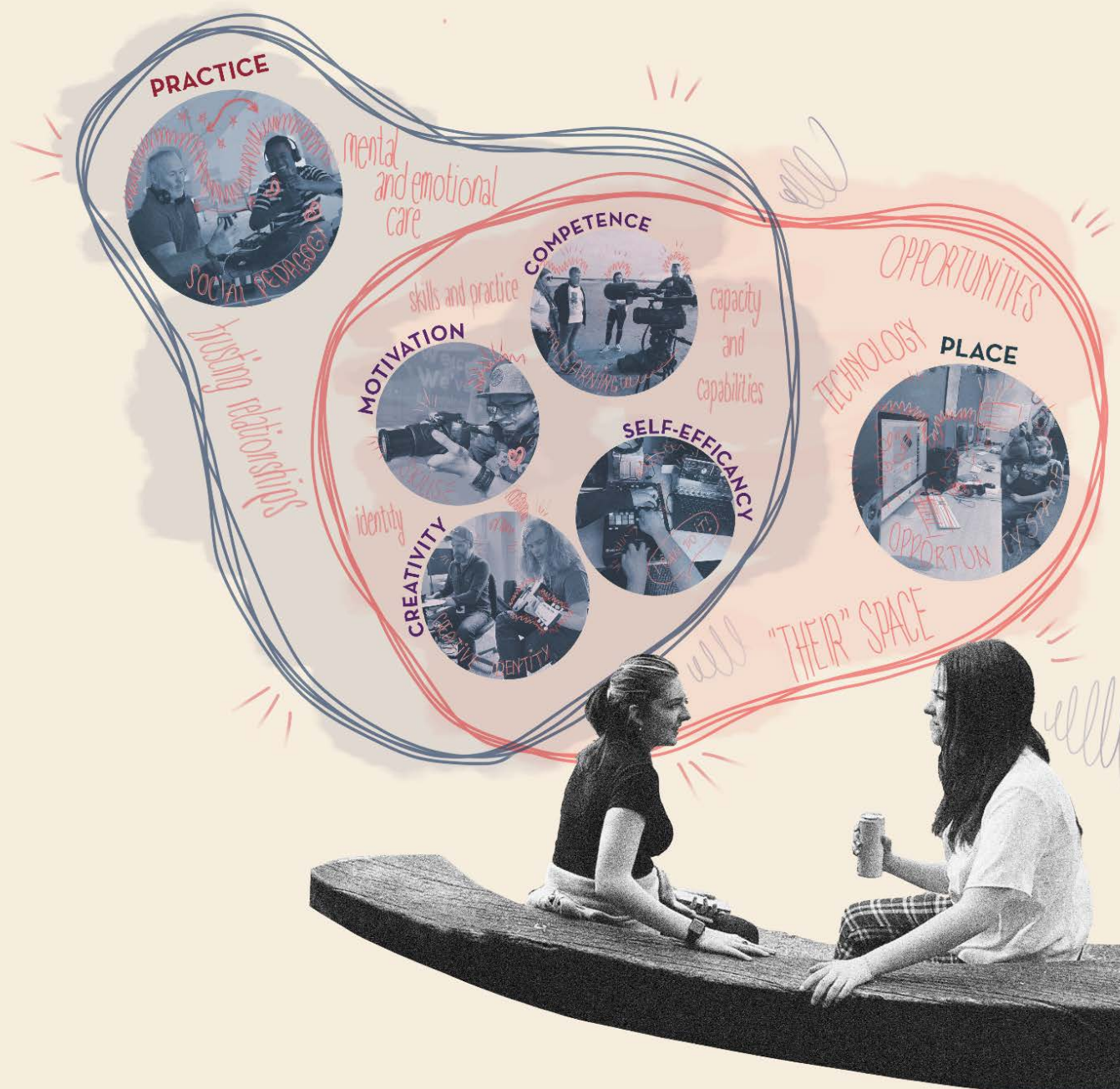
This year we partnered with Surge Street Theatre Company; building on this partnership to bring unique Street Theatre opportunities to young people in the Highlands.



OUR PRACTICE

Positive outcomes for young people are supported by Eden Court through a number of related development processes. The **practice** draws on social pedagogy, putting young people at the centre of the work and making the learning environment more inclusive and exploratory. The **place** itself is very important given the unique spaces on offer and the ability of young people to feel at home there.

Development of **competence, motivation, creativity, and self-efficacy** are all connected and overlap - as young people gain skills they feel more able to do things, their creative ideas flourish, and they are motivated to learn more. This is especially important for those who may not be supported to develop like this in more formal education settings.



CASE STUDY LOUIS

Louis was referred to the Eden Court CashBack Team in March 2020 through his Care Home - Tom's Croft. Louis has been living in Tom's Croft for the past five years and was made aware of what CashBack could offer him through Tom's Croft staff, who had worked with the CashBack team previously. When Louis started with us, he attended one day a week. Louis at this time was enrolled in school, but did not attend and refused to go. He had previously transitioned through a number of secondary schools. Reasons for not attending include bullying, behavioural needs, attitude and a lack of consistency in relation to staffing, activity and approach to his learning.

Louis had a clear goal of what he wanted to get out of the CashBack program at

Eden Court. He did not want to make films, perform or get involved in music production. Louis was a keen gamer and had a growing YouTube channel of video game compilations that he edited on his phone. It was clear he wanted to learn how to edit to a higher standard, and emulate his peers in the gaming community.

Louis attended a session every Friday during term time. His attendance was consistent, unlike school, only missing sessions due to illness or appointments.

Louis was offered the chance to explore film, music making, editing and photography. But it became clear very early on that Louis wanted to specialise in video game editing for montages. His passion is for video games, and editing his clips and others into montage videos. Initially, Louis engagement in general conversation was limited with his behaviour guarded and unresponsive. But if engaged in video game conversations his attitude and engagement changed dramatically - and this became a key mechanism in getting to know him better.

"I have been learning after effects, special effects, blender, and animation for two years now. Sort of because lockdown, and I tried different things, and specialise in video editing, I'm still learning, but have been successful so far. I haven't made a lot, I'm still getting used to everything. But I have had videos shown in the Eden Court showcase events and at the Inverness Film Festival" Louis

"I am more creative and I have been expanding my ideas. I want more of the same and work towards movie special effects" Louis

Over the course of the two plus years working with CashBack at Eden Court, Louis has developed a more positive outlook on his life and has grown in confidence and appears much more comfortable in the CashBack space. He has always been self-starting and focused on the goals he wishes to achieve.

A lot of work and support has been offered to Louis from a number of partners and it should be noted that he now attends school almost full time.



CASE STUDY ALI

Ali is 20 years old, and has been living on his own for the past 3 years after suddenly losing his Mother in 2019.

Ali has had many difficulties to deal with along with grieving the loss of his mother; including a diagnosis of OCD. Since his mother's death Ali has been very isolated, which had a very negative impact on his mental and physical health, and well-being. He would spend most of his time indoors, and found travelling to local towns for shopping, or to meet people, too hard to face because of his anxiety.

Ali has been attending weekly Open Studio CashBack sessions since August 2022. It has had an incredible impact on many areas in his life.

He is very open to trying new things and giving it all a go to see what he wants to focus more on and pursue. So far, Ali has spent time learning Logic Pro X to produce his music, showing real potential in this area. He has also written, performed and recorded his own music as well as the music of others. He has also tried filming, learning to use cameras and other equipment, and has found that this is something that he really connects with. This passion inspired Ali to buy a camera to use and to explore and play with. Ali wants to push himself and is very proactive and is also a good communicator and will ask to try out different things and will talk about his ideas.

"I've really enjoyed this last month and a half that I have been attending the CashBack sessions so far. They have allowed me to form a lot of new connections and experience working in a creative and welcoming environment with people who have similar interests to myself. It truly is the highlight of my week and really benefits my mental health in so many ways. I'm looking forward to what the future holds through everything that the sessions have brought me." Ali

Before attending the sessions, Ali was finding it hard to be out in public. However, since starting with Open Studio we have seen a dramatic improvement in his confidence and sense of self.

Ali is now using public transport, is engaging in the world around him and spending much more time out of his house and in the community. He is building new relationships and enjoying mixing with new people, trying all sorts of new things. He is open and enjoys chatting to other young people/ young adults and Eden Court staff and freelancers.

Ali wants to move forward and wants to keep coming to the sessions at Eden Court, making a film for the Inverness Film Festival and recording his own music to perform at the CashBack Highlands Live Showcase.

Ali is also looking for other opportunities in Eden Court outwith the CashBack programme. The team at Eden Court are going to support Ali through a Youth Scotland Award using one of his creative projects as the focus. Ali is keen to keep developing newly found skills and passions in filmmaking, editing, music writing, music production and performance as well as social skills in working with others, and creating strong relationships with peers and with the facilitating staff.

Ali has a very positive attitude in life and is now ready for exciting new opportunities.

CASE STUDY

ALEJANDRO

Alejandro (Ale) is 18 years old and lives in Elgin. Alejandro has been diagnosed with ADHD and is currently in the process of being assessed by the learning disability team in Elgin. Ale is currently exploring their gender identity.

Ale was referred to us by their Mother, after meeting on another music project that they were attending in 2021.

Ale is very interested in music and it was felt that Open Studio sessions could be something that they would engage with. Ale's mother was hoping that this would be something that they would enjoy, have interest in and further develop their music skills along with relationship building and confidence.

Ale has been attending pretty much on a weekly basis, sometimes twice a week, and has shown a lot of potential in playing the bass guitar, using music software Logic Pro X and creating beats and synth patterns using MIDD and MIDI controllers. They are also really good at dancing and loves using the cameras to make short films.

Ale has demonstrated a huge ability in all the areas mentioned and the relaxed, playful nature of the format of Open Studios has worked well for them. After having had someone to one tuition and a performance

opportunity at the CashBack Showcase event in March, Ale has expressed interest in pursuing DJ'ing as a hobby.

The Open Studio sessions are not like a formal classroom, which is something Ale has struggled with. The practitioners at Eden Court are not teachers which has worked to our advantage and has established a creative environment that Ale has functioned well in. Ale liked both working with other people and on their own, and having the freedom to try different things in the studio.

Ale achieved a lot with these sessions. Just being here every week and focusing on a project was a big achievement for them – and the team at Eden Court have witnessed Ale's confidence grow, and their skills develop over this time. Ale's social interactions with other participants have been strengthened too.

Alejandro felt really happy about all the positive feedback they received regarding their sessions; how well they had been doing in them, and the relationships they have developed during Open Studio.

One of the next steps for Ale is that they will be setting up a home studio in their house. This will be a great focus for them to build on their gained experience with music production, playing live instruments and DJ'ing. Having the freedom to nurture these skills at home will undoubtedly help focus their boundless energy and enthusiasm.





PROJECT FOCUS

CASHBACK HIGHLANDS SHOWCASE

Every year the CashBack Highlands Live Showcase is something to look forward to, and that was no exception this year. On learning that the programme would be coming to a close, we made the decision to use our final showcase event as an opportunity to, not only, celebrate the work and achievements of participants, but also to acknowledge the achievements of CashBack funded work in the Highlands over the last decade.

Across the evening's performance, which was planned and curated by Open Studio participants. 16 young people presented a mix of film, live music, live djing, drag performance and original music to an audience of 75 people.

Showcase events; whether live, in our theatre, or film showcases, in our cinemas, are an important part of the CashBack Highlands programme and they mean a huge amount to the young people taking part.



Some highlights from the event can be found here:
<https://vimeo.com/digiteamedencourt/cashbackshowcase2023>

RESPONSIBILITIES



PROJECT FOCUS

CONNECTING YOUNG CARERS FILMS

In February, for our final Partner Referral project, we worked with Connecting Young Carers – a long-time partner and beneficiary of the CashBack for Communities programme in the Highlands.

Connecting Young Carers approached us about supporting some of their young people to make some short films which they could use as advocacy tools to share on Young Carers Action Day in March 2023.

The young people worked with the CashBack for a Creative Highlands team, and some colleagues from the Children's Commission over two days – sharing their experiences of being a young carers, the stigma they often face, and connecting this to their rights as young people and as young carers.

The young people made two short films – which were shared on social media, but also with Elected Members and other stakeholders in the Highlands.

If you'd like to see the films –
 you can so do by following these links:
<https://vimeo.com/805903338/1d6f60b547>
<https://vimeo.com/805907159/a8ddd8fde6>



PROJECT FOCUS

GIVEBACK PANTOMIME

As part of our Go, See, Share Fund, in December 2022, we welcomed over 125 young people to a matinee GiveBack performance of our Peter Pan, our festive pantomime.

The young people and their families were treated to a programme and ice-cream alongside their complimentary tickets.

As well as participants from our various programmes, we also welcomed care experienced young people and young carers from across the Highlands – all of whom were identified by our project partners as being unlikely to be able to attend the pantomime otherwise.

We asked the young people to review their experience, and thankfully we were awarded 5 star rave reviews.

“My favourite character was Tinkerbell.”

“I liked the flying.”

“We had a great time, thank you very much for letting us go”

YEAR 3 IN NUMBERS

469

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WORKED WITH

220

NUMBER OF UNIQUE CREATIVE SESSIONS

18

ARTISTS DELIVERING THE PROGRAMME

PROJECT SPEND

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	YR 3 TOTALS
Community Artists in Schools	£18,301	£20,512	£13,664	£17,959	£70,436
Open Studio	£6,145	£3,747	£7,411	£6,446	£23,749
Partner Referral Pathways	£ –	£3,018	£3,018	£3,018	£9,054
Next Steps Programme	£ –	£3,716	£3,025	£2,646	£9,387
Continuing Professional Development	£363	£250	£250	£259	£1,122
Young Promoters/ Youth Arts Awards	£ –	£1,191	£450	£500	£2,141
Showcase Events	£ –	£ –	£3490	£3,924	£7,414
Progression and Invite Go and See Funds	£440	£1,000	£1,875	£ –	£3,315
Accessibility / Translation	£300	£300	£300	£300	£1,200
Core Project Team Costs	£8,458	£8,458	£8,458	£11,613	£36,987
Management and Marketing	£3,160	£3,160	£3,160	£3,160	£12,640
External Evaluation	£5,250	£ –	£ –	£5,250	£10,500
TOTAL	£42,417	£45,352	£45,101	£55,075	£187,945

All of the activity his year was delivered in the Highland Council Local Authority area.

£187,945

TOTAL SPEND



OVER

21%

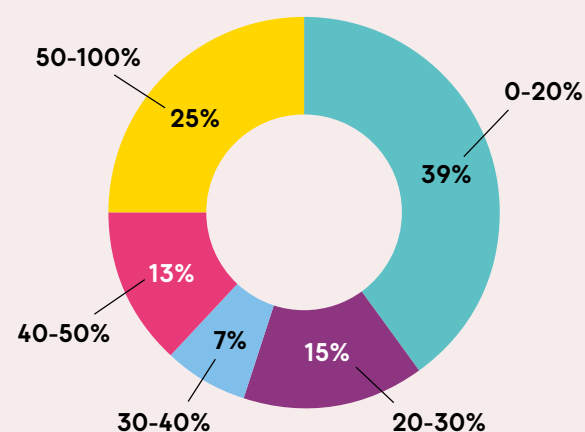
OF OUR PARTICIPANTS
IDENTIFIED AS HAVING
ONE OR MORE DISABILITY.

OVER

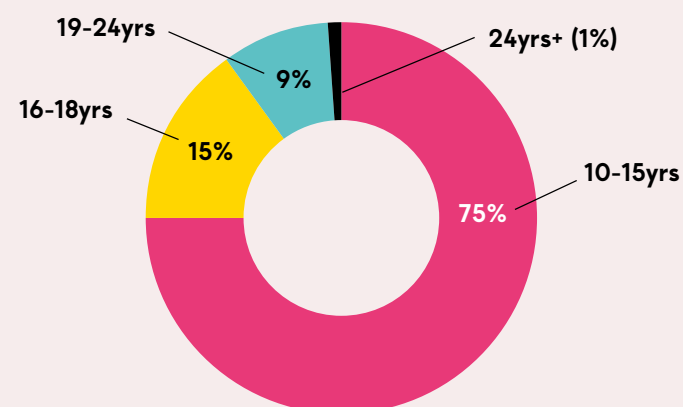
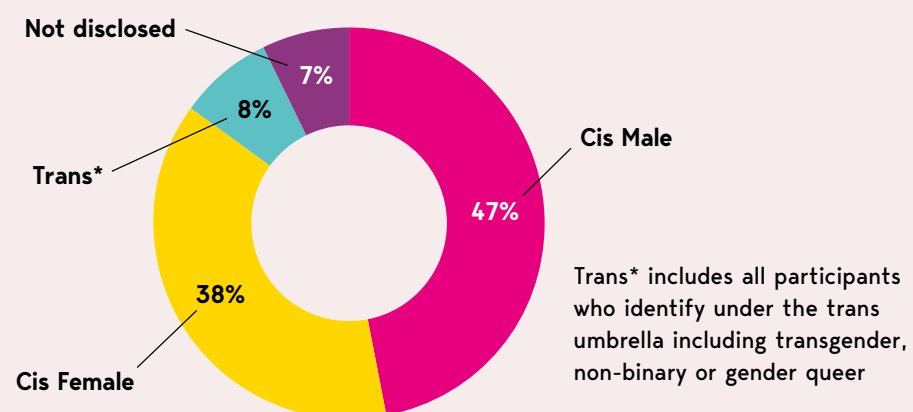
10%

OF OUR PARTICIPANTS
IDENTIFIED AS BEING
PART OF THE LGBTQIA+
COMMUNITY.

SIMD BREAKDOWN



AGE BREAKDOWN

GENDER
BREAKDOWN

EDEN COURT HIGHLANDS UPDATE 2022-23

Eden Court provides an extraordinary choice of arts and cultural experiences for everybody in the Highlands and Islands, including live performances of all genres in our two theatres, a curated programme of films in our cinemas and creative classes and activities for all ages, abilities and interests in our dance and education studios.

As the only major performance arts venue and independent cinema in the region, our programming is diverse to meet the needs of our widespread audience. People regularly travel from all parts of the Highlands and Moray to attend events at Eden Court and rely on us to provide access to high quality arts and culture. An estimated 300,000 people come through our doors each year, in a region with a total population of just 235,000.

Live Performance & Producing

In 22/23, Eden Court returned to full-form post-pandemic with a packed live programme across our Empire (840 seat) and OneTouch (260 seat) theatre spaces. We welcomed 150,000 ticket bookers over 350 live performances of 175 different productions. Highlights included:

- New productions from Scotland's national companies:
 - Scottish Ballet's *The Scandal at Mayerling*, *Coppelia* and *The Snow Queen*.
 - Scottish Opera's *Don Giovanni* and *The Verdi Collection*.

- National Theatre of Scotland's *Orphans and Burn*.
- RSNO's *Viennese Gala*.
- Our Christmas pantomime, *Peter Pan*, was seen by over 36,000 audience members and became Eden Court's most financially successful pantomime on record. It also received positive reviews, including a 5* review stating: 'Consistently, Inverness' Eden Court proves itself to be among the best pantomimes in Scotland. This year they might well have topped the list.'
- High-quality large-scale productions, such as *James IV – Queen of the Fight*, *SIX The Musical* and *Pride & Prejudice** (*sort of).
- Year-round shows for children, including *The Wonderful Story of Henry Sugar* and *Around the World in 80 Days*.
- Comedy from household names such as Alan Carr, Stewart Lee and Maisie Adam.
- Creative Scotland supported Touring Fund shows, including *A Wee Journey* by Farah Saleh and Oğuz Kaplangi, *Thunderstuck* by David Colvin and *549: Scots of the Spanish Civil War* by Wonder Fools.
- 37 accessible performances, including BSL, Audio Described, Captioned and Relaxed performances, as well as Touch Tours.

Eden Court also co-produced original productions, including:

- The Stamping Ground – a brand new musical featuring the songs of Runrig, co-produced with Raw Material Arts. The creative company behind the show included Morna Young as Writer, John Kielty as Musical Director, Luke Kernaghan as Director and Kenneth MacLeod as Designer. 7,600 people saw the show over its two-week run at Eden Court and it garnered 4* reviews from The Times, The Scotsman and The Guardian.
- In December, we presented Unicorn Dance Party, the second production developed through our co-producing relationship with Capital Theatres and Aberdeen Performing Arts. Through this partnership, we have developed three brand new Christmas shows, with each presented at our respective venues on a three-year rotation. In 2023, one of the three shows – The Gift (Capital Theatres and Barrowland Ballet) – won the Critics' Awards for Theatre in Scotland (CATS) award for Best Production for Children and Young People.
- We also produced our annual outdoor music festival Under Canvas, which took place throughout July and August with 170 artists performing and 8,000 audience members attending. This included a number of special events, such as a week of music and storytelling as part of Scotland's Year of Stories. Recognising the central role Under Canvas now plays in the Highlands' summer cultural calendar, it has been shortlisted in the 2023 Highlands & Islands Thistle Awards in the category of Outstanding Cultural Event or Festival.

Film & Visual Arts

In November 2022, Eden Court delivered the 20th Inverness Film Festival, which was attended by over 2,000 people across six days. It included thirty-three feature films, several shorts and a series of free industry events for young people as part of our Behind the Scenes partnership with Glasgow Film. Support from Film Hub Scotland enabled us to present a panel discussion for Scottish documentary feature The Oil Machine and a live score from the internationally acclaimed silent accompanist Stephen Horne alongside 1919's Behind the Door.

Our year-round film programme had eclectic content, with over 1,850 screenings of 340 different films seen by 45,000 people. These included blockbuster, independent, family and international films. The top five most attended films of the year were Top Gun: Maverick, Elvis, Downton Abbey: A New Era, Roald Dahl's Matilda the Musical and Living. Beyond our base in Inverness, we continued to support Cromarty Cinema through the procurement of films and hosting of their Cinema Manager position.

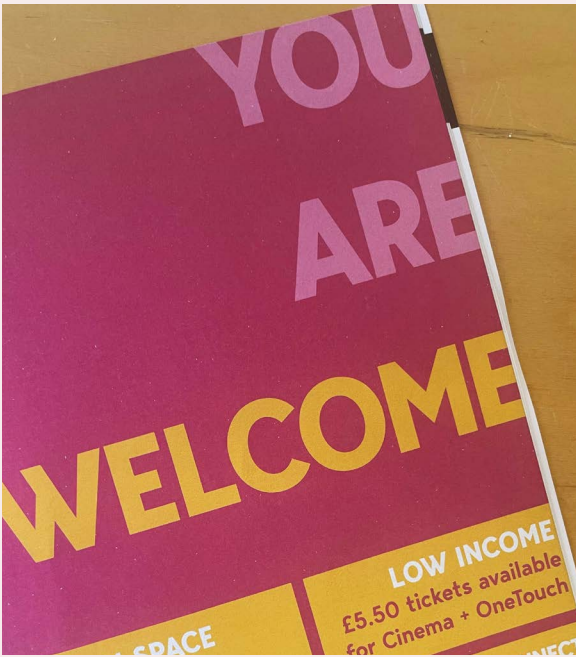
In relation to Visual Arts, in 22/23, Eden Court presented 36 exhibitions across our three gallery spaces, providing exhibition opportunities for 85 visual artists.



Engagement

Eden Court delivers a wide-ranging programme of engagement activity, aimed at enabling people to express their creativity in a variety of ways, in 22/23 this included:

- A year-round Studio Programme of creative classes and activities for all ages and abilities across dance, drama, singing and filmmaking. This included opportunities to make and showcase work, as well as activity aimed at particular groups, such as Dance for Parkinson's and I Heart Drama for disabled adults. In 22/23, 8,000 people engaged in activities spanning 550 classes.
- An annual programme of National 5, Highers and AS Level Qualification Courses across Dance, Drama and Filmmaking for up to 50 students from across the Highland region.
- Facilitated safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ Community, such as Queer Youth Arts Collective. Eden Court is also working towards an LGBTQ+ Charter and Rainbow Mark accreditation by 2024.
- A programme supporting at-risk young people to develop their creative and technical skills, funded through Scottish Government's Cashback for Communities (until March 2023).
- Funded opportunities for Young Artists, which in 22/23 included two Youth Arts Bursaries.
- Programmes, tours and workshops for Primary Schools and Nurseries across the Highland region.
- Collaborations with partners and clients on a variety of Projects, Events and Festivals, such as Belladrum Music Festival.
- A partnership with UK-wide project, Fun Palaces, exploring how Eden Court can share resources with communities and support cultural democracy across the Highlands.



Artist Support

In 2022, we launched the Eden Court Connect scheme – an Artist Support package that formalised and expanded on the organisation’s existing artist support offer. Eden Court Connect provides free space for theatre artists to develop work; offers networking events in order to better facilitate a local artistic community; and provides mentoring and support in areas such as Producing and Marketing. This programme seeks to respond to the issue of a lack of consistent support for Highland-based artists, resulting in many of them relocating further south.

We also provided paid opportunities for artists through an Unlimited R&D commission, several Historic Environment Scotland Gaelic research assignments, four new music commissions for artists performing at Under Canvas and a show supported through the Pleasance National Partnerships programme.

You Are Welcome Campaign

In November 2022, we launched the You Are Welcome campaign, which sought to amplify and extend Eden Court’s commitment to open our building up to everyone in the community. This campaign comprised of three strands:

- Warm Spaces – we signed up to the UK-wide Warm Spaces initiative and provided regular reminders that we are open as a space for people to spend time seven days a week, without any pressure to make a purchase.
- New pricing options – we introduced a Low-Income ticket price for our OneTouch Theatre and Cinema programmes, enabling people to pay just £5.50 to attend. In addition, we introduced Pay It Forward tickets across our studio classes, where people can choose to pay slightly more for their own ticket in order to fund spaces for other people.
- 3. Community Table – a free, bookable space for community groups to meet at any time that the building is open.

In addition, in 22/23 we have further progressed our commitment to the promotion of Gaelic language and culture. We secured funding from Bord Na Gaidhlig to recruit a Gaelic Project Manager and refreshed Eden Court’s Gaelic Language plan, which outlines five priority areas, ranging from staff development to organisational communications to artistic programmi

OUTCOME 1

“Young people build their confidence and resilience, benefit from support networks and reduce risk taking behaviour.”

82%
reported increased confidence

78%
reported that they were able to do new things

86%
reported that they felt more resilient

81%
reported that they had supportive networks

87%
reported that they had made a positive change in their behaviour

OUTCOME 2

“Young people develop their personal and physical skills.”

80%
reported improved skills

OUTCOME 3

“Young people’s health and wellbeing improves.”

85%
reported improved wellbeing

OUTCOME 4

“Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations).”

74%
reported an improved attitude to education

77%
reported increased motivation to learn

OUTCOME 5

“Young people contribute positively to their communities.”

84%
reported an improved perception of their neighbourhood

74%
reported better links to their community

69%
reported that they wanted to make a difference to their community

65%
reported that they felt a stronger sense of belonging to their community

OUTCOME 6

“Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system.”

Our evaluation focuses on the risks and barriers that our participants face, and how those who are most at risk of exploitation or becoming involved in crime are able to use the programme as a positive developmental activity. Strong results for outcomes 1 - 5 evidences this, as well as feedback from parents, referral partners and other stakeholders.

YEAR 3 EVALUATION IN SHORT

Evaluation Approach

We use two main methods to explore Cashback outcomes. The first is a post-participation survey asking participants to reflect on their experience and how it has affected their learning and development. The survey deliberately asks participants to reflect on the development of their creative and practical skills and abilities, alongside indicators relating to psychosocial development aligned to the nature of the activity (i.e., self-efficacy, feeling supported, ideation, commitment and motivation to learning). We have survey responses from 43% of participants, a reliable sample representative of participants' experiences in this context. Qualitative data comes from regular site visits including interviews with participants, practitioners and staff, and referral partners. Year 3 included visits in August, November and March, including three focus groups, 10 participant interviews, three referral partner interviews, two staff workshops and regular observation of sessions.

Outcomes

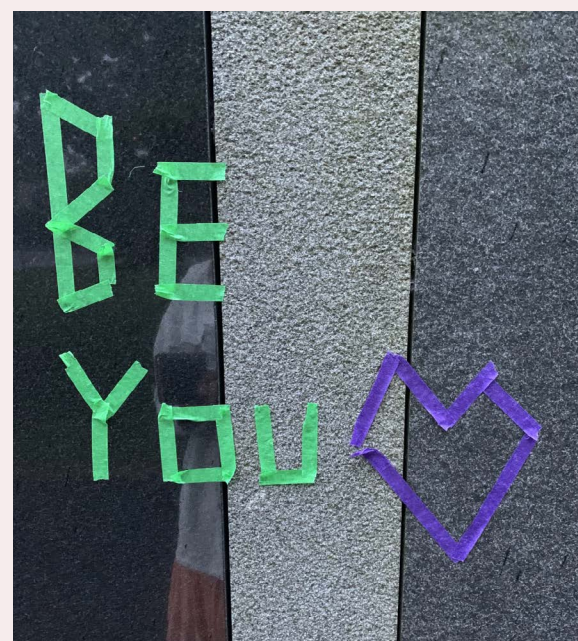
Strong outcomes and impacts were reported for psychosocial outcomes (i.e., confidence, positive behaviour and learning, ability to do new things), wellbeing, and attitudes towards learning. Many participants reported that they were inspired to rethink their careers and creative identities as a result of taking part.

Stakeholders discussed how the approach to practice at Eden Court creates a safe and trusting environment where young people are supported to develop on their own terms, and in many cases provides a nurturing environment not always available to them elsewhere.

Qualitative research with participants and stakeholders indicated further important outcomes relating to the importance of the relationships developed with practitioners, the need for practice to remain flexible and responsive, the importance of alternative communities for many young people, and how the programme has contributed to young people being able to imagine positive future selves.

Why does it work?

The Cashback Highlands practitioners have developed an approach to their practice which draws on the values and principles of social pedagogy. This method is about ensuring that young people who have complex lives, and in many cases are trauma-experienced, can develop supportive relationships with adults, can direct their learning according to their own terms, can identify ways in which they are progressing, and can build and develop supportive communities. The care and attention of the Eden Court staff team is central to enabling positive outcomes for those taking part.



Recommendations

Since continuation funding for Cashback Highlands Phase 6 (2023-2026) was not successful, there is an opportunity for the Open Studio element to be reviewed and enhanced through funding from other sources. This is an essential service for many vulnerable young people across Inverness and the Highlands at a time when other services are under strain. It is also a core progression route for a diverse and representative cohort of young people unlikely to progress in other mainstream education settings in the same way. The focus of Eden Court moving forward should be on how to develop an offer that makes the most of the sophisticated practice and meaningful relationships (with participants, their families, and referral partners) that have been developed in Phase 5.

Evaluation and impact of the CashBack for a Creative Highlands programme was undertaken by Dr. Douglas Lonie and the team at there is an alternative (tialt.)



WHAT NEXT?

We remain committed to the young people we have nurtured, and built relationships with over this three year phase of CashBack for Communities funded activity, and are activity seeking further funding to support the continuation of the Open Studio model of provision.

Whilst we explore the funding options available to us, we created a Hangout space for participants to come to Eden Court once a fortnight to connect with the team and to connect with each other. Our Hangout sessions began in early April and remain ongoing and we are confident that they are providing a much needed space in the interim between CashBack funded activity and whatever comes next.

In July 2023, we received word that a funding bid to the National Lottery Young Start Fund was successful, and we have secured funding to deliver Futures Studio (a newly imagined progression of the Open Studio model) for the following three years.

“Funded work coming to an end is naturally disappointing, but we remain committed to providing opportunities for young people to engage with the arts, particularly those who have faced barriers to accessing these opportunities previously. We are delighted to have found a new funder to support some of this vital work and look forward to welcoming participants back to Eden Court on a weekly basis later this year.

Eden Court's Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion action plan prioritises people who have faced such barriers, and will continue to deliver this type of work until the arts and culture sector is more accessible and better representative of the world we live in”

Lucy McGlennon, Head of Engagement,
Eden Court

CASHBACK HIGHLANDS

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