

PHASE FIVE EVALUATION

# CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES

FOCUS ON COVID-19



FINAL REPORT

Spring 2022



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# INTRODUCTION

## About this report

This report explores learning among CashBack for Communities delivery partners during the Covid 19 pandemic. It focuses on spring 2020 to spring 2022, the first two years of Phase 5 of the CashBack programme, which ends in spring 2023.

The report explores the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on the delivery of the CashBack for Communities programme, and what has been learned over the past two years in the context of delivery during the pandemic.

## CashBack for Communities Phase Five

CashBack for Communities programme is a unique Scottish Government programme that takes funds recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act and uses them to support young people in a positive way. Between 2008 and 2023, £110 million was committed to community initiatives to improve the quality of life of young people across Scotland.

Phase 5 of CashBack for Communities runs from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023 and supports projects that provide a range of activities for young people between the ages of 10-24 which:

- support people, families and communities most affected by crime
- support those most at risk of being involved in antisocial behaviour, offending or reoffending into positive destinations
- support young people most at risk of entering the justice system.

Additionally, activities are provided, which are not limited by age, which meet the above conditions and provide intergenerational support for parents, families and children impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences.

The CashBack programme aims to support young people through building confidence and resilience, developing skills, improving learning, employability and employment options, improving health and wellbeing, connecting young people positively with their communities and diverting young people from involvement in the justice system.

The programme funds 24 CashBack partner organisations to deliver activities to support young people and families. This ranges from diversionary work through to more in-depth support and intervention.

## Method

### FIELDWORK

The main focus of this research involved online or telephone discussions lasting approximately 45 to 60 minutes with each partner. The discussions explored how partners adapted in light of the pandemic. Key areas for exploration included:

- the main impacts of the pandemic on partners
- the main impacts on young people and how partners adapted
- new approaches, what worked well and what didn't
- particular challenges and approaches in certain environments
- experiences of digital inclusion
- impact on partnership working
- continuation of new approaches as restrictions eased
- wider lessons learned.

All 24 partners took part in this research. We held 24 discussions involving 37 individuals. The quotes in the report are all from CashBack partners.

### DESKTOP REVIEW

To set this work in context we also undertook a brief desktop review of:

- annual reports for 2020/21
- grant offer letters and variations of grant offer letters for Phase 5
- Inspiring Scotland's research on young people's views on CashBack for Communities<sup>1</sup> undertaken in 2021
- Inspiring Scotland's wider work exploring the impact of Covid 19 on young people<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Young people's views of CashBack for Communities, Inspiring Scotland, Autumn 2021

<sup>2</sup> Disadvantaged young people: the depth of the impact of Covid 19



# IMPACT ON DELIVERY

## Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the way CashBack for Communities activities were delivered from April 2020 to early 2022. It explores the impact of the pandemic on:

- plans and activities
- delivery in particular settings – such as schools, prisons and secure care
- partnership working.

## Impact on plans and activities

### LOCKDOWN MARCH TO JUNE 2020

Overall, all CashBack partners were significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic emerged in early 2020, with Phase 5 of CashBack due to commence in April 2020. Most partners were about to launch their Phase 5 activities as the UK went into lockdown, and significant restrictions on daily life were put in place through to summer 2020. Schools, leisure, social and community venues closed. People were unable to meet or leave their house except for essential purposes, and could not travel beyond their immediate area. From 23 March 2020 people were only allowed outside to buy food, to exercise once a day or to go to work if they absolutely could not work from home.

All partners had to immediately assess their delivery plans, and explore how best to support young people and their families. Some worked to meet immediate needs, in terms of emotional and wellbeing support, food parcels, vouchers and data for online connections. This included organisations who had been CashBack partners for some time and had an established group of young people to support, and partners who were new to the programme.

### Example: Practical support

Where restrictions made it difficult to deliver CashBack activities, Achieve More Scotland were able to use sessional staff to support delivery of food parcels and vouchers to thousands of people in seven targeted communities in Glasgow and North Lanarkshire. The food parcels had been funded from various sources including the Scottish Government's Community Well Being Fund. This allowed Achieve More Scotland to meet immediate needs, while continuing to engage and build trust with children, young people and families in areas where CashBack projects would ultimately be delivered.

Partners paused – or did not start - their face-to-face activity. Face-to-face activity was not permitted, and the places that projects were due to deliver in were closed or had no access at all to the public – such as schools, community spaces, sports facilities and prisons.

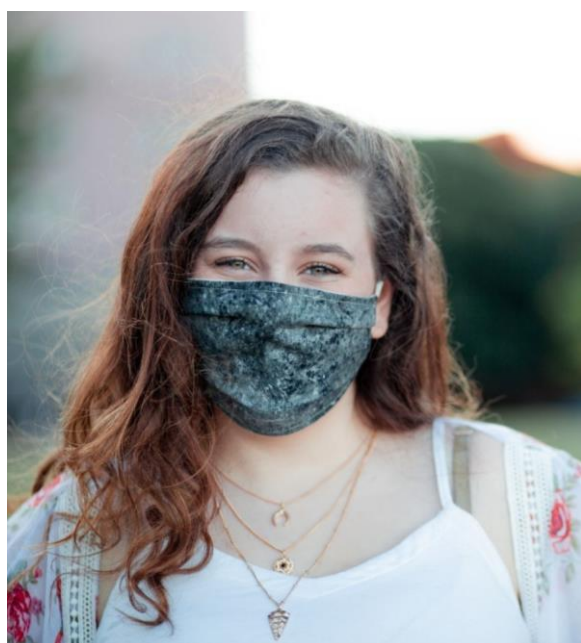
During this time many partners made sure that they checked in with young people informally, using text, Whats App, calls or social media. There was a strong emphasis on keeping contact, supporting young people and working through uncertainty.

This helped partners to retain a presence with the young people and families they aimed to work with through Phase 5. A few of the projects who were new to the CashBack family found it particularly challenging to adapt as they didn't have an existing approach or consolidated group of young people they were already working with. However, these partners also found that continuing engagement around practical and emotional support helped build a foundation for future activity through a basis of trust and existing relationships.

As lockdown continued, partners began to explore alternatives to face-to-face activity, including online opportunities, developing digital resources and exploring other opportunities for outdoor activity, alternative venues or new partnerships.

### **Example: Community work**

Mayfield and Easterhouse Youth2000 (Y2K) project retained a presence during the early stages of the pandemic, offering advice and support to young people in a wider capacity, beyond the CashBack project. The project also undertook detached youth work in the community, which helped the organisation to be able to quickly and positively return to face-to-face delivery when able to.



In some cases staff also invested time in training and skills development, to support new approaches. A small number of projects furloughed their staff, meaning there was no delivery over that period.

### **SUMMER/ AUTUMN 2020**

It took some time for it to become clear that the pandemic and its impacts were likely to be long term.

As summer 2020 approached, partners explored:

- online delivery

- outdoor delivery – one-to-one or in small groups
- one-to-one tailored support
- detached youth work
- doorstep visits.

As restrictions eased over the summer holidays, this offered opportunities for some outdoor activities. Partners used approaches like ‘walk and talks’, walking challenges and outdoor activity in public parks. Often this complemented online activity.

**Example: Face-to-face activity**

Achieve More Scotland offered a six week summer programme with under 12s in summer 2020. Work with teenagers was still limited due to restrictions on group sizes, but there was some evening football and multi sport activity outdoors and in small groups. This worked very well over the summer months, but was very restricted in the winter months because facilities didn’t have floodlights and were not safe when icy or dark.

**Example: Outdoor activity**

Many projects funded by YouthLink Scotland’s CashBack Youth Work Fund adapted to include more outdoor delivery. Many funded organisations already included outdoor delivery as a significant feature, but new approaches included developing outdoor summer programmes, setting up outdoor learning programmes, delivering walk and talk sessions and introducing outdoor adventure programmes.

However, it remained challenging to find suitable spaces to meet. At this time, there remained a range of significant challenges to face-to-face delivery including:

- parents were worried about their children mixing at activities
- there were different restrictions in different parts of the country
- transport to safe spaces was an issue with challenges using public transport and projects unable to transport young people due to the restrictions
- venues remained closed.

“ It was a real challenge finding things that we could offer to young people.”

“ Getting access to venues and facilities was a real challenge to the sector.”

Partners found that they had to try to deliver as much as possible and be as adaptable as possible during this phase.

### **Example: Piloting online activity**

Youth Scotland delivered aspects of its Generation CashBack 'Lead' strand of the project online. As well as live online training sessions for young people and workers, they also produced a series of tutorial films including a wide range of activities such as games, drama and body percussion. This has since been evaluated, and the games video tutorial was the one that had the most engagement with young people and workers. Youth Scotland plans to use a mixed delivery approach in summer 2022.

### **Example: Piloting online activity**

Barnardo's spent time thinking about how to support young people during the pandemic, and deliver employability support to young people. In discussion with Scottish Government and Inspiring Scotland they decided to pilot an online Fit for Work programme in Renfrewshire. In summer 2020 they held a Community of Practice meeting where they shared the learning from the Renfrewshire pilot and other local authority areas adopted the online model. They continually adapted and improved their online activity to keep young people engaged.

### **Example: Piloting online activity**

Impact Arts pivoted its programme to be delivered online. It found that this increased engagement, widened the geographic scope and attracted a broader range of young people to the project.

### **Example: A hybrid approach**

Scottish Sports Futures introduced street work consultation with young people; ran outdoor multisport sessions; held 'walk and talk' sessions on a one-to-one basis; ran outdoor small group sessions; converted wellbeing workshops to be delivered online; converted SCQF accredited Education Through CashBack modules to an online format.

While many projects considered or piloted an online delivery approach, some were unable to use this. For example, projects working with young people in prisons were not able to use online approaches as young people did not have access to the internet. Alternative, creative approaches had to be used to keep in touch with participants.



### Example: Email a prisoner scheme

Station House Media Unit used the 'email a prisoner' scheme to engage with prisoners, as they were unable to visit. They were also able to gather requests and broadcast messages to prisoners using the prison radio station within HMP & YOI Grampian which they continued to manage remotely during lockdown.

YDance worked with Barnardo's Inside Out team in HMYOI Polmont and used the 'email a prisoner scheme' where young people drafted emails that were sent to the dance tutors. Through this they explored different types of music and dance and discussed the impact of lockdown on their physical fitness and mental health – as young people were locked in their cells 23 hours a day and had no access to the internet. This was then used to develop tailored development programmes for young people. It also allowed the young people to develop a rapport with the dance tutors.

**“This allowed the tutors to slowly develop connections with young people and built strong scaffolding that helped get their buy-in.”**

### Example: Using TV services in prison

Access to Industry had periods when it was unable to visit the prison during the early stages of the 2020 lockdown. Young people had no access to phones or laptops. The project produced a video about the project that was played on prison TV (in their cells).

**“We produced a video that could be played on prison TV that promoted the project and made young people aware that they could access employability services and support in their halls.”**

Schools returned in early August 2020, and projects which aimed to work with schools began making contact and connections. In some cases this worked well. However, there remained challenges including:

- connections and relationships had been lost
- the transition into schools in the pre-summer term had not taken place as schools were closed
- school attendance was inconsistent with pupils and teachers off and some parents worried about sending their children to school
- things changed at the last minute and the environment could be chaotic



- individual head teachers had different approaches to working with external organisations.

While some projects found that they had to adapt their approach to avoid working in schools, others found that they had to do more work in schools due to community venues being closed and it being challenging for young people to travel from school to other locations.

#### **Example: Adapting activity to run in schools**

Action for Children was planning to deliver support to young people aged 16 plus through community based activities in South Lanarkshire. However, it couldn't deliver this community based programme in 2020 as community based activity stopped during this period. In late 2020 and early 2021 it revisited and redesigned the programme, to run in two schools in South Lanarkshire.

#### **Example: Adapting activity to run in communities**

Basketball Scotland was planning to support pupils in small groups across a range of schools. Despite the restrictions on physical activity in primary schools, it continued delivery in schools but it also had more opportunities to deliver in community centres as a result of the pandemic, in partnership with others such as Scottish Sports Futures.

Basketball Scotland also undertook outreach street work with youth workers, which worked very well, and introduced a street art project to tackle anti-social behaviour. It also pivoted its work to focus in on one area, aiming to have a greater impact in this community.

#### **Example: Street work**

Govan Youth Information Project was funded through YouthLink Scotland's CashBack Youth Work Fund. In the early stages of lockdown it shifted its intensive support and skills training for young people into a street work response to new community safety concerns related to lockdown. As restrictions eased, they were able to reinstate the group work outlined in the original proposal.

Some projects continued with outdoor delivery, but as autumn progressed there were issues with lighting and weather. One project had to pay for lighting so they could deliver night sessions and another had to stop outdoor delivery as lighting was not available.

A few projects which had not been delivering until this stage began launching alternative approaches to delivery.

## WINTER 2020/21

Scotland entered a second lockdown from December 2020 to March 2021. Projects again had to reassess their approaches. Most felt in a much better position and more prepared, due to all the learning from 2020. Many were able to react more quickly to the changing circumstances, and shift their delivery model to online or physically distanced outdoor activity.

“ We were ready for it, we had learnt from the first lockdown.”

“ We learnt so much during the first lockdown we were able to kick back into what we did then, we had all the infrastructure in place to online and outdoor delivery.”

By the second lockdown, most projects felt better prepared than the first time and had the skills and resources to engage with groups. By this stage young people had got more used to online delivery. However, some young people found it very difficult to be back in lockdown and were fatigued with online delivery.

### Example: [Introducing a hybrid approach](#)

Rangers Charity Foundation was new to CashBack for Phase Five. The project took the time over the pandemic to recruit project delivery staff and identify potential participants. The project worked with prison services as referral partners. Face-to-face delivery started in November 2020. Remote delivery only took place for three weeks during lockdown in January 2021.

## OPENING UP – APRIL TO NOVEMBER 2021

From April 2021, restrictions gradually reduced through to November 2021. CashBack projects were able to run outdoor group sessions, small group face-to-face activities indoors, and continue some online activity. Face-to-face activity resumed for many projects, to some extent.



At this stage projects found that access to venues remained a challenge. Although some community facilities began to open up, it took time for them to reopen, some remain closed, and it was difficult for some projects to obtain long term and regular bookings. Projects also adapted their approaches to make more use of outdoor spaces wherever possible, to make groups smaller and to use a flexible approach.



Projects found that there was less appetite for large gatherings, and participants preferred smaller group work at this stage.

Although restrictions were reduced, at this stage projects had to check the rules regularly to see what was permitted and adapt plans accordingly. Different local authorities were also under different restrictions, and projects had to work within different sets of rules.

Much of the activity was able to return, gradually, to fit more with what was planned originally. However, some projects which aimed to incorporate volunteering for young people found that this was particularly challenging. Partners that projects had planned to work with were often not yet open to volunteering opportunities, and it was challenging to find volunteering opportunities in local communities. Some found a small number of outdoor volunteering opportunities, and some introduced peer mentoring opportunities to address this gap. However, some felt that the volume and quality of volunteering opportunities was reduced compared to what they had planned.

### **Example: Time for planning**

The Prince's Trust Scotland originally planned to have a reflection and review year in the first year of Phase 5, so didn't deliver activity until April 2021. This period was utilised to restructure resource and make system improvements, but resulted in some loss of relationships and experienced staff. Following the pandemic, activity has shifted to a hybrid model with an increased focus on online activity. This ensures greater geographic reach in terms of access to Development Awards.

### **Example: Returning to face-to-face delivery**

In 2020/21, Celtic FC Foundation created person centred learning and resource packs which they delivered to participants, and then supported young people to engage in online sessions around goal setting, employability, physical activity.

From May 2021, the Foundation was able to deliver its programme in its stadium. Celtic undertook a risk assessment, reduced the number of young people per group, implemented social distancing measures, organised protective equipment for staff and young people, and changed catering to individual packs. The activity was also adapted to ensure young people could maintain a distance. They also implemented a regular screening process with all staff and young people completing a covid screening form every week.

### **Example: Starting face-to-face delivery**

In August 2021, as stadiums started to open up, SPFL Trust was able to start its Phase 5 face-to-face work. Face-to-face delivery in a stadium was a core part of the work, and a real draw for young people. SPFL Trust delivered 2 cohorts (Dundee and St. Mirren in June 2021 and another 3 in August 2021 (Falkirk, Hearts and Midlothian). Restrictions on football stadiums were strict and red zone protocols were enforced and this presented the Trust with challenges.

SPFL Trust was able to offer pre-programme open days for its first cohort of young people and then delivered the first face-to-face programme for young people between June and November 2021. It used the first cohort to learn about what worked and didn't work as part of this, and carried out online surveys with participants and stakeholders. This was used to inform the programme for the second cohort.

## **OMICRON – DECEMBER 2021 TO MARCH 2022**

In December 2021 a new, more infectious, variant of Covid-19 meant that temporary restrictions had to be introduced in Scotland. By this stage, most partners were back to face-to-face delivery. The temporary restrictions resulted in projects having to reassess their approaches, and some activities had to be refocused or paused. Some activity had to shift to being outdoors or online temporarily. Some planned

larger events had to be postponed or cancelled. Activity which involved casual drop-ins from young people had to be paused to ensure control over numbers.

Because of the prevalence of Covid-19 in the community, and the requirement for contacts to isolate for 10 days, many partners had to work through how to deliver with high rates of staff absence. However, partners were able to continue to deliver most activities. Some partners felt that this phase had a significant impact on young people's mental health, and it became more difficult to encourage young people to engage over this period.

After a period of adjustment, most partners felt that by spring 2022 they were back to closer to what they had planned than at any time over the past two years. However, the learning from the past two years had influenced the shape of each partner's project. And partners emphasised that they continued to review their plans in light of the wider context, in recognition that the pandemic was not over. In a very small number of cases, some activity was just starting in spring 2022 – for example face-to-face work in secure settings or residential activities. In some cases face-to-face work in prisons had not yet resumed, due to ongoing restrictions.

**“ The impact of the pandemic is not over.”**

### Challenges in particular settings

All partners had to adapt their work in some way. However, partners working in particular settings experienced some specific challenges.

#### SCHOOLS

CashBack partners working with schools had a very mixed experience. Over periods that schools were closed, some partners lost a core method of engaging with young people. As schools reopened, partners had different experiences on a school-by-school basis. Each head teacher decided what was appropriate for their school, meaning that activities varied from school to school even within the same local authority. Many partners also found that ways of working within schools were constantly changing.

**“ Head teachers are the decision makers, it is really up to them.”**

Each project had different experiences. A few found that schools remained reluctant to allow outside organisations in to deliver activities. Others found that they worked much more closely with schools than originally planned for their CashBack activity. Those who were able to work closely with schools often had a demonstrable track record of delivering activity in schools and existing relationships with schools due to their wider work or previous CashBack activity.





**We enhanced and developed new and existing partnerships with schools.”**

Working with schools helped some projects to connect young people in to wider after school, evening and holiday activity. However, projects working in schools often had to work with smaller bubbles of one class at a time, which affected the number of pupils they would work with.

**Example: Working with schools**

Station House Media Unit worked closely with Aberdeen City Council to be part of its Covid Routemap for Education. This enabled the project to access some schools, to deliver CashBack activity. However, each school still had its own rules and some were reluctant to have external visitors – particularly at times when rules required that whole classes had to self-isolate if the class was exposed to Covid-19. SHMU offered some outdoor work for schools, which helped to engage new participants.

**LARGE SPORT AND CREATIVE VENUES**

Some of the CashBack projects were planned to be delivered in football stadiums, in theatres or on boats. Two projects could not deliver any face-to-face activity over the first year of the programme as their stadiums closed to the public in March 2020 and did not reopen until summer 2021. Delivery at the stadiums was a big draw for young people, and a key way of attracting participants.

Another project delivers activity on boats, which had to be taken out of the water in spring 2020 and group sailing did not resume until August 2021. Another creative project, to be delivered in a theatre, found that the theatre was closed due to the restrictions for a significant period of time.

**Example: Programme redesign**

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland normally delivers its CashBack activity on two boats, providing young people with 20 hours of land based and 174 hours of sea based sail training. Group sailing was not possible until summer 2021, so the organisation had to rethink alternatives. The Trust redeveloped the entire programme to focus on how to improve outcomes for young people, in another way.

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland put together a toolkit of education workshops and outdoor land based activities – such as archery, tubing, orienteering, crate climbing and kayaking - and appointed a youth development worker to deliver this. The youth worker worked carefully to ensure the newly created land based youth work met the agreed CashBack outcomes.

### Example: Programme redesign

The Eden Court CashBack Highlands project was mainly due to be delivered in the Eden Court theatre. This project experienced particular challenges as theatres had to be closed and did not open fully until mid 2021. The building was a key feature of the CashBack work, with young people supported to make the theatre their own.

The project worked within the restrictions as much as possible. For example, young people involved in CashBack activities were given exclusive access to the theatre for programmes when the theatre was able to open. Eden Court also introduced online activities in early 2021. The project held a 'Back Online Festival' which included film screenings, a hip hop night, a singer song writer session and a Q and A session with authors. This worked very well for the young people.

The project also held outdoor events. For example, it made use of the space created by Eden Court's annual Under the Canvas event held outside the theatre. This space was used to run outdoor CashBack activities during the day for five weeks, such as silent discos, craft and film-making sessions.

**"It was all done outdoors so it worked."**

## JUSTICE

Projects working within the justice system, in prisons and secure care settings, also found that there were particular challenges during the pandemic. Access to secure care and prison settings was extremely restricted over 2020 and 2021. Young people in these settings do not have access to the internet, to phones or to confidential spaces for engaging in project work. Projects have had to use other means such as the 'email a prisoner' scheme, or engaging with people as they leave secure care or prison settings.

### Example: Working in secure care

The Cyrenians Keeping Families Together with CashBack for Communities project is targeted at young people who are at greatest risk of involvement in the justice system, offering intergenerational support for families. Originally the project aimed to work with five secure care units over the three years of Phase 5, supporting families to rebuild relationships so young people can return home where possible.

When the pandemic emerged, the top priority for secure care units was keeping the young people safe, and in order to achieve this, contact with external agencies was limited. During this time the project focused on staff training and upskilling, offering conflict resolution lesson plans and developing partnership agreements with each secure units to build trust and strengthen relationships. Some support was provided remotely, when there was no access to secure care units, and support was provided in person, when guidance allowed. A challenge in secure units is that young people do not have access to the internet or phone unsupervised, and don't have confidential spaces available to them.

By early 2022 there were more opportunities for the project to access secure unites to deliver one-to-one, small group work and mediation with young people. In addition, the project was able to offer a blended approach of remote and in-person support to families that had only been accessing remote support throughout the pandemic.

**“Our project is relationship based, face-to-face contact is vital, to build safe and trusting relationships.”**

**Example: [Working in prisons](#)**

Before spring 2020, YDance had undertaken a lot of work with Scottish Prison Service, Barnardo's and HMYOI Polmont as they were critical to making the work in prisons happen. The prison was in lockdown and face-to-face sessions were then resumed in June 2021. YDance ran weekly sessions for different types of dance, working across all populations housed in HMYOI Polmont. The project also connected with some young people through video tutorials.

**Example: [Working in prisons](#)**

The Access to Industry project aimed to bring employability training and support within HMYOI Polmont. The project was able to access the prison 2 days a week by the end of 2020. It was the first third sector organisation to be allowed back into the prison. However, within the prison restrictions were still in place meaning that young people had to stay in their residential halls and within their bubbles – during the following months. Young people also did not have access to online opportunities within their cells. This restricted ability to work with the volume of young people expected over year 1 of the project, but activity has built up steadily as restrictions have eased.

## **IMPACT ON PARTNERSHIP WORKING**

The pandemic changed how many CashBack partners work with others in partnership. Although many had put significant time and effort into building relationships in early spring 2020, these relationships changed with the pandemic.

Overall, CashBack partners found that other partners were under a lot of pressure. Often they had to focus on other priorities, and their focus and plans changed significantly. Some CashBack partners who were able to deliver activity face-to-face with young people reasonably early on, found that other delivery partners were still not able to. As restrictions changed over time, different organisations interpreted these differently. Organisations in different sectors had different guidance in place.





**Different organisations had different set-ups and arrangements during lockdown.”**

This meant that CashBack partners often had to develop new partnerships. Many put significant effort into broadening their referral networks and developing wider partnership working. For example, partners involved in employability activity developed connections with JobCentre Plus (which was open) and Department for Work and Pensions. Partners working in the justice system broadened their referral networks beyond prisons, which were under pressure for much of the time, to work with Police Scotland, local authorities and community organisations.

Some CashBack organisations highlighted joint work with other members of the CashBack family to develop referral systems, promote activities, train staff and deliver activities. However, a few partners would have welcomed more connection with other CashBack partners to talk about how they were coping during the pandemic.

**Example: Joint work in the CashBack family**

Scottish Rugby Union worked with Basketball Scotland to explore delivery. Together they supported outdoor sessions at a school in Dundee. They also worked with Scottish Sports Futures to deliver online training modules.

Scottish Sports Futures also spent time talking to other partners about their plans and developed effective partnerships.

**“It was good to be able to tap into what others were doing, and to see how we could learn from each other.”**

**“It gave us time to map out who our partners were in local communities and to look at how we could link up better.”**

CashBack partner YouthLink Scotland also supported Basketball Scotland staff with training on knife crime, through the [No Knives Better Lives programme](#).

Basketball Scotland also worked closely with wider partners including SAMH. The project had a focus on mental health and wellbeing, and worked with SAMH to upskill youth workers. This built on existing good relationships that the two organisations had, and helped with delivering the mental health and wellbeing strand of the project. Basketball Scotland has adopted a wellbeing ambassador approach (trialled by Scottish Sports Futures and SAMH through the Changing Lives Fund) to support mental health and wellbeing conversations, creating capacity and expertise. SAMH and Scottish Sports Futures played a key role in building the skills of the wellbeing ambassadors.

Some organisations also found that delivering crisis support to families in partnership during the pandemic – such as food parcels – helped them to think about what else they could work on jointly.



**It got us thinking about what else we could do in partnership.”**

# IMPACT ON PARTICIPANTS

## Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the pandemic on CashBack participants. It explores how the pandemic changed:

- the needs of the target group
- the profile of CashBack target groups
- the number of young people partners could work with.

## Needs of young people

We explored with CashBack partners how the needs of the young people and families they work with had changed during the course of the pandemic. Some partners said that the needs and issues remained the same, but had intensified and become bigger during the pandemic. This included issues of poverty, access to services, lack of opportunity and food security.

**“ Covid-19 has accelerated challenges families face and some families are faced with new challenges.”**

Some said that needs had changed over time. Partners saw:

- increased problems with mental health, depression and anxiety
- increased problems with physical health, weight and inactivity
- reliance on technology
- increased substance misuse
- reduced confidence and resilience
- lower levels of literacy and numeracy
- lower life and employability skills
- increased poverty
- reduced optimism for the future.

**“ There is a general vibe amongst young people that everything seems hopeless, and they don't see the point in anything. They just can't see what the future looks like.”**

“ The lasting effects of the pandemic will be significant for young people and their families for years to come.”

“ It brought existing inequalities right to the surface.”

Increased anxiety was the most common change highlighted by partners. Partners felt that young people had experienced long periods of isolation with limited access to support services, which resulted in an increase in anxiety.

“ There is so much anxiety amongst young people, it is a real challenge getting them back into society.”

“ The levels of poor mental health and anxiety are through the roof.”

“ There is real anxiety amongst kids, the pandemic has been a form of trauma for a lot of them and this is likely to have a lasting impact on them.”

“ Lack of social interaction during the pandemic has been a huge thing for young people, they have not been able to see their friends.”

Partners found that many young people were not getting up, moving around, leaving their room or going outside. Some said that families were struggling to support their children to do things with their day. People were in their homes so much that they became detached and inactive. Local services were not open and young people were not able to access the support services that they needed.

“ Young people definitely came out of the pandemic worse.”

“ Young people have really suffered over the past 2 years.”

Young people who were at home in challenging situations – including domestic abuse or substance abuse within the home – experienced particular challenges, having a negative impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

“ Some young people have been living in a pressure cooker environment at home.”

A few partners also mentioned that ethnic minority young people and young people with additional support needs were reporting particular challenges including lack of confidence, isolation and poor mental health.





Some young people didn't want to leave the house, especially those with additional support needs."

Partners working in the employability field found that young people were often coming to them very anxious and isolated, with limited social and employability skills and a lack of confidence about the future.



Young people are less job ready than before."



Young people from disadvantaged and low income backgrounds have less confidence in how they get back on track."

CashBack partners put time into understanding how to support young people and their families over this time. Partners felt that their activities generally met the needs of young people and families, but adapted their services to:

- introduce or strengthen the focus on mental health and wellbeing
- strengthen referral arrangements for mental health or substance misuse
- upskill staff on recognising issues such as substance misuse or depression
- provide more summer and holiday activities to reach their target group.



We made a real shift towards mental health support."

Many partners had to adapt the way their services were run because young people had different needs. For example:

- **Barnardo's** found that young people were much more anxious, and needed one-to-one support before or as part of their Fit for Work programme which involves a lot of group work.
- **Eden Court** introduced an even 'softer start' for young people who had been isolated for long periods of time and were anxious about Covid and being in groups of people.
- **Includem** started working more closely with wider families around young people, in response to needs around food, heating, transport and mental health, to support family financial, emotional and physical wellbeing.
- **Impact Arts** noted increased anxiety levels among young people, and focused their work more on building resilience.
- **Scottish Sports Futures** worked with partners to review their approach, and introduced more one-to-one support, provision of food to families, and connections with local organisations to help access household products.
- **YDance** found some young people had lost confidence and were reluctant to get involved as a group. Dance tutors did a lot of one-to-one work with young people to support them to re-engage.

- **SPFL Trust** adapted its programme to work with new partners to deliver sessions on drugs, alcohol and gambling due to increased drug and alcohol issues.

“ We are much more aware of the extreme poverty within communities and so we now ensure that we provide food to young people on the programme.”

“ It’s what young people need right now, they need space to talk about the impact of the last two years.”

“ We have adopted more informal techniques and ways to work with young people.”

Some partners found that they had to put more effort and time into supporting people to leave their home and engage on a face-to-face basis.

“ Young people are not as willing to do face-to-face sessions, their needs have changed.”

Some had to adapt their approach to work more intensively with young people and families on a one-to-one basis. Some partners worked with fewer young people over longer periods of time, to provide more intense support and achieve greater impact.

“ The starting place for working with families and young people is very different to what it was before the pandemic.”

“ We now have to focus more on trauma and ACEs, this makes it harder to find the best way to support young people and requires more intensive work.”

**Example:** [Intense work with young people](#)

Mayfield and Easterhouse Youth2000 Project (Y2K) adapted its 12 week programme in schools into a more tailored 3 to 4 week programme targeting specific issues including healthy relationships, sexual health and homophobia. They have worked with more young people on a one-to-one basis, with an increase in young people experiencing anxiety and mental health issues. The focus has shifted to enable emotional support and tailored support to meet the needs of young people and schools.

## Profile of participants

Most CashBack partners continued to work with their intended target group, although the needs and approach changed. For some, the pandemic impacted on the profile of participants in 2020 and 2021.

Employability partners found that the profile of young people referred to their programmes changed. The young people referred to employability programmes have often had different needs than before, for example barely leaving home, high levels of anxiety, more involvement in gambling and using drugs or alcohol. This has meant that young people are less far along the employability pipeline, and need to stay on programmes longer and progress through different programmes until they are ready to progress to employment. A few have found it challenging as some young people have got used to being at home and spending their time online.

“ We are finding that young people are much further away from being job ready.”

“ The purpose (of our project) has changed since lockdown. We are now focused on ensuring that young people don't get any less ready for work.”

### Example: Supporting softer outcomes

National Autistic Society (NAS) began a new strand of CashBack funded work in Phase 5, working with children aged 12 to 16 years old with autism who are school refusers and at risk of entering the justice system. NAS helps young people to re-engage with school, explore alternative activities to build confidence, and to support young people to move into positive destinations. The pandemic resulted in an increase in isolation and anxiety among young people, coupled with reduced opportunities for work experience or tasters. There has been a stronger focus on softer outcomes including confidence and resilience, and supporting young people to progress to other training courses – supporting the journey to work in the longer term.

Justice partners found that the justice system changed during the restrictions, with court and police proceedings changing and fewer cases going to court. Some partners found that there was also a decrease in youth offending and referrals to social work, which altered their referral process. This meant it was harder to identify and target young people at risk of engagement with the justice system and some partners were concerned that they missed engaging with some of their target group because of this.

“ We missed a lot of young people due to changes in court and police proceedings during lockdown.”

One sporting partner which was able to carry on its work during periods of tight restrictions worked with more under 12s than expected. Restrictions were tighter for older participants, meaning group sizes had to be smaller and there were times when group sport for 12 and overs was not permitted. It expects to rebalance this over time, with increased work with older groups when permitted.

One creative partner realised that there was a demand from participants for an LGBTQIA+ group, and introduced this into its CashBack work.

**Example: Adapting to demand**

Eden Court introduced a new LGBTQIA+ group as part of CashBack Highlands. Sessions are held weekly and bring people together online from across Highland. The sessions have been very popular and focus on a different art form every week. Hosting the group online helps people from across Highland to take part, and support participants who have spoken of feeling isolated due to where they live.

**“I’ve never felt so welcome in a group before.” Participant**





# IMPACT ON MANAGEMENT

## Introduction

This chapter explores the impact of the pandemic on how organisations managed their CashBack projects. It explores impact on:

- delivering against grant conditions
- planning
- budgets and forecasting
- risk
- demonstrating outcomes for young people.

## Ability to deliver against grant conditions

Overall, most CashBack projects felt that they were still able to deliver against their original grant conditions. Inspiring Scotland's records show that seven of the projects reduced the overall number of young people they expected to reach during Phase 5, while one project adapted its model and increased the number of young people it expected to reach. While some partners reduced the overall number of young people they aimed to work with, they also increased their targets in terms of outcomes achieved for this group – reflecting a more in-depth, intensive approach to support.

Projects welcomed the flexibility that they had to discuss their approach with Inspiring Scotland. CashBack partners highlighted that Inspiring Scotland was very supportive, understanding and flexible throughout.



**We had some honest conversations about what was happening, especially during the first lockdown.”**



**We have been able to adapt the project as things changed to respond to changing restrictions and regulations.”**

Projects welcomed the regular contact that they had with Inspiring Scotland during the pandemic and felt able to work through any challenges together. Many projects indicated how much they enjoyed working with Inspiring Scotland, and welcomed how readily available they were to reassure projects, to answer questions and to explore issues. A few indicated that regular discussions with Inspiring Scotland kept

them grounded, reduced their fears and helped the mental wellbeing of their staff team.

**“ We have a good relationship with Inspiring Scotland.”**

**“ The biggest thing was the flexibility we got, especially at the start. It made it so much easier.”**

**“ It has been the most completely positive and helpful relationships and they have made our lives easier.”**

A few projects that were well established in CashBack activity and already had strong partnerships in place indicated that they felt more confident that they had an established model in place that worked and could be adapted.

**“ In an organisational sense we have learnt to be flexible and adaptable to respond to the challenges that the pandemic threw at us.”**

However, a few projects indicated that they were concerned that they would not be able to meet the target number of young people they had agreed. A few said that they were not able to adapt their participation targets, and that the expectation is that the projects should be able to operate as normal now, and be able to ramp up their activities and deliver on grant conditions and targets from across Phase 5. A few find this challenging because:

- the project doesn't have capacity to engage with more than a certain number of young people at any one time
- projects have not been able to use volunteers due to restrictions in place as a result of the pandemic
- numbers for 2020 and 2021 are down due to lack of access to spaces like schools, prisons and secure care, lack of referrals due to partners having other priorities, and the need to undertake one-to-one or smaller group work to meet restrictions in place due to the pandemic
- organisations have been significantly impacted by the pandemic in terms of their resilience, income and staffing.



A few projects indicated that they were still working through realistic target numbers for participation in Phase 5. A few projects had to adapt their approach to offer less activity to a larger number of participants, in order to meet target numbers – for example by offering two shorter sessions a week instead of one long one. Other projects were able to reduce their target number of participants, and intensify the amount of support offered to each participant – for example working over a longer time period, or working with the family more widely and not just the young person.

A few projects indicated that they continue to adapt and plan their activity on an ongoing basis, to ensure that they meet the needs of young people.

**“ We’re constantly reviewing the programme at the end of each session to meet the needs of the young people.”**

Inspiring Scotland and Scottish Government emphasised that partners should discuss any concerns around target numbers on an individual basis, and if delivery targets are not realistic they are happy to consider suitable adjustments.

Inspiring Scotland highlighted that Scottish Government had been flexible and supportive throughout the pandemic, assisting with clear and timely messaging to provide reassurance of commitment to funding, and appreciation of the circumstances partners faced. Scottish Government set a pragmatic, flexible and supportive direction, which was then built into the Inspiring Scotland approach to relationship and management with partners.

## **Budgets and forecasting**

Partners had to replan, budget and forecast on a regular basis as so many things were changing during the pandemic. Partners were pleased that they were able to be flexible, adapt and use their budget in different ways if needed. For example one partner was below budget so agreed to deliver the programme in an additional local authority, and another had some underspend which it used for additional counselling services. One partner used underspend to introduce a micro grants scheme.

### **Example: Adapting budgets**

Due to the restrictions required during the pandemic, Youth Scotland’s Generation CashBack flagship youth event, Reach, was cancelled. With the agreement of Scottish Government, the consortium partners moved quickly and diverted funds from the planned event to create a Generation CashBack Direct Microgrants fund. This fund provided opportunities for targeted young people to receive a microgrant of between £100-£300 to help them develop their interests and skills, and to enable young people to take the next steps in achieving their goals. These microgrants funded 153 applicants from 34 youth groups across

Two partners felt that there could have been more flexibility to carry over underspend beyond the end of Phase 5, as it was as a direct result of the pandemic. Another

partner was concerned that they would not be able to spend their full award by the end of Phase 5. Three partners found that more time had to be spent on management, budgeting, administration and marketing as the project was adapted over time in response to restrictions. And one partner found that as an organisations its own finances were under pressure due to being closed for such a long time, and that it remained in recovery phase.

#### **Example: Managing grant applications**

YouthLink Scotland administers a small grants fund for youth organisations, as well as a small number of three year awards to explore how longer term grants could work. Funded organisations applied before the pandemic emerged, and all projects chose to continue and submitted revised proposals and timescales. Additional time and capacity was required to manage the grant programme and support organisations. However, the funded organisations continue to achieve positive outcomes for young people, in different ways, with flexibility about how they do this.

## **Risk**

CashBack partners had different experiences of assessing risk during the pandemic. Some partners said that they already had good risk assessment processes in place, and that these were adapted to the context of the pandemic. Other partners said that the pandemic significantly changed their thinking about and approach to risk. Most organisations highlighted that previously they had a risk register, and thought about risk in terms of business continuity, but that the pandemic introduced a new level of risk assessment.

“ It was a gamechanger in terms of risk.”

“ Our thinking about risk changed.”

Considering risk became part of everyday activity, and had to be reassessed regularly, sometimes on a daily basis. Partners highlighted that risk assessments were constantly under review and updated to fit with changing rules and restrictions during the different phases of the pandemic. Some partners had to undertake different risk assessments for different strands of their work. Partners felt that they now had strong approaches to risk assessments in place, with a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, and that this would be beneficial for future activity.

“ The risk assessment process has seen us through the different stages of the pandemic so far.”

It helped when partners:



- had skilled and experienced Board members to support risk assessment
- worked with partners such as schools who had detailed risk registers in place
- undertook risk assessment with the service user in mind – and the need to provide a close, friendly, person centred approach
- regularly reviewed national and sectoral guidance
- had clear responsibility for assessing risk and reviewing risk registers frequently.

**“ Thinking about risk impacted on our ability to deliver, what we can and can’t do.”**

While some found that being a larger organisation with robust organisational approaches to risk assessment was very helpful, others found that smaller organisations could adapt more quickly and be more responsive as restrictions changed.

One partner indicated that as a youth work sector leader, it set up a page on its website providing the latest updates on Covid guidance. The organisation developed a set of risk assessment templates for youth groups to use to ensure they were complying with guidance and regulations. The organisation also provided advice and support to groups when requested to ensure that they were comfortable with what they were doing and able to offer.

## **Achieving outcomes**

Many partners indicated that although they had adapted their work, outcomes for young people may have been affected by the pandemic. Young people are often at a different starting point, and their needs have changed. Meeting immediate needs around health, wellbeing and confidence has become a key focus for some. Some found that they needed additional time to get to know young people, build their confidence and review the baseline that they were starting at. Expected outcomes for some young people have needed to adjust.

**“ [The CashBack project] has become a bit of a lifeline for some of our young people, it has kept them engaged and healthy.”**

Within the employability field, partners indicated that:

- volunteering outcomes may be lower – with restrictions affecting their availability
- college and further learning outcomes may be lower – with online learning not suiting all young people, and numbers restricted during the pandemic
- employment outcomes may be reduced – many appropriate options such as hospitality or sport industries were closed during the pandemic and young people couldn’t access suitable entry level positions or work experience

- awards and qualifications may be lower – with training suspended or restricted and places on courses just becoming available.

Some employability partners have found that instead of moving into volunteering, learning and employment, young people have continued their journey by moving on to further training or employability programmes or staying longer on the CashBack course. This has enabled young people to develop their softer outcomes and skills, but it has been harder to move people into positive destinations.

**“ We have ended up hanging on to young people for longer, as we have not been able to move them on to jobs or work placements.”**

A few projects that were new to the CashBack programme in Phase 5 felt that they had not really had the chance to get going, which would affect outcomes for their participants. Some partners also felt that the lack of face-to-face contact may impact the outcomes achieved by the young people.

**“ Outcomes have changed, we have had to flex this to take account of the impact of the pandemic.”**

One partner felt that because of changing their model in light of the pandemic, their outcomes for young people had increased, with a wider range of outcomes and greater positive impact.

**“ Our whole model of youth work has changed in a positive way... We can now see that the land-based activities really complement what we are delivering at sea, and this is delivering a greater range of outcomes for young people.”**

Partners also indicated that some aspects of their work had become harder to measure during the pandemic – particularly justice and attainment outcomes. In relation to crime and anti social behaviour some partners indicated that these really fell over the pandemic, due to much wider social conditions, and projects found they couldn't compare pre-pandemic to pandemic figures. To address this, some have focused on attitudes to crime and anti social behaviour.

In relation to attainment, some partners indicated that schools have been closed for so long, re-engagement with school has taken time and there have been long periods of disrupted learning with children and young people off school isolating. This makes the link with attainment is challenging to make. To address this, some have focused on engagement with school and school attendance more generally.

A few partners indicated that it was important to recognise changes which previously may have been seen as very small were now quite important big changes for young people. For example, regularly engaging in a positive activity either face-to-face or

online provided structure to young people's lives, and was a big achievement for some young people who were very isolated, anxious and rarely left their rooms. A few partners emphasised the importance of understanding individual journeys and progress, and that this can go forward and reverse due to wider events.

**“ Some might reduce substance use, some might leave the house, some might take steps to engage with a trauma counsellor, some might experience improved mental health. Reporting should record soft skills better.”**

A few partners also indicated that it was more difficult to get some of their participants to give feedback on their experience, fill in surveys or talk to evaluators, due to wider issues around isolation and anxiety.

Most partners felt that Inspiring Scotland has been very understanding about the need to change intended outcomes and related targets, and that this has taken the pressure off staff teams.

**“ We could be flexible about how CashBack outcomes were met.”**



# LEARNING

## Introduction

This chapter summarises learning from the experience of CashBack projects over 2020 and 2021, in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. It explores what worked well, what didn't work and what has been learned that will be useful for future activity.

## What worked well

Delivering CashBack projects during the pandemic was challenging. But projects tried many new approaches, some of which worked very well.

### LEARNING TO BE FLEXIBLE

Projects found that the pandemic made them become more flexible and adaptable, as they became even more used to working in unpredictable and chaotic circumstances. This helped to encourage organisations to try new things, be brave, constantly reshape and be fluid. Many felt that their organisation and staff team had become highly skilled at coping with change and adversity, and would be much better equipped now to deal with the next challenges that they faced.

“ We have learned that doing things and trying things is better than not doing anything at all.”

“ ...the turbulent time stimulated innovation and investment across our organisation.”

“ The pandemic has brought the team closer together – we are so good at problem solving, adapting to change and finding creative solutions.”

### WELLBEING AND IN-DEPTH SUPPORT

Projects found that there was a strong need for wider support, with a particular focus on health and wellbeing. Projects learned about the importance of taking time to build relationships and trust, and found that it is hugely beneficial to undertake wider work which is not directly related to their core purpose – as this can still help the young person over time.



**“ At the moment the programme has more mental health and wellbeing than employability.”**

**“ That we can adapt to support young people with whatever they need at that time. We didn’t stay fixed on employability. It’s not about us, it’s about them.”**

Across some of the projects, there was a trend towards supporting smaller numbers of young people in more depth. Projects found that working with smaller numbers of young people has enabled deeper one-to-one impact, a personalised approach, and really feeling able to work on individual issues with young people.

**“ We are not aiming for mass participation. Covid allowed us to move into that space.”**

### **A TRUSTED ORGANISATION**

Some organisations found that a continued presence in their communities during Covid-19 – delivering practical support like food, vouchers or data connection – helped their organisation be seen as a trusted and recognisable source of support. It also helped staff to ensure that contacts and relationships were not lost, and gave staff a better understanding of the needs and experiences of young people.

**“ We managed to keep young people engaged and young people wanted to come back after lockdown.”**

Continuing to undertake community and youth work helped to reaffirm the importance of this work to CashBack partners, reminding them of why they are doing their work and what difference they can make.

**“ We are seen as a trusted organisation which is there when needed.”**

Having a presence in the community also helped to encourage young people and families to get involved, when activity opened up, due to genuine trust and relationships.

**“ It was so important to keep going, and develop these relationships.”**

A few CashBack partners indicated that they plan to continue to offer food, vouchers and wider support alongside their delivery, in recognition of the need for this support.

**“ We have intensified our support and changed our traditional model of support.”**

## ONLINE DELIVERY

Finally, projects learned a lot about delivering activity to young people online. Projects found that:

- creative methods online work well – using art and games
- online activity needs supported by activity packs or resources – which projects delivered to young people and families
- young people need support to engage online -although they may be able to use phones well, this doesn't always translate to computers and online meetings
- group dynamics can be tricky online – but some groups can work well
- individual meetings with families and young people can work well online – as long as families have the choice of other methods too
- simply providing a space for young people to chat can work well – online activity doesn't need to be highly structured
- sometimes videos or online resources can provide information in a simple, accessible way - without the need for online discussion or workshops

Some projects indicated that they had been meaning to try online activities before the pandemic but hadn't got round to it. And some said that the pandemic forced them into trying something that they were nervous about – but really worked in some situations.

“ The pandemic forced us to fast track our online offer.”

“ We now have confidence to do things online.”

“ We have broadened our content as we realised that not everything needed to be ‘workshopped’.”

Most projects found that most young people were happy engaging online. Online activities helped projects to reach more people – for example in rural areas, or people with additional support needs. One project which worked with people with autism found that online engagement was very popular with participants, which it had not previously realised.

“ It was a real positive from Covid that we were able to reach people that we would not have reached before the pandemic.”

“ The use of digital technology has been an unexpected positive outcome. We had to use it, it changed people's opinions and became the new normal.”

“ Online delivery has been a revelation, it has helped to strengthen our offer to young people.”

Engaging online also helped young people to develop their own skills.

“ We will try to develop as much tech-based work as possible, this gives young people transferrable skills.”

“ We want to ensure that young people are digitally included, as they need this to be able to access opportunities.”

However, it depended on the circumstances. Some projects focused on physical activity found that online engagement did not always work, with a clear preference for face-to-face activity. Although, online delivery worked well with many young people in the early stages of the pandemic some projects also found that over time some digital fatigue set in – with young people using online methods for learning and socialising.

Projects are keen to retain successful elements of online delivery, such as:

- using online networking to build relationships with young people at the start, bringing them in face-to-face once they feel comfortable
- using online activities for a proportion of participants for whom face-to-face access is a barrier – for example people in rural or island locations
- using online delivery to support young people to learn and gain qualifications
- building a mix of in person and online activities, to suit participants and based on what their preferences are.

“ It has to reflect the needs and wants of young people.”

#### Example: Ongoing use of online resources

During lockdown, Barnardo's staff recorded video sessions that could be shared with different groups.

**“We have now built up a library of useful video clips that can be used in future.”**

A lot of their employers recorded talks that they can now use for other groups. They will continue to support young people to develop their IT skills.

**“We are going to continue to help young people develop their digital skills as it will help them in the workplace.”**

## What didn't work so well

During the pandemic, CashBack projects had to adapt quickly and try lots of new approaches within a constantly changing environment. There was lots of success, but also some things that didn't work well.



Overall, projects found that there were challenges to online learning. Challenges included confidence engaging online, poor connections and access. Projects also had to provide practical support to engage young people online, through data, devices and software. At times projects felt that young people struggled to find a safe and private space to engage online, with family members distracting or mocking in the background.

A few projects tried online approaches but young people didn't enjoy it or engage, so they swapped to offer one-to-one or small group outdoor activity, street work, street art and wider one-to-one family support.

Some services were particularly difficult to provide online – such as counselling and family support. Some projects found that people found it easier to miss online or phone appointments, and that face-to-face activity was much richer and enabled deeper relationships and trust.

**“ It is difficult for young people to manage a diary and to take calls.”**

Overall, many projects felt that young people had a clear preference for face-to-face activity. They felt this reinforced that their planned approach of face-to-face delivery was the right one – even if it could be enhanced or supported with some online opportunities at times.

Some CashBack partners also emphasised that the pandemic had been hard for staff too. Working from home and online was very isolating, and staff needed support with their own health and wellbeing and a focus on wellness for them, so that they in turn could support young people.

## Ongoing approaches

Overall, CashBack partners learned from their experience during the pandemic. There was a lot that worked well, and will be built into future approaches including:

- using online and blended opportunities – for initial contact, for engaging people in remote and rural areas, for reaching across Scotland, for online resources, for social groups and to gain qualifications
- focusing on health and wellbeing – ensuring that wellbeing is built in as a foundation of the project, as a basis for achieving wider outcomes
- depth/ one-to-one approaches – working with a smaller number of young people in more depth
- family approaches – working with the young person and wider family, to provide practical and emotional support
- using outdoor delivery – building outdoor delivery into the programme, which was felt to work well.

Overall, projects felt that the pandemic emphasised just how important their work is, and the need for ongoing youth, community development, creativity, physical activity, employability and justice focused work to support young people to overcome the additional challenges presented by the pandemic.