



SPFL Trust

CashBack

Off the Bench

2023-24

Annual Report



spfltrust.org.uk/cotb

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Welcome

At the SPFL Trust, we know that football can reach people that others can't, and in doing so break down barriers.

CashBack Off the Bench uses football to engage young people in communities nationwide, empowering them to power their own potential.

“It's helped me get to where I want to be and what I want to become as a person.”

- Cameron, CashBack Off the Bench Participant, Falkirk Foundation

Throughout 2023-24, we have delivered Off the Bench in partnership with four ATCs: Spartans Community Trust, Morton in the Community, Falkirk Foundation and St Mirren FC Charitable Foundation.

ATCs

Throughout this document, you will see us refer to ATCs - this means SPFL associated trusts and clubs.

Participants from each group have gained the skills and confidence to progress positively, highlighting the delivering ATCs' commitment to the programme.

Some participants have successfully gained employment, while others have embarked on paths involving education, volunteering, and training opportunities. A number are even starting their career journey coaching within football.

I want to express my thanks to colleagues from participating ATCs and other partner organisations who help deliver the programme.

Their contributions are helping young people shape their own futures, in ways that are right for them.

I look forward to our continued collaboration to ensure the success of the programme, and wish all of our participants my very best as they progress.



Nicky Reid
CEO



What is CashBack Off the Bench?

Funded by the Scottish Government's CashBack for Communities programme, Off the Bench works to provide young people aged 16-25 with an opportunity to access education, physical and mental health support to build better futures.

The eight week programme is delivered three days per week in partnership with four ATC partners: Spartans Community Trust, Falkirk Foundation, Morton in the Community and St Mirren FC Charitable Foundation.

At Morton in the Community and St Mirren FC Charitable Foundation, programme delivery was supported by an SPFL Trust staff member.

Young people work towards both accredited awards including SCQF Level 4 Employability Award, Scottish FA Level 1.1 Coaching Badge.

The programme is also supported by a network of partners to enable young people to build a better path going forward.



Learn more about CashBack Off the Bench - watch our film with participants from the Falkirk

Who is Off the Bench for?

Off the Bench is for young people who:

Are aged 16-25

Want to gain new qualifications and build new skills

Want to power their potential and take the next step to a positive destination

CashBack objectives

- Support young people who are most at risk of being involved in antisocial behaviour, offending or reoffending towards or into positive destinations
- Provide person-centred support for young people, parents and families impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma
- Support young people to improve their health, mental health and wellbeing
- Support people, families and communities most affected by crime

What do participants gain from the programme?

- New qualifications and skills
- Access to career support
- Increased knowledge about their physical and mental health
- Connections within their local community
- Opportunities to volunteer at their local SPFL club or ATC
- Access to education, physical and mental health support to build better futures
- A chance to get behind the scenes at their clubs

Scottish Government Policy Areas in Focus

Best Start, Bright Futures

CashBack Off the Bench was designed considering the Scottish Government's 'Best Start, Bright Futures' strategy.

Targeting people between the ages of 16-25, we believe the programme can have a lasting impact on their future prosperity - and those who surround them.

Research shows that if you live within 10 miles of an SPFL football club you are three times more likely to experience poverty. That's why ATCs are ideally positioned to inspire change in our communities.

Throughout the programme, participants receive the following:

- Breakfast each morning
- Lunch every day, with hot and cold options available
- Surplus food to take home
- Support to secure their free bus travel
- Free use of electronic devices to support them on the programme
- Support to achieve SQA awards
- Support to prepare for employment, including mock interviews and CV support
- Kit provided as their uniform, which can be washed on site if required
- Signposting to external stakeholders
- Pathways into other ATC projects that may benefit them
- Physical activity each day, delivered by trained coaches
- Mental Health support provided by Progressive Pathways

Children's Rights

Scotland should be an amazing country for all children and young people to grow up and learn in. For many it is, but to make it that place for everybody, young people need to have all of their rights respected at all times.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) lists all the things that children are entitled to as they grow up.

This includes having the chance to live and develop healthily, the right to primary and secondary education, and the right to rest, play and take part. You can read more about UNCRC on our [website](#).

At each CashBack Off the Bench delivery partner, staff have completed training to make sure all key points are met, complying with the Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA).

Tasks were implemented throughout the programme to allow young people to have their own choice and options on their learning. For example, the citizenship project was all participant led with limited support and guidance from their tutor.

Participants have been provided the opportunity to feedback at the end of their experience which has provided excellent opportunity for development. In addition, a participant focus group will be hosted to establish a more robust and honest review of CashBack Off the Bench on an annual basis.

We are hosting an event to celebrate the first year of phase six of CashBack Off the Bench this year. At this event, we will host a workshop about working with young people, so we can strengthen our approach going forward. We will host a series of workshops where we will engage the young people.

Fair Work Framework

The Scottish Government aims that by 2025, people in Scotland will have a world-leading working life where fair work drives success, wellbeing and prosperity for individuals, businesses, organisations and for society.

At the SPFL Trust, we put our people at the forefront of the organisation, prioritising wellbeing and staff development.

In application of the Fair Work Framework, we do the following:

We are an accredited Living Wage employer

Staff receive annual pay reviews

We have undertaken a review of our staff handbook and implemented new policies

We have a development budget to allow for training to support staff in their roles

We deliver a three-year monthly programme of training directly to ATCs on identified subjects such as fundraising, marketing and communications, governance, sustainability, poverty and peer engagement sessions to upskill and support our delivery partners

In partnership with Impact Funding Partners, we deliver The Training Ground to our network of ATCs, helping them to improve as organisations and develop their resilience

Supporting Scotland's Climate Change Plan

To support Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan, CashBack Off the Bench, participants worked on a citizenship project specifically targeting climate change within their community.

Young people worked alongside their peers to research and investigate a local climate issue. Learning skills and gaining experience in project management, groups identified and supported areas such as greenspaces, recycling, drainage, air pollution and wildlife.



Falkirk Foundation worked alongside the local Green Team, helping to maintain the greenspaces for wildlife, community use and seasonal change at the nearby Kelpies walkways



Spartans Community Trust worked within a local greenspace to understand litter and refuse and the impact it has on the local wildlife and community use. They helped to tidy areas and plant new trees, having a positive impact on their local area



St Mirren FC Charitable Foundation worked alongside a local mental health charity "Men's Shed" to support the work being done in a community garden. Understanding the land, drainage, seasonal changes, and wildlife was essential to the project



Morton in the Community worked alongside club grounds staff to learn about the impact of climate change at Cappielow. The group researched recycling and plastic usage within the grounds during the week but also on match days

Powerful partnerships

In year four, four ATCs delivered CashBack Off the Bench, using the unique power of football to engage young people.



As well as ATCs, CashBack Off the Bench is supported by a range of both local and national partners who offer expertise on a range of issues including mental health, racism, gambling, alcohol and drugs.



Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

Scottish Fire & Rescue delivered workshops on fire safety, including pyrotechnics and flares, first aid, and recruitment and training for the fire service. Participants visited local fire stations, learning about the life of a firefighter, what the training looks like, and how to apply for the service.



CPD Training Solutions

CPD Training Solutions delivered first-aid training to participants at all four clubs participating throughout 2023-24. CPD ensured that participants became competent in first-aid for life, learning and work.



PROGRESSIVE
PATHWAYS
LIMITED

Progressive Pathways

Progressive Pathways provide one-to-one mentoring across all clubs, and will be continuing to do so throughout phase six (2023-2026) of the programme. One-to-one support is crucial for all participants, as they build their skills and confidence to reach positive destinations.



Fast Forward

Fast Forward delivered addiction awareness sessions focussing on gambling, alcohol and drugs. They used interactive activities to highlight the different types of gambling, how to deal with issues surrounding gambling, and how to help others. Interactive and engaging sessions helped to teach participants about the dangers of gambling, and how it can have a real impact on your life.



Police Scotland

Police Scotland Community police team and Football Liaison Officers were in attendance across all clubs on a regular basis, delivering workshops which helped to raise the awareness of policing issues and how crime can have a negative impact on many.



Scottish Football Association

The Scottish Football Association (Scottish FA) delivered an Introduction to Coaching one-to-one, and the Laws of the Game course to all participants.

Through this partnership, young people can gain their one-to-one coaching badges, developing a basic understanding of:

- The Scottish FA coach education pathway and the coaches learning journey
- Effective communication and player interaction to develop effective delivery
- The fundamental principles of a games-based approach to player development
- The role of the coach within the coaching process
- How to solve some common problems faced by the coach

Participants also completed modules on mental health, child welfare and protection, and some have continued coaching in football since completing these workshops.

COTB 2023-24 in numbers

Participating clubs	4
Participant total	41

Male	35
Female	6



Motherwell were due to deliver but had to withdraw from the programme. Kilmarnock have subsequently been added to the programme and are delivering two cohorts in 2024-25.

SIMD profile

SIMD profile 0 - 20%	20
SIMD profile 20 - 30%	8
SIMD profile 30 - 40%	6
SIMD profile 40 - 50%	6
SIMD profile 50 - 100%	1

Participant ages

16-18	20
19-25	15
Over 25	6
Didn't disclose	0

Sexual orientation

Straight / heterosexual	36
Gay / lesbian	1
Bisexual	0
Other	0
Prefer not to say	4

Disability

Disability identified	14
Vision	5
Hearing	0
Mobility	2
Dexterity	0
Learning or understanding or concentrating	6
Stamina or breathing fatigue	0
Socially or behavioural	0
None of the above	16
Other	7
Prefer not to say	5
Total	41

Ethnicity

White Scottish	28
White other British	0
White Irish	0
White Polish	0
White gypsy/traveller	0
White showman/showwoman	0
White other	4
Mixed or multiple ethnicity	0
Pakistani, Scottish Pakistani or British Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi, Scottish Bangladeshi or British Bangladeshi	0
Chinese, Scottish Chinese or British Chinese	0
Other Asian ethnicity	4
African, Scottish African or British African	0
Other African ethnicity	3
Black Caribbean	0
Other black ethnicity	0
Arab, Scottish Arab or British Arab	1
Prefer not to say	1
Total	41

Overall programme performance

The numbers below are based on the 19 participants who completed our survey

46% of CashBack Off the Bench participants throughout 2023-24 did not have English as their first language. This number was higher than expected, making it difficult to gather information in a way that was suitable for everyone.

With support from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), we have implemented changes for our 2024-25 delivery of the programme. Our materials and forms are now translated to support those who don't have English as their first language.

Outcome one

Young people are diverted from antisocial, criminal behaviour and involvement

Throughout CashBack Off the Bench, young people learn about the risks involved in antisocial behaviour and criminal involvement. ATCs work with a number of partners such as Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland to better understand the effects of risk taking behaviour.

Support from both ATC staff and our community of partners has helped build confidence, significantly reducing risk taking behaviour and building resilience.

19

Young people reported that their own participation in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour has reduced

19

Young people reported that they feel less inclined to participate in antisocial and/or criminal behaviour

100%

100% of participants now:

think twice before getting involved in antisocial and criminal behaviour

have reduced involvement in antisocial and criminal behaviour

are more aware of the consequences associated with antisocial and criminal behaviour

Outcome two

Young people participate in activity which improves their learning, employability and employment opportunities

Support is provided for young people on the programme to gain qualifications and work towards securing a positive future.

Participants are supported to complete the SQA employability award, supporting their skills development and helping establish their next steps and journey to employment or education.

Through the qualification, skills and increased confidence gained during their

time on CashBack Off the Bench, young people are supported to power their potential and progress to positive destinations.

“ I feel better and more confident about myself. This has helped me to learn new skills such as teamwork and leadership which can help me get a job. ”

- Participant



45

Young people gained an accreditation for a new skill

12

Participants gained a modern apprenticeship/employment

14

Participants gaining training opportunities or work experience

7

Participants gained a place at college or university

8

Participants gained volunteering opportunities

Outcome three

Young people's health, mental health and wellbeing improves

Participants engage in physical activities during each session, accompanied by a nutritious lunch provided weekly. These activities foster confidence, teamwork, and problem solving abilities.

The Scottish Government has outlined wellbeing through eight indicators known as SHANARRI: Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, and Responsible.

100%

100% of participants reported their mental health has improved as a result of taking part in CashBack Off the Bench.

19

Young people reported an increase in feelings against SHANARRI indicators: Safety, Health, Achievement, Nurture, Activity, Respect, Responsibility, Inclusion

19

Young people reported their mental health has improved and they have a more positive outlook on life

18

Young people reported they are more aware of the risks and impacts of harmful substance use

18

Young people reported they are less inclined to engage in harmful drugs and/or alcohol use

19

Young people reported their confidence has increased

21

Young people reported evidence of participation in physical and sporting activities

Outcome four

Young people contribute positively to their communities

We know how much of a positive impact young people can have in our communities throughout Scotland, and with CashBack Off the Bench, participants are encouraged and supported to do so.

Participants acquired valuable team working and problem solving skills, while also raising awareness in their local communities about the issues affecting them.

Participants at St Mirren worked alongside their local Men's Shed to create a community garden

In Falkirk, participants volunteered with the Green Team in the Helix Park, home of the famous Kelpies!

In support of Scotland's 2018-2032 Climate Change Plan, participants worked on projects targeting climate change in their communities

19

Young people reported their perception of their neighbourhood improves

19

Young people reported a heightened sense of belonging to a community

19

Young people reported feeling their contribution, links with communities and social interaction are improving

19

Young people reported increased motivation to positively influence what happens in their community

13

Young people went on to volunteer, coach, mentor, support or take a leadership role in community organisations

460

Community focused awards gained by participants

68

Community focused awards gained by participants

Outcome five

Young people build their personal skills, resilience and benefit from strengthened support

Mentoring continues to be an essential feature of the CashBack Off the Bench programme, with one to one support provided to all participants from fully trained coaches.

With an increased number of delivery days on the course has come stronger relationships between participants and delivery leads, boosting morale among each group.

“The young people have reported the excellent and impactful support from their mentor, with 100% of participants reporting the mentoring gave them someone to talk to and they felt more supported.”

- Programme Lead



19

Young people reported feeling more resilient (e.g. believing in yourself, taking things in your stride, being determined, being self-disciplined, being optimistic, adapting to situations)

19

Young people reported positive, supportive networks including improved relationships with family, friends and peer mentors

19

Young people reported increased access to appropriate services

19

Young people reported positive changes in their behaviour (e.g. reduced risk taking, increased understanding of risk, better ability to make positive choices and improved understanding of rights and responsibilities)

Support for New Scots

Throughout 2023-24 delivery, we were delighted to welcome New Scots to the programme at all four participating clubs.

After arriving in Scotland, many of our New Scot participants were living in temporary accommodation, finding it difficult to settle in their community.

ATCs worked alongside local partners to establish English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses for these participants to attend and power their potential for their life in Scotland.

A huge amount of learning, work and support was put in place to ensure these young people were included regardless of their ability, knowledge, or experience.



New Scot participants were supported with the following:

Visa applications and residency status

Language and translation

Signposting to local organisations

Food and clothing requirements

Employment support (including PVG)

Financial breakdown

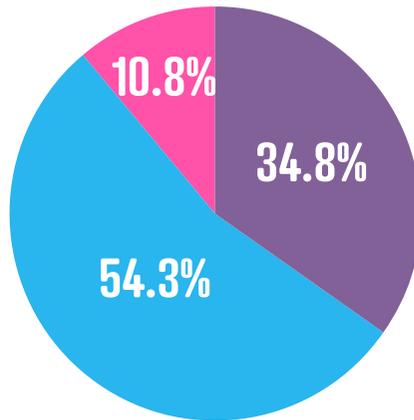
Total CashBack grant
£171,647

Here's how we've
spent our budget:

Non staff
delivery cost
£93,219

Staff delivery
cost
£59,806

Management
cost
£18,622



Local authority breakdown

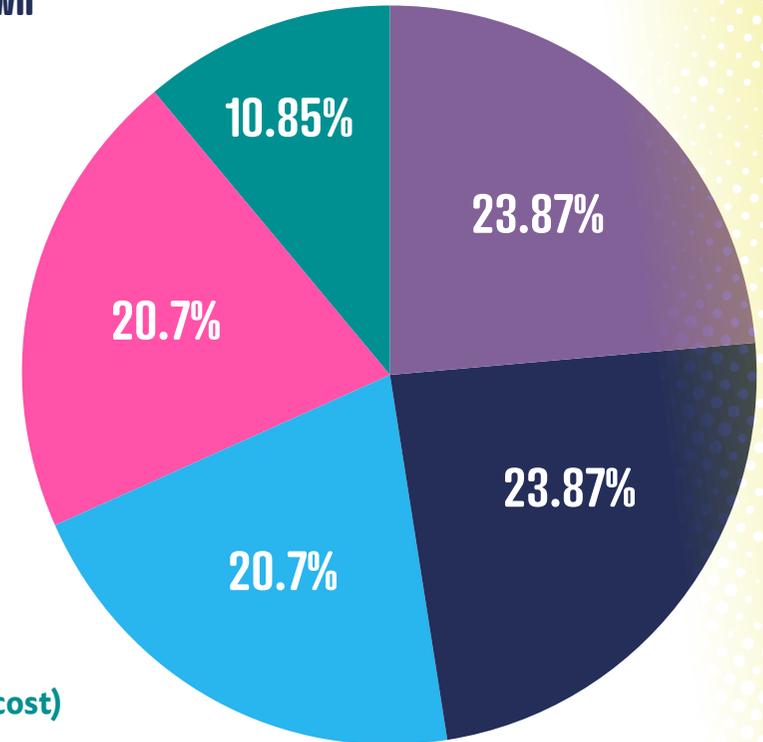
City of Edinburgh Council
(Spartans)
£40,976.35

Falkirk Council
(Falkirk)
£40,976.35

Inverclyde Council
(Morton)
£35,536.25

Renfrewshire Council
(St Mirren)
£35,536.25

Glasgow City Council
(SPFL Trust management cost)
£18,622



Future thinking

To ensure CashBack Off the Bench continues to strengthen, we have reflected on this reporting period and will work towards implementing the following changes:

- There were significantly more male participants than female. Going forward, we will focus on how we can attract and recruit women and girls to the programme
- We will work with the SQA to streamline the process of awarding certifications, ensuring a quicker turnaround for participants
- We will improve our support for New Scots by providing better signposting to local organisations
- We will work with environmental partners such as Virodor and Tiger to support the local investigations aspect of the programme
- The Killie Community, Kilmarnock FC's charitable arm, will deliver alongside the four existing ATCs in the second and third year of this grant funding period
- We will run an annual football tournament between our five CashBack Off the Bench delivery partners
- The Killie Community will be running two separate cohorts - one at the beginning of the delivery period and another towards the end. Their second cohort is in place of Motherwell FC Community Trust who had to be withdrawn from delivering
- With support from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), we have implemented changes for our 2024-25 delivery of the programme. Our materials and forms are now translated to support those who don't have English as their first language



Case study

Josh's Story*

Josh moved to Falkirk to live with their mum, who they had been separated from since the age of 12 due to neglect.

Sadly, after just two weeks, Josh found themselves living in homeless accommodation. Despite going through a challenging time, they started a college course, giving them a sense of stability and motivation.

Unfortunately, Josh fell seriously ill with Sepsis half way through the course in 2023. The long term absence from college resulted in their place being withdrawn and they spent a number of months trying to recover.

After making a recovery, Josh saw a new opportunity to join a new course at the same college. However, their place was withdrawn at the last minute after the college learned about their attendance on their previous course.

By this point, they felt like everything was against them in life. They had no permanent address, no friends in the area, no chance at college and no employment prospects. They were then introduced to the coaches at Falkirk Foundation through their work coach at the Job Centre, where they first discussed CashBack Off the Bench.

Being an active person and feeling comfortable with the Falkirk coaches, they decided to start the programme.

Josh has high praise for the coaches who deliver the programme, saying they are the best thing about it. They just listen, they are empathetic and always there for them.

They have said numerous times how thankful, appreciative and happy they are now to have stability in their life. Without CashBack Off the Bench, they have no idea where they would be.

With a place on the Centre Forward college course secured with the help of Falkirk Foundation coaches, Josh feels much more optimistic about life. This positive destination will maintain the stability in their life, and will allow them to broaden friendships and connections in the area.

Starting the programme, Josh was shy, lacked confidence and self esteem, and rarely engaged in group settings. They are now demonstrating a huge change in personality, looking happier, healthier and beaming with confidence. Josh finished the programme leading in group activities, offering peer support, was always engaged and openly talked at each session.



**Not the participant's real name*



Scottish Professional Football League Trust

Hampden Park, Glasgow, G42 9DE
0141 620 4162 | enquiries@spfltrust.org.uk

spfltrust.org.uk cotb



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