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### **Executive Summary**

shmu's CashBack - Move Forward programme helps young people overcome personal barriers and avoid anti-social behaviour and (re)offending through three core projects:

- (1) Our **Youth Media Project** supports 10 to 18-year-olds from regeneration areas of Aberdeen (0-20% SIMD) to participate in media-related activities;
- (2) shmu's **Training Academy** supports school leavers identified as unlikely to achieve a positive destination, and those who have left school and require one-to-one support; and
- (3) the **Media Access Project** (MAP) works with young prisoners in HMP & YOI Grampian and those recently released.

In Year 3, we achieved continued growth in reach and participation. *CashBack - Move Forward* engaged 289 young people, a significant increase in the number of young people who took part in Year 1 (88) and a continuation of the growth trend established in Year 2 (230). Over three years, we have supported 607 young people, exceeding our target of 567 participants. 55% of the young people we supported were male, demonstrating our effectiveness in engaging with young men who are known for being hard to reach and more likely to experience long term economic exclusion. More than half of the young people were from the 0-20% SIMD data zones.

This report demonstrates why the *Cashback - Move Forward* model continues to be respected by young people and stakeholders and has effectively achieved the Scottish Government's CashBack outcomes.

Our Youth Media Project supported young people to realise their potential and increase confidence, gain accreditation, successfully transition to further education, and utilise their skills and experience to provide peer support. Our Training Academy continued to deliver

a successful employability support option tailored specifically to the interests and needs of disengaged young people. With MAP, young people were supported to tackle complex issues following offending behaviours, with a wraparound holistic and person-centred support package. Our approach has successfully supported individuals to begin the journey away from offending towards a more positive and stable life within our communities.

In the final year of the initiative, we built on our learning from the project's first two years, gathered through our staff team, participants and stakeholders. Without the COVID-19 restrictions experienced previously, we were able to deliver a full programme of activities for young people engaged with our Youth Media and Training Academy programmes. Unfortunately, restrictions in HMP Grampian significantly reduced access to prisoner numbers, and we reluctantly ended the prison project during this year. We maintained a strong relationship with the prison, supporting young people pre and post-release, and piloted a community-based programme focussing on supporting justice-experienced young people to divert them away from prison.

Adding value to our programme, we secured match funding for additional interventions which supported all our CashBack participants. This included funds from Children in Need and the Hunter Foundation for Youth Social Action Activities, which empower young people to address issues affecting their everyday lives. Creative Scotland's Recovery Funding for Cultural Organisations helped us develop activities and volunteering opportunities in the community for those post-release. Funding from the Youth Music Initiative allowed us to embed music as a medium in the transformative journeys of young people moving through our organisation. This match funding will also enhance our engagement with young people throughout Phase 6 of our CashBack Initiative.



Youth Media participant



### Introduction

CashBack for Communities is the Scottish Government's programme which repurposes money seized from proceeds of crime into projects for young people who face disadvantage. In January 2020, £19m of newly funded projects were announced; Station House Media Unit's (shmu) CashBack - Move Forward received £292,500 to work with over 500 young people in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire over three years. With a focus on creative approaches and media, the programme seeks to help young people overcome personal barriers, avoid antisocial behaviour, and (re)-offending.

The funding covers three projects:

Youth Media supports 10-to-18 year-olds from regeneration areas of Aberdeen to participate in media-related activities. The project works with young people at risk of involvement in anti-social and offending behaviour from the regeneration areas of Aberdeen. Person-centred creative opportunities support young people to actively participate across various media platforms, supporting their personal development and progression.

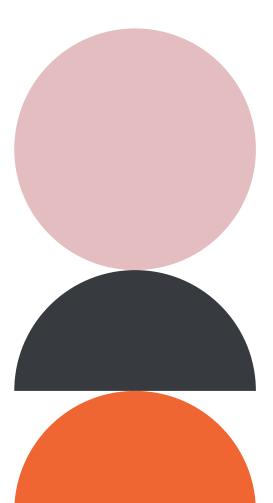
shmu Training Academy provides a coordinated package of support for summer and winter leavers who have been identified as unlikely to achieve a positive destination. Providing support in school and our base in Aberdeen, the programme re-engages those struggling in the senior phase at school and support them through the transition into work, further education or training. It also supports young people who have left school and require personalised one-to-one support to begin their journey along the employability pipeline.

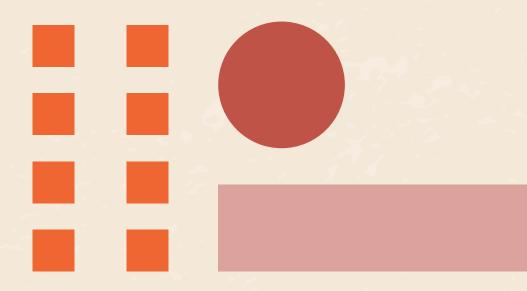
Media Access Project (MAP) supports young prisoners in HMP Grampian to participate in media programmes run in our SQA-accredited Creative Media Unit within the prison, with continued coordinated support post-release. MAP encourages, motivates, and inspires young prisoners, many of whom are prolific offenders with chaotic lifestyles, to begin the journey from offending towards a more positive and stable life post-release.

In Year 3, 289 young people participated in *CashBack - Move Forward* for the first time, resulting in 607 young people who engaged with *CashBack - Move Forward* over the full three years of the initiative.

This report covers the project's final year, and learning across the full three years, spanning:

- An overview of participants and performance across projects
- · Organisational update
- Updates on the three CashBack Move Forward projects
- Three case studies that illustrate each project's delivery model and impact
- A fourth case study which demonstrates the journey of a course participant who progressed into employment within our organisation
- · Communications report
- · Collaborative working update
- · Financial report
- · Evaluation summary
- Learning from CashBack Move Forward and plans for Phase 6





"It was good to get to do something new and it made me want to learn and get good at something again. It gave me a routine and schedule which was very important for my mental health, something to look forward to."

Training Academy participant



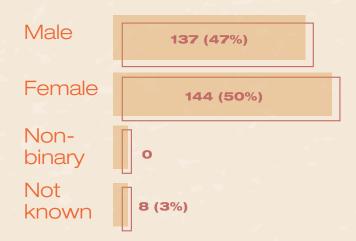
### Year 3 Engagement • •

### 289 participants in Year 3

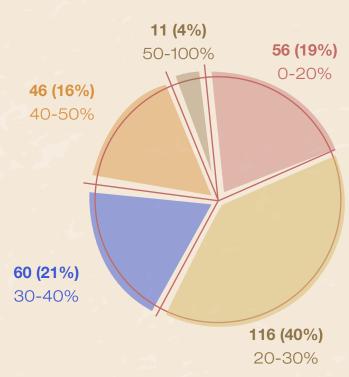
### Age



### **Sex identity**



### **SIMD Profile**



24 (8%) young people with a disability; most prevalent issues were:

Social or

1

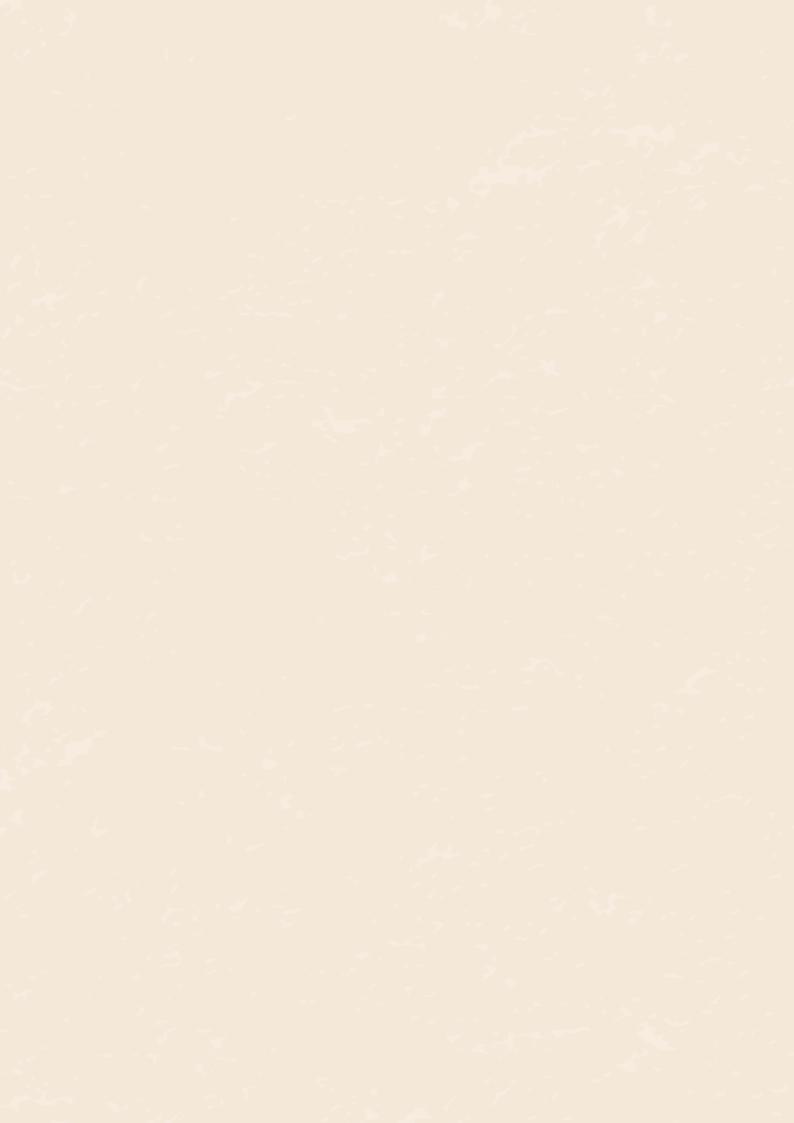
Stamina, al: breathing or fatigue:

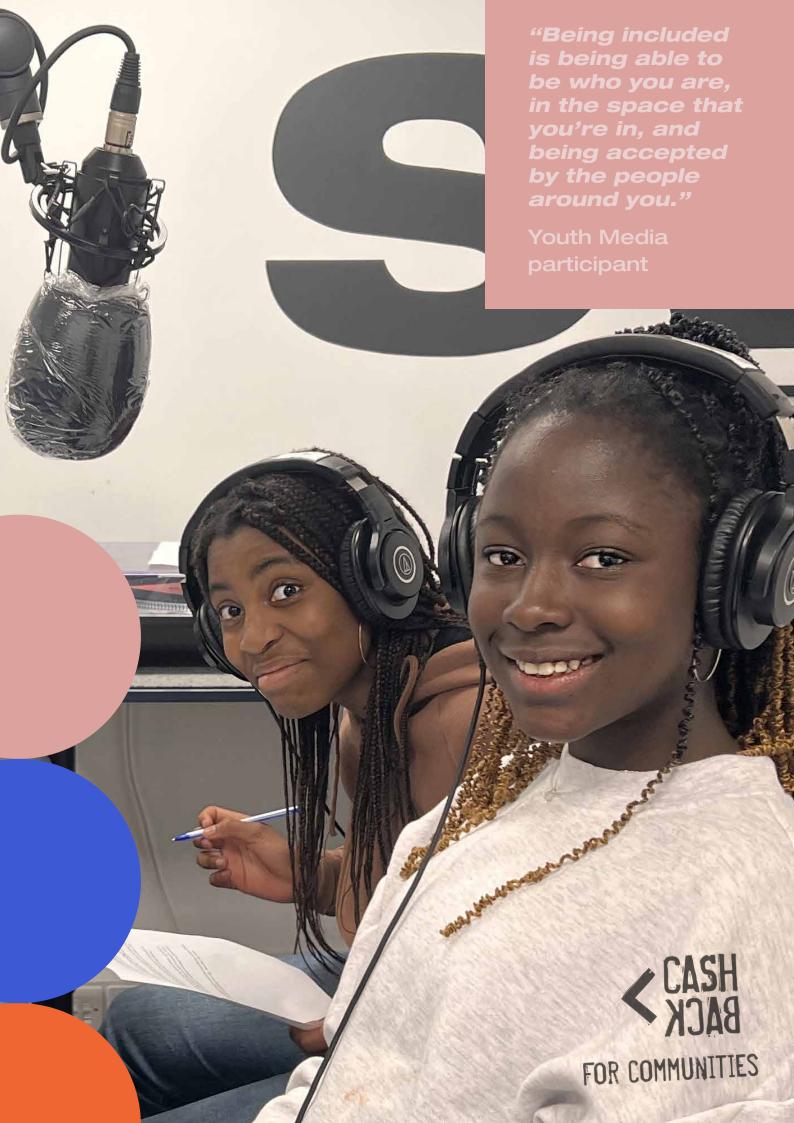
Mobility

17

Learning, understanding or concentrating







### Year 3 Outcomes

### 289 new participants in Year 3



### **Outcome 1: YP build their capacity and confidence**

271

189 Increased

confidence (65%)

Able to do new things (94%)

Feel more resilient (39%)

Of stakeholders report increased confidence

70 %

83

young people reported positive support networks (28%) 84
people reported
positive changes in
behaviour (29%)

**75**%

112

Of stakeholders report perceived positive changes in behaviour



### Outcome 2: YP develop their physical and personal skills

130 257

Increased personal skills, achieving accredited learning (45%)

Increased skills (89%)

55%

Of stakeholders report increased skills



### **Outcome 3: YP health and well-being improves**

263

Improve wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators (91%)

**75**%

Of stakeholders report perceived increases in SHANARRI indicators



### Outcome 4: YP participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations)

43

positive destinations achieved (15%)

Employment 1
Education 17 (6%)
Training 10 (3%)
Volunteering 15 (5%)

19 Improve s

Improve school attendance (7%)

21

Secure interviews (work, training or further education) (7%)



### **Outcome 5: YP contribute positively to their communities**

29

Take on a volunteering role (10%)

13,776

Hours of volunteering

89

Improved social interaction, contribution & links with communities (31%)

159

Produce media tackling issues relating to their communities (55%)



### Outcome 6: YP are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

21

Feel less inclined to participate in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour (7%) 12

Complete an individual future Learning Plan (4%)

21

Improved relationships within family and social circles (7%)

14

Feel more positive about the future post-release (5%)

# Target vs Actual Outcomes 2020-2023

	TARGET	ACTUAL	% OF TARGET ACHIEVED
Outcome 1: Young people build their confidence and resilience, benefit from stre	engthened support n	etworks and reduc	e risk-taking behavio
Young people report their confidence increasing	507	464	92%
Young people feel able to do new things	507	511	101%
Young people feel more resilient	294	243	83%
Other stakeholders report perceived increases in confidence and resilience	75%	85%	113%
Young people report strengthened support networks – including improved relationships with family and friends/increased access to appropriate services	278	216	78%
Young people report positive changes in their behaviour	270	251	93%
Other stakeholders report perceived positive changes in the behaviour of young participants	75%	80%	107%
Outcome 2: Young people develop their physical and personal skills			
YP will demonstrate increased skills	507	533	105%
Stakeholders report skills increasing	75%	75%	100%
YP will gain accreditation for learning and skills development	403	224	56%
Outcome 3: Young people's health and well-being improves	<u>:</u>	<u>:</u>	:
YP will report increases in wellbeing feelings against SHANARRI indicators	324	522	161%
stakeholders' report perceived increases in SHANARRI indicators among YP	75%	82%	109%
Outcome 4: Young people participate in activity which improves their learnin	ng, employability ar	nd employment opt	ions (positive
Number of young people re-engaging with education, or school attendance increases	186	103	55%
The number of young people secure interviews (work, training or further education)	155	37	24%
The number of young people progress to a sustained positive destination	230	97	42%
Outcome 5: Young people contribute positively to their communities			
The number of hours of volunteering contributed by participants	12,492	44,171	354%
Number of young people produce and disseminate/broadcast media tackling issues relating to their communities	567	294	49%
Young people feel their contribution, links with communities and social interaction are improving	324	220	68%
Outcome 6: Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involveme	nt with the crimina	I justice system	
Young people complete an Individual Learning Plan which includes plans for the future related to behaviour and risk-taking	441	29	7%
Young people report that they feel less inclined to participate in anti-social and/or criminal behaviour	309	81	26%
Young people report improved relationships within family and social circles	213	77	36%
Prisoners feel more positive about the future post-release	45	25	56%



### **Organisational Update**

#### **Covid-19 Recovery**

The return to face-to-face activities in Year 2, following periods of lockdown, made a significantly positive difference to the young people involved in our projects. We found that young people needed support to become comfortable in the group work environment again after such prolonged periods of isolation, and social anxiety was demonstrably more prevalent post-pandemic.

### Responding to the mental health & wellbeing crisis

We observed heightened levels of anxiety in young people, and this is supported by research from leading UK youth charities which identified that young people have been left particularly vulnerable because issues caused by Covid-19, such as declining mental health, social isolation, uncertainty surrounding exams and limited employment opportunities. We therefore redesigned our services to mitigate Covid's impact on mental health and emotional well-being. From Year 2 we increased activities which supported young people to boost their resilience and have embedded mental health & wellbeing in all our practices.

#### **Operational and Staffing Review**

In Year 2, our Youth Services Manager and our Youth Development Worker left shmu. As a result of the many changes which stemmed from the pandemic, we felt it important to take stock and consider whether the structure and support in place to deliver our Youth Media programmes

was fit for purpose. A full operational and staffing review allowed us to understand the capacity and skills required to support this important area of our organisation's work.

A dedicated Youth Worker was recruited to oversee the Youth Media Saturday Take-Over programme, and new tutors delivered additional activities across our Youth Media programme. A new Youth Services Manager was recruited, with extensive experience in supporting young people to be safe, protected and afforded opportunities to make significant positive life changes, including in education and child protection roles. This appointment allowed for a renewed focus on the activities we offered, and as a result, there has been a notable growth in participant numbers and opportunities delivered in Year 3.

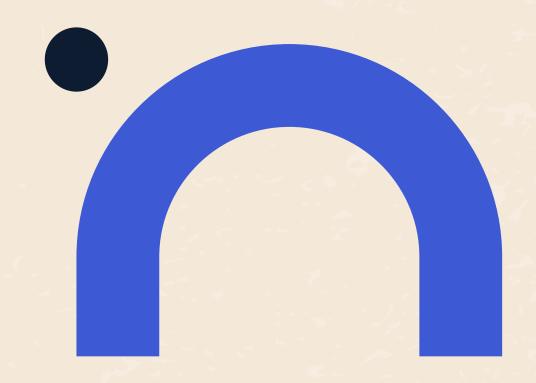
#### **Campaigns**

During Year 2 of CashBack - Move Forward, a
Communications Officer was recruited to develop
and implement a comprehensive internal and external
communications strategy. The role spans campaign
coordination, working with relevant partner organisations to
raise awareness and to promote discussion and action in
areas of interest for the organisation, including Challenging
Poverty, Mental Health and Wellbeing and Climate Change
(see our Communications Report on page 29). Each
campaign has offered opportunities for young people to
expand their knowledge and develop further skills while
addressing issues important to them and their peers.

"I got lots of respect from staff, I felt like a part of the shmu family and felt included."

Youth Media participant





"I feel that SHMU
has helped build my
confidence especially
when it comes to
talking to other people.
I also don't think I'd have
started volunteering if
you hadn't helped me
set it up"

Training Academy participant





### Youth Media

#### **Increased Engagement**

Our new Youth Services Manager was recruited in the summer of 2022, leading to a review and redesign of youth service activities to provide increased opportunities to participate, leading to increased engagement. Whilst some former participants have naturally moved on since the return to full activity post-pandemic, we recruited new participants to the weekly Youth Media project, with an average of 24 young people regularly taking part in weekly Youth Media activities throughout the year.

We introduced new community outreach activities in Year 3 which has enabled our Youth Team to further develop relationships with partner community organisations, allowing for mutual support and increased interaction. In total, we worked with 227 young people during the third year of the project through; Speak Out FM, Speak Out TV, One Day Challenges in radio, film and music, Podcast Outreach, Friday Film Club and our Saturday Youth Media takeover.

#### **Content Creation**

As always, our Youth Media focus has been to utilise the knowledge gained during sessions to support film, radio and music content creation. The young people have participated in weekly live radio shows discussing their experiences, interviewing guests and sharing their experiences with the wider community audience.

The weekly Saturday morning live radio show (10am-1pm) continues to act as a platform for the young people to engage with their community and to represent the views of their age-group on a diverse range of topics.

Participants have also been involved in the creation of content to be shared on our community TV channel, including a short film called "Remembering Together" which looks at the young people's experience of the coronavirus pandemic as part of a wider community art project and a docufilm covering our trip to the Glasgow Science Centre.

#### **Youth Voice**

A key objective of the Youth Media project is to give young people an opportunity to have their voice heard within their local community, currently mostly through their takeover of the radio station on a Saturday morning, during which their shows cover topics of relevance to them within their community. Topics have included discussion around mental health services in schools, at home medical care, the attainment gap, and the impact on pupils of teacher shortages.

In January, during prelim period in schools, the young people hosted a particularly impactful morning of shows focusing on study skills, exam technique and other assessment models. Researching for this show offered them an opportunity to develop their own study skills and build an understanding of how to balance wellbeing during times of stress. Applying the youth voice to these messages offered peer support to their school communities and offered a valuable insight to the views of young people of the examination process.

We are committed to a youth-led approach and have a well-established Youth Media Forum, providing the opportunity for all young people involved in the Youth Media Project to influence the future direction and focus of the work, and a weekly Youth Planning group which ensures that all youth activities within the organisation are in keeping with our ethos. Participants are involved in all aspects of decision-making, from to day-to-day operational planning, to developing concepts for new areas of work.

#### Citizen Science & Youth Social Action

We continued to develop our STEM and science focussed project, which has seen our *CashBack Move-Forward* participants take part in a number of positive activities that have included; a trip to the Glasgow Science Centre; provision of a Science of Wellbeing session; and a trip to North East Scotland College Science labs.

In December 2022, we secured funding through Children in Need for Youth Social Action and offered a broad range of sessions with external speakers, helping us explore the different ways young people can make their voices heard to effect change within their communities, from formal structures such as Scottish Youth Parliament, to informal means from participating in demonstrations to the use of art as a means of vocalising opinion.

"shmu has helped him come out of his shell, he's certainly more confident. He has tried a few different groups but shmu is the only one he has stuck with. He has absolutely loved all the science related stuff especially. He has been given amazing opportunities through shmu!"

Parent of participant





### Youth Media Case Study

#### **Case study overview**

Our Year 3 Youth Media case study presents Chris\*, who has engaged with Youth Media throughout the whole of Phase 5. Chris had a keen interest in film but struggled to work constructively with others. Through support to engage in youth media activities, Chris has learned to work well as o part of a team and has been a driving force to establish new pieces of work linked to film.

When Chris first came to shmu as a 12-year-old, his interest in film was obvious. Even at this young age, he talked articulately and enthusiastically about film but seemed nervous about working with others. He attended all film sessions, getting involved with all elements of the process and was surprised to learn how much was involved in creating a short 2-minute film. At the end of this experience, Chris commented: "I enjoyed the opportunity to be creative and express myself. I am able to talk about films and be with like-minded people and find this inspiring, and also enjoy the creative process of developing ideas with other people."

From this initial experience, he was hooked and began attending regular Saturday morning Youth Media sessions, which he has continued to do over the last four years. He used the radio show as a platform to share his love of film, which eventually led to him having his own film-based show on shmuFM, shmu's community radio station.

When asked about the most challenging aspect of Youth Media, Chris explained, "I have definitely had trouble mixing with people that have personalities I don't like". Staff said it was evident shmu is an escape from school for Chris, as he can find other people and their behaviour difficult at school and distracting. We have supported him in developing coping skills that help him at school, and at shmu, he feels comfortable and can work on his interests.

Chris is always keen to develop as much practical filmmaking experience as possible. Of all participants in the youth media group, he was the most vocal about the need to establish more film activities for his age group. Over time he has worked on countless video projects at shmu, including helping to film content for the Aberdeen Mela and working on a short local history documentary about the Jacob's Ladder restoration project in Woodside, Aberdeen. Chris also helped to establish the Into Film Group and enhanced his practical skills in filmmaking as he wrote critical reviews of films for the youth media blog.

Chris said: "Into Film has been a great opportunity to expand my knowledge of films and meet people with the same interests as me. At first, I thought we'd just watch action films, but it's actually opened my eyes to a lot of stuff I would never have thought about watching, and they've been great. I've also enjoyed taking part in practical sessions and am working on my first script for a short film."

His knowledge of film and ability to talk articulately about it has grown substantially over his time at shmu. Chris can now work in teams, share his ideas and use the equipment and said, "I've got better at working with most other people and have gained confidence in giving my opinion". Staff report that Chris is always happy to help staff and has grown in his confidence to speak out and show more of his personality. They also note that he is excellent with any other young people who lack the confidence to take part in radio shows, always making an effort to include quieter members of the group.

shmu delivers the BFI Film Academy, and for years, Chris was inspired by watching others develop ideas into short films that were then screened at film festivals. He made it clear he would apply to do this when he was old enough, and this year Chris successfully applied to the BFI Film Academy, where he is working with others to create a short film and complete an NPA Film and Media (Level 6) qualification. When he arrived at shmu in 2018, Chris said, "I'm here because I want to be a film director" – thanks to his involvement in the Youth Media Project, he's well on his way to realising his dreams.

\*This is a pseudonym





"I just want to thank you for giving my daughter this chance. To see her smile like that is amazing. To see her out of the house is a massive step but to see her (like that) is a major thing. Thank you to you and your team."

Parent of Youth Media participant



### **Training Academy**

#### **Summer Leavers Courses**

During Year 3, we delivered our Training Academy programme with ten young people from St Machar and Northfield Academies who were identified as unlikely to secure a positive destination at the point of leaving school. The programme supported the development of skills, confidence and plans to make a positive transition. Of the ten who participated in our Training Academy Summer Programme, five re-engaged with education, one moved on to further training, and one secured a place in college.

#### **New and Re-established Partnerships**

In January, shmu met with staff at Bucksburn Academy, St Machar Academy and Oldmachar Academy to offer support for pupils who had been identified as unlikely to secure a positive destination when leaving school. As a result, we began a Training Academy course in Bucksburn Academy for 10 ASN pupils at the beginning of February 2023. While we have only worked with the pupils for a short time, positive changes such as confidence and skills are already evident in the young people we are supporting. They have learned how to use hand-held recording devices and have been proactive with planning for their live radio show. In March, the group came into shmu to record their first live radio show, and all significantly increased their confidence as a result.

In St Machar Academy and Oldmachar Academy, we are working in partnership with Barnardo's to co-deliver a leavers programme through our Training Academy and

their Cashback-funded Fit for Work programme. We started the Oldmachar programme at the end of March 2023, creating our first podcast session. Two further sessions were delivered to record the show and evaluate the content, and discuss our other employability programmes at shmu that the group could progress onto.

#### **Expanding Social Circles**

In our employability work with young people in schools, participants often find themselves working positively with others outside their established social circles. This helps to break down stereotypes of those from other areas of Aberdeen. They develop new relationships with other young people who have common interests, expand their personal social circle and broaden their outlook.

#### Stage One Work

Our Stage One provision offers comprehensive one-to-one support for young people with multiple and/or significant barriers to successful progression. Participants are supported by staff to complete baseline evaluations and undertake light goal-setting and action planning to determine the tailored skills development activities they require. Year 3 brought a noticeable increase in participants presenting with multiple barriers and requiring Stage 1 or even Pre-Stage 1 support, and 18 young people were supported with one-to-one provision. Feedback from partners and organisations outside employability indicates that this is a widespread issue, and our project has adapted to meet the more resource-intensive and longer-term nature of this work.

### **Employability Support for Young People with Criminal Justice Experienced**

We completed our final course with under-25-year-olds in HMP Grampian, working collaboratively with our MAP project. The young people completed a 12-week personal and skills development employability course involving sessions on film, music, radio, and employability. These young people were also offered assistance by our support team, both while in custody and following their release. Several have signed up to receive pre-release support and plan to continue working with shmu in the community following release from the prison.

"I think I got more than I expected and hoped for from the course. One of the most valuable things I gained were the new relationships I made with the other course members and the staff at shmu."

**HMP Grampian participant** 



### Training Academy Case Study

### **Case study overview**

Our Training Academy case study presents James\*, who managed to achieve in school despite a number of challenges but struggled to transition to a positive post-school destination. Following a traumatic experience at college, James and his family felt they had nowhere to turn. Testimony from James's mother below, highlights the importance of the tailored support shmu offers and its life-changing impact on the young person and their family.

"James is 20 years old with multiple diagnoses, including Autism, Tourette's syndrome and anxiety disorder, hypermobility, executive dysfunction and flat feet. School was very challenging for James; however, with the support he got from school and home, he managed to attain a decent level of education, however, due to his conditions, he was in no way ready for the working world, and further education in a normal setting would have been too challenging. The only option that was open to James on leaving school was to attend Prep for Work course at NESCOL, which was way below his mental ability. Unfortunately, the course was full of challenging and disruptive students, and James was targeted by bullies who saw him as a soft target and was called names, humiliated and laughed at and even assaulted. He endured college for around six months, and following his mental health deteriorating due to the environment he was in at college, we removed him from the course.

As a family, we were left lost with what to do for James. He was still in a place where he could not leave the house alone, could not travel on his own, was very socially isolated. He was unable to work, struggling with anxiety and self-esteem, but he has such huge potential, and we had no idea where to turn.

We were aware that shmu worked under the banner of 'no-one left behind' and approached them to see if there was any help they could offer. We had a meeting with shmu, and they kindly agreed to take James on and see what they could offer to support him. Just as the input began with shmu, covid hit, but shmu set up Zoom meetings firstly between ourselves and James, and as he grew in confidence, he was able to set these up on his computer himself and have 1:1 meetings with his shmu Employability Support Worker. As Covid started easing, his Support Worker has been regularly meeting with James at least once a week to either go out somewhere together or to attend the shmu building, where he has been trying out photography with a tutor and attempting different projects with his Support Worker who is always trying to find new things for him to try. James has got to know his support staff very well, and I have to say that I have seen a huge difference in him in just over a year. It had taken James a while to be able to answer the door himself, but over time with his Support Worker coming to the house regularly to

meet with him, he is now able to get himself organised and open the door, lock the door behind him and be in the outside world with a little more confidence. Recently, for the first time ever, James, who was home alone, actually answered the door to the postman to accept a parcel. This may not sound like a big deal, but in our world, this is a huge step, and it is thanks to shmu for their patience and input. We have seen James's communication improve, and he is now instigating conversations, ordering his own food when out for lunch, being in shops where he is comfortable and being able to ask store workers questions and to buy his own things.

James loves Warhammer, and a Saturday job came up there, and he decided that he wanted to apply for the post. He didn't get it, but the fact that he had the motivation and confidence to actually apply has left us flabbergasted and has given us hope that he may have a chance in the future to become independent and live his life to the full.

James still has a lot of challenges to overcome, and it may take a bit more time to find his path in life, but we are now seeing progress. If it wasn't for shmu, James would just be another young adult with autism hiding away in his room, rocking, listening to music and playing video games, unable to function in the outside world, with little hope for the future and no support from anywhere else. With continued support from shmu, hopefully, we can continue to see James progress and reach his full potential that he rightly deserves."





### The Media Access Project (MAP)

#### MAP - HMP Grampian

In Year 3, we delivered two 12-week courses of our CashBack programme in HMP Grampian. These introduced young participants to media, including radio, music and film. Participants were also supported to gain their Employability Award and offered ongoing employability support when they were released. Our Support Worker assisted sessions within the Creative Media Unit in prison, building relationships with participants and working on pre-release plans to support a positive reintegration into the community. The young people were also encouraged to work on personal skills such as communication, timekeeping and team building.

We were delighted that one of our participants won a Koestler Bronze Award for a music video produced during his film sessions at HMP Grampian. The track 'Living with Time' features hard-hitting lyrics tackling the complex background of one man's offending and the impact of a lengthy prison sentence. The video includes an honest and charismatic delivery from our participant, who - despite being an experienced poet - had never performed on camera. Only 11 other entries from across the UK received recognition in the Performance category, with even fewer

achieving one of the coveted top prizes. Koestler Arts is the UK's best-known prison arts charity, encouraging people in the criminal justice system to change their lives by participating in the arts.

Unfortunately, despite these successes, we made the difficult decision to relocate this element of our CashBack programme from HMP Grampian to community-based delivery. We were finding it increasingly difficult to deliver our services in the Creative Media Unit due to continuing restrictions in HMP Grampian, which reduced access to prisoner numbers significantly. Our team maintain a strong relationship with the prison, supporting anyone pre and post-release who is keen to sign up for shmu support and volunteering opportunities in the community.

A highlight this year was the two Koestler Arts Awards secured by young people who took part in the CashBack programme. There was a Gold Award for their documentary film 'Straight Talking' in which they shared their experiences of drug and alcohol misuse, and a Highly Commended Award for their film 'Feels', a mock advert they created as part of their employability project.

#### MAP - Community

In November 2022, we began the community project 'Engage', which replaced our prison-based programme. Engage is a 12-week course which gives participants an introduction to media with four-week blocks of Radio, Film and Music and opportunities to engage with our Support and Employability teams. To develop this area of work and build and maintain strong links for referrals, we have linked in with key partners, including Justice and Youth Social Work, DWP, Unpaid Work Teams and other 3rd Sector organisations. We have also been invited to attend events, including an event organised by Youth Social Work as part of National Care Day and also attending their 'Warm Space' afternoon. We also attended a drop-in session with STAF-Youth Action Voices, who are looking to form a Steering Group with young people in Aberdeen. We will continue to make the most of opportunities to meet and engage with a range of young people and their workers, letting them know about opportunities at shmu.

Our first Engage course finished in January 2023, and we marked this with a celebration event. Each participant took a friend or family member along, and we invited some of our staff team. This was an opportunity to showcase the groups' achievements and watch their music video, 'Cheat n Death'. Each participant was awarded a certificate of achievement, and all have said they wish to remain involved with shmu. Since the course finished, two of the participants have continued to engage with shmu, with one doing radio training and the other attending our Wellbeing Café regularly.

Our second Engage programme started in March 2023; the staff team are enjoying working with the young people, seeing the development of their skills and realisation of their abilities, and we look forward to seeing what this group creates.

"The teamwork and spark that was created was just unreal. I am gutted the course has finished but looking forward to staying part of shmu and seeing what comes next"

MAP participant



### MAP Case Study

#### **Case study overview**

Our Year 3 MAP case study tells Eddie's\* story of his journey with the Engage course, which is delivered in the community and aims to break the cycle of offending. This example demonstrates the importance of providing positive learning experiences to engage young people and support skills development. Eddie's story also presents the wider societal benefits of projects which minimise the potential for reoffending and focus on the opportunity for a productive future.

Eddie was referred by his work coach at DWP for our new Engage course, a 12-week personal and skills development course where participants learn skills in music, radio and film while working with other participants and developing their confidence and other core skills. He has a keen interest in music and was excited to hear about the course. At his first meeting with our Adult Development Worker, he explained, "I am honestly buzzing about this opportunity, and I can't wait to get started."

In the referral note, Eddie's referrer noted that Eddie had some experience in writing music and rapping but was keen to learn more about music. Eddie also told us he was enthusiastic about trying his hand at radio and TV too, and keen to take part in positive, meaningful activities.

The course began in November 2022, and from the first session, Eddie brought lots of energy to the group, but at times he could be very lively, interrupting others and would often curse. Eddie recognised this was something he needed to work on, and when meeting with our Adult Support Worker noted this as an action to improve, as well as learning new skills, increasing his self-esteem and overcoming social anxiety.

At the beginning of the course, Eddie described his strengths as; empathy; confidence; being articulate and effective in communication; having a good ability to learn; rap; and problem-solving. By the end of the course, Eddie reported having noticed an improvement in positive behaviour, community links, and his relationships/social circles. Eddie felt more positive about the future and felt his risk of reoffending had decreased significantly.

"I have seen us all grow in confidence, and we really clicked as a group."

The Engage group completed a 4-week block in music where they wrote their own lyrics, made their own beats, and recorded a song. Eddie worked

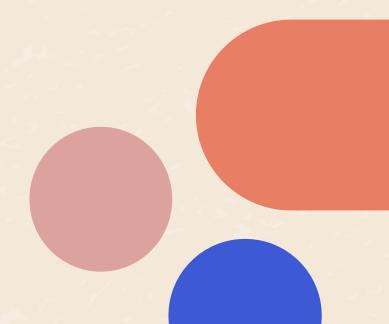
well in these sessions, and although he has a lot of experience in music, he was mindful of others not being as proficient. The group moved onto a 4-week radio block where they learned what is required to be a radio presenter and researched, scripted, and broadcast their own Christmas Special show on shmuFM, our community radio station. In the final four weeks of the course, the group created a music video for a track they recorded during the music portion of the course.

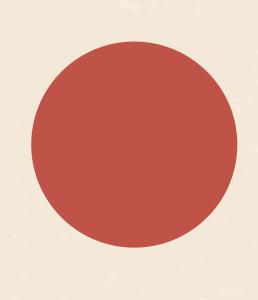
Eddie has made significant improvements since he first engaged with shmu; he is much calmer in sessions and doesn't interrupt people, or if he does, he is quick to recognise this and apologise. Our Adult Support Worker has noticed a positive shift in his confidence and his self-esteem. Eddie has also been working with our employability team on updating his CV and interview preparation.

Eddie has also been looking into Business Gateway with the intention of setting up his own music business. He has now started our community radio training course and is looking forward to starting his own radio show and potentially showcasing his own music on shmuFM.

"shmu has been great for me to get involved with. It has been able to push me in the right direction to give me focus for where I am going. To land on your feet, first you must jump."

\*This is a pseudonym





"I am so
grateful for the
support for my
son and also
supporting me
too. I wasn't
expecting that,
but it has been
invaluable."

Parent of participant

### **Communications Report**

In Year 2, we recruited a Communications Officer with a background in journalism and teaching, and this new appointment has proved significantly beneficial to our CashBack programme. By creating and implementing a comprehensive Communications Strategy, we have been able to enhance our ongoing efforts to raise awareness of the organisation and our programmes, including CashBack - Move Forward.

Our CashBack funded programmes are prominent on shmu's social media, with reels and images from project activities proving popular (examples provided below):

#### **MELA**

Zoology Museum
Remembering Together
First Employability FM Show
Microscopy workshop

Analytics have demonstrated a significant increase in reach and engagement across our social media platforms since the beginning of our *CashBack - Move Forward* programme:

- A Facebook reach of 158,476 an increase of 307%,
- Facebook page visits 27,495 an increase of 721%
- 459 new Facebook page follows an increase of 389%
- An Instagram reach of 19,881 an increase of 278%, with 350 new Instagram followers and profile visits of 5,253, an increase of 169%
- Our Ad reach was 43,669, an increase of 100%
- Our Ad impressions were 76,285, an increase of 100%
- 2.7K post reactions, comments and likes, an increase of 2315%

Our Communications Officer has also been building working relationships with mainstream media outlets, both locally and nationally, and has utilised these to promote the organisation, our work and our funders. This also identified a role for shmu in leading/facilitating collaborative campaigns on specific areas of interest,

such as Challenging Poverty, with the opportunity for the young people taking part in our CashBack programmes to become actively involved.

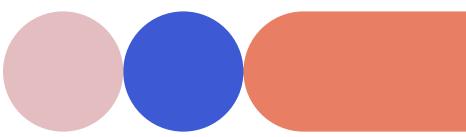
Our multimedia Challenge Poverty campaign ran across Challenge Poverty Week from the 3rd October - 10th October 2022, taking a coordinated approach with 3rd sector organisations ACVO, Abernecessities and Cfine. Each partner created films that were screened on the first day of Challenge Poverty Week 2022, hosted at The Belmont Filmhouse.

The shmu film by young people from our CashBack programmes focused on the experiences of young people living against the backdrop of the escalating cost of living crisis; hearing from the future generation about what could be done to create a better future for them: <a href="https://bit.lv/3CBAuKR">https://bit.lv/3CBAuKR</a>

The event was attended by key councillors from Aberdeen City Council, including the joint leaders and key leaders from other third-sector organisations who are committed to tackling poverty. Following the film screenings, a discussion took place with the chief executives of Abernecessities, Cfine, ACVO and shmu, including input from the individuals who took part in the films. This created a productive conversation and resulted in the ACC Anti-Poverty and Inequality Committee having their first meeting at shmu on 23rd November, where they heard first-hand accounts of living in poverty from our young people and adult volunteers with experience of living in poverty.

Building on the success of this campaign, work is now taking place on our Mental Health & Wellbeing campaign for Mental Health Awareness Week (15th – 21st May); with the current rise in mental health problems in young people, there will be many opportunities for our *CashBack-Move Forward* participants to contribute to this piece of work. The intention is to create another opportunity for those directly affected to speak to decision-makers, as we did with Challenge Poverty.

Our plan is to continue to build momentum around these campaigns, with young voices at the fore, and we will be working with our CashBack Phase 6 participants to build a campaign around Climate Change Week (17th-24th September).



"One pupil wouldn't talk into the microphone on week one, but by the final session had recorded and was excited to be chosen to do the live show. It has been great to see the quieter members of the group growing in confidence and develop self-belief."

**Class Teacher** 



## Further Developments Linked to CashBack-Move Forward

Throughout CashBack Phase 5, we strived to raise the profile of the organisation, our activities and our funders. We continue to use the investment from CashBack to underpin match funding which enables our organisation to increase our capacity, extending the reach of our work, the depth of support we can offer and the diversity of opportunities available.

#### **Sean Connery Foundation**

We were delighted to recently receive a prestigious 3-year funding award from The Sean Connery Foundation to develop our film work with young people. The Foundation was established in 2022 by the estate of Sir Sean Connery to support young people in developing the skills, knowledge, confidence, and connections needed to work in the film and TV industry. This funding will allow us to turbocharge our moving image programmes with young people across the region, expanding existing successful programmes, including our CashBack funded work, while introducing brand new initiatives co-designed alongside the young people who will directly benefit. The Foundation's commitment to shmu provides unrestricted funding for over three years and totals £480,000.

#### **Youth Social Action Fund**

We have been awarded a grant of £50,000 from the Youth Social Action Fund (Children in Need and the Hunter Foundation) to build young people's confidence and skills, empowering them to take an active and leading role in developing solutions to issues which affect their lives and their communities. The funding has supported us in embedding social action throughout our CashBack and Youth Media activities, supporting young people to address and constructively challenge the barriers they face in their lives and in their communities.

#### Youth Music Initiative - Transform Project

With £30,000 funding secured in March 2023, 'Transform' builds on our previous 'Making Waves' Youth Arts Access funded project, embedding music as a medium in the transformative journeys of young people moving through our organisation. Our CashBack Phase 6 projects will benefit directly by being able to add music-making

opportunities to their programmes. For our Youth Media programme, this will lead to an enhanced offer and will help enrich progression pathways to further and higher education and other career options, while music in our Training Academy and Engage strands will help provide meaningful activity & stability to young people who need it the most.

#### **Making Recovery Visible Fund**

This Locality Improvement Fund (Drug & Alcohol) project was launched in Year 2 of CashBack Phase 5. This project was available for any *CashBack-Move Forward* participants in HMP Grampian post-release who is engaging in substance misuse support, offering creative and meaningful activity, as well as recovery and peer support. We are currently delivering our final Making Recovery Visible music course, utilising the last of the underspend in the fund.

#### City and Shire NOLB Employability Funding

We secured continuation funding for Aberdeenshire Employability provision to September 2023 and for Aberdeen City employability provision to the end of June 2023. We were successful in joining the new commissioning framework and now await the minicompetition tenders to be released. These contracts mean that we can offer continuation support to young people taking part in our CashBack programmes – supporting them to continue to move positively along the employability pipeline.

### Aberdeen Health & Social Care Health Improvement Fund

shmu secured funding from the Health Improvement Fund to support Afghan refugees. The project was initially aimed at young Afghan refugees 16-25, offering an in-school project to 16–17-year-olds and a community project for 18–25-year-olds. However, with recent changes in the Afghan refugee community in Aberdeen, with many moving on to other cities, we gained permission to expand this project to offer opportunities to other refugee communities, potentially including Ukrainian refugees.

#### **Trauma Informed Practice**

In response to growing mental health concerns across our communities, we continue to lead a Trauma Informed initiative across Aberdeen, endeavouring to create a movement that encourages organisations, communities and individuals to become Trauma Informed. Our Trauma Informed Aberdeen Steering Group was set up during Year 2 and meets monthly. We also led a national Trauma Informed training programme for practitioners working with young people in the arts.

"I gained confidence and planning for a more positive future."

**MAP** participant



"Being part of Youth Media has made me feel like I actually have something to do and makes me excited for Saturdays and Tuesdays."

Youth Media participant



### Workforce Development Case Study

### **Case study overview**

We were delighted to be able to offer an employment opportunity to Tanya who engaged with our employability project after struggling with anxiety, which was preventing her from making a successful transition into a sustained positive destination. COVID restrictions had exacerbated the issue, but with support addressing both employability skills and confidence, the young person was able to apply for and secure a permanent role within our organisation; a Youth Worker supporting young people taking part in our *CashBack - Move Forward* programme.

Tanya initially learned about our organisation through her father who is a shmu volunteer. He explained: "From a very young age Tanya had been very confident, sure of herself. She was always front and centre when it came to school concerts, talks and was very expressive in her dancing. However, when Tanya was just 11 all that changed; her mum fell ill, I had to give up my job to look after her mum and money became very scarce, and this impacted on Tanya the most out of the 3 kids. She became the secondary carer to her dad for her mum. The dancing stopped, her social involvement stopped, and this had a massive effect on Tanya growing up."

After finishing school, Tanya attended college on 3 occasions undertaking a number of courses. She enjoyed college but felt it was a bit of a roller coaster; positive while at college but becoming more negative when not in college. Tanya's last college course took place during covid lockdowns and was delivered mostly online. This compounded her anxieties as she wasn't leaving the house much or interacting with many other people.

"I was very worried; I was a worrier. I wasn't pushing myself to do much. Stuck in the mud a bit. My anxiety was worse due to not leaving the house."

Following her experiences at college, Tanya did not manage to secure employment; she tried to look for work, but her motivation was low and anxieties high. Tanya's father recognised that Tanya was low and not pushing herself, so set up a meeting for her with our employability team to discuss options.

"I was reluctant at first but once I got here, I realised it was what I needed" explained Tanya.

Tanya joined the employability Succeed employability course for young people at Stage 3 of the employability pipeline in September 2022. On the course Tanya focussed on traditional employability skills such as CV's and interview techniques as well as employer visits. She

also took part in the media activities, developing her transferrable skills.

"It was good to get to do something new and it made me want to learn and get good at something again. It gave me a routine and schedule which was very important for my mental health, something to look forward to. The course re-ignited my motivation to go out and do something so made the jump to work less scary. It was a nice stepping-stone! It helped with my communication skills and regularly attending shmu and getting out of the house helped me work on my anxiety and with dealing with different situations. It helped me get used to being around people again and encouraged me to a range of individuals in a safe welcoming environment. It was good to build relationships with people that were not education staff or family!"

Tanya's father was delighted by the impact engaging with the course had on his daughter:

"Tanya left school with no real direction, went to collage for 6 years studying 3 courses and coming away with 3 HND's but still no direction. Her anxiety was shutting her off to the world, until she came to shmu. Suddenly had something to get up for in the morning, she had direction a purpose to move forward, they gave her, in a word, HOPE. Through shmu she met people, socially she started to come out of her shell; yes, the anxiety was still there and probably will always be there, but she was finding a way through shmu to move forward with the anxiety, using it as a strength rather than a tether holding her back."

Once the course was complete Tanya continued to access support from the shmu employability team to job search and apply, keeping up the good habits and routine she had developed.

"Since the course I am more willing to talk to people, more willing to put myself forward for things and more confident in myself. I would recommend the course, even if you



know what you want to do, it is good to come along and get into a routine and talk to others as that helps a lot."

A job opening came up at shmu for a Youth Work position to support our CashBack programme; Tanya applied and seriously impressed the panel, utilising all the skills she had developed throughout her time on our youth employability course. Although Tanya didn't have the level of work-based experience that we were looking for in the original position, the panel were so impressed that they offered Tanya a Youth Work Trainee position, which she accepted.

Tanya's father was very proud, advising; "She applied for her first real job, she aced the interview, and I am not lying here saying that she would of never of gone to the interview if it were not for the staff and training she had got at shmu."

Tanya has now been in post for 3 months and has impressed all that work with her with her professionalism and natural ability to connect with young people. She has been able to utilise her existing administrative skills to support the work of the Youth Services team, whilst bringing a real vibrancy and creativity to the youth engagement activities. She has successfully transitioned from participant to colleague and displays a level of confidence and empathy that fosters positive and supportive relationships with the young people involved in our youth programmes.

"I am really enjoying my new role at shmu, all of the employees were super nice and welcoming when I joined. I am receiving a lot of support from the Youth Media staff, and I really feel like part of the team. I thought it would be more difficult starting a job, since this is my first proper job that I have had, but the transition was made super easy. My anxiety has taken a backseat at this point, and I am convinced that it is because shmu is such a great environment for me to learn and grow. Working with the Youth Media participants is so rewarding, seeing them show up every week and going on radio or working on film, it's nice for them to have something to look forward to, and I'm delighted to be a small part of that."

Shelley MacKenzie, Youth Services Manager, is thrilled to have Tanya as part of the team and has been consistently impressed by her work; "Absolutely delighted for Tanya (and of course our young people) who are simply loving having her as a Youth Worker!".

Tanya's father movingly summed up the impact of her involvement with shmu; "When your daughter phones you after her first pay day crying at you down the phone because of the money she had earned, you know then and only then that things are going to be ok. You see this is not only a huge influence on Tanya but the whole family.

I have volunteered at shmu for close on 10 years as a radio presenter, I have seen the stellar work shmu does not only in the local area but the whole city and wider, but when it is one of your own you look at things a bit different; you get to see the insecure kid/adult who came into shmu grow, flourish with just a little bit of time taken by the wonderful staff at shmu."



## **Collaborative Working**

### CashBack Collaborative Working - across the portfolio

shmu fully recognise the benefits of working collaboratively with partners, and our CashBack programme is no different. The challenges of the first two years of *CashBack- Move Forward*, linked to the pandemic, meant we were unable to develop the partnership opportunities across the portfolio that we would have liked to. However we could not have delivered our programme without the commitment and support of a broad range of local community partners.

### CashBack Collaborative Working - Youth Media

Several partners/agencies contribute to the Youth Media Project in a variety of ways. Examples include the promotion of training, referrals and moderation of awards, acting as guests on radio programmes, providing content, running information sessions and offering additional support to the young people participating in the project.

Partners/agencies that have contributed include:

- Aberdeen City Council Communities
   Team (Youth Service)
- Academies in our communities; St Machar, Northfield & Lochside
- Primary schools across the regeneration areas of the city
- Local Community Projects, Community Centres and youth venues/flats
- · Culture Aberdeen cultural partners
- · ACVO
- · Aberdeen City Youth Council
- · NESCOL
- · University of Aberdeen
- · Robert Gordon University
- Film Access Scotland (FAS) and their partner agencies
- · British Film Institute (BFI)
- · Into Film
- · Youthlink Scotland
- · Creative Scotland
- · Young Scot

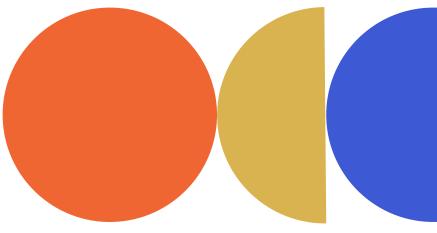
We have continued to develop links established during lockdown with services such as Children 1st, Syrian New Scots, Families Outside and local health and social care 'Fit Like Hubs' for vulnerable families across the priority areas of the city. These relationships allow us to offer our youth media activities to groups of young people we have not worked with previously.

### CashBack Collaborative Working - Training Academy

Our strong relationships with the third sector across the region have lasting benefits, with many organisations offering workplace visits and work experience placements for our CashBack participants. Partnership with other employability providers in the city (Aberdeen Foyer, Barnardo's, Enable, Apex and Pathways) mean we can play a role in building a coordinated place-based multi-agency approach to employability support across the priority areas of Aberdeen. We are also currently exploring partnership working with Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) on our New Futures project with 'New Scots' and are working in partnership with the Family Learning Team on our Women Returners course.

We work closely with the DWP and SDS participating in job fairs and training opportunities and attending information events to discuss and promote our CashBack programme directly with their delivery staff.

Our growing database of local employers across a variety of sectors provides opportunities to identify hosts for workplace visits and presentations about different types of employment. This has led to securing work placements, work trials and visits with Farrans Construction, Robertson Construction, HSBC and Bon Accord Care, as well as some smaller local employers and freelance workers. It is our intention to continue to build links and develop stronger relationships with a broad range of private sector companies as part of our Phase 6 programme so that we can offer work-based placements in all relevant sectors for our participants.



### Cashback Collaborative Working - MAP

A number of partners/agencies contribute to MAP in a variety of ways, and we could not deliver this service without their support. These partners provide additional specialist support, from making referrals, sharing good practices, running information sessions and offering additional issue-specific support and progression pathways to the young people participating in the project:

Partners/agencies that have contributed include:

- Alcohol and Drugs Action
- Aberdeen in Recovery
- Aberdeen Drug Partnership
- Turning Point Scotland
- Apex Scotland
- Aberdeen Foyer
- Aberdeen Health and Social Care Partnership
- Aberdeen City Housing Support
- Criminal Justice Social Work
- Unpaid Work Team

"Thank you again for your assistance. You have done more to help in the short time you have been working with him than any other support he's had in the last eight years and that means a huge amount to me, and I know to him also."

Parent of participant



## Financial Report -Year 3

With agreement from the Scottish Government, the underspend in Year 1 of £24,759 was brought forward and split over Years 2 & 3 to allow us to achieve the original target outcomes set out in our application for the full three years of the project.



Project Activity	Actual
Youth Media Project	
Operational Staff Costs	25,380.00
Freelance Tutors	4,500.00
Running costs, materials & general expenses	3,000.00
Participant expenses (refreshments, travel etc)	2,000.00
shmu Training Academy	
Operational staff costs	23,000.00
Freelance Tutors	2,000.00
Running costs, materials & general expenses	1,500.00
Participant expenses (refreshments, travel etc)	1,500.00
Media Access Project (HMP Grampian)	
Operational staff costs	7,000.00
Freelance Tutors	17,500.00
Running Running costs, materials & general expenses	2,000.00
Across Programmes	
Audio/IT Technician (across all programmes)	3,000.00
Project delivery sub-total	92,380.00
(ii) Capital expenditure	
Contribution towards equipment across all programmes	5,000.00
Capital expenditure sub-total	5,000.00
Total Project Activity	97,255.00
Other Project Costs	
Management and Marketing Fee	9,999.00
External Evaluation (see guidance section 4)	5,000.00
Total Other Project Costs	14,999.00
Total Expenditure	112,379.00

## **Local Authority Area Spend** and **Activity**

Most of our CashBack programme is delivered in Aberdeen City; however, some beneficiaries live in Aberdeenshire.

- Youth Media focuses on supporting young people in the regeneration areas of Aberdeen City.
- Training Academy focuses on supporting senior phase pupils in Aberdeen schools but also provides some one-to-one support to young people in both local authorities.
- MAP supports prisoners in HMP Grampian who are released to either Aberdeen City or Aberdeenshire

### Analysis of spend across both local authorities;

Analysis of spend across bo	pend across both local authorities;				
<b>Local Authority Area</b>	Expenditure	Young people supported			
Aberdeen City	£ 105,379	271			
Aberdeenshire	£7,000	18			

### Finance Report 2020-2023

With less work than anticipated taking place in the prison due to ongoing restrictions, spend in this area was less than projected. We were therefore able to commit more of the budget to work taking place in the community. Across the 3 years, despite these variations, the budget was balanced with total actual expenditure of £292,500, as projected.

Project Activity	Actual	Projected	Variance
Youth Media Project			
Operational Staff Costs	£64,440	£42,784	£21,656
Freelance Tutors	£10,361	£10,320	£41
Running costs, materials & general expenses	£10,164	£12,972	£2,808
Participant expenses (refreshments, travel etc)	£5,784	£5,354	£430
shmu Training Academy			
Operational staff costs	£52,658	£28,692	£23,966
Freelance Tutors	£4,420	£3,798	£622
Running costs, materials & general expenses	£3,777	£3,094	£683
Participant expenses (refreshments, travel etc)	£3,264	£3,165	£99
Media Access Project (HMP Grampian)			
Operational staff costs	£27,065	£94,744	£67,679
Freelance Tutors	£36,956	£13,272	£23,684
Running Running costs, materials & general expenses	£5,144	£6,153	£1,009
Across Programmes			
Audio/IT Technician (across all programmes)	£8,500	£8,152	£348
Recruitment costs	£1,500	£1,500	£0
Capital			
Contribution towards equipment across all programmes	£14,592	£14,625	£33
Total Project Activity	£248,625	£248,625	£0
Other Project Costs			
Management and Marketing Fee	£29,250	£29,250	£0
External Evaluation	£14,625	£14,625	£0
Total Other Project Costs	£43,875	£43,875	£0
Total Expenditure	£292,500	£292,500	03

## **Local Authority Area Spend** and Activity

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- Training Academy focuses on supporting senior phase pupils in Aberdeen schools but also provides some one-to-one support to young people in both local authorities.
- MAP supports prisoners in HMP Grampian who are released to either Aberdeen City or Aberdeenshire

### Analysis of spend across both local authorities;

Analysis of spend across both local authorities;				
Local Authority Area	Expenditure	Young people supported		
Aberdeen City	£ 270,815	562		
Aberdeenshire	£ 21,685	45		



During Year 3 of our CashBack programme, we have continued to work collaboratively with our external evaluators, The Lines Between. At the beginning of February 2023, a Senior Researcher from The Lines Between visited shmu and met with project managers, delivery staff, young people and stakeholders involved in the project. Additional phone and Teams interviews took place with participants, parents and external stakeholders from referral agencies.

The Lines Between also reviewed the project data gathered by shmu across the year. As was found in the first two years of *CashBack-Move Forward*, the strongest results are for Outcomes 1, 2 and 3. Of the 289 participants, 65% report increased confidence, with over 90% reporting the ability to do new things, over 80% increased skills and over 90% increased wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators.

CashBack-Move Forward worked with 607 young people over the life of the 3-year project; in total, over 70% of young people report increased confidence, 90% report the ability to do new things, over 80% increased skills and over 80% increased wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators.

## Outcome 1: Young people build their capacity and confidence

The most widespread impact on the young people involved in *CashBack - Move Forward* in year 3 is the

ability to do new things. This was reported by 93% (271) of young people, with 65% (189) of young people feeling more confident. 112 young people reported increased resilience, and 83 reported positive support networks. Eighty-four young people reported positive changes in behaviour.

These self-evaluation results were corroborated by The Lines Between in evaluation interviews with young people, parents and other stakeholders, including organisations referring young people to shmu's programmes. Reported improvements in young people's confidence result from the activities young people participate in, the encouraging environment created by shmu staff, and being part of a supportive group of peers. There is a knock-on effect as young people initially achieve small steps and gain self-belief. As they develop new interests alongside peers, their improved confidence means they are willing to try and succeed in further activities.

Over the full three years of the project, the most widespread impact was the ability to do new things, reported by 90% (551) of young people. 76% (464) of young people reported that their confidence had increased because of their engagement with the programme, whilst 35% (216) reported positive support networks, and 41% (251) reported their behaviour had improved.

## Outcome 2: Young people develop their physical and personal skills

There is clear evidence of Outcome 2 being achieved in Year 3, with 88% (257) of young people reporting increased skills. Interviews with young people involved with Cashback-Move Forward found participants gaining practical, technical and personal skills. They described how learning techniques in creative media, such as filmmaking and radio production, encompasses many other skill areas, including research, writing, timekeeping, and communication in teamwork with other people and in public presentations. Examples from the interviews with Youth Media Project participants included skills in technical and production activities, as well as writing, planning and personal organisation. In addition, young people clearly articulated the social skills that they had gained, which enabled them to comfortably present information on diverse topics through radio shows, as well as communicate with their peers in the process.

Second only to the ability to do new things, increased skills were reported by 89% (533) of the total number of young people who engaged with *CashBack-Move Forward* during the three-year programme.

Over the course of the three-year programme, 55% of young people who participated gained accreditation for learning and skills development. These included 28 full SQA awards, with over 100 participants completing units or part of modules of SQA awards. Other recognition included Dynamic Youth and Youth Achievement and Saltire awards.

## Outcome 3: Young people's health and well-being improves

Over 90% (263) of young people involved in *CashBack* - *Move Forward* report improved wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators. This figure is an increase on the first 2 years of the project. Overall, 85% (522) of the young people who took part over the three years report improved wellbeing against SHANARRI indicators as a result of their participation.

## Outcome 4: Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options (positive destinations)

Although shmu worked with a larger cohort of young people in the final year of the project, and results for positive destinations were higher than the previous year, positive destinations were still below the originally anticipated numbers. There continues to be an issue surrounding fewer positive destinations being available as a result of COVID-related lockdown restrictions, particularly in the entry-level jobs where young people would typically begin their careers, such as retail and hospitality. As evident in Year 2, the longer-term impact

of the COVID restrictions on young people is that they needed a longer time engaging with projects and additional support, with mental health issues such as anxiety at a significantly higher level than in previous years. Significantly, 43 young people did achieve a positive destination, including volunteering (15), education (17), training (10) and employment (1). In addition, results showed that school attendance had increased for 19 young people.

In total, between 2020 and 2023, 97 positive destinations were achieved, which included volunteering (28), education (50), training (15) and employment (4). School attendance increased for 103 young people.

## Outcome 5: Young people contribute positively to their communities

13,776 hours of volunteering were undertaken during Year 3, which is lower than in Year 2. However, 29 young people took on a volunteering role, which is an increase from the previous year and as some roles are more recent, the volunteer hours contributed will increase significantly beyond the end date of the project. Over a third (89) of young people feel their social interaction, contribution, and links with communities have improved, while over half (159) have produced and disseminated media tackling issues in their communities.

Over the three years of the programme, 93 young people have taken on a volunteering role, with 44,171 hours of volunteering recorded. Just over a third (220) of young people feel their social interaction, contribution, and links with communities have improved, while just under half (294) have produced and disseminated media tackling issues in their communities.

# Outcome 6: Young people are diverted from criminal behaviour or involvement with the criminal justice system

This outcome is less directly relevant for many of the young people taking part in *CashBack - Move Forward* compared with the other outcomes. However, this impact is still evident, with 21 young people in Year 3 less inclined to participate in anti-social or criminal behaviour. These 21 young people also reported improved relationships with families and social circles. An Individual Learning Plan was completed by 12 young people, and 14 prisoners reported feeling more positive about their future post-release.

In total, over the three years of Phase 5, 81 young people feel less inclined to participate in anti-social and/ or criminal behaviour, with 29 Individual Learning Plans completed and 77 young people experiencing improved relationships with families and social circles. Twenty-five prisoners reported feeling more positive about their future post-release.



## **Learning from Phase 5**

Throughout CashBack-Move Forward, shmu gathered feedback from young people, stakeholders and partners. This evidence played a role in quality assurance and also helped us to identify opportunities for engagement or areas for further development. We identified a few challenges and also solutions to barriers and support to sustain engagement.

## Impact of the pandemic and the need for digital skills and inclusion

Year 1 of CashBack-Move Forward proved challenging due to the pandemic, which had a significant impact on our model of delivery. We had to redesign services to cope with periods of lockdown, our building was closed, and staff were only able to work from home. During this time, our team worked tirelessly to adapt and revise our projects, with some participants working with us solely in an online capacity. Despite the barriers created by restrictions, there were also opportunities to enhance inclusivity and work in new and innovative ways.

The importance of access to digital devices and internet connectivity became obvious during the pandemic. It was essential that individuals and families could connect with vital services, education, and wider support structures. shmu played a key role in leading successful consortia applications to secure devices and internet access for those who were digitally excluded across the city, with a focus on the regeneration areas. These included applications to Connecting Scotland (Phases 1 and 2) and Youthlink for young adults engaging with education programmes.

In the redesign of our CashBack services, we considered long-term recovery; many of our programmes included digital elements, and we were able to pilot a range of online learning options. It was evident that several of our CashBack projects would continue to benefit from a blended approach of both face-to-face activities and online sessions by allowing increased participation and extending our inclusivity across our programmes.

Several of our participants highlighted that travel to shmu from rural areas and/or in poor weather was a barrier to engagement that could be avoided if they were able to participate online. This was also the case for some people with disability/mobility and/or transport issues. Given the impact we achieved with the flexibility of both in-person and online activities, it is a concern that some areas continue to experience problems with connectivity.

### Mental Health & Wellbeing

As the programme progressed, it became evident that the barriers and needs of the young people we were working with had changed, with higher numbers of young people suffering from mental health issues, social anxiety and low confidence post-pandemic. Support in these circumstances is much more time-consuming and labour-intensive as relationships and trust are built slowly.

Further difficulties stemming from the pandemic include perceptions of a 'safe space' for young people; from Year 2 onwards, it became apparent that there was an increase in the number of young people staying on at school but failing to engage with the education system. Despite little interest in taking part in lessons, young people remained at school as it was familiar and comfortable, even though it was not necessarily the most beneficial place for them. A similar situation impacted those leaving prison; there has been an increase in reoffending as being incarcerated was deemed 'safer' than an uncertain situation on release, or there was insufficient support on leaving prison to sustain a lifestyle that didn't involve offending or anti-social behaviours.

As a result of the increased concerns around mental health & wellbeing, we focused on enhancing the wellbeing infrastructure within our organisation to better support those we work with. shmu secured funding from ACVO's Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund to increase our wellbeing support across our organisation's services, and we have been able to expand our wellbeing offer to our CashBack participants, ensuring a robust and consistent package of support. We are also leading a Trauma Informed initiative across Aberdeen, endeavouring to create a movement encouraging organisations, communities, and individuals to become Trauma Informed.

With the challenges experienced during the cost-of-living crisis and the relative cost of living creating a greater disparity in Aberdeen City, we anticipate we will continue to see increased anxiety amongst the young people we are supporting.

### **Employment Opportunities**

The post-pandemic job market is different and further disadvantages young people; previously, young people from our employability courses would move on to entry-level roles in areas such as hospitality and retail. Due to the lockdown and the cost-of-living crisis, which has significantly increased costs, many businesses have closed,

especially in hospitality. Retail businesses, already heavily reliant on online sales, struggled with rising energy costs and business rates and several high street shops have now closed. In addition, as the job market has contracted, further and higher education graduates have encountered fewer opportunities to secure employment, so recent graduates now fill the entry-level jobs our participants would usually move onto.

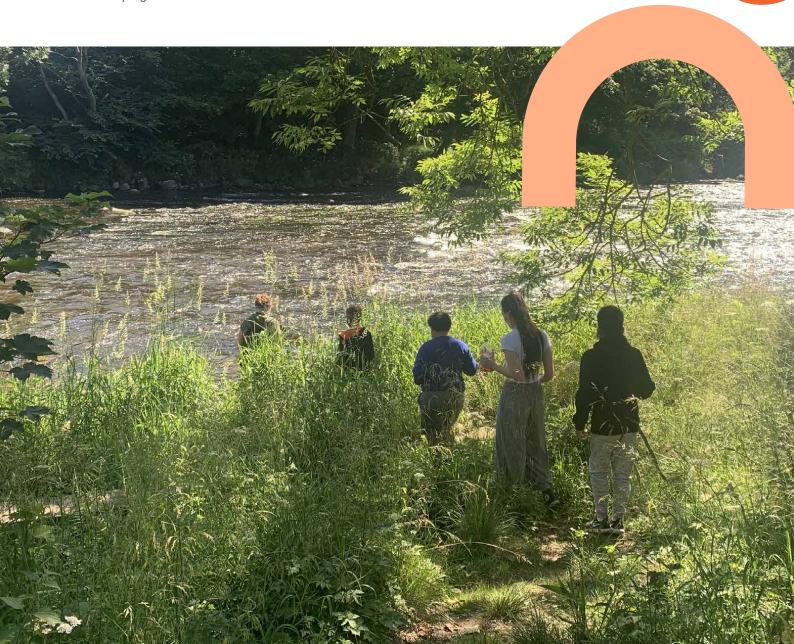
With limited opportunities, there has been a rise in unfavourable working conditions, such as zero-hour contracts and minimum wage posts, as opposed to Real Living Wage roles. As a Real Living Wage provider and advocate for supporting staff members to achieve their full potential, we promote fair working practices such as career development and workplace experiences, including Employer Retention Incentive Schemes. We are considering introducing Modern and Graduate Apprenticeships to our workforce.

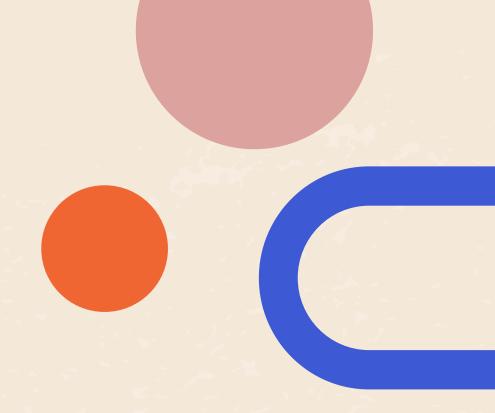
#### **Free Bus Travel**

Free bus travel for young people has had a significantly positive impact on the ability of young people to engage with our programmes and their confidence and social

mobility. Staff have observed that after sessions at our facility, young people now regularly use the free bus travel to go into the centre of Aberdeen to spend time together socially, forging relationships, increasing their support network and increasing their confidence and overall wellbeing. This was not the case before the introduction of free bus travel.

The introduction of free travel has also had a major impact on those who live in rural areas. Although services could be improved, in terms of regularity and routes, the ability to travel freely across the region has been liberating for those who live in rural areas of Aberdeenshire. Free travel has also reduced our project costs as previously we met the travel expenses of young people from Aberdeenshire taking part in our CashBack programmes.





"I was pushed out of my comfort zone and even though it was hard, I felt good afterwards and relieved that I had done it."

Training Academy participant

### Phase 6 - CashBack NorthEast

Having been a key strategic CashBack for Creativity partner since 2011 and becoming a CashBack strategic partner in Phase 5, delivering outcomes for over 1,500 individuals across these programmes, shmu are delighted to be awarded £348,210 for Phase 6 of the CashBack for Communities initiative, for work taking place from April 2023 to March 2026.

The funding will support our CashBack NorthEast programme, which builds on the success of our Cashback Phase 5 work, enhancing and expanding our previous programme and introducing new elements that focus on the revised criteria for Phase 6.

Our programme will continue prioritising engagement with the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people across the North East. We anticipate that 525 young people will take part in the CashBack NorthEast programme. We will support them to overcome their personal barriers to avoid becoming involved in anti-social behaviour or offending, reducing the likelihood of reoffending for young people who are already justice-experienced.

### Youth Media Project

Building on the success of our Phase 5 work, this component will provide person-centred creative opportunities for young people (10-18 years) from the regeneration areas of Aberdeen at risk of involvement in anti-social and offending behaviour. The SQA-accredited programme will provide support, motivation, skills development and learning through exciting and creative mediums (radio and TV broadcasting, music and citizen journalism), encouraging participants to set bold but meaningful targets for self-development. The increase in confidence, resilience and ambition, and an invigorated appetite for further learning and personal development will result in diversion from anti-social or offending behaviour, improved progression routes, and a rise in sustained positive destinations for participants.

### Training Academy

Our successful Phase 5 Training Academy programme targeted pupils in St Machar and Northfield Academies, and building on this, we aim to extend the programme to offer coordinated support to young people attending schools across the whole of Aberdeen City and in targeted secondary schools in Aberdeenshire. The communitybased programme, which will target pupils identified as highly unlikely to secure a positive destination, will offer a needs-led, positive hands-on experience, developing personal and vocational skills through media and employability modules, including workplace visits and work experience placements. The programme will support young people to succeed - securing a direct positive destination or support to move on to our associated employability provision, avoiding the potential downward spiral into anti-social or offending behaviour that can result from an unsuccessful transition from school.

### **Engage**

Despite the success of our Phase 5 Media Access Project (MAP) within HMP Grampian, we faced considerable challenges due to a lack of numbers of young people in the establishment. With this in mind and recognising the significant change in the sentencing of young people with a focus more on community disposals and diversion from prosecution initiatives, our Phase 6 'Engage' programme will be delivered in the community with young people who are already justice experienced with a focus on breaking the cycle of offending and addressing additional barriers such as poor mental health and substance use issues. The programme will use media as a tool for engagement, providing meaningful group activity and opportunities for ongoing volunteering, with our support service providing a wraparound holistic and person-centred package of support. We will build on our success in supporting young people in the community, encouraging, motivating and inspiring participants, many of whom have chaotic lifestyles and are heading towards a custodial sentence, to begin the journey away from offending towards a more positive and stable life within our communities.

### **Matched Funding**

Our CashBack NorthEast programme will continue to use the investment from CashBack for Communities to underpin match funding which will enable our organisation to increase our capacity, extending the reach of our work, the depth of support we can offer, and the diversity of opportunities available.

Phase 6 match funding already secured includes investment from the Youth Social Action Fund (Children in Need and the Hunter Foundation) empowering our CashBack participants to take an active and leading role in developing solutions to issues which affect their lives and their communities, Creative Scotland's Youth Music Initiative to increase the use of music across our CashBack programme, and the Sean Connery Foundation to increase access and training for young people in film.

