

# **Reconnecting: The Cashback Highlands Impact Report 2021-2022**



**Cashback Highlands Year 2 Evaluation report**

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## Executive summary

Cashback Highlands is Eden Court's flagship youth engagement programme, 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.

### Outputs

Year 2 of the Cashback Highlands programme engaged 549 young people across four core programme strands (Under Canvas, Open Studio, Next Steps and the Creative Learning Programme). The biggest proportion of participants were aged 10-15 (79%), with the remaining 21% aged between 16 and 24. Participants have been engaged from across the Highlands, and participants living in the most deprived areas of Inverness have been successfully targeted and engaged in the programme. The Creative Learning Programme has engaged with 12 schools in the region, despite ongoing pandemic restrictions.

### Outcomes

All six national outcomes for the Cashback for Communities programme have been successfully demonstrated in Year 2, in line with the expectations set out in the grant award letter. They are particularly strong for psychosocial outcomes (i.e., confidence, ability to do new things, resilience) and for education and wellbeing. Slightly lower scores were identified for community-level outcomes, but this may be due to how the concept of community is understood or experienced by participants. Eden Court provides a rich and rewarding community for participants, but this may be regarded as a positive exception to some other communities they are attached to (e.g., school, neighbourhoods).

Alongside the national outcomes Cashback Highlands has catalysed the 'Queer Youth Arts Collective', a new youth-led and self-sustaining forum engaging nearly 40 young people in discussion and action relating to their cultural lives and opportunities. Initiatives like this, and the growing Cashback Highlands programme are helping to reframe the status of the young artist participants within Eden Court and across broader communities. Cashback Highlands continues to develop and operate a sophisticated model of practice enabling positive outcomes to be achieved with young people often with complex lives and needs.

### Why does it work?

The Cashback Highlands model draws on social pedagogy – putting young people's voices at the centre of the work, adapting to individual abilities and needs, and providing a safe and supportive learning environment. Young people develop across four interrelated aspects: competence, creativity, motivation, and self-efficacy. They are supported to express themselves in whichever medium they like, collaborate with each other and with the practitioners, developing new positive identities and self-concepts in the process.

### Recommendations

Building on the successful pandemic-response phase of Year 2, Year 3 brings the opportunity to target young people more directly involved in the youth justice system, to broker new relationships with schools and community organisations across the region, and to embed 'Cashback graduates' more formally in Eden Court's engagement activities. In doing so, the programme will continue to improve even more young people's lives and grow its reputation as a high-quality, thoughtful, and genuinely transformative model of practice.

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## 1. The Cashback Highlands Programme

Cashback Highlands is Eden Court's flagship youth engagement programme and is part of the Scotland-wide Cashback for Communities programme which uses money seized from criminals to reinvest in young people and create more positive futures.

The programme is designed to empower young people to feel more confident, to learn new skills and increase their aspiration. It exists within a broader national aim to reduce offending and antisocial behaviour and improve lives through building stronger communities. In line with Eden Court's mission, 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.

The Year 2 programme focused on getting things 'back on track' after the persistent closures caused by the pandemic in Year 1. The originally planned programme had to be adjusted to accommodate remaining restrictions. Taking a thoughtful and flexible approach to what activities could be carried out realistically and safely at each stage of the year, the Eden Court team has provided a broad and relevant engagement programme for young people, despite the ongoing challenges created by the pandemic. The Year 2 programme consisted of the following four main elements:

**Under Canvas** – an update to the original 'Next Steps' strand, young people from different referral partners were brought onsite to the outdoor stage area to take part in different creative activities (including film, music, and theatre). This consisted of five three-day blocs being delivered during the summer holidays in 2021.

**Open Studio** – Starting again in August 2021 and running for 32 weeks a year, Open Studio enables any young person who wants to come into Eden Court to develop their creative skills every Friday. Working with young people who have built a relationship with the organisation over time, as well as engaging new young people via referral partners (including Highland Council, Who Cares Scotland, and local schools), Open Studio allows young people to come and try a broad range of creative activities in a supported environment.

**Next Steps** – Next Steps provides a focused progression programme for young people who want to develop their creative skills in a 3–5-day residency in Eden Court, usually collaborating on producing a creative output (e.g., a film, a performance, a recording). These blocs are usually run throughout the year and arranged with referral partners to ensure young people who could benefit most from the opportunity are given access.

**Creative Learning Programme** – Recognising the ongoing difficulties faced by schools in relation to the pandemic, the originally intended 'Artist in Residency' strand was repackaged as a more responsive and flexible programme where Eden Court Artist Practitioners could design a bespoke project in partnership with schools and community groups across the region. This has included projects on street theatre, youth leadership, tie-in workshops with performances at Eden Court, and music and film workshops with primary and high schools.

A full list of sessions and activities delivered over the year is provided in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1 - OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES IN 2021-2022

<b>2021 Apr</b>	Venue closed LGBTQI network begins online	<b>2021 May</b>	Venue reopening preparation	<b>2021 Jun</b>	Delivery begins again Who Cares Scotland Outdoors Filming (2 days)
<b>2021 Jul</b>	Under Canvas (15 days) Surge Street Theatre (6 days in Inverness and Alness)	<b>2021 Aug</b>	Open Studio (weekly, 3 sessions a day) Mikey's Line Film (3 days)	<b>2021 Sep</b>	Open Studio
<b>2021 Oct</b>	Open Studio Next Steps (3 days x 2 groups) NTS The Enemy (8 days, 4 schools)	<b>2021 Nov</b>	Open Studio Alness Youth Club (5 sessions) Film and Music Showcases	<b>2021 Dec</b>	Break (School shows cancelled due to Covid)
<b>2022 Jan</b>	Open Studio Power of Sound (1 High School, 4 Primary Schools, 30 sessions)	<b>2022 Feb</b>	Open Studio Alness Young Leaders (3 days) Care Day (Workshop and party)	<b>2022 Mar</b>	Make Up (performance and workshop, 5 High Schools) Golspie High School (4 days)

Interviews with the staff team indicated several considerations that fed-in to the redesign of the programme for Year 2:

- Running Next Steps as a back-to-back summer programme enabled the team to ‘shout’ about the fact that Cashback Highlands was back in action and celebrate this (securely) with the facilities provided by Under Canvas
- A key focus of all activity has been to take a ‘spacious’ approach – recognising that many young people, particularly those experiencing additional challenges, need to be supported to socialise again after the pandemic, and to gain confidence in taking part in creative activities whether alone or collaboratively
- Another key focus has been to just get young people ‘making and doing things again’ recognising that the pandemic has limited many young people’s access to creative facilities and technology
- There is an ongoing effort to further nurture existing relationships with schools and to develop new ones. The change from having an artist in residence to offering several artists to be available for bespoke creative learning programmes is a sensible response to the disruptions the pandemic has created in schools, however it also requires work to build trusting relationships and develop the type of projects schools need and can accommodate.
- Proposed ‘tie-ins’ with the Eden Court programme (i.e., working with high schools to offer creative workshops around attending planned performances at the venue) have been responsive to changing restrictions. They have been successful when possible, but often performances have been cancelled or postponed last minute, which has also required a flexible response on all sides.
- Exploring the monitoring data at the end of Year 1, the team noticed that a relatively large proportion of participants were identifying as queer or non-binary. In response, the team set up an LGBTQI+ session in the online conference at the end of the year. From this session of three young people there has emerged the ‘Queer Youth Arts Collective’ now engaging 37 young people from across the Highlands online each week to discuss how creativity and culture can support them to have their voices heard.

These adaptations show how the Cashback Highlands programme has been adapted to an ever-evolving context in the latter stages of the pandemic. The team has engaged in regular reflection to consider how best to adapt the programme and drawn on their extensive networks of referral partners and schools to ensure that wherever it was possible to provide opportunities this was done. In this sense Year 2 has represented a much more active ‘pandemic response’ phase than was possible in Year 1. The final section of this report outlines how this can be developed further into Year 3.

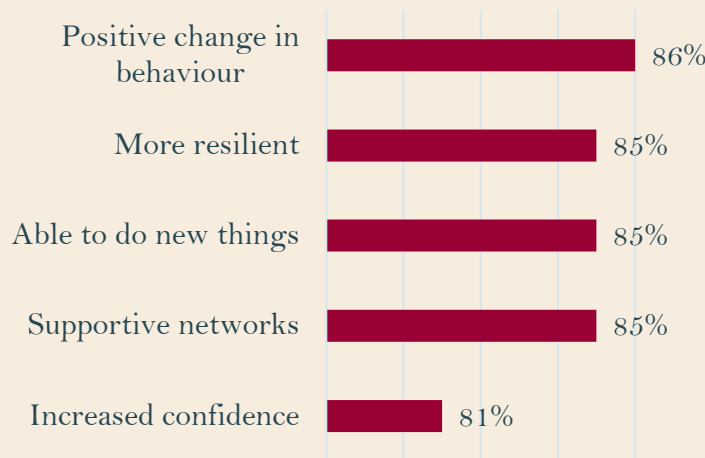
## 2. Achievement against the Cashback for Communities outcomes

The Cashback for Communities national programme has six outcomes that funded projects must seek to achieve and report on:

- Outcome 1: Young people build their confidence and resilience, benefit from strengthened support networks and reduce risk taking behaviour
- Outcome 2: Young people develop their physical and personal skills
- Outcome 3: Young people's health and well-being improves
- Outcome 4: Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations)
- Outcome 5: Young people contribute positively to their communities
- Outcome 6: Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

The original grant agreement for the programme had an aspiration to involve 1,420 participants over three years. Clearly this aspiration has been affected by the nine months of building closure in Year 1. The total number of participants in Year 2 was 463, with a further 53 taking part in Year 1, indicating a relatively high programme total of 516, considering the limitations on activities. The reporting against outcomes below summarises the percentage of participants reporting 'agree or strongly agree' against the dimensions measured and show that in all cases there has been positive impacts reported in line with the targets agreed in the grant letter.

FIGURE 2 - PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES



Participants reported strong psychosocial development across all aspects measured. Stakeholders (i.e., referral organisations, schools) also reported clear positive psychosocial outcomes for those taking part.

[participant] was very shy and withdrawn, especially disconnected after the pandemic, and not particularly supported by school. Working with [practitioner], practicing and recording the guitar has completely transformed her character, she now carries herself in a totally different way. It's really quite remarkable, the difference.

**-Referral partner interview**

**FIGURE 3 - EDUCATION AND WELLBEING OUTCOMES**

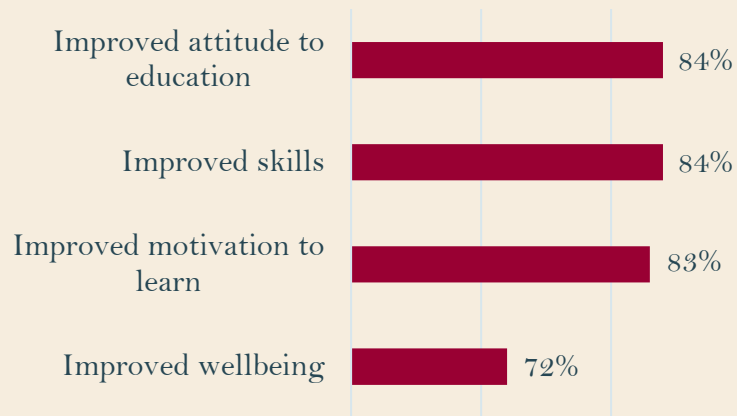


Figure 3 shows strong responses in relation to education and wellbeing. Education outcomes reflect participants having a positive attitude towards learning and motivation to learn more rather than reflecting actual attendance or attainment. The design of the programme is such that many workshops are taking place in schools (i.e., pupils are present), or for Open Studio or Next Steps, it is often the case that young people are being provided with activities as an alternative to formal education. Likewise, it is unlikely that the length and scale of projects could have a significant impact on attainment in a schools context, and achievements in the out of school context are recorded differently (discussed further in Section 3 below).

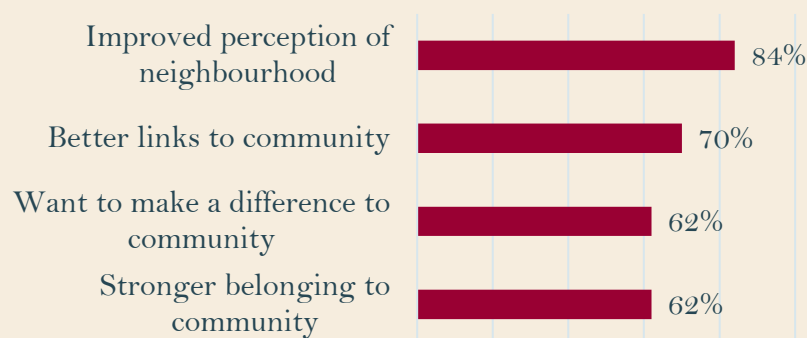
The slightly lower score for wellbeing likely reflects the fact that this is measured by feeling safe, secure, listened to, and supported by the Eden Court staff team which is higher for those attending on-site projects than would be expected in a school setting, whether a one-off workshop, or over a few days.

We work with young carers, those who need the chance for fun, a break from caring and a chance to meet peers from their community. I think we have seen the greatest change in individuals confidence and belief in themselves. We have also had some grow their talents which was down to the motivation from the workers running the sessions. Cashback truly makes the sessions fit for the young person. Not being too rigid gives freedom for expression and creativity but also gives space for them to be shy, anxious and unsure to start and not feel pressured.

- Referral partner interview



**FIGURE 4 - COMMUNITY OUTCOMES**



While still high and in line with the targets set out in the grant letter, there were slightly lower scores identified against the community outcomes. As with wellbeing, some element of this is explained by the fact that the schools projects tend not to focus on connecting with communities and more on developing skills and confidence in new artforms and techniques. Beyond that, and discussed further in the following section, it may be that the concept of community in Cashback Highlands should be reconfigured to reflect the emerging community of practice that is connected to Eden Court as a venue (i.e., including other participants, artists and practitioners), which would also likely be less observable in lower-dosage school settings, but could be an interesting line of enquiry for the programme and evaluation in Year 3.

### **Findings from qualitative data collection**

The qualitative findings are based on three site visits in Year 2, including three focus groups with participants, interviews with young people, referral partners, and the staff team. The themes emerging from the analysis indicate both additional outcomes not represented in the Cashback for Communities national framework, as well as outlining the mechanisms by which positive outcomes are achieved (i.e., what it is about the practice and experience that is leading to positive changes for young people).

### **Creative and artistic development**

Participants report that they are allowed to take creative risks, explore new ideas, and challenge themselves and each other to engage in activities and produce outputs that are new to them. They suggest it is the experimental space, alongside the opportunity to exchange ideas with the artist practitioners and with each other, that pushes them to take their ideas to the next level.

Interviews with the creative team highlight how this is a deliberate tactic. Creativity flourishes when rules are rolled back and young people are encouraged to discover their own paths, often leading to interesting collaborations across artforms. The artist practitioners are there to 'scaffold' the learning experience (i.e., indicate what may or may not be possible within the facilities and resources available) rather than to suggest or insist on creative content. Once a young person has indicated a clear interest in a particular artform or medium they are supported to outline how they need to develop their skills and learning, including collaboration, to make their visions a reality.

Another aspect discussed by referral partners and participants was how the programme acts as a way of acknowledging and validating young people's creative identities. Being seen as, and treated as, artists, improves participants' creative self-concept. This process can also serve to 'override' some negative identities that they have either internalised themselves or have been imposed by others (e.g., 'problem child').

## **Socialising and creating a supportive environment**

Regular participants indicated how important the social aspect of the programme is in terms of building a trusted 'family' among each other and with the practitioners, as well as how the space enables them somewhere to relax and feel comfortable being themselves. Many described how this is quite different to school and college which can be socially stressful, particularly for neurodiverse participants or those with additional support needs.

This 'relaxed' element of the practice was also described by the staff team and referral partners as much needed and effective. During the Under Canvas residencies one of the referral partners remarked:

This is so essential after the pandemic. Today, this is the first time these young people have been together. It's the first time we've seen them in person. Most of them will have had quite challenging home environments over these past months and it's so important that they just get a chance to chill and breathe and have an experience of just enjoying themselves again.

**-Referral partner interview**

This was echoed by the staff team and in observations where it was clear that participants needed to be given space to get to know each other (or become reacquainted after pandemic separation), allow them and practitioners to figure out what their mood and motivation is like, and then be supported by the practitioners to pursue their interests, which also may change within the day or over several days. A 'spacious' approach was described as especially important after the pandemic given that many young people have been presenting with higher levels of stress and anxiety.

For some of the young people who have had particularly difficult experiences the team take a very sensitive approach to getting them involved. This can include providing a few sessions where no practical activity is needed or expected, but that the practitioners are available to chat through a young person's experience and establish 'where they are at' in terms of any complicated aspects of their lives, as well as how engaging in a creative programme may be of interest or benefit to them.

## **Imagining future selves and developing career aspirations**

Participants often mentioned how the space was very different to what's possible for them at home or school, both in terms of the facilities, but also that a friendly, low-pressure environment enables them to be themselves, which can then lead to developing their self-concept towards further imagined future selves aligning with further creative development, learning and careers.

This approach was described as thoughtful and deliberate by the staff team and is seen as one of the really important aspects of what Eden Court in particular can offer given the technical facilities and broad function of the building:

I think it's something to do with that idea of co creation, and letting the young people know that we can always say that we're not teachers, this isn't a school, this is a place where you can come and hang out. And we've got the tools and the software and the hardware and the right people there to help in that co creation model. And a massive part of it still, which we always like to use is that tool of the building, and then people meet other freelancers or the technicians backstage or get into the projection booth, you know, and get a chat with a projectionist. And all these elements kind of break down the preconception of an institution, I suppose. And sort of humanizes us all within it. I think that's the secret to it

**-Staff member**

I'd like to be a filmmaker, or help advance not only Scotland, but the Highland film industry, because some of the bestselling greatest ones of all time are from here. And I don't think it really gets enough credit, because there's so many people across the Highlands who have the skills to work in the film industry, they're just not given the opportunity. Like we have been given this opportunity so it's not really a debate over whether you should or shouldn't move forward, lots of young people, whether disabled or not, just don't have the chances that we do.

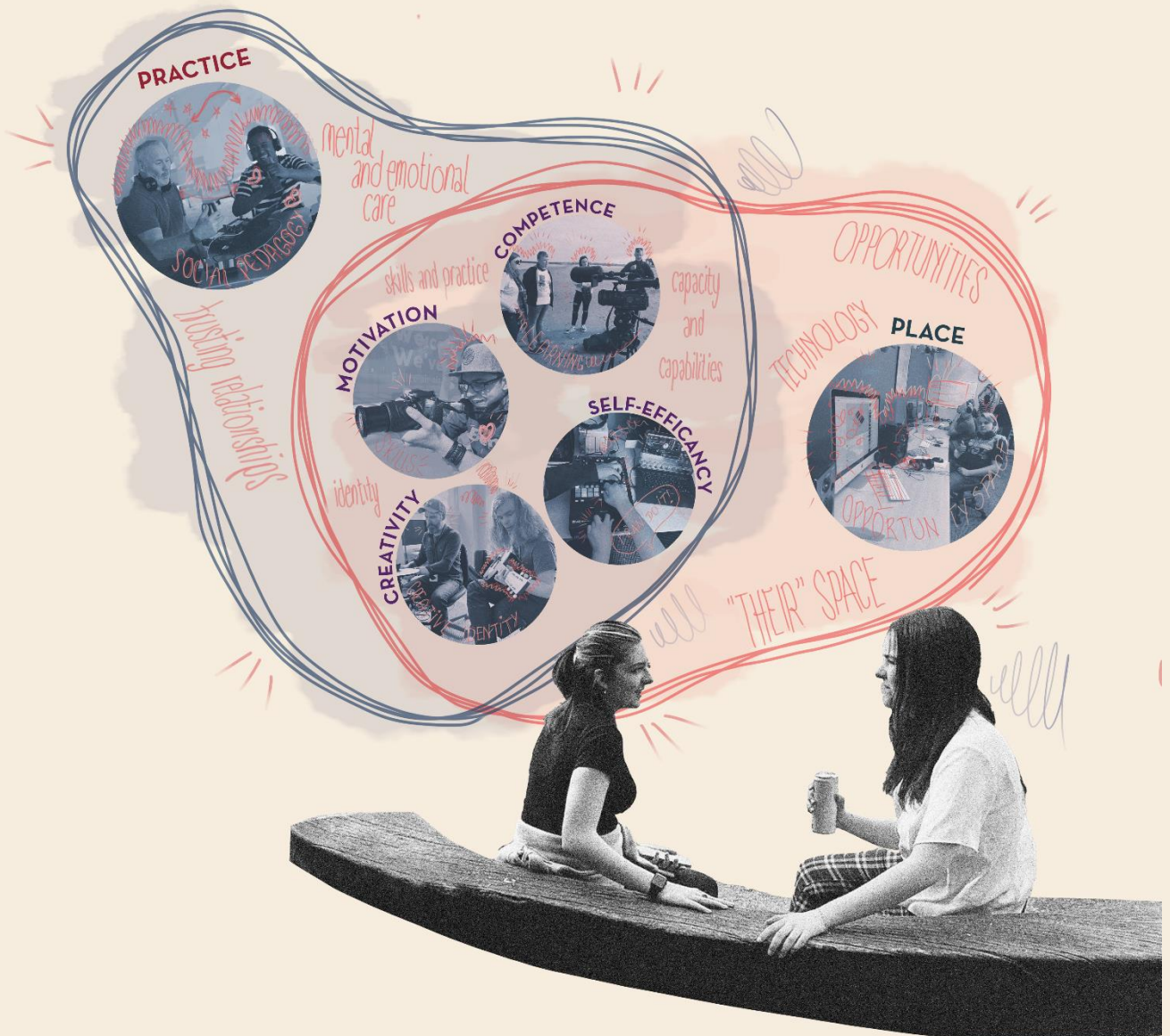
**-Year 2 Cashback Highlands Participant**

It's just that you always find something that you want to do. And the people here will accommodate that. Like, if it's something they've never done before, they'll train around us to do it for you. They will make it work. Yeah, that's epic.

**-Year 2 Cashback Highlands Participant**

## The Cashback Highlands Emerging Model of Practice

FIGURE 5 - CASHBACK HIGHLANDS PRACTICE MODEL



The emerging model of practice within the Cashback Highlands programme draws on a number of factors and mechanisms to support young people to achieve positive outcomes and creative outputs.

**Practice** – the practice very intentionally draws on social pedagogy – i.e., an approach to education that puts the mental and emotional care of the young people at the centre of their learning experience and builds a learning journey that responds to their specific needs or challenges. The practice is build around establishing trusting relationships with young people and recognising the value and assets that everyone in the learning environment brings with

them (staff and participants). This is an essential aspect of enabling vulnerable young people to feel supported to learn.

**Place** – clearly the setting of Eden Court brings with it a number of opportunities for young people to develop their creative capacities; from the technology suites, instruments, cameras and costumes to the direct experience of learning from and shadowing staff and crew that operate the building. The practice, and often long-term relationships that are established with participants, also means that they see Eden Court as ‘their’ space, although a lot of care is also offered to those coming into the building for the first time to avoid intimidation.

The survey findings and learning journeys that participants describe show how positive outcomes are made up a number of overlapping aspects:

**Motivation** – this includes motivation to attend, motivation to learn, and motivation to diversify their creative skills and practice. The approach in Cashback Highlands supports motivation by enabling a very sensitive and spacious entry point for young people and being adaptable to their needs and interests throughout their participation.

**Competence** – another aspect of motivation is that participants gain psychological (and social) rewards from increasing their competence across a range of skills. The more they engage in learning a skill (e.g., filming, directing, learning music, or editing software for gaming), supported on an individual learning journey by the practitioners, the more they are motivated to take that learning to the next level. The motivation to make ‘cool stuff’, both individually and collaboratively, grows as participants are able to ‘make stuff even cooler’.

**Self-efficacy** – this is a psychological construct which is essential for young people to develop positive outcomes, and especially for them to last over time. It is linked to the two aspects already described and can be seen in the ‘can do’ attitude that develops as young people learn skills. The shift from ‘I can’t do something’ to ‘I can do something’ is a profound and rewarding process also linked to participants’ having a more positive self-identity overall. By knowing they have the capacity and capabilities to solve problems and challenges again in the future, or at least, the ability to learn how to, young people often develop a stronger sense of self.

**Creativity** – this is also linked to the other factors. Developing a ‘creative identity’ is often described by participants as a core source of motivation and establishing identities as artists or competent creative professionals is part of increasing self-efficacy (i.e., moving from ‘I’m learning how to use a camera’ to ‘I’m a filmmaker’). Creativity is also about being able to make a new or novel contribution, whether in music, film, drama or any other artforms. For most Cashback Highlands participants, it is often about doing something creative that is new to them or extending their creative ideas by collaborating with peers and practitioners. Developing creative thinking skills is also an important competence to apply to other aspects of life and in further learning and employment beyond the Cashback programme.

## Other emerging outcomes

### Different levels of ‘community’

The notion of community in Cashback Highlands has come up in several conversations. Community seems to be considered across three levels:

- i) The ‘community of practice’ that surrounds the venue and the programme (i.e., the participants, practitioners, and staff)
- ii) The community of Inverness or other local towns, including the neighbourhoods that participants live or participate in (via schools for example)
- iii) The community of the Highlands and the role of Eden Court in supporting the creative development of a broad range of dispersed young artists



In relation to the first level, participants and staff regularly reflect on how the programme model builds a strong community of practice in and around the venue. It is normal for young people who attend a 'drop-in' opportunity to build a relationship with the venue and start attending Open Studio regularly. Likewise, the schools work is often a 'taster' of some of the more established projects that Eden Court can offer and acts to promote the core programme to those not already attending. The Cashback programme contributes much to this strong and dynamic community of practice.

The second formulation of community is slightly more problematic as for many of the participants their immediate community can be a place where they are not enabled or encouraged to flourish. Whether this refers to a school community where they don't feel that their creative identity is fully appreciated, or a local neighbourhood where limited cultural infrastructure highlights the novelty of the activities at Eden Court. Given the more complex relationship some participants have with these communities it may not be realistic to anticipate strong and lasting outcomes at this level. That said, the [annual showcases](#) of the music and films produced in the Cashback programme held in the autumn are well attended and received, providing a key moment of community celebration and connection.

The third level has regularly been mentioned by participants and practitioners as significant. Eden Court and the Cashback programme play an important role in enabling young participants to access opportunities onsite, as well as taking the programme to schools and communities in more remote areas of the Highlands. Year 2 has seen the programme extend to towns such as Alness and Golspie, although further consideration should take place in Year 3 as to what can realistically be achieved in terms of broader geographies, with the Creative Learning Strand being adjusted as needed to accommodate this.

I think even like in the Highlands, like Eden Court really, is a very unique place, like a hub, really. We've had young people come all the way from Ross-shire, Ullapool and Moray, because like this really is the only place that's available. People come from very far, because resources like this, in the Highlands, in particular, are very, very scarce.

**-Year 2 Cashback Highlands Participant**

### **Catalysing new activities – Queer Youth Arts Collective**

As discussed briefly in the first section, a strong success story from Year 2 was the establishment and growth of the 'Queer Youth Arts Collective'. Initially provided as an online session at the 'Back Online' event in March 2021 and attended by three people, the forum has grown over the year, via weekly online meetings, to include 37 young people. The forum gives young people identifying across the LGBTQIA+ spectrum the opportunity to discuss current issues relating to art and culture in the Highlands (within and beyond Eden Court), to suggest new opportunities for taking part in creative activities and discuss any other topics of interest. There is an Eden Court staff member on hand to respond to expressed needs and ideas, but the forum is youth led and organised. The forum design two in-person events at Eden Court per year and can also act as a site of referral for people who may be interested in taking part in new workshop opportunities within and beyond the Cashback programme.

The project was 'seed funded' by Cashback for the first 10 sessions but is now self-sustaining and being funded through additional funds brought into core engagement programme budget, recognising how essential it is to the young participants and to Eden Court.

## Changing the status of young artists within Eden Court

The way that Eden Court thinks about its engagement work has shifted in recent years, notably in response to the pandemic and a deeper understanding of the organisation's role as a vital community asset. The restarting of the Cashback programme in Year 2 has provided an opportunity for the organisation to reconsider its relationship to the young artists taking part in the programme (including those who have been attending over the longer term, as well as new young people coming into the programme for the first time). There is a growing recognition across the organisation that the Cashback programme also acts as a way of developing new audiences and connecting the organisation to the artists and cultural producers of the future. The Cashback programme enables the organisation to listen to more diverse voices, bring them into its operations, and amplify them.

It's not intended to be an audience development program. But actually, you think about audience development, meaning Eden Court's broader community, like not just audiences, in terms of people that see shows, that is what Cashback is doing. What we're learning from this team of people, the engagement team, in particular, when we have a diverse representation in our team, it benefits everything that we do, and the rest of the organization are starting to notice that now that we are much more able to kind of make meaningful and authentic decisions because of the diversity of voices we've got within our team. So we're not speaking on behalf of people. We're letting the people here speak. And I think that's true of Cashback. Right, it's true of the participants that we have in and then get into shape a little bit of what they do. And actually, Eden Court's values are very much about taking all of the power and decision making away from the 'experts' and the staff and the senior leaders and putting it more in the hands of the people who are the beneficiaries of our charity.

**-Staff member**

## Diverting young people from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

The focus of the Eden Court Cashback programme in Year 2 has been to ensure that those young people most at risk of negative outcomes from their pandemic experiences (whether through isolation, lack of access to learning materials and opportunities, or with additional challenges or responsibilities) could reconnect with the organisation, and with each other.

The organisation partners with a diverse range of referral partners, including some young people who are at high risk of entering the youth justice system or have direct experience of it. This includes young people not currently attending mainstream education, those in care, and those who are moving into independent living.

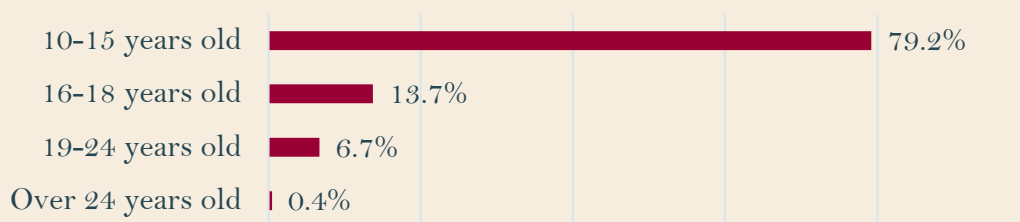
As the demographics below show, there is a concerted effort to target activities at young people in the most deprived areas and focus on those with the most complex lives. Although the programme in Year 2 has not explicitly focused on young people in direct contact with the youth justice system, this will feature more prominently in Year 3 now that the pandemic restrictions seem to have normalised and programme partnerships can be established with greater confidence.

### 3. Participant demographics, attainment, and positive destinations

The demographics presented below show the range of young people involved in activities in Year 2. Taken together they show a diverse cohort, with clear engagement from a range of young people at higher risk of marginalisation.

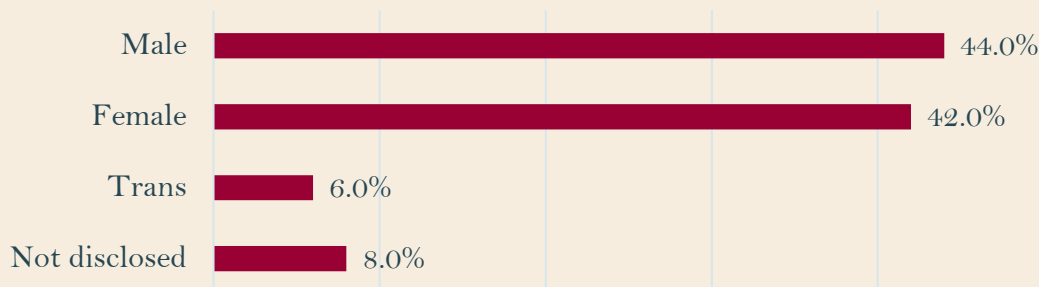
Some survey responses queried the appropriateness of being asked to provide details about protected characteristics (e.g., sexuality, religion, or pregnancy status) either because of the ages of those participating, or whether it is proportionate to the type of activity they are being involved in (e.g., one response stated, 'is this really necessary for a school trip?'). We will work with the Cashback team to explore this further in Year 3 and ensure that demographic data is being collected in a way that is proportionate and appropriate to the depth and type of activity being provided.

#### Age



Those aged between 10-15 made up the largest proportion of participants (79%), with the remaining 21% aged between 16 and 24.

#### Gender

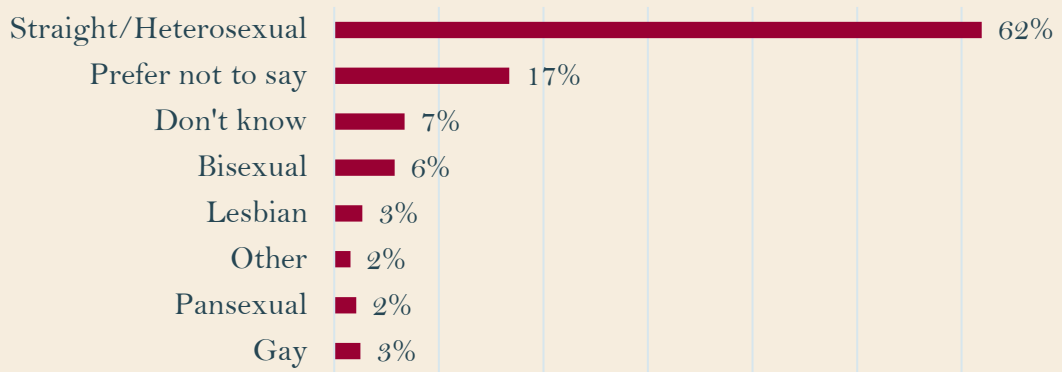


There is a very slight male bias in participation (44%) compared to females (42%). Around 6% of participants identified as Trans<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Trans\* includes all participants who identify as transgender, non-binary or gender non-conforming

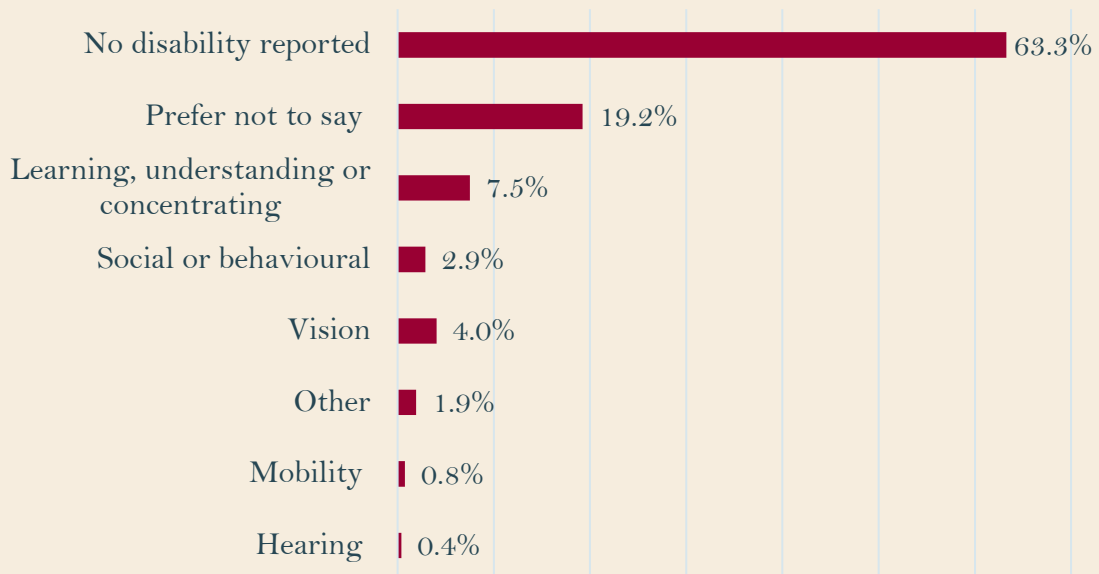


## Sexuality



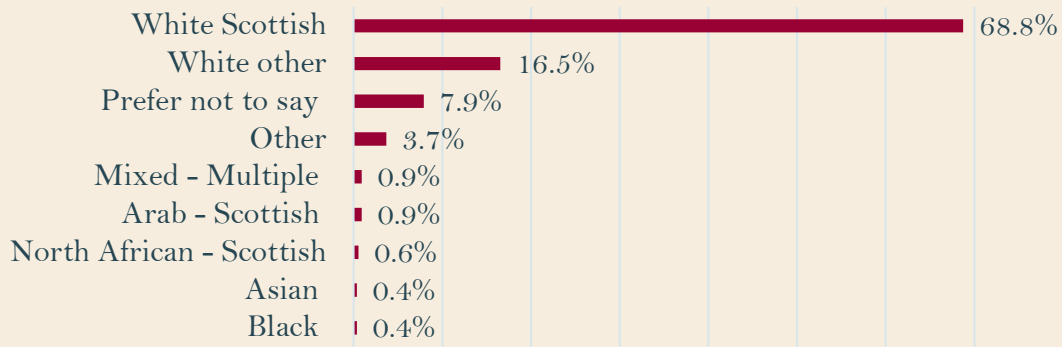
The majority of participants identified as straight/heterosexual (62%), with large proportions indicating they prefer not to say (17%) or don't know (7%). Smaller proportions identified as gay, lesbian, or other.

## Disability



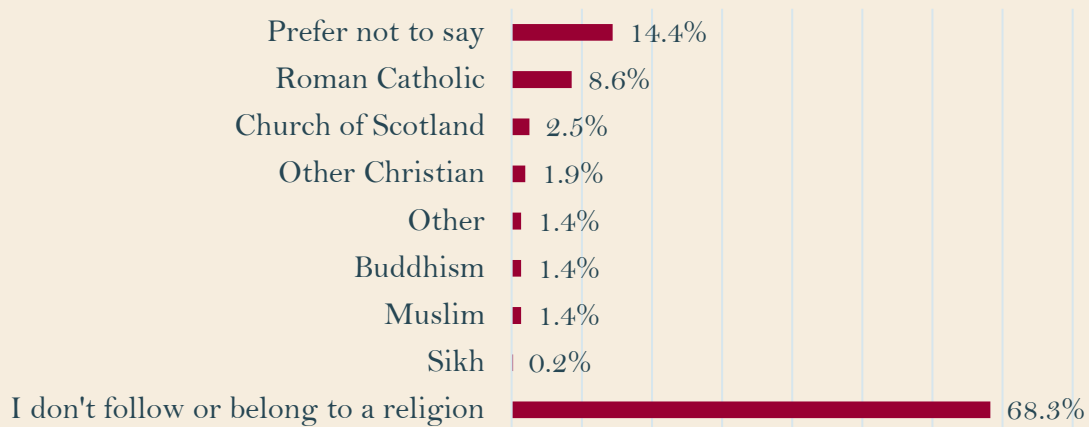
The majority of participants (63%) indicated that they do not consider themselves to have a disability. A large proportion indicated that they prefer not to say what their disability is (19%). The most common description of disability related to issues with learning, understanding or concentrating (7.5% of participants), with small proportions reporting disability relating to hearing, vision or mobility.

## Ethnicity



86% of participants identified as White Scottish or White other, with a large proportion (8%) indicating that they prefer not to say.

## Religion



A large majority of participants indicated that they do not follow or belong to a religion (68%), with Roman Catholic being the next largest proportion (9%). Other religions were represented in much smaller proportions across the cohort.

## Marital and pregnancy status

78% described themselves as single with a further 17% indicating that they prefer not to say. Others described themselves as married, widowed and divorced. It's likely this data is not reliable given the younger age of most respondents.

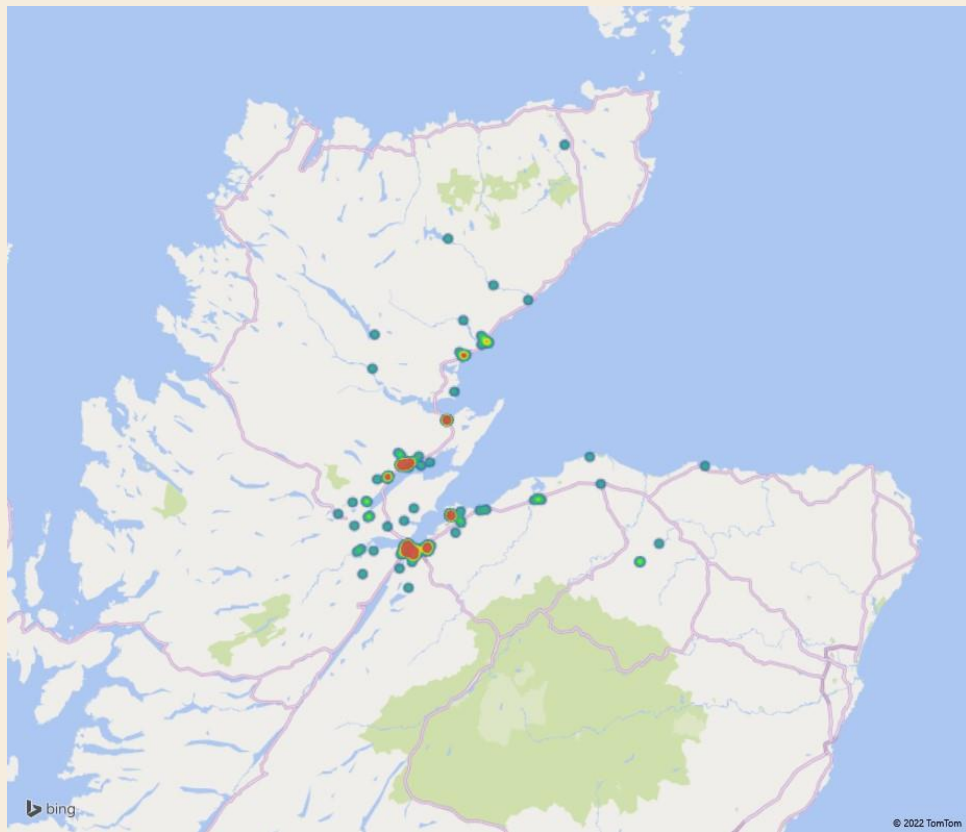
1 respondent described themselves as currently pregnant and 1 respondent described themselves as having been pregnant in the previous 12 months.

## Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

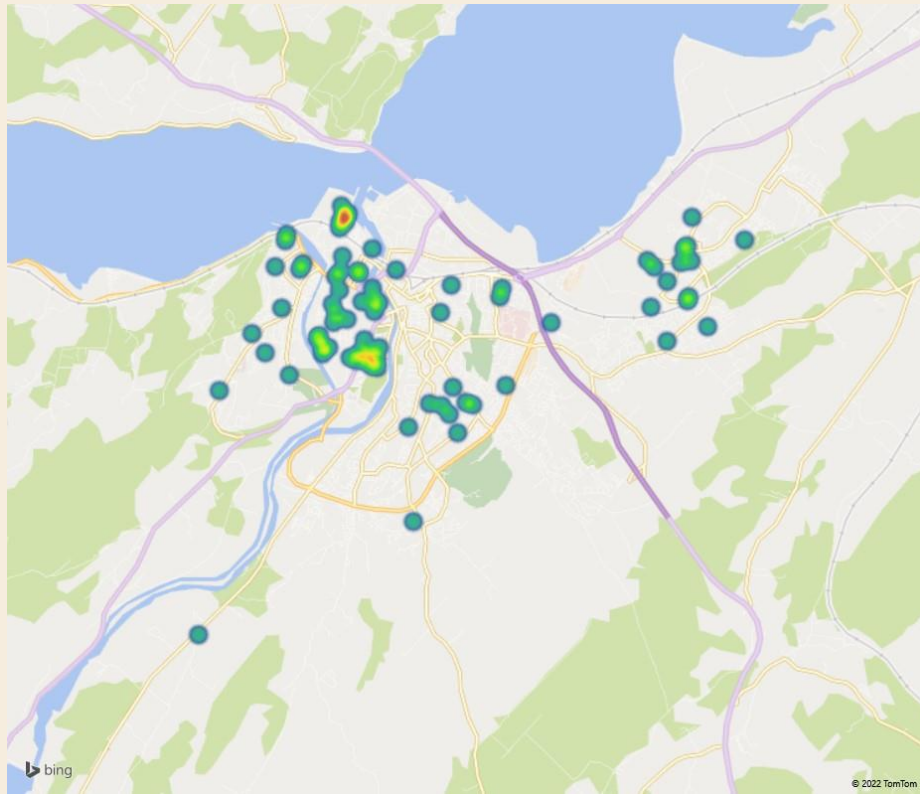
SIMD Quintile	Proportion of participant postcodes	Proportion of Highlands postcodes
1 – most deprived	17%	10%
2	39%	17%
3	24%	36%
4	16%	30%
5 – least deprived	4%	7%

While the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a useful policy and research tool, within the Highlands it can mask very acute deprivation as the overall Scottish index scale includes large urban centres where poverty is more concentrated. Nevertheless, the data shows that Cashback Highlands activity has focused strongly on the most deprived communities within and beyond Inverness. 56% of participants lived in the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland, against 20% living in the least deprived 40% of neighbourhoods. The following heat maps show the reach of Cashback Highland’s activity, as well as illustrating the clear attempt to engage with the most deprived communities in the city of Inverness itself.

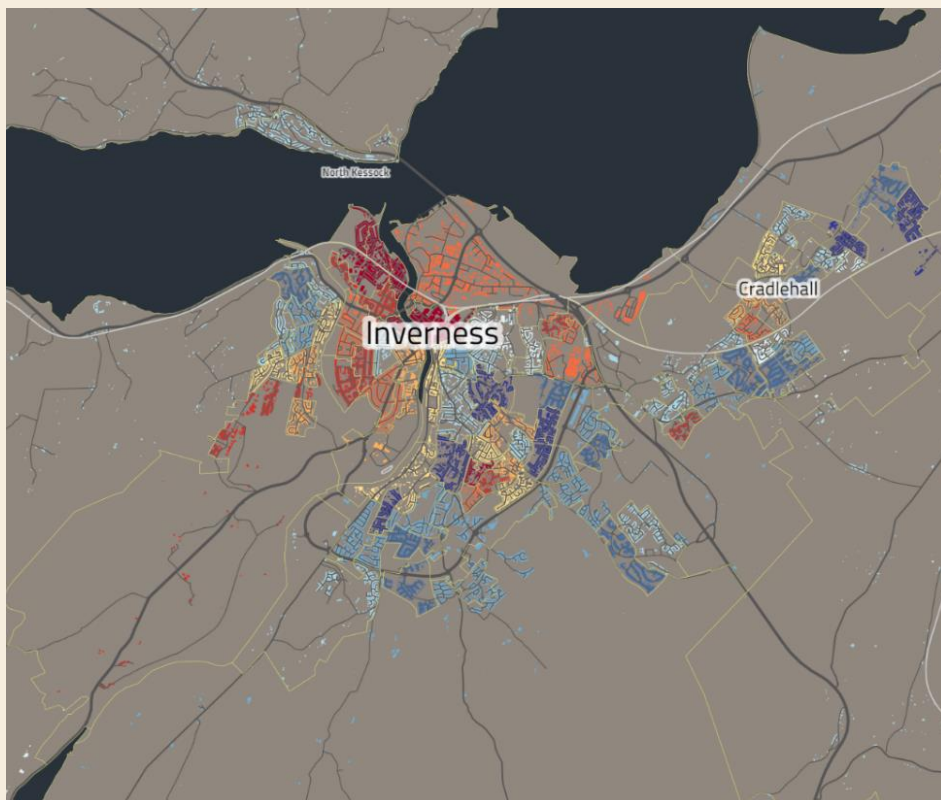
**FIGURE 6 - POSTCODE DATA OF PARTICIPANT RESIDENCE IN THE HIGHLANDS**



**FIGURE 7 - POSTCODE DATA OF PARTICIPANT RESIDENCE IN INVERNESS**



**FIGURE 8 - SCOTTISH INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION SHOWING MORE AND LESS DEPRIVED AREAS OF INVERNESS (RED IS MORE DEPRIVED, BLUE IS LESS DEPRIVED)**



## **Attainment and positive destinations**

There has been a relatively low level of attainment in Year 2 given the open approach to the project model, a focus on reengaging young people with the space, and the need to support social mixing as a first step in the pandemic response.

The new responsive approach to school and community engagement also means that there are fewer opportunities for attainment via school than was originally envisaged for the Artist in Residence model, although this is being explored as a priority in Year 3.

Positive destinations in the Cashback Highlands model tends to refer to the number of young people 'graduating' from drop-in or taster sessions to regular attendance in Open Studio or other programme strands. In Year 2, 12 young people became involved in regular cashback activity in this way. Four young people started further and higher education programmes in media or arts citing their learning in Cashback Highlands as a key driver for this.

Further work will be done in Year 3 to identify a larger range of onward positive destinations, although the cultural infrastructure is more limited than in some other areas of Scotland, meaning that there are fewer options beyond Eden Court for training and employment in media arts.

## 4. Key lessons and recommendations

Year 2 has provided the opportunity to reactivate the Cashback Highlands programme in a changed context. Plans were still directly affected by pandemic restrictions including, closures, cancellations and changed relationships with schools and community partners.

The updated programme has responded to this context in terms of design (i.e., focusing on creating a relaxed and welcoming environment to enable young people to feel confident and supported to reengage with their learning), as well as structure (i.e., condensing the Next Steps programme over the summer and creating a more responsive approach to working with schools).

The experience and approach of the practitioners means there is a clear model of practice being applied across the Cashback Highlands programme, making it accessible for young people with very complex lives and needs, enabling them to achieve positive outcomes, develop a secure community of practice, and feel a sense of support and belonging.

In Year 2 there has been a need to work with schools and community partners that were largely already linked to Eden Court, recognising that there is already trust established, and understanding that project models have had to be flexible to education environments only just recovering from the pandemic (e.g., most schools work couldn't begin until October, and was then disrupted through November and December, with most effective partnerships not being possible until February/March 2022). The number of young people involved, and the potential to develop these partnerships further throughout Year 3 is testament to the agility and flexibility of the Cashback Highlands team.

Priorities for Year 3 include an attempt to engage directly with youth justice teams (at all stages) and apply the Open Studio model on and off site to those at greatest risk. This will complement the ongoing open-access model providing training and support to a broad range of young people with complex support needs. Work with schools will be further extended, with the offer of longer-term engagement, and it is anticipated that tie-ins with the Eden Court programme are less likely to be disrupted. The successful approach to Under Canvas will be repeated with the aim of establishing new referral relationships, as well as bringing in new faces from those already established.

### **Further recommendations the team may wish to consider:**

- Providing the option for a more formal 'graduation' offer to some of the young people who have been involved in Eden Court engagement work over several years (e.g., paid apprenticeships, 'ambassadors') enabling them to develop professional skills while supporting younger participants into the programme
- Establishing a new strand focusing on those already involved with the youth justice system, or at high risk of being so. This can be modelled on the established practice from across the Cashback programme, but may need to be adapted to off-site settings and 'piloted' for length and effectiveness in these settings
- There is potential for some participants to track their progress more formally via digital portfolios, spending time with practitioners reviewing their learning journeys and setting out future priorities, objectives and support needs. While this will not be appropriate for all participants, it may enable greater alignment with some accreditations (e.g., Arts Award, Youth Scotland Awards)
- Consider how the 'community of practice' becoming established at Eden Court can be more embedded within the organisation. There is potential for Cashback participants to be recognised as young artists and more consistently contribute to the engagement strategy and beyond

## 5. Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation of the Cashback Highlands programme is linked to the overall Cashback for Communities logic model. This focuses on five shorter term outcomes relating to individual and community development and a longer-term outcome related to diverting young people from criminal behaviour and the youth justice system (summarised in Section 2 of this report).

We use two main methods to explore these 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). The survey responses summarised above come from 47% 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 2 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.

Demographic and monitoring data is collected via a mandatory registration form, which had a full response rate in Year 2 (n=549). It is possible that some young people have participated tangentially in drop-sessions, or more 'open' activities in schools and onsite at Eden Court, although every effort is made to formally register participation.