



RUTS
RURAL & URBAN TRAINING SCHEME



RUTS CashBack Academies

Annual Report
2024-2025



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Welcome to RUTS CashBack Academies

RUTS has been working in partnership with CashBack for Communities since 2023 when we were awarded funding for Phase 6.

This report aims to share the impact that our programme, RUTS CashBack Academies, has made throughout year 2, as well as providing a summary of the wider impact of the Phase 6 funding and our plans as we move into year 3.

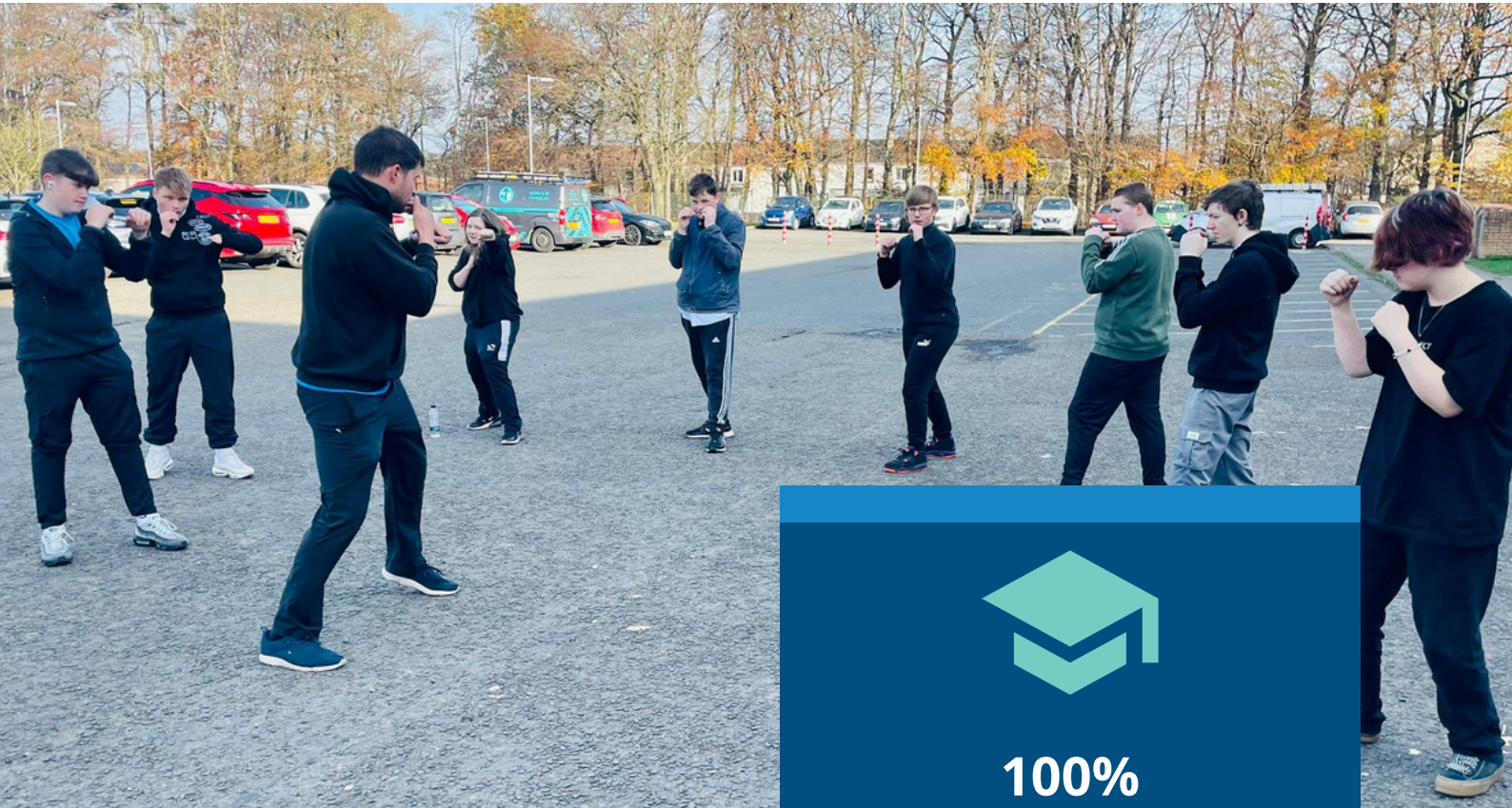


During our second year, we continued to improve our tried and tested RUTS service offerings, taking on board feedback from young people and partners to deliver a more attendee driven course, offering greater flexibility around the types of activities that they preferred, which has had a positive impact.

We believe that this approach is allowing us to have a lasting impact on the lives and futures of these young people and helps create greater distinction between traditional school education and RUTS vocational courses.

In the second year we have delivered RUTS CashBack Academies to 162 young people across Midlothian, East Lothian and West Lothian.

About RUTS



RUTS has been an inclusive, innovative service for young people in the east of Scotland since its founding in the early 1980s.

We are responsive to the needs of young people in our communities and strive to help young people overcome barriers, enhance skills, gain qualifications and achieve their potential.

RUTS do this through the themes of motorbikes, bicycles and general fitness to offer accredited vocational training, as well as bespoke employability and sector-specific courses.



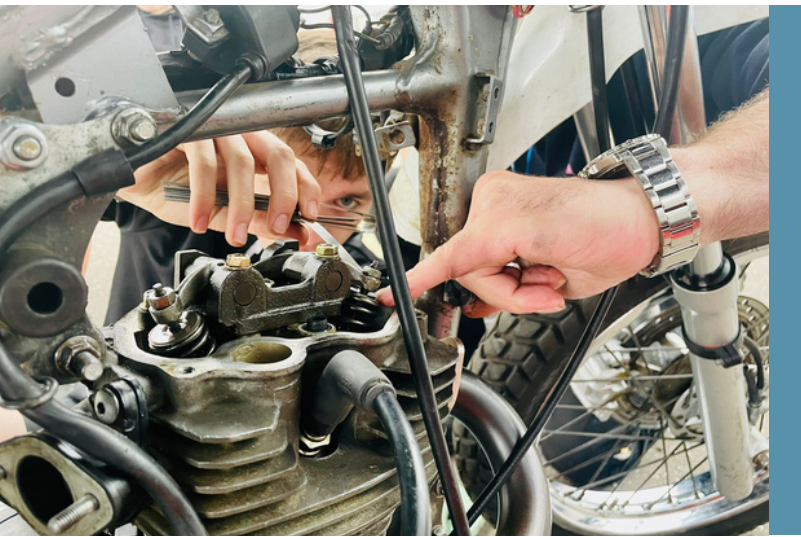
100%

of attendees
re-engaged with education

We offer tailored personal development, recognising each young person's individual needs, skills, strengths, ambitions and personalities. We use mobile equipment to deliver our services across schools and a range of partner agencies.

These collaborations continue to build positive relationships within the community and ensures we can reach the young people who will benefit most.

About the academies



The RUTS CashBack Academy courses are a variation of our core service offerings, aligned to Motorbike, Cycling and non-contact Boxing activities which support participants gain technical and life skills within the context of employability.

We have partnered with schools in East, West and Midlothian to make each of these courses accessible via our skilled trainers and mobile delivery teams who strive to create a safe and

exciting environment that will not only be a place to learn, but a place to have fun and develop skills. The courses are aligned to the school terms and run for approximately 18 weeks on site within the schools, allowing RUTS staff to build relationships with young people and provide a supportive, positive environment for progression that respects and upholds children's rights as outlined in the UNCRC.

Reflection on year 2

It has been another successful year for RUTS, our delivery partners and the young people, enjoying many positive experiences and stories to inspire individuals to forge ahead with their next steps in life, whether college, volunteering, training or employment. In our second year of Phase 6, we refined our delivery model slightly, whilst continuing to build on our strengths and experience to deliver bespoke courses as part of the CashBack for Communities Programme, supporting participants to gain certifications, technical and life skills within the context of employability, and improve mental health and wellbeing.

We make each of these courses accessible via our skilled trainers who strive to create a safe and exciting environment that will not only be a place to learn, but a place to have fun and develop skills for their onward journeys in life.



Together we make this happen...



Steve

CashBack
Project Lead



David

Lead
Youth Trainer



Andrew

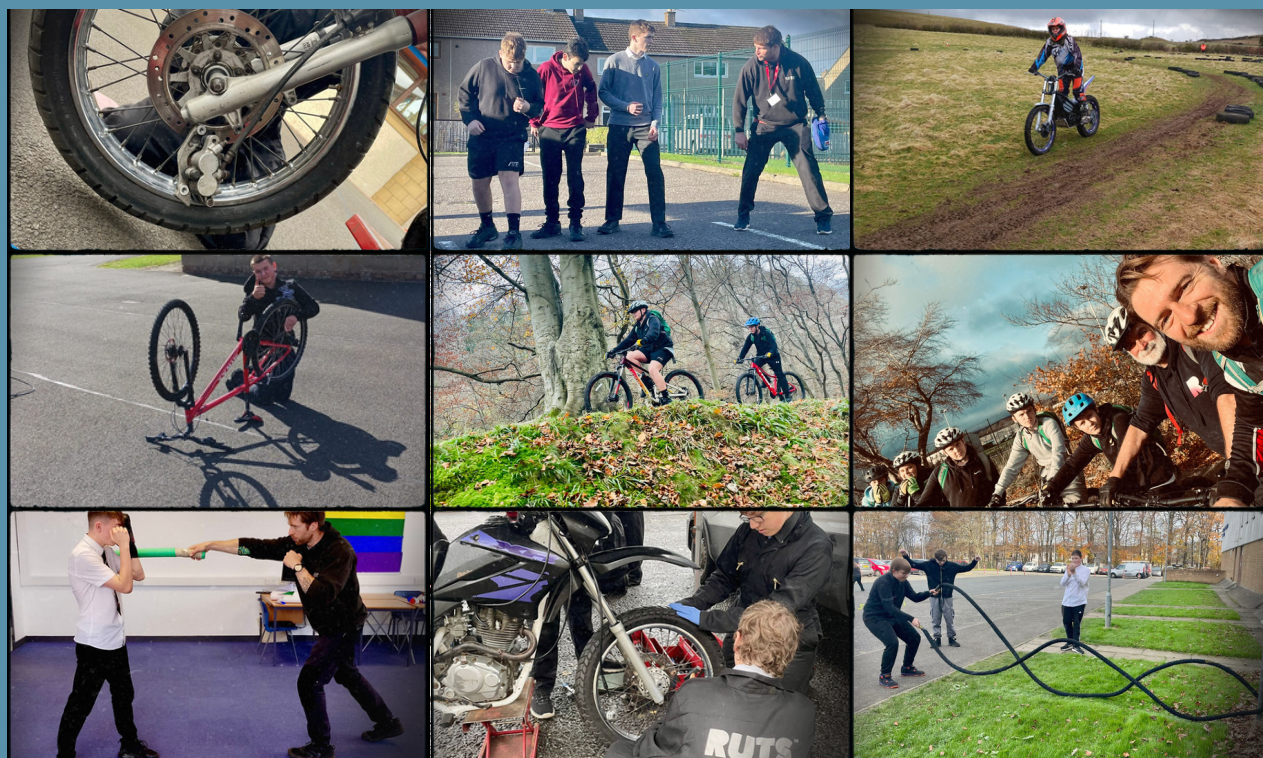
Youth Trainer



Ankit

Youth Trainer

RUTS CashBack Academies delivering throughout the Lothians



Impact

Number of young people

25 West Lothian

43 Midlothian

94 East Lothian

Over 480 academy sessions delivered in Year 2, working with 162 young people.

Spend by area

£21,784 West Lothian

£37,468 Midlothian

£81,904 East Lothian

Year 2 highlights

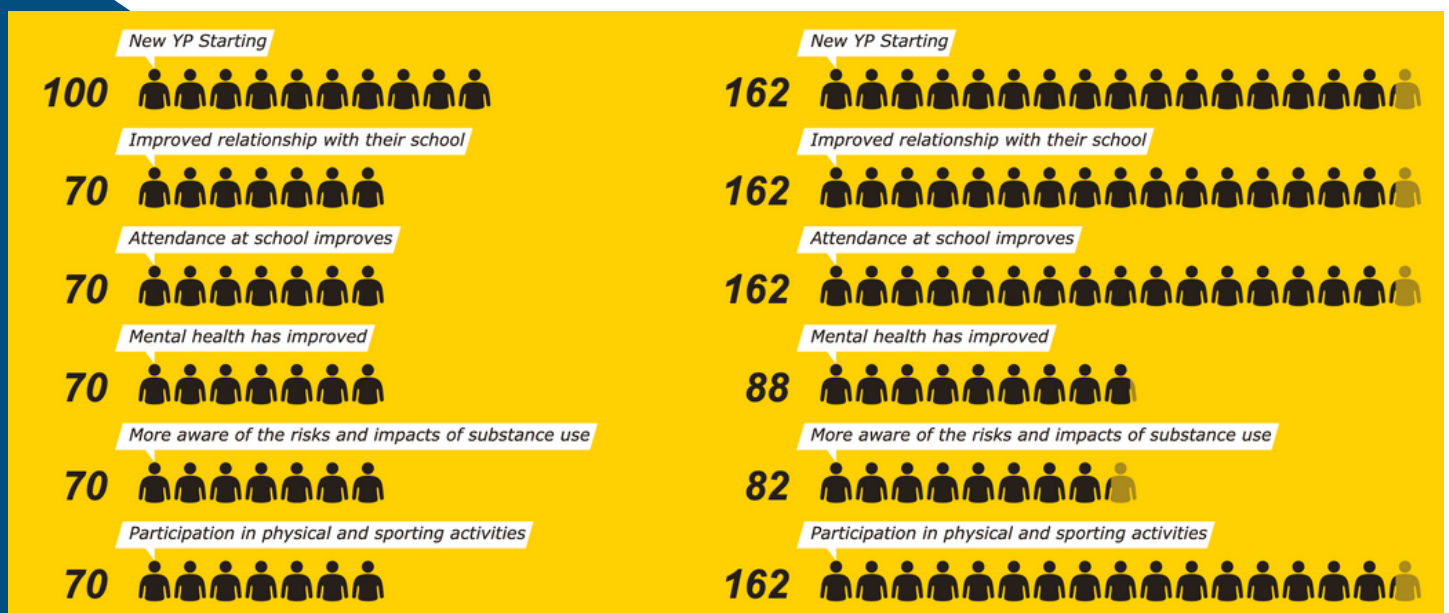
Key performance highlights :

Our second year of the CashBack delivery has proven to be incredibly positive and memorable. We have gained some valuable insights and lessons learned during the year which contributed positively to our continuous improvement processes. RUTS CashBack Academies supported a total of 162 young people, all of whom had the opportunity to regularly take part in sporting activities and learn new skills.

Building on this, we have seen all attendees improve their attendance at school, and experience improved relationships with peers and teachers. Some positive progression at this early stage has seen personal wellbeing improve, with 88 young people highlighting that they have improved mental health. The chart below picks out some highlights from our KPI's (Appendix 1).

TARGET

ACTUAL



Note : The RUTS CashBack Academy delivery model is designed to ensure that all attendees are introduced to, and actively engaged with positive physical or sporting activities, whether that is through our core activities of Motorbikes, Mountain Bikes or Boxing, or via the broader fitness or yoga work that we roll out amongst many of the pupils

Year 2 highlights cont'd

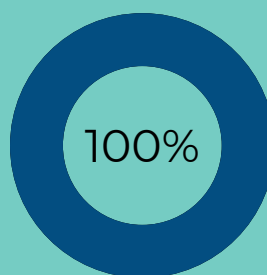
Key highlights :

One of our key criteria for referral to RUTS CashBack Academies is a minimum of three barriers such as behavioural, school non-attendance. Our data reflects that 100% of young people continue to meet this criteria in year 2 by having three barriers or more.

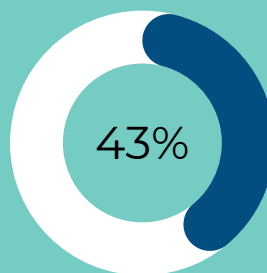
Additionally, 43% of young people referred to the RUTS CashBack Academies have a disability i.e. learning or physical, which is consistent with data from year 1.



Highlight Referral data :

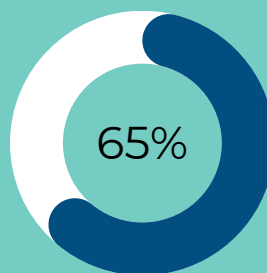


100% of young people referred have three or more barriers

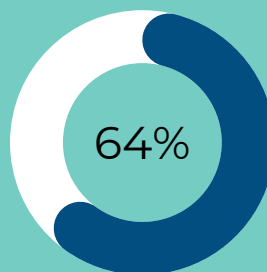


43% of young people referred have a disability

Highlight Outcome data :



65% of young people reported a reduction in their criminal behaviour



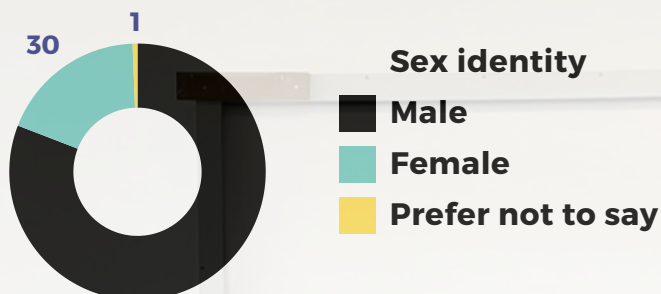
64% of young people reported they were less likely to engage in harmful drugs/alcohol use

Note : During year two we have seen an increasingly positive impact on the behaviours of the young people in relation to crime and substance misuse, as reflected in the graphs.

Equality data

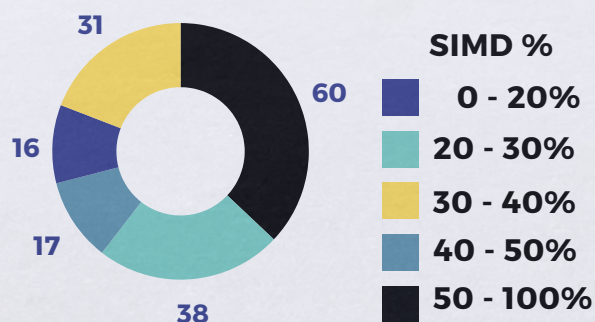
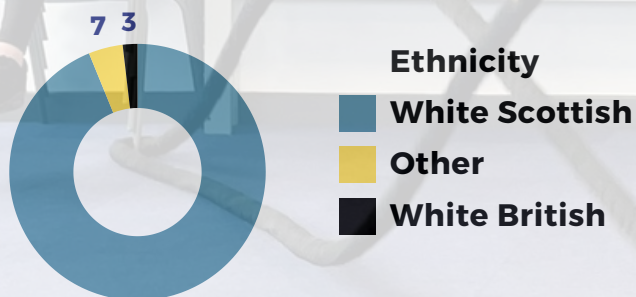
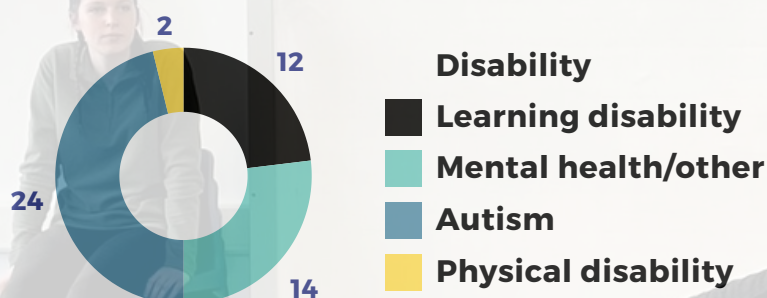
Description :

These charts below show a clear breakdown of the equalities data captured over year 2.



Insights:

Gender balance has improved notably in year 2, with Dalkeith High School hosting our first dedicated, girls only RUTS CashBack Academy.



Insights:

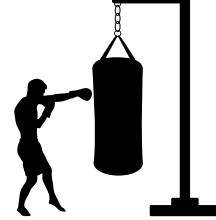
Analysis of the cohort who reside in deciles 1-3 show that 51% reported that they would be less inclined to partake in anti-social or criminal behaviour.

In addition to SIMD, other key criteria for young people joining our CashBack Academies is that they have a minimum of 3 barriers.

Year 2 - the journey continues

QUARTER ONE

15 young people come through the Q1 RUTS CashBack Academy.



QUARTER TWO

New partnerships created with four new schools in East Lothian and Midlothian.



QUARTER THREE

35 referrals received for girls, exceeding our expectations for the year 2 gender split.



QUARTER FOUR

We delivered 174 individual CashBack sessions in Q4 alone, across 8 schools in East, West and Midlothian.

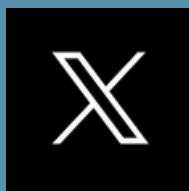


Communication highlights

School engagements and social media highlights.

We've had a number of really positive engagements over the second year of our RUTS CashBack Academies, and have used a variety of approaches to engage and communicate with stakeholders. We have continued to build a strong online presence to promote the RUTS and CashBack brands, using social media to promote and share examples of the fantastic work that has been undertaken with young people. Whilst the world of social media has become more challenging to navigate in our second year, we were regular users of X, Facebook and Instagram, with the latter becoming more popular in the last quarter of the year.

"The visit and comms session delivered by ROSPA and the RNLI was really informative. It was important for staff to learn about the dangers of Tombstoning and how RUTS can engage with young people to highlight the risks" - RUTS staff member.



Partnerships

Partnership working is a vital part of the RUTS CashBack Academy delivery. We work alongside a wide range of organisations and services when delivering our courses, to improve young people's support networks and provide them with a varied range of services. We receive referrals from a wide range of organisations including schools, communities and public services.

Below are some of the major organisations that we have worked with in the second year of CashBack Phase 6.



During year two, CashBack partnerships were formed with local secondary schools: Inveralmond, Musselburgh, Ross High, Preston Lodge, Knox Academy, Rosehill, Dalkeith and Beeslack to continually engage with, and shape our academy model. The academies have been well supported by young people, educators and parents.

Initial engagement was undertaken with CashBack delivery partners such as KIC Dance and Venture Scotland with plans to further develop these networks during 25-26. We have engaged a number of voluntary organisations in our second year to establish what long term working partnerships might be achievable, for example, Three Hares Community Woodland, Tweed Valley Trails Association, with the hope that we can increase volunteering and career opportunities for young people in the areas that inspire them most.

Case study 1

CashBack gender balance

In year one, the scales felt heavily tipped in favour of attendees being males: statistically, adolescent males are more likely to require specialist support from organisations such as RUTS. Whilst gender balance is an ongoing challenge which RUTS continues to tackle, we saw a positive increase in female CashBack attendees in year two.

RUTS put a strategy in place early on in year two, so that girls only groups could be formed as part of the delivery, creating a more welcoming environment for girls. This was received positively by schools and we saw referrals increase from 16 in year 1 to 30 in year 2.

"I normally wouldn't come along to things like this at school because it's usually just full of boys, but i've really enjoyed doing the course with my friends."



A full-page photograph of three people mountain biking on a grassy hill. The person in the foreground is wearing a blue helmet and a green backpack. Two other riders are further ahead on the same path. The background shows rolling green hills and a bright sun in a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

**“I’ve never had the chance to go mountain biking with my friends before - it was mint”.
Young person**

Case study 2

"I had fun working with the guys from RUTS and I'm looking forward using the skills area over the summer with my friends"
Young person

Improved community engagement and volunteering :

Beeslack High School approached us to see how we could help deliver a CashBack course, encourage bicycle use and improve pupils confidence through local volunteering. RUTS came up with a plan to get the students a qualification, get them out cycling and promote volunteering through relevant local engagement.

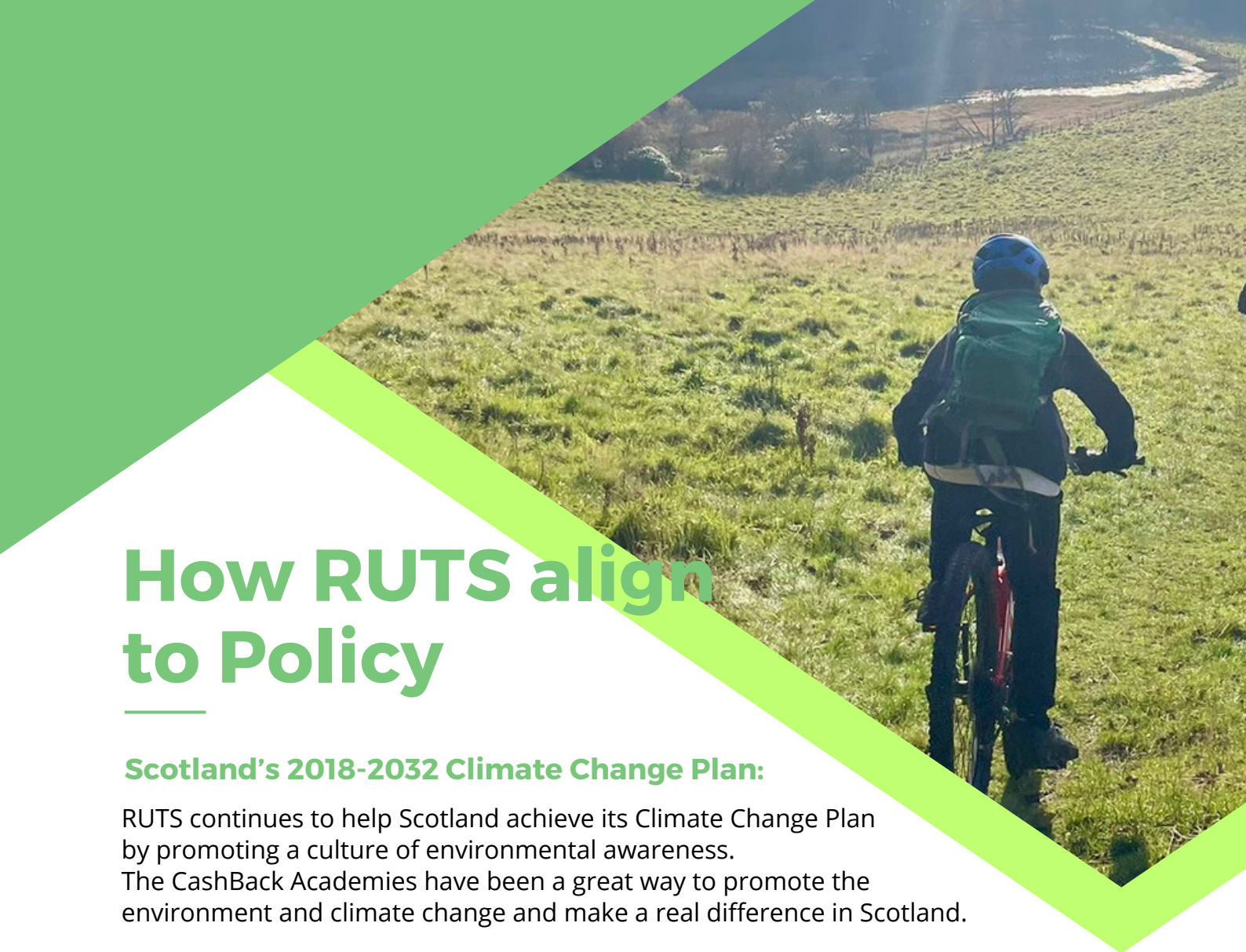
RUTS introduced the concept of trail building on the MTB Skills Area on the school grounds, as this had fallen into a state of disrepair over the years and fitted in with the British Cycling Trail Therapy model of undertaking volunteer work to revitalise a school and community asset. The engagement of the students was very positive, as some students were disengaging from school, whilst others had learning issues.

It was a great success for most of the group and attendance throughout the course was good. The group had an enjoyable time, engaging with both assessment work and getting outside to learn about MTB trail building and leadership styles whilst using bikes.

In addition to delivering accredited training, RUTS provided mentorship experience for young people which encouraged them to re-engage with school/education. This included the delivery of mechanical training and experience in the use of hand tools for maintenance. The CashBack course also provided the opportunity to ride a bicycle in a controlled and safe environment and experience road and trail riding, whilst developing life skills and having fun.

A key area for the group was being able to take newly learned skills and apply them to an assessment process, which was very pleasing for RUTS staff to see. The improved school engagement and the reduction of barriers for some individuals was great for their confidence, whilst doing something practical and finding a new hobby was great for their mental health and well-being.

Six students achieved a SCQF Bicycle Maintenance Leadership Award. Attendance during the course was also a success, whilst the MTB Skills Area at the school is a much safer, visually pleasing and fun place for young people in the local community to use. The school also fed back that the course had a positive impact on the pupils and their general outlook on life.



How RUTS align to Policy

Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan:

RUTS continues to help Scotland achieve its Climate Change Plan by promoting a culture of environmental awareness.

The CashBack Academies have been a great way to promote the environment and climate change and make a real difference in Scotland.

Some of the key highlights during year 2 of CashBack were as follows:

- ✓ Staff are regularly encouraged to exercise and increase physical activities, with a positive energised culture promoted to staff both in and out of work.
- ✓ Promotion of bike use and fitness via CashBack Academies to ensure maximum physical and mental health benefits for attendees - it's what we do!
- ✓ Encourage all CashBack attendees to apply for a Young Persons Free Bus Travel Card. We want to make it as easy as possible to re-engage with education.
- ✓ RUTS continued to reduce our van miles travelled in 24/25 through thoughtful planning to reduce use of vans and maximise coverage of schools.
- ✓ Regular recycling and re-use of training equipment to minimise waste.
- ✓ RUTS worked with Beeslack High School volunteers to revitalise the local pump track and promote the health benefits of being active outdoors.
- ✓ Installed air-source heat pumps at our offices, as well as making other energy efficiency improvements to our building like heating, insulation and improved drainage.

How RUTS align to Policy cont'd

Best Start, Bright Futures: The Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan, 2022-26 :

The CashBack Academy project has focussed on one of the three key themes from the Best Start, Bright Futures plan, namely "Supporting the next generation to thrive", by specifically targeting young people with a view to increasing the likelihood of reaching and sustaining positive destinations.

The CashBack Academy was specifically designed to support the achievement of this outcome by introducing activities that push the boundaries of the young person's comfort zone and skillset while supporting them to build resilience.

Course content in our second year has supported positive behavioural changes in relation to confidence, aspirations, and enabled the rebuilding of relationships with peers, their wider community and re-engagement with school.

The RUTS training staff have been instrumental in the roll-out of the CashBack Academies in our first year, their feedback has enabled us to tailor content and continuously improve processes over the duration of the project.

UNCRC / CRWIA

RUTS have embraced the UNCRC and use of a CRWIA within our organisation, having undertaken thorough planning and research prior to its creation and implementation. A timetable is now in place to review relevance of the CRWIA annually and ensure it is fit-for-purpose. UNCRC annual refresher training is rolled out to staff each December, with a process in place to have new staff complete the training as part of their on-boarding process.

The CashBack Academy now ensures that UNCRC forms part of the introductory session to promote its existence and ensure that young people have a better understanding of their rights. The feedback loop that we have in place with young people and partners allows us to regularly review our processes and ensure that the voice of the child is heard.

Link to CRWIA on RUTS website.

<https://www.ruts.org.uk/s/ChildrensRightsandWellbeingImpactAssessmentv41.pdf>

How RUTS align to Policy cont'd

Fair Work First Framework:

RUTS is committed to each of the Scottish Government's Fair Work First criteria.

<https://www.ruts.org.uk/fair-work-statement>

Appropriate channels for an effective voice

RUTS organisational policies highlight our commitment to fair and inclusive work practices for all staff. Encourage all staff to have the opportunity to Speak Up and have a voice. RUTS recognise and accommodate Trade Unions and members thereof to ensure that those who work for us meet with the principles of the Fair Work criteria.

Investment in workforce development

RUTS invest in developing our staff and have robust induction and personal development plans in place to ensure staff are fully qualified to deliver RUTS programmes and qualifications. Staff are encouraged to keep CPD up to date and be aware of current trends in our sector.

No inappropriate use of zero-hours contracts

RUTS do not offer zero hours contracts or engage people on a sessional contract to cover where an employment contract is more appropriate. All RUTS staff are on permanent contracts.

Action to tackle the gender pay gap

RUTS promote and support equality, diversity and inclusion within our workplace. RUTS has a fixed salary structure which eliminates a gender pay gap. RUTS workforce represents the communities that we serve.

Offer flexible and family friendly working practices

RUTS offer flexible and family friendly working practice to all staff from day one of employment, in line with providing the best support to the children and families we work with. We encourage our people to collaborate and feel supported in their place of work.

Oppose the use of fire and rehire practices

RUTS do not engage with fire and re-hire practices. RUTS has an inclusive recruitment practice in place, to ensure appointments are made on a fair and impartial basis.

Payment of the real Living Wage

RUTS is an accredited living wage employer and review pay periodically to ensure that staff receive a fair pay for the work that they do.

Updates and priorities

Organisational updates :

Work on the youth hub in partnership with the Penicuik Y' is nearing completion, featuring a newly installed air source heat pump and refurbished dedicated areas designed to enhance youth engagement activities.

RUTS has continued to actively promote its programmes to girls, leading to increased participation from this underrepresented group in the CashBack academies.

Recognising that East/West Lothian are large and diverse geographic areas, we have made a concerted effort to extend our reach by actively promoting the CashBack academies to as many schools as possible within the region. This targeted outreach reflects our commitment to ensuring young people across the Lothians have access to the opportunities our programmes offer.

RUTS have delivered some pilot projects this year with New Scots focusing on breaking down language barriers and using practical hands-on sessions to achieve this.

We have also worked closely with Monarchs Speedway to engage with young people on supporting the design of new programmes which can be used as a diversionary project. We will pilot a project in partnership with police in Fife to engage with young people on the fringes of offending to improve engagement.

Priorities for Year 3

-  Promote CashBack academy programmes across all of our activities, to engage young people over year 3.
-  Confirm bookings for CashBack Year 3 - we are currently formalising bookings for year 3, with existing partners keen to continue the partnership and engagement with new schools underway to establish new CashBack partnerships.
-  We will continue to capture feedback from young people, educators and stakeholders to inform and shape continuous improvement in processes.

Appendix 1: KPI's

Indicator	Year 2 Actuals	Year 2 Target	Actuals Year 1+2	Targets Year 1+2
New YP Starting	162	100	310	200
Outcome 1:				
YP report that their own participation in antisocial/criminal behaviour has reduced	74	70	156	140
YP report that they feel less inclined to participate in antisocial/criminal behaviour	74	70	156	140
Outcome 2:				
YP gain accreditation for a new skill (See Tab 2 for Breakdown)	81	70	462	140
YP report an improved relationship with their school	162	70	298	140
YP attendance at school improves	162	70	298	140
YP gaining / taking up Modern Apprenticeship or employment	4	5	9	10
YP gaining / taking up Training / Work Experience	7	5	28	10
YP gaining / taking up college or uni placement	16	8	34	16
YP gaining / taking up Volunteering AFTER completion of programme	1	8	88	16
Outcome 3:				
YP report an increase in feelings against SHANARRI indicators	82	70	176	140
YP report their mental health has improved and they have a more positive outlook on life	88	70	182	140
YP report they are more aware of the risks and impacts of harmful substance use	82	70	186	140
YP report they are less inclined to engage in harmful drugs and/or alcohol use.	83	70	175	140
YP report their confidence has increased	84	70	184	140
YP report evidence of participation in physical and sporting activities	162	70	310	140

Appendix 1: KPI's cont'd

Indicator	Year 2 Actuals	Year 2 Target	Actuals Year 1+2	Targets Year 1+2
Outcome 4:				
YP report their perception of their neighbourhood improves	75	70	145	140
YP report a heightened sense of belonging to a community	75	70	145	140
YP report feeling their contribution, links with communities and social interaction are improving	76	70	145	140
YP report increased motivation to positively influence what happens in their community	75	70	145	140
YP go on to volunteer, coach, mentor, support or take a leadership role in community organisation	200	70	287	140
Hours of volunteering contributed by participants	61.25	100	284.75	200
Community focused awards gained by participants	0	0	0	0
Outcome 5:				
YP report feeling more resilient	162	70	310	140
YP report positive, supportive networks – including improved relationships with family, friends and peer mentor	162	70	310	140
YP report increased access to appropriate services	162	70	310	140
YP report positive changes in their behaviour choices / improved understanding of rights and responsibilities)	162	70	310	140

Appendix 2:

Spend v Target

	2024/25			Phase 6 to date		
	Actual	Target	Variance	Actual	Target	Variance
Project Co-ordinator	£30,744	£30,744	£0	£61,488	£61,488	£0
Youth Trainers/Progression Co-ordinator PT	£73,610	£73,610	£0	£147,220	£147,220	£0
Sessional Staff	£10,000	£10,000	£0	£20,000	£20,000	£0
Other costs (fuel, insurance, SQA costs)	£2,000	£2,000	£0	£4,000	£4,000	£0
Cost for external qualifications (coaching awards)	£2,500	£2,500	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£0
Facility hire costs	£2,600	£2,600	£0	£5,200	£5,200	£0
Sports equipment	£2,000	£2,000	£0	£4,000	£4,000	£0
PPE - for off road/mechanics workshops	£2,000	£2,000	£0	£4,000	£4,000	£0
Project delivery equipment (tools, cycle parts/equipment)	£2,000	£2,000	£0	£4,000	£4,000	£0
Management and Marketing	£13,704	£13,704	£0	£27,408	£27,408	£0
TOTAL	£141,158	£141,158	£0	£282,316	£282,316	£0

RUTS



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