



OCTOBER 2020

CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES IMPACT EVALUATION



» PHASE FOUR

EVALUATION OF PHASE FOUR OF THE CASHBACK FOR COMMUNITIES PROGRAMME

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Katy MacMillan
Research Scotland
Spiersbridge House
1 Spiersbridge Way
Glasgow G46 8NG
0141 428 3972
katy.macmillan@researchscotland.org



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Appendices

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Further documents

Click on the links below (in pink) to view further documents:

Online report summary

Themed stories of change for young people:

Confidence	Wellbeing
Skills	Attendance and attainment
Aspirations	Positive destinations



Acknowledgements

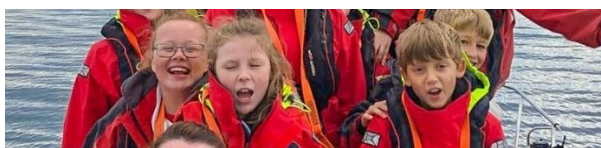
This report draws strongly on the excellent annual and evaluation reports produced by CashBack partners – including case studies, quotes, photos and statistics. Partners used imaginative and innovative ways of presenting evidence about the difference they have made for young people. We thank all partners and evaluators for providing this evidence to inform the national report.

Summary of findings

Between 2017 and 2020, CashBack for Communities reached more than 106,000 young people

CashBack for Communities worked with over 106,000 young people between 2017 and 2020 – phase four of the programme. This is at least 20,000 more than expected. More than 62,000 were new to the activity. Many young people said that without CashBack, they would not be engaging in other positive activities.

Over two thirds of the young people involved in phase four were from the most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland¹.



69% Of young people were from the **20%** most deprived neighbourhoods.

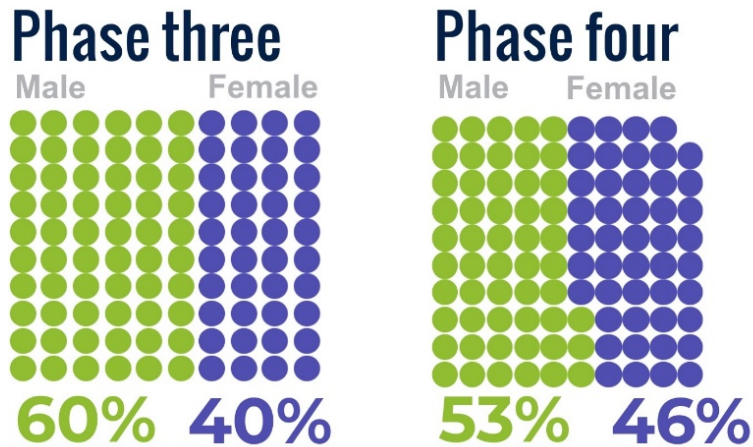
This is much higher than phase three of the CashBack programme, when around a third of participants were from the most deprived neighbourhoods. This indicates a strong focus on involving young people from areas of multiple deprivation in phase four. Young people also experienced a wide range of disadvantage and risk.



¹ From the most deprived 20% neighbourhoods in Scotland based on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD 1 and 2 deciles)

Around half of participants were young women, and around half were young men.

The proportion of male and female participants during phase four of the CashBack programme was more balanced than in the previous three years.



Partners made a good deal of progress ensuring they engaged both girls and boys in the activities. Partners regularly reflected on the profile of participants, and took action where required. Some introduced targeted activity, some worked closely with other organisations working with women and girls, and some strengthened their team in terms of gender balance, skills and experience.



Taking part in CashBack had a significant impact on the confidence, skills, aspirations and wellbeing of young people.

106,039
young people took part



80,500
built their confidence and capacity

84,500
hours of time volunteering were given by young people

83,000
improved their wellbeing

72,000
built their aspirations and positively changed their behaviours

71,000
increased their skills

35,000
young people moved into positive destinations

18,500
achieve formal accreditation for learning


14,300
improved their attainment at school



12,500
young people took on volunteering or leadership roles



8,900
said they reduced their anti-social or criminal behaviour



“She radiates confidence which is allowing her to experience new things whilst encouraging others to do the same.” **Stakeholder, Basketball Scotland**

“Her thought process has changed entirely...her whole outlook has improved. It's energised her whole life.” **Stakeholder, Impact Arts**

“She was so down and she's so confident now. It takes my breath away.” **Stakeholder, Action for Children**

“It really has changed my life and given me hope.” **Young person, YouthLink Scotland**

“It's the first time I actually felt that someone cared about what happened to me.” **Young person, Celtic FC Foundation**

“I have hope now. Instead of thinking that things are going to go downhill, I now have hope.” **Young person, Barnardo's**

CashBack supported young people to improve their attendance and attainment at school

Around 12,000 young people felt that taking part in CashBack helped improve their attendance at school and around 14,000 felt taking part helped their attainment at school. Both are higher than expected at the start of the programme.

Young people reported feeling more confident and willing to attend school. Young people, particularly those taking part in changing lives through sport activity, also felt:

- Better able to concentrate and focus within class
- Motivated to improve grades
- More resilient and motivated to try harder
- Motivated to behave within class.



School of Football makes you try harder.” **Young person, Scottish Football Association**



The School of Basketball is a key driver in maintaining effort and behaviour across the school.” **School lead, Basketball Scotland**



I’m more focused in lessons, it nudges me a little bit more to try my best.” **Young person, Scottish Rugby Union**

Lessons learned

Achieving outcomes for young people

Approaches were successful when focused on:

- Relationship based practice – strong relationships with young people
- Empowerment – young people taking the lead
- Flexibility – taking an individualised approach
- Environment – building a safe space for young people which felt their own
- Learning – reflecting on what works, and regularly reviewing approaches.

Some partners indicated that phase four had helped them to realise the value of taking an intensive and targeted approach to working with young people. This had helped many to focus on key target groups – such as women and girls, people in disadvantaged areas or young people experiencing wider disadvantage. Some indicated that in the future, they would further focus in their work on a smaller group of target young people, over a longer time period and with more intense support. Some had built this into their phase five bids.

Demonstrating impact

CashBack partners have made excellent progress in demonstrating outcomes for young people. Evidence about confidence, skills, wellbeing, aspirations and behaviours (the four mandatory outcomes for phase four) is very strong.

However, some of the non-mandatory outcomes remain particularly challenging to demonstrate – including diversion from anti-social behaviour and attainment at school. There is also scope for more consistency in demonstrating positive destinations (without being too prescriptive). While evaluators worked with projects to better demonstrate these outcomes, in some cases they were hard to evidence and may require continued focus into phase five.

Partners are reporting across a wide range of indicators. The strongest evidence emerges when partners are focused in on a small number of outcomes and indicators. There is scope to encourage partners to focus on consolidating their efforts to assess impact onto a small number of outcomes and indicators, allowing space for the rich, qualitative evidence to emerge.

Partners are reporting quarterly on outcomes (as well as performance). There is scope to streamline quarterly reporting to focus in on performance measures, with outcomes reported at a more meaningful time interval (perhaps annually). Annual and evaluation reports often cover similar ground. There is scope to review the role and expected content of each, to streamline reporting requirements.

Introduction

About this report

This report explores the impact of and lessons learned from phase four of the CashBack for Communities programme, which ran from April 2017 to March 2020. It explores:

- the profile of participants;
- the impact of the programme;
- the key success factors and barriers in bringing about impact; and
- lessons learned around programme management, planning and support.

Detail on the method used to conduct this evaluation is outlined in Appendix One.

Note on findings

It is important to note that the final few months of phase four of the programme were impacted by the global public health situation which emerged in early 2020, due to Covid 19. This did not affect the evaluation methodology but

did mean that some partners had to pause their activities. This affected the numbers participating in the programme, the outcomes achieved and ability to reflect on outcomes with participants. This should be borne in mind when reading this report.

The CashBack for Communities programme

CashBack for Communities is a unique Scottish Government initiative which takes funds recovered through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 and invests them back into communities. The programme was announced in 2007, with activity beginning in the financial year 2008/09. It focuses largely on providing opportunities for young people aged 10 to 24 years old to take part in free sporting, cultural, youth work and employability activities which raise aspirations, ambition and levels of attainment. The programme focuses on freely accessible activities for young people who:

- live in areas of deprivation;
- are disadvantaged by being unemployed, not in education or training;
- are excluded or at risk of exclusion from school; and/ or are at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour and offending or re-offending.

Programme development

There have been four broad phases of CashBack activity.

1

The first phase (from 2008 to 2011) was an early stage where approaches to using proceeds of crime to have positive impacts for young people and communities were developed and established.

At the end of the first phase - in 2011 - the Scottish Government's Safer Communities Division carried out a review of the CashBack programme and changes were made to strengthen programme management and delivery. These changes included the appointment of an external delivery partner to develop consistent processes, support projects in delivering and measuring their outcomes, and support monitoring, evaluation and reporting at project and programme level. Since July 2012, this role has been undertaken by Inspiring Scotland².

The logo for Inspiring Scotland, featuring the word "INSPIRING" in white capital letters on a dark teal rectangular background, with the word "SCOTLAND" in dark teal capital letters below it.

2

The second phase of activity ran from 2011/12 to 2013/14, and involved 14 project partners, reducing to 13 partners by the end of Phase two. Phase two was evaluated in May 2014. There was a strong focus on mass participation activity. The evaluation made a series of recommendations relating to the processes within the programme. It also highlighted positive initial steps towards understanding the outcomes and impact of the programme.

3

The third phase of activity ran from April 2014 to March 2017. Phase three involved 14 project partners. Ten of the project partners were also involved in phase two, and four were new for phase three. Phase three was strongly focused on outcomes and impact on young people, across the themes of employability, sport, youth work, culture and facilities. An evaluation of phase three is available [here](#).

4

The fourth phase of activity ran from April 2017 to March 2020. It involved 17 project partners, six of whom were new to the programme. Phase four involved a strong focus on socio-economic deprivation, and targeted activity to support the most disadvantaged young people. This report sets out findings from an evaluation of phase four.

² The Scottish Government has tendered this role on a regular basis and applied a thorough selection process.

Themes and project partners in phase four

Phase four involved 17 project partners across four themes.

Journey to Employment

Action for Children, Barnardo's, Bridges Project, Celtic FC Foundation, National Autistic Society, The Prince's Trust Scotland, The Wise Group, Venture Trust



Changing lives through sport

Basketball Scotland, Scottish Football Association, Scottish Rugby Union, Scottish Sports Futures



Diversionsary youth Work

Ocean Youth Trust Scotland, YouthLink Scotland, Youth Scotland Consortium



Creativity

Creative Scotland, Impact Arts



»

Source: Grant Offer Letters

Most of the partners deliver CashBack projects directly. However, two of the partners are national organisations which provide small grants to other organisations:



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

Creative Scotland ran the [CashBack for Creativity](#) grants programme. This included a targeted fund with awards up to £120,000 for up to 18 organisations, and an open fund with awards of £500 to £10,000.



YouthLink Scotland ran the CashBack for Communities [Youth Work Fund](#). This is a small grants scheme for community based youth work organisations, to provide diversionary activities for disadvantaged young people.

In addition, one partner - Prince's Trust Scotland - provides small grants to individual young people to support them into positive destinations by helping them overcome the financial barriers to accessing education, employment or training.



Finally, Youth Scotland ran the [Generation CashBack](#) programme as a consortium, in partnership with Girlguiding Scotland, Boys' Brigade and Scouts Scotland. The funding supported both new and existing groups, in Scotland's most deprived communities.

Intended outcomes for phase four

Phase four of the CashBack programme intended to achieve nine outcomes over the short to medium term. Four of these outcomes were mandatory and it was expected that all funded projects would contribute towards these. Mandatory outcomes are highlighted in teal and optional outcomes are in red. Partners could then choose whether their work would contribute towards the five remaining short term outcomes.



<p>Young people build their capacity and confidence</p>	<p>Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively</p>	<p>Young people develop their personal and/or physical skills</p>
<p>Young people's wellbeing improves</p>	<p>Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment options</p>	<p>Young people participate in positive activity</p>
<p>Young people contribute positively to their communities</p>	<p>School attendance and attainment increases</p>	<p>Young people are diverted from involvement in the justice system</p>

The full logic model used during phase four is attached as appendix three.

In using this information, it is important to note that project partners were encouraged to focus on a relatively small number of key outcomes that they intended to deliver. Many projects may also be contributing to wider outcomes but did not select these as their main focus for bringing about change.

Participant Profile

Total participants

82,067
Target phase four participants

106,039
Actual phase four participants

Over 106,000 young people took part. This is around 24,000 more than expected.

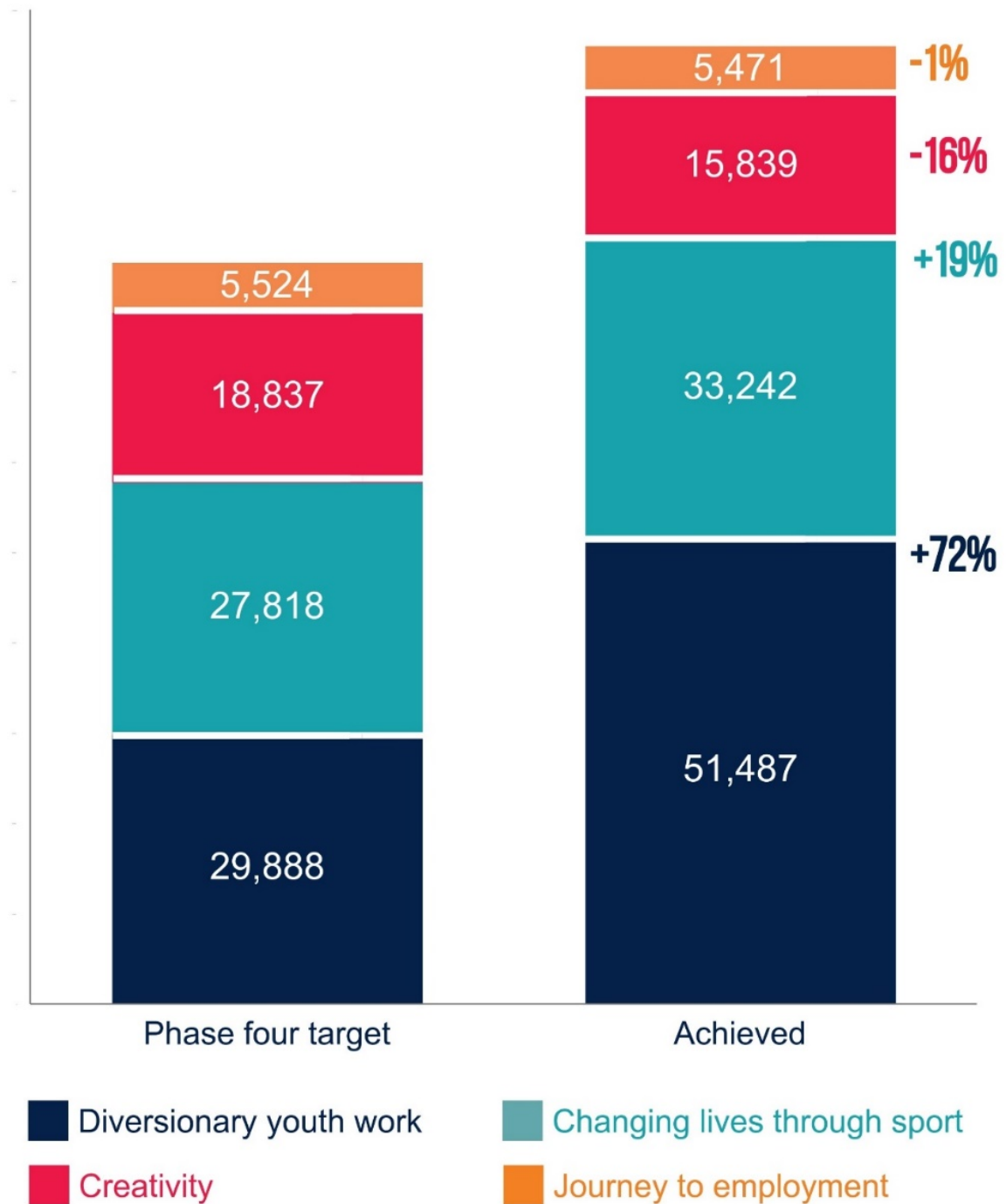
Due to the robust reporting processes in place, this is a reasonable estimate of the number of participants in phase four.

It is likely, however, that it is a slight under-estimate of participant numbers. The emerging global health situation affected the numbers participating during the programme in spring 2020. Some partners had to pause activities towards the end of phase four. In addition, some partners which funded a range of projects to deliver CashBack activities understandably found it challenging to gather full monitoring information from projects in spring 2020.



Participants by theme

Each delivery partner set targets for participant numbers based on their target group and the nature of work being delivered.



Overall, delivery partners were pleased with the number of participants they had engaged. The youth work and sport themes involved more participants than expected.

Within the **diversionary youth work theme**, delivery partners indicated that they generally found it relatively easy to engage the intended number and profile of participants. In some cases target numbers were exceeded. One partner significantly exceeded its target numbers with almost double the number of participants expected. It attributed high numbers of participants to close work with local partners who bring a strong understanding of local need. Within this theme, delivery partners had been involved in the CashBack programme for a number of years and generally felt able to make informed choices about the level targets were set at.

Within the **changing lives through sport theme**, delivery partners had achieved or exceeded targets. While two found this reasonably easily achievable, two indicated while they had managed to broadly achieve the target number of participants, this was challenging. Both mentioned that if running the programme again they would set a lower target number of participants and spend more time with each participant.

One of these delivery partners had expanded its activities rapidly over Phase 4, more than doubling the size of its programme. It found that this was very resource intensive, and while the target number of participants was likely to be met, it could be more effective in the future to focus on a smaller number of participants and undertake more in-depth work. The other delivery

partner expected to achieve target numbers but if doing again would set lower target numbers with more support, as it felt that not all young people have had the opportunities they would like.

The employability and creativity themes involved very slightly fewer participants than expected. Within the **employability theme**, most partners felt that they had achieved their target number of participants well. Partners within this theme tended to set small, focused targets for ongoing and intensive support for groups of young people over a period of time. The number of intended participants for this theme was therefore lower than the sport, creativity and youth work themes.

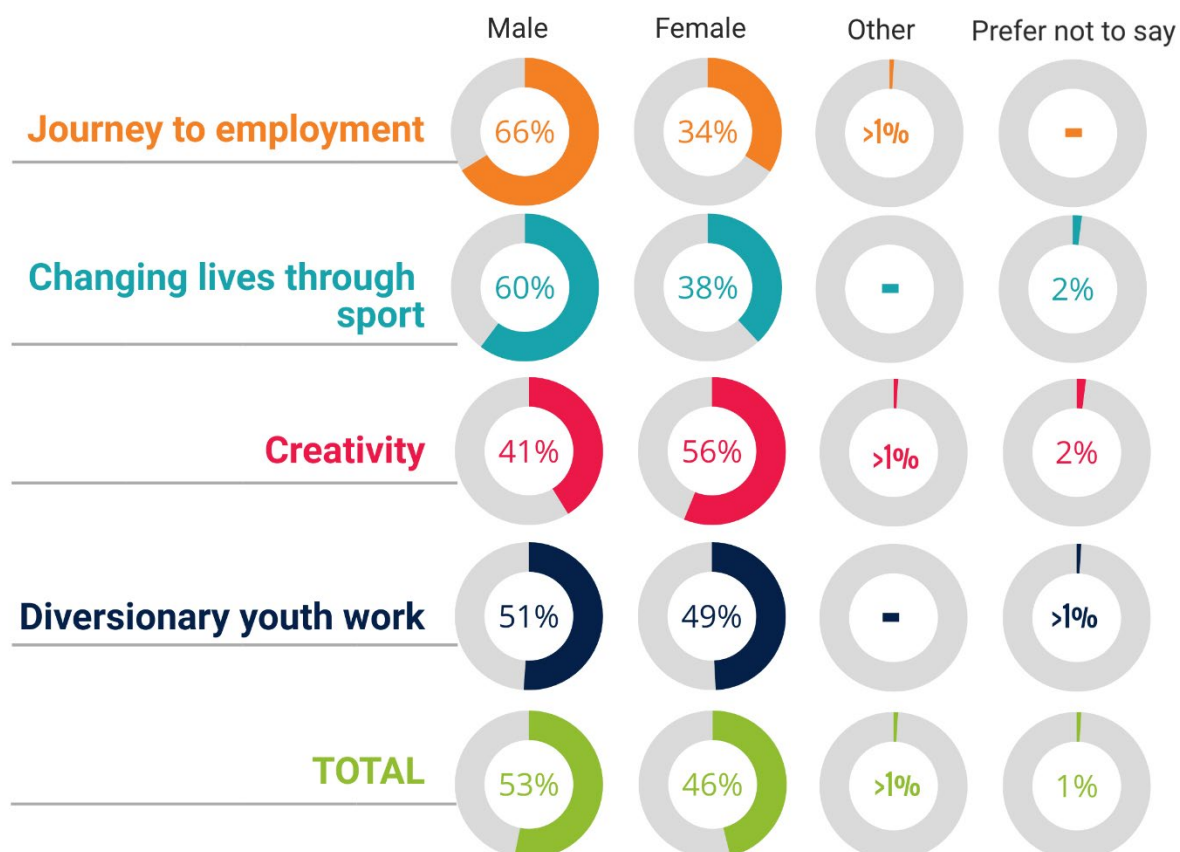
A few employability delivery partners found that it took time to build up relationships with referral agencies, resulting in a relatively slow start to Phase 4 participant numbers. However, after strengthening links and widening the range of agencies involved, most partners were able to engage the target number of participants. One partner found it hard to involve enough young people due to the volume of referrals from partner agencies, which they felt they had limited control over.

Within the **creativity theme** the number of participants in CashBack for Creativity funded projects was slightly lower across both targeted and open elements of the programme. As this programme involves taking applications for funding a wide range of projects it was challenging to set realistic targets in terms of participation in advance of reviewing applications received.

Profile of participants

Gender

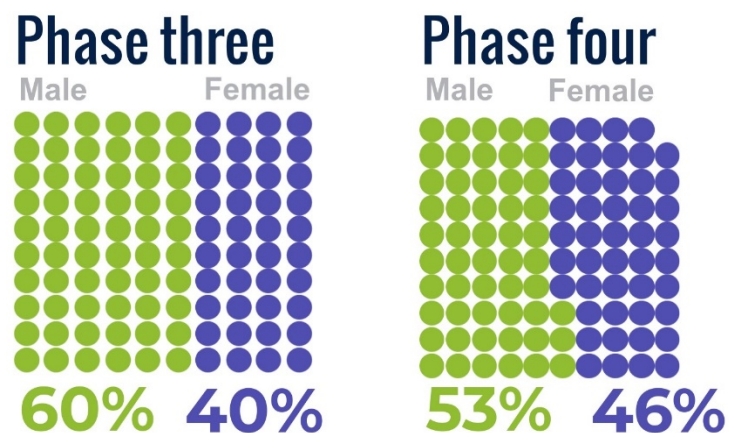
Just over half of all phase four participants were male, and just under half were female.



There are differences within the themes, with a higher proportion of boys and young men in the employment and sport themes, a higher proportion of girls and young women in the creativity theme, and broadly equal participant among youth work.

Less than one per cent identified as another gender. However, partners and projects used different approaches to categorising gender. For example, in some projects young transgender participants were involved, but they chose to be categorised under the gender they identified with (male or female, rather than other).

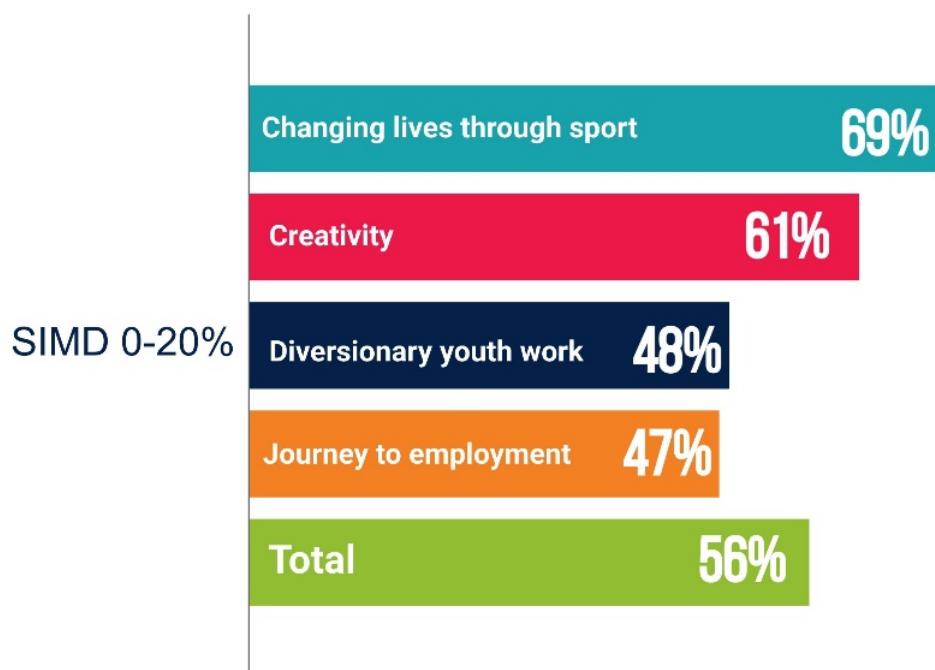
The balance of male and female participants for phase four is more equal than in phase three – when 60% of participants were male and 40% female.



Deprivation

69% Over two thirds of the young people involved in phase four were from the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in Scotland³.

Almost eight out of ten participants in the youth work strand were from the most deprived neighbourhoods, around two thirds for the sport and creativity themes, and half for the employability theme.



³ Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Deciles 1 and 2 – includes an estimate from one partner based on the areas in which the organisations it funded operate.

This compares with around 30 to 40% from the 15 to 20% most deprived areas for phase three. This is a clear increase and indicates a strong focus on involving young people from areas of multiple deprivation within the CashBack programme for phase four.

Wider disadvantage and risk

Partners involved a wide range of young people experiencing disadvantage and risk, including:

- additional support needs
- assigned social workers
- long term illness
- low school attendance
- exclusion from school
- care experienced
- identifying as LGBTQ+
- caring responsibilities
- unemployed
- experience of substance misuse
- lone parents
- homeless
- anxiety or relationship difficulties
- communication difficulties
- bullied at school
- socially isolated
- asylum seekers or refugees
- minority ethnic identities
- mental health issues
- literacy and numeracy challenges
- criminal records
- involvement with community mental health services
- self harming
- social work involvement
- family poverty.



Participants in risk categories: Ocean Youth Trust Scotland

Across phase four, more than a third of OYTS participants were from the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland. Many had identified risk categories. For example, 15% had additional support needs, 11% had an assigned social worker, 9% had a long term illness, 9% had truanted or been excluded from school, 5% had experience of care, 4% identified as LGBTQ+ and 3% were young carers.

Range of participants: Impact Arts

Through the CashBack to the Future programme, Impact Arts provides 14 to 19 year olds with rewarding creative experiences to build confidence and skills. It works with young people living in areas of deprivation who are at risk of disengaging from school, at risk of involvement in anti-social behaviour, living with a disability or health condition, or not in education, employment or training.

Focus on offending: Celtic FC Foundation

The CashBack Gateway to Employment project supports young people aged 16 to 24 who have offended or are at risk of re-offending. The project focuses on target communities with the greatest incidents of anti-social behaviour and crime. Across phase four, 100% of participants were unemployed, not in education or training. Two thirds (69%) were from the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods, and two thirds (66%) had a history of anti-social behaviour or offending. Wider data also showed that most participants experienced multiple barriers to employment, including mental health and physical health issues.

Focus on autism: National Autistic Society

The National Autistic Society Scotland's Moving Forward programme targeted young people aged 16 to 24 with autism. The focus was on young people living in the 40% most deprived areas in west and central Scotland, supporting them into employment, education or training. Across phase four, all participants were from the 40% most deprived areas, and two thirds were from the 20% most deprived areas.

Schools of rugby, football and basketball

The Cashback Schools of programme involves Schools of Rugby, Football and Basketball. There is a strong focus on schools in the most deprived areas of Scotland. The programmes support young people who are disadvantaged by living in areas of deprivation, being excluded or at risk of exclusion from school and at risk of being involved in anti-social behaviour, offending or re-offending. The programmes also operate in some schools for young people with additional support needs.

Impact

Introduction

This chapter explores the outcomes achieved by the CashBack for Communities programme during phase four. Click on the tabs below for detailed information on each outcome.



1 Young people build their capacity and confidence

2 Young people's behaviours and aspirations change positively

3 Young people develop their personal and/or physical skills

4 Young people's wellbeing improves

5 School attendance and attainment increases

6 Young people participate in activity which improves their learning employability and employment options

7 Young people participate in positive activity

8 Young people are diverted from involvement in the justice system

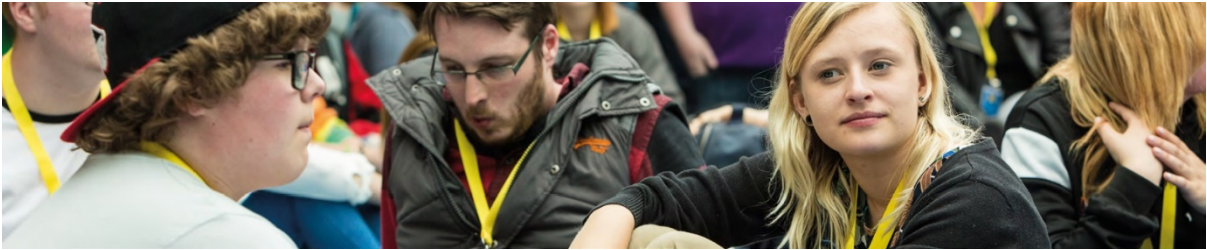
9 Young people contribute positively to their communities

Lessons Learned

Introduction

This chapter explores the ways of working which have contributed towards positive outcomes during phase four. It also highlights lessons learned during phase four. It is based largely on discussion with project partners and members of the Strategic Delivery Group for CashBack for Communities.

Successful approaches



The main success factors contributing to positive outcomes were:

Relationships

Delivery partners were clear that their success was often down to the relationships between project staff and young people. Staff focus on being friendly, informal, non-judgemental, honest and inclusive in their work with young people. They spend time building rapport and exploring what motivates and inspires their clients. This helps to encourage young people to engage with the project, and to sustain their involvement.

Delivery partners thought carefully about the make up of their staff team. In many cases, staff are strong role models and mentors for young people due to coming from the same area, having similar experiences or sharing similar characteristics. Partners also invested in upskilling staff in particular areas – for example around employability, working with young people with additional support needs, or being trauma informed and aware of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

“Relationship building is at the heart of everything we do. It’s very young person centred.” **Partner**

“The relationship between the young people and the coaches is the key.” **Partner**

Young people taking the lead

Delivery partners consistently highlighted the need to involve young people in planning, designing and delivering activity. Partners aimed to give young people as much responsibility as possible, and a way which recognises the skills of young people and the contribution they can make. Many focused on supporting and encouraging young people to take on leadership roles within the project – and beyond.

“ They get to have an opinion and a say. And they do get to dictate the programme to a certain extent.” **Partner**

A small number of partners talked about the specific importance of taking a youth work based approach, highlighting the transformative power of youth work.

Flexible and individualised

Partners highlighted the importance of flexible, individualised and varied support for young people, provided in a person centred way. However a few also highlighted the importance of routine and structure for their client group.

“ We treat them like adults and make them feel welcome. We treat every young person as an individual.” **Partner**

Partnership

Many partners indicated that having good links with referral partners helped to engage young people at the appropriate time through a trusted source. This included building links with support organisations, statutory bodies, schools, equalities organisations and others. As partner confidence in delivery grew, they became better at identifying potentially suitable candidates. Clear recruitment materials, local press coverage and case study examples also helped to generate referrals.

Reaching out through partners: Action for Children

Action for Children worked with partners so that their staff could go for a day to the Skills Development Scotland or Jobcentre Plus offices, to try to engage with young people as they accessed these services.

Targeted approaches

Many partners considered whether to introduce targeted activity for women and girls or for minority ethnic communities. Some introduced targeted activity, which they felt worked well. However, targeted activity was approached and used carefully, being aware that diversity and mix within groups is also important in many instances.

Targeted activity for women and girls: Scottish Football Association

SFA delivered 12 female only schools and also ran a dedicated MIC programme (engaging young minority ethnic people). Running targeted activities has worked well. SFA also has a dedicated women and girls officer in each region.

SFA staff feel that CashBack has definitely helped to push the agenda to get more girls and women involved in football.

“It has had a huge, huge impact on female participation. I don’t think we’d be in the situation we’re in now... CashBack funding allowed us to move along the ladder faster than we would have on our own.”

The focus of the CashBack programme has spread across the organisation. There are now young women who started off taking part in the CashBack programme who are now working for the SFA, and the staff team has a better gender balance.

Targeted activity in areas of deprivation: Youth Scotland Consortium

The Youth Scotland Consortium engaged a high proportion of young people from SIMD 1 and 2 areas. This was 73% in year 2 increasing to 81% in year 3. The majority of delivery focused in on young people facing the most challenges, and eligibility was checked specifically to ensure a focus on SIMD 1 and 2 areas within each local authority area. The breadth and diversity of delivery enabled effective engagement of young people who are marginalised, have complex needs, live in deprived areas or have other needs such as not being in employment, education or training, or being at risk of anti-social behaviour or offending.

Linking with other targeted activities: Barnardo’s

Over the final stages of Phase 4, Barnardo’s worked with schools to link in with their targeted Pupil Equity Fund activities, which support pupils in the most disadvantaged areas. This means they can link with pupils at an earlier stage and develop pathways into relevant employability programmes.

A safe space

Partners and young people highlighted the value of having a safe space, which felt their own.

“As soon as I walked in here I felt welcome and safe. I felt in a safe space, it instantly felt like I was part of a family. It is my house away from home.” **Young person**

“They made us feel wanted and cared for.” **Young person**



“I think it's good to have this space, it's a safe space... There are girls getting into trouble here with boys... because it's dark now. So, less girls in the streets means less chance of those things happening. There are a lot of sexual assaults happening in Govanhill, we are safer here.” **Young person**

Reflection and learning

Some partners felt that they had been successful because of embedding reflection and learning within their practice. This was important both for reaching the target profile of young people and achieving the intended outcomes.

Partners with a good mix of participants were committed to reflecting on the profile of their participants, understanding barriers, recognising the need for support, and taking action to address barriers.

Some ensured that they regularly linked back to their intended outcomes and the CashBack logic model, to check their work continued to be focused on the change they intended to bring about. Some emphasised the importance of coming together to share ideas and experience of what works. And some said it was important to be committed to learning, reviewing your practice and changing it where it needs to be adapted. A few mentioned that taking joint responsibility for demonstrating impact across the team helped them to better evidence the difference their work was making.



We can recognise when services need to be adapted.” **Partner**

Learning from previous experience: The Prince’s Trust Scotland

The Prince’s Trust prioritised achieving a better geographic spread of Development Awards over the final stages of Phase 4. The management of the programme was restructured, with responsibility for the programme shared across locally based Hubs, rather than sitting with two individuals based in a single location. The team also developed a new social media strategy, targeting young people in different parts of Scotland, and young women. The team also held local celebration events.

“We’re locally based, so we’re best placed to reach people and we have the resources to reach out to people.”



Challenges and lessons learned

The main lesson learned, identified by partners across CashBack themes, was the value of intensive work with young people. Some partners indicated that if they were to rethink their phase four delivery, they would set lower targets for participant numbers and offer more intense support.

Partners indicated that often they were deliberately targeting vulnerable client groups, who needed a lot of support and had many wider challenges within their lives. Young people often had adverse childhood experiences, poor mental health, trauma or multiple barriers, and little or no support from family or positive friendships. Partners emphasised that working with these target groups required time to build relationships and bring about meaningful and sustainable change to people's lives. Aftercare was also key to success and sustaining positive progression.

““ Ten weeks is a drop in the ocean when the young people have had a lifetime of challenges.” **Partner**

““ We have to do what we can with the funding that is available. However we could have more impact if we could provide more intensive support for some young people.” **Partner**

““ I think we could make more impact if we worked with less pupils and with less schools... We need to spend more time with less pupils.” **Partner**

While many partners targeted areas of concentrated disadvantage, some found that could limit the participants that they were able to support. Some sought more flexibility in engaging with people who are not living in area based concentrations of deprivation, but are still vulnerable. At the same time, a few found it harder to target disadvantaged young people in areas where deprivation was dispersed, rather than concentrated. One partner was concerned about the targeted approach, and felt a universal approach worked better.

Other lessons learned included:

- **The importance of individuals** – When one person leaves from the delivery partner or other org, their networks and connections can be lost. Staff also need to be chosen carefully for working with young people, and need training.
- **The investment needed in good partnership working** - In some cases, it was challenging to engage partners. This was particularly difficult in areas where there were lots of different opportunities for young people, and many different programmes to participate in. It could also be a challenge if there were issues around territorialism between areas, or if partner organisations were concerned about losing track of outcomes for 'their' young people. Some found it challenging if partners had a different ethos and approach to their work, or if partnerships were not approached in a strategic way.

- **Setting realistic targets can be challenging** – Two partners who used their CashBack award to provide small grants to other organisations indicated that they found it a little challenging to agree target numbers of participants before they had opened their funding award schemes and reviewed applications. A few who were new to CashBack also found it challenging to identify targets which were realistic, particularly if their work involved engaging a client group which was new to the organisation.
- **Capturing outcomes can be difficult** – This can be a real challenge for softer outcomes around feelings and behaviour change, and for outcomes which only affect a proportion of young people – for example improving attainment, or diverting from anti-social behaviour. The two partners who fund other organisations to deliver CashBack activities also highlighted that some of these projects struggled with reporting, which could make it harder to report on impact.
- **The wider context can be challenging** – Some partners mentioned the challenges of the wider environment in which they are operating, with community, youth and culture organisations under pressure due to wider budget cuts in the public sector.


Some partners mentioned that they had learned from their experience and built this into their bids for phase five. For example, one built in more aftercare for participants one moved from one year to three year funding for projects and one re-instated its strong focus on leadership from earlier phases in the CashBack programme. Some strengthened their monitoring and evaluation arrangements, to ensure they can demonstrate impact.

Impact on organisations

Taking part in the CashBack programme had made a difference to the participating organisations.

Extending profile and reach

Partners indicated that participating in CashBack helped to grow their organisation, extend their reach in terms of geography and client group and increase their profile.

 Getting access to CashBack funding helps to raise the profile of youth work in Scotland.” **Partner**

Example: Scottish Sports Futures

Taking part in CashBack has had a very positive impact for Scottish Sports Futures. Over four phases of CashBack funding, Scottish Sports Futures has grown and developed with and because of CashBack. The programme has provided the organisation with the ability to show others what they do and how they do it. It has also helped them to establish an important role in the wider sphere of changing lives through sport organisations in Scotland.

“It’s taken us from a local reach programme to a national reach programme.”

“It’s allowed us to have a strategic input on the whole sport for change agenda through our position...it’s put us in that space and given us a voice.”

Piloting new approaches

A few organisations highlighted that CashBack provided them the opportunity to try out different programmes and approaches, with learning then passed on throughout the organisation. For example, one partner tried out delivering accredited learning as part of its CashBack work, and has now introduced accreditation to all of its programmes with young people.

“Overall it has supported what we do and has allowed us to do really good work.” **Partner**

Developing staff skills

Some organisations felt that CashBack brought new staff with new skills to the organisation, or helped to develop the skills of existing staff. For example, one organisation really strengthened its skills in terms of employability.

Embedding person centred and youth led approaches

Many organisations already had a strong youth led ethos, but many also felt CashBack helped to strengthen their focus on young people as leaders, as individuals and as decision makers.

“Being part of the CashBack programme has helped us to grow and develop the services that we provide for young people.” **Partner**

Funding and sustainability

Most partners felt that the three year funding through CashBack provided a sense of security and sustainability for staff, encouraging staff to join and stay with the team organisation. It also helped to attract match funding and strengthen applications for funding, with other funders feeling reassured by the CashBack name and evidence that the approach has been successful. For example, Scottish Football Association found that some schools purchased the programme using their Pupil Equity Funding, because they had seen the CashBack funded programme working. Some partners also felt CashBack had helped them to become better at demonstrating their impact, which helped them to apply for funding.

“It’s given us a lot of leverage when we’re applying for other funding.” **Partner**

“If we didn’t have CashBack funding, we wouldn’t be here.” **Partner**

Strengthening focus and targeting

Some partners felt that CashBack helped them to focus in on what was important. For example, one partner felt that without CashBack it would be working with a different client group of less disadvantaged people, which would limit the impact of its programme. Another felt it had shifted strongly towards delivering more employability focused work. One felt that through CashBack, it was now more focused on the change it could bring about through sport, rather than the sport itself. It indicated that it is now seen as a model of good practice in changing lives through sport, by **sportscotland**.

Impact

Many partners felt much more aware of thinking about what difference they have made for young people through their work. Many have strengthened their outcomes focused evaluation through their CashBack activities, introducing new outcomes focused tools to track impact. This has helped some feel better equipped to demonstrate impact to others, including funders.

 Being able to demonstrate the impact on young people has been a core driver for us.” **Partner**

Example: Bridges Project

Through CashBack, Bridges Project became much more aware of the need to evaluate impact across all projects. As a result, the organisation has rolled out a monitoring and evaluation framework based on the Indicators of Vulnerability assessment tool they developed through CashBack.

Impact on wider funded organisations

For two of the partners, the CashBack programme involved providing funding for a wide range of creative and youth work organisations. There was clear evidence of a similar impact on these funded organisations in terms of:

- Enabling new partnerships across sectors
- Learning and upskilling of staff
- Developing an evidence led culture
- Co-design, participant involvement and empowerment
- New referrals and connections with young people
- Strategic and organisational changes, with new roles created
- Adapted delivery, new ways of working and higher quality experiences for young people
- Enhanced reputation and profile
- Supporting access to wider sources of funding to continue services.

 For the first time we used a co-design process which allowed us to empower the participants and produce a flexible and responsive project.” **Funded organisation, CashBack for Creativity**

“As with all youth work organisations, accessing funding is a real challenge and we rely on CashBack’s Youth Work Fund to provide programmes such as the Film Club. It also provides us with leverage to bring in much needed additional resources. The return on investment should never be undervalued.” **Funded organisation, YouthLink Scotland**

Example: Creative Scotland

The CashBack for Creativity programme impacted both directly and indirectly on the funded organisations. For example:

- Hot Chocolate reported that its profile was strengthened and its links with Creative Scotland and other potential funders developed
- MRC Pathways found the process of regularly reviewing and sharing progress was invaluable for developing an evidence led decision making culture within the organisation
- Findhorn Bay Arts sustained its activities beyond the life of the project, achieving funding through the Youth Music Initiative
- Lyth Arts Centre evolved its practice, strengthening the co-design and empowerment of young people

Programme management

Views of delivery partners

Overall, most partners (local and national) were happy with the management of the CashBack programme. Partners felt that Inspiring Scotland took a flexible and supportive approach. Many highly valued the relationships that they had with Inspiring Scotland staff, feeling that staff were accessible, approachable, solution focused, empathetic, interested and understanding.

Partners generally felt that the application process was fair and as would be expected for this type of three year funding programme. Partners also valued the focus on demonstrating impact, particularly the case study approach. Some felt that the reporting requirements had pushed their organisation to be better at recording what they achieved, and demonstrating it.

“It has made us more aware of gathering information and reporting... It keeps us all on track.” **Partner**


“CashBack has forced us to have all that infrastructure in place to do this – to find ways to showcase our impact.” **Partner**

“As an organisation, we are looking to evaluate better and report better on a lot of the things we do – and we will look to take this learning from CashBack.” **Partner**

To enhance programme management, some partners (approximately half) suggested changes to the reporting requirements. The main areas partners would like to see further developed are:

- **More flexibility in reporting** – Some (9) mentioned they felt the quarterly report format was challenging and could be more flexible.
- **Less regular performance reports** – A few (3) suggested less frequent reporting on outcomes, for example on an annual rather than quarterly reports. This was because these partners found it hard to report on outcomes – which were often long term – on a quarterly basis.
- **More flexibility to change targets and indicators** - While most liked that they could choose the most relevant outcomes and indicators for their work, a few felt that the targets and indicators were prescribed, rather than negotiated. A few said they should have thought more carefully about this stage, as it quickly became apparent that some targets were not achievable. The two partners who fund other organisations highlighted that it was very challenging to set detailed targets without knowing which projects would apply and be successful to the fund.


Partners highlighted connections with others in the CashBack family through training one another, making referrals and delivering joint projects. Many mentioned supporting young people to access the Prince's Trust Development Awards, to allow them to access training or equipment. Some felt that they worked well with particular partners because they had a common purpose and ethos.

 There was a clear message from Inspiring Scotland that we're all part of the CashBack family, we're all part of the same team." **Partner**

Delivery partners very much enjoyed attending events and sharing learning with other CashBack partners. However, most indicated that there were limited networking opportunities through phase four, and they would like to see more of this. Some would like more regular networking opportunities for partners, virtually or face to face.

Views of national stakeholders

National stakeholders (Inspiring Scotland and Scottish Government) highlighted that phase four of the programme had performed well, with strong progress in achievement of outcomes and profile of participants, enabled by effective programme management.

 The money is going to the hardest to reach. This is a real success." **Inspiring Scotland**

National stakeholders highlighted that the reporting process was robust.

In terms of **quarterly reports**, national stakeholders felt the quarterly reports were very valuable in providing very useful case study information, and an indication of progress. The reports help to provide reassurance and are linked to payment of

money, and so help to ensure projects are on track and any issues are spotted. They also provide a mechanism for ongoing partner engagement and accountability.

National stakeholders felt that the case studies were highly valuable in demonstrating impact. It was felt that some of the best information about impact was in written and video case studies, bringing out the softer changes in young people in an impactful way.

In terms of **annual reports**, there were varied views. One national stakeholder found the annual reports had been a particular success, becoming a very successful tool for them in portraying their programme impact to external stakeholders and the public and being used to secure extra funding. However, another national stakeholder found the annual reports produced by CashBack delivery partners less useful than the quarterly reports. This partner was not sure that individual annual reports for each CashBack delivery partner were needed and suggested an overarching annual CashBack report may be more useful.

In terms of **evaluation reports**, national stakeholders felt that through phase four the level of evaluation achieved improved, due to effective programme management support. National stakeholders felt that this had resulted in evaluation requirements which were robust yet not too onerous.

In terms of wider policy connections, one national stakeholder stated that more needed to be done to connect the CashBack programme with a wider pool of applicants, connecting in with important policy areas and ensuring more variety in the organisations that are funded across the phases.

Learning over the phases

The CashBack programme has now been in operation for 12 years – across four phases. There have been regular opportunities for reflection and learning. Key areas of progress include:

Demonstrating impact

A key change has been the strengthened focus on demonstrating the impact the programme has on young people. At the outset, there was a strong focus on measuring activities and outputs, with little evidence about the difference the programme made for young people. Over time, and in line with a wider shift in the public and third sector, CashBack has shifted its focus away from tracking activities towards demonstrating outcomes and impact. This shift has happened both at project and programme level. Partners have significantly developed their skills in demonstrating impact, building a rich pool of both quantitative and qualitative evidence about the difference their work makes to young people.

CashBack partners now, largely, have much stronger in-house skills around impact and outcomes. This is both due to participation in the CashBack programme, as well as wider shifts from other funders. This change has taken place over a five year period. Early on in phase three, many partners found that evidencing progress

against outcomes was challenging. However, by the end of phase three most were confident in their ability to demonstrate progress towards outcomes, and this has continued to strengthen into phase four. As partners become more confident in phase four, some are seeking more flexibility in how they demonstrate that progress in innovative, qualitative and rich ways, which are diverse across the programme.

This learning has been continued into phase five of the programme. A more streamlined outcomes model was developed; the frequency of external evaluation has been adapted to reduce reporting requirements while still generating useful learning and reflection; and young people's views were built into the phase five assessment process.

Targeted activity

During phase three, equality and targeted activity to address disadvantage and deprivation was not always a key focus – either of the programme as a whole, or of the work of individual partners. There remained a high volume of universal work for young people, and some partners had concerns about introducing more targeted activity. However, during phase three and into phase four, discussions about targeting and tackling disadvantage became focused, and partners adapted their approaches. Many shifted their approach during phase four to deliver more targeted activity to a smaller, more focused group of young people. This approach has worked well in terms of reaching young people who need support most, with a high proportion of young people in phase four living in the most deprived parts of Scotland. Partners have recognised the value of this approach, and some were keen to focus their activity even more in the future – working with a smaller number of young people in a more intensive way. This has resulted in a much more targeted approach for phase four, which has been further solidified at the outset of phase five.

Wider lessons

In addition, across both phase three and phase four some learning emerged which remains relevant to build into phase five of the programme.

- **A wider pool of partners** - Some stakeholders believed that existing CashBack partners are able to make better quality applications to the programme, because they have good experience to draw on, understand the outcomes focused approach, and know how to fill in the application form. It remains worth considering how a wider pool of partners could be supported to produce high quality applications for future phases.
- **Reporting requirements** - CashBack intended outcomes, indicators and reporting requirements have been tightened up and made clearer. Across both phases, partners suggested considering reducing the reporting requirements. For example, some suggested that while some activity or financial information may be required on a quarterly basis, outcomes may be best reported less frequently than quarterly. There remain opportunities to streamline requirements, particularly as partners have become much more confident and able to demonstrate the outcomes they are achieving. Some of this learning has already been built into phase five of the programme.

- **Gender balance** – During phase three of the programme, more men benefited from the programme than young women. Targeted action was taken during phase four, which helped to achieve a broadly equal gender balance among participants. However, it is important to carry this learning through to the phase five, to ensure that a focused approach is taken to continuing to achieve a gender balance across the programme.

Conclusions

Participation

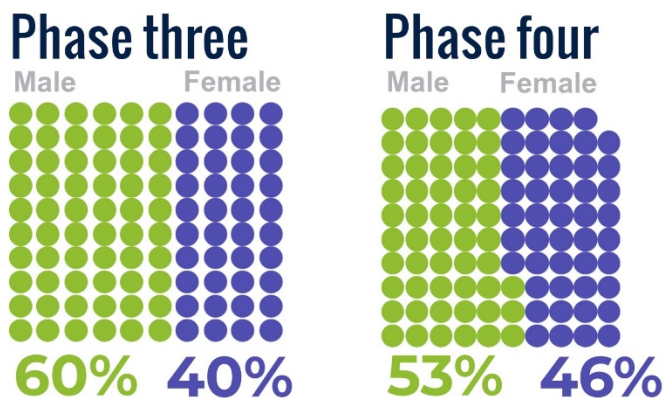
The CashBack programme (phase four) reached more than 106,000 young people. This is at 24,000 more young people than expected.



Profile

More than two thirds (69%) of young people were from the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods of Scotland. This is much higher than in phase three, when around a third of participants were from the most deprived neighbourhoods. This indicates a strong focus on involving young people from areas of multiple deprivation and experiencing wider disadvantage.

Broadly equal numbers of participants were male and female during phase four. The balance of participants during phase four was more balanced than during phase three. Partners achieved this through working closely with other organisations, strengthening their staff team and skills, introducing targeted activity, and regularly reflecting on the profile of participants and taking action.



106,039

young people took part



80,500

built their confidence and capacity

84,500

hours of time volunteering were given by young people

83,000

improved their wellbeing

72,000

built their aspirations and positively changed their behaviours

71,000

increased their skills

35,000

young people moved into positive destinations

18,500

achieve formal accreditation for learning

14,300

improved their attainment at school



12,500

young people took on volunteering or leadership roles

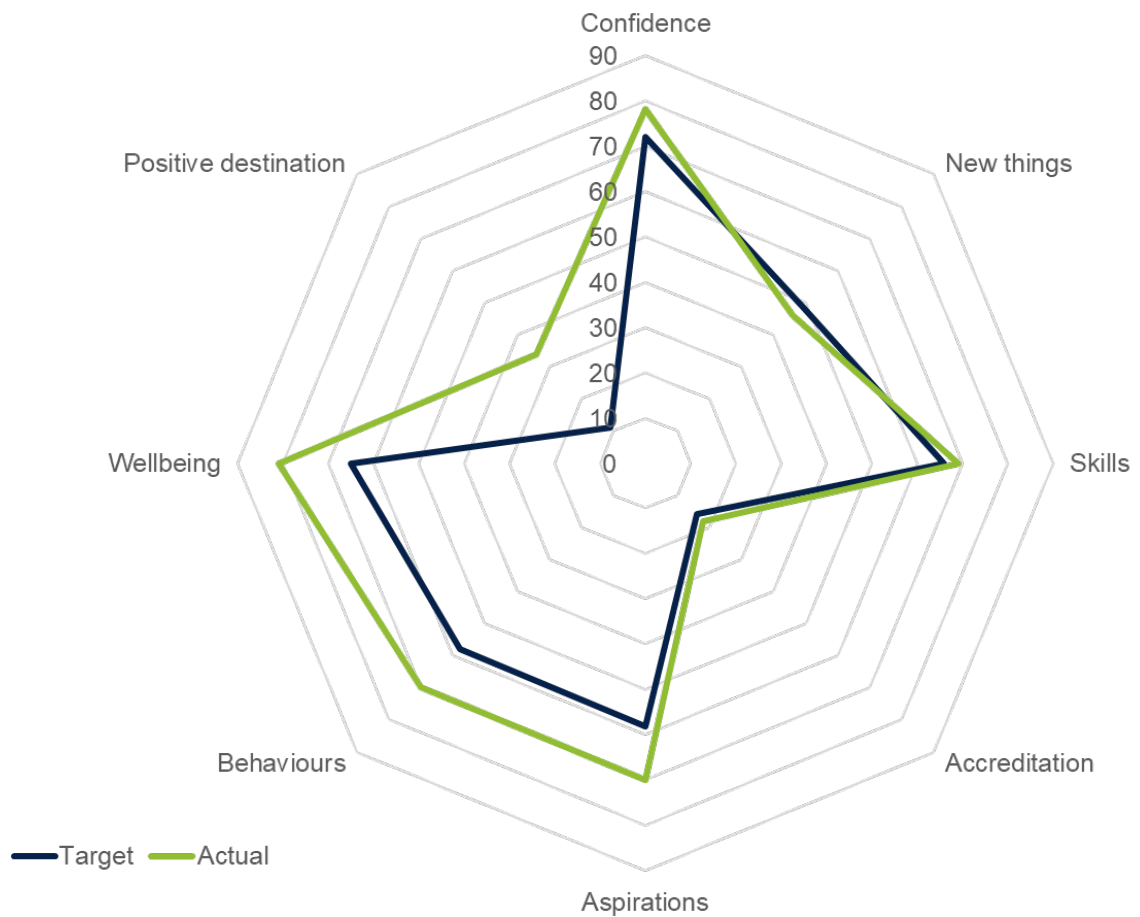


8,900

said they reduced their anti-social or criminal behaviour

Impact

Taking part in CashBack had a significant impact on the confidence, skills, aspirations and wellbeing of young people. The programme met or exceeded its targets across all of these areas.



Lessons learned

Achieving outcomes for young people

Approaches were successful when focused on:

- Relationship based practice – building strong relationships between staff and young people
- Empowerment – young people taking the lead in planning and delivering activity
- Flexibility – taking an individualised approach
- Environment – building a safe space for young people which felt their own
- Learning – reflecting on what works, and regularly reviewing approaches

Some partners indicated that phase four had helped them to realise the value of taking an intensive and targeted approach to working with young people. This had helped many to focus on key target groups – such as women and girls, people in disadvantaged areas or young people experiencing wider disadvantage. Some partners indicated that in future they would plan to work with lower numbers of young people, over a longer time period and with more intense support. Some felt this would help to support particularly vulnerable young people, for example those with adverse childhood experiences, poor mental health, trauma, multiple barriers and little or no support from family.

Demonstrating impact

CashBack partners have made excellent progress in demonstrating outcomes for young people. Evidence about confidence, skills, wellbeing, aspirations and behaviours (the four mandatory outcomes) is very strong.

However, some of the non-mandatory outcomes remain particularly challenging to demonstrate – including diversion from anti-social behaviour and attainment at school. There is also scope for more consistency in demonstrating positive destinations (without being too prescriptive). While evaluators worked with projects to better demonstrate these outcomes, some were hard to evidence and may require continue focus into phase five.

Partners are reporting across a wide range of indicators. The strongest evidence emerges when partners are focused in on a small number of outcomes and indicators. There is scope to encourage partners to focus on consolidating their efforts to assess impact onto a small number of outcomes and indicators, allowing space for the rich, qualitative evidence to emerge.

Partners are reporting quarterly on outcomes (as well as performance). There is scope to streamline quarterly reporting to focus in on performance measures, with outcomes reported at a more meaningful time interval (perhaps annually). Annual and evaluation reports often cover similar ground. There is scope to review the role and expected content of each, to streamline reporting requirements.

