

Agenda Item	11.
Report No	CPPB/29/24



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 4 December 2024

Community Learning and Development (CLD) Annual Report 2023-24

Report by: Assistant Chief Executive - People

Summary

This annual report provides board members with a summary of the achievements of the Highland CLD Partnership in year three of the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan 2021-2024.

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Highland Council (Education Authority) has the legal responsibility for Community Learning in the directorate plan. This report provides the board with a summary of the progress made by the Highland CLD Partnership in year three of the Highland CLD Plan 2021-2024.

2. Recommendations

The Board is asked to:

- Note the progress, including key delivery achievements, made in year three of the Highland CLD Plan 2021-2024.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Resource:** the requirements for the CLD Plan are delivered within the existing resources of the Community Planning Partnership.
- 3.2 **Legal:** there is a legal duty on the Highland Council (Education Department) to develop a three-year CLD plan.
- 3.3 **Risk:** stakeholders who are most able to be engaged and involved are the ones most likely to benefit from CLD. Those who have barriers to engagement and involvement are likely to be further disadvantaged if those barriers are not effectively addressed in a timely, appropriate way. This could have a detrimental impact on the aspirations, ambitions and achievements of people who are disadvantaged, experiencing poverty or who have additional support needs.
- 3.4 **Health & Safety** (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people): there are no new implications for Health and Safety.

- 3.5 **Gaelic:** the Safeguarding and CLD team is connected with the Gaelic CLD officers to ensure Gaelic requirements are met.

4. Impacts

- 4.1 In Highland, all policies, strategies or service changes are subject to an integrated screening for impact for Equalities, Poverty and Human Rights, Children's Rights and Wellbeing, Climate Change, Islands and Mainland Rural Communities, and Data Protection. Where identified as required, a full impact assessment will be undertaken.
- 4.2 Considering impacts is a core part of the decision-making process and needs to inform the decision-making process. When taking any decision, The board must give due regard to the findings of any assessment.
- 4.3 This is a monitoring and update report and therefore an impact assessment is not required.

5. Overview

5.1 Legislation and Expectations:

The Highland Council (Education Authority) has a statutory duty, as set-out in The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, to publish a Community Learning and Development (CLD) plan every three years describing how they will co-ordinate and secure "adequate and efficient" CLD provision with other sector partners. This report presents the progress made in year three of the 3-year plan (2021-2024)

- 5.2 **CLD work in Scotland is guided by the [Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development 2012](#)** document and underpinned in legislation through [The Requirements for Community Learning and Development \(Scotland\) Regulations 2013](#); and supports the achievement of the following national policy goals:

- to ensure communities across Scotland – particularly those which are disadvantaged – have access to the CLD support they need;
- to strengthen coordination between the full range of CLD providers and respond appropriately to the expectations set by the CLD Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships: Community Learning and Development 2012 (Scottish Government);
- to reinforce the role of communities and learners in assessment, planning and evaluation processes, enabling them to shape local CLD provision, and;
- to articulate the important role and contribution of CLD and make it more visible.

- 5.3 The Scottish Government published guidance for the development of the 2021-2024 CLD plans. This emphasised the expectation that plans should be developed and reported through Community Planning Partnerships and that the first year of the new plans should be developmental, reflecting the learning from the Covid-19 pandemic and the second year should focus on recovery measures.

In addition, The Scottish Government has also identified 5 key themes that should be addressed through CLD Planning:

1. Involvement
2. Shared CLD priorities
3. Planning
4. Governance monitoring
5. Workforce development

6. Development of the Highland CLD Plan:

In Oct 2020 the then CLD Delivery Group undertook a review of all available Community Partnership led locality plans and Covid response evaluations and from this summarised the following themes:

- Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Voice, Inclusion and Participation
- Digital Inclusion
- Employment, Volunteering and Training
- Community Development and Resilience

The Highland CLD Plan does not seek to outline all proposed CLD activity to be undertaken in Highland. The following priorities arrived at by partners are the focus of collaboration.

Theme	CLD Priority
Mental Health & Wellbeing	The CLD community in Highland will prioritise working together to improve the levels of mental health and wellbeing experienced by people in our communities. This work will be targeted towards those at greater risk of poorer outcomes.
Voice, Inclusion & Participation	CLD will make it a priority to listen to those individuals and groups who want to but have little or no connection with decision makers and service budget holders and support them to influence the positive changes that are required to improve the lives of under-represented and seldom heard people.
Digital Inclusion	CLD partners will support digital inclusion. This priority will focus CLD opportunities on increasing; skills, confidence, and access.
Employment, Volunteering & Training	CLD in Highland will provide; visible, easy to access opportunities which support routes into Employment, volunteering and training for those who need it most.
Community Development & Resilience	CLD in Highland will prioritise targeted support to the development of capacity in key areas and of groups to increase their resilience for the future. This priority will build on the experiences and outcomes of Highland communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

***Appendix 1** provides a summary of the progress and key achievements made against the priorities in the third year of the plan.

6.1 How the plan is delivered:

The ambitions set out in the plan are delivered through the 9 Community Planning Partnership CLD delivery partners. The Highland CLD network provides an opportunity for partners to come together to plan, deliver and evaluate CLD provision using the strategic priorities as a framework.

7. Key Achievements in Year Three for the CLD Plan 2021-2024

- **Mental Health & Wellbeing:** The new Discovery College in Inverness is a safe space for people who identify as disabled and/or neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+, Carers, religious and ethnic minorities and coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Run by mental health charity Centred, a Peer-Led approach is used in a mutually empowering relationship to build hope and connections.

- **Voice, Inclusion & Participation:** New Scots to the Highlands are being given the chance to learn English as a Second Language (ESOL) while exploring the Scottish landscape, wildlife, and local heritage in a welcoming cultural exchange between refugees from Afghan and Ukrainian, with Learning for Life and Countryside Rangers.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Lead Scotland focuses on linking education and disability, providing resources that promote accessibility and allow users to gain the knowledge needed to navigate the digital world securely. Digital inclusion is a social justice issue and left unchecked, exacerbates social inequalities. Lead recognises the huge potential of digital technology to enhance their services and reach more people who are at risk of being left behind.
- **Employment, Volunteering and Training:** My Future, My Success empowers young people using a collaborative approach to help them think about their future careers and aspirations. They do this by connecting them with the Social Enterprise Academy network of mentors to develop skills for life in enterprise and learning, personal development and workplace skills.
- **Community Development & Resilience:** The Community Partnership Team has created a robust monitoring and reporting process aimed at aligning partnership practices across the 9 CP areas. An Action Tracker is used to deliver local actions that align to local plans and the 3 HOIP priorities (People, Place and Prosperity).
- **Workforce Development:** HLH has developed three new staff awards in 2024, approved for delivery by SQA and CLD Standards Council in the CLD domains of Youth Work, Adult Learning and Teaching ESOL. A marked increase in accredited Awards by learners is mentioned positively by HMIE since the staff programme was rolled out in 2023.

8. Next Steps:

- The CLD partnership will continue to work together to deliver on the CLD priorities for year one of the Highland CLD Plan 2024-2027 as previously approved by the board.
- The CLD Strategic Group will continue to build a strong CLD partnership in Highland by providing strategic direction for the CLD Operational Group with support from the Highland Community Planning Partnership Team.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to:

- i) Note the progress, including key delivery achievements, made in year three of the Highland Community Learning and Development Plan 2021-2024.

Author: Mark Richardson, Head of Adult Learning and Youth Work (HLH)

Date: November 2024

Appendices: Appendix 1 CLD Annual Report 2023-24

Improvement priority 1: Mental Health & Wellbeing

The CLD community in Highland will prioritise working together to improve the levels of mental health and wellbeing experienced by people in our communities. This work will be targeted towards those at greater risk of poorer outcomes.

CLD in Practice – spotlight on Mental Health & Wellbeing work

The Discovery College

The [Discovery College](#) is a project run by mental health charity Centred. Based in the Eastgate Centre in Inverness and in Caithness, the Discovery College aims to create a safe space for people who identify as disabled and/or neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+, Carers, Religious and ethnic minorities and coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. It is the Highland's first college dedicated to helping individuals gain a deeper understanding of wellbeing, mental health, and/or substance use. Underpinned by a peer support collaborative, it helps people of all ages create a psychologically safe space where they can learn about and explore their feelings and emotions leading to increased self-awareness, emotional intelligence, self-confidence, resilience and mental health and wellbeing. People have the opportunity to build a community, experience personal and community empowerment, and develop an underlying sense of hope.



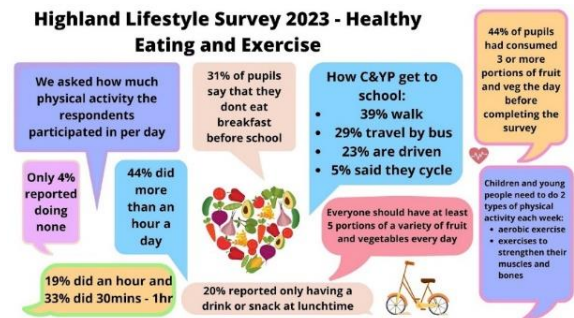
Flexible Peer-led approach

Programmes are co-produced with Peer support workers, with some people who use the Discovery College (Peer Walk-Ins) asking for therapeutic sessions such as Decider Skills and Living Life to the Full. The interactive website has a [course catalogue](#) to showcase the support that is available for people to focus on their mental health and wellbeing, personal development and employability. Since the Discovery College opened in the Eastgate Centre for one day a week in July 2024, there have been **109 unique engagements**. From October they are opening 3 days a week with the focus on connecting people. The 7 paid Peer Support Workers and 4 Peer Volunteers deliver 1-2-1 sessions either face-to-face in the Community Lounge or online. Initially they expected to see mostly women and young people, however, the majority of Peer Walk-Ins are actually men. The Mood Monitor board encourages people to tick smiley or sad faces depending on how they're feeling when they come in and leave. Of those who ticked the board, 100% ticked smiley faces to show they feel better. One Peer Walk-In said, **"This is the first time I've been out in weeks!"**

Peer Support Progression Pathway

The peer-led approach is a mutually empowering relationship that builds **hope and connections**. Some people work their way through the peer journey without realising, as it's not a linear process. It starts with when they walk through the door; to joining a Friendship Drop-in session; booking on a learning session; enrolling on Peer-to-Peer training; volunteering as a Peer Volunteer; and then gaining employment as a Peer worker.

Peer-Support Manager, Sue Lyons said: "It's about holding the space for people either here at the college, at a third-party space, or online. It has to be welcoming for people to feel it belongs to them - it's their space.
We meet people where they're at."

Actions	Progress made/Practice examples	BRAG
1. Identify and test a shared approach of how CLD partners can measure increased wellbeing as a result of taking part in CLD Activities	Increased wellbeing is measured by CLD partners using different methods. There is not a single and consistent method that is used by all partners and across all services e.g. some partners in the CLD Operational Group measure wellbeing using SWEMWBS as a single tool, others use SHANNARI such as My Future My Success. Evidence of improved outcomes related to improved data sharing. • In use: Short Warwick and Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (SWEMWBS) 7-point scale • In use: SHANNARI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included) • In use: 5 Ways to Wellbeing • In use: Mood Monitor (smiley faces ticked on the Mood board before and after intervention) • HLH Learning for Life uses a questionnaire to identify the extent to which social isolation and loneliness has been reduced due to adult learning services. The CLD partnership is working alongside the Community partnership team and the Corporate Business Performance team to improve data sharing among partners to better understand the impact of our CLD. This will be developed and rolled out for Year 1 reporting on the CLD plan 2024-2027. • High Life Highland (HLH) Youth Work and Adult Learning Annual Reports for 2024 are being shared across the partnership along with individual case studies • Data and case studies have been shared by My Future My Success and Social Enterprise Academy Schools • The Highland Council shares data and case studies from the Children and young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, Employability Multiply Programme and Whole Family Wellbeing Programme. • Youth Highland and Voluntary Youth Network have shared their annual report for 2023-2024, providing data and case studies to populate the CLD year 3 annual progress report and for the new CLD plan 2024-2027. • HTSI has shared data on the Year 3 Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund • The mental health charity Centred has shared data which demonstrates the positive impact of their Peer Support approach at the Discovery College in Inverness via their Mood Monitor • Many other third sector organisations have shared data which demonstrates the impact of their activities on the wellbeing of learners and participants.	
2. Create, deliver and gather data - Identify and promote the use of recognised and validated wellbeing measures and tools for CLD partners to evidence impact of CLD interventions	My Future My Success Programme uses the SHANARRI wellbeing tool with great success to highlight the progression of young people who take part in the MFMS programme. Wellbeing Highland Wellbeing Highland is a website for Parents and Carers created by the Highland Council and NHS Highland. Every two years the Highland Lifestyle Survey is carried out by pupils in P7, S2 and S4. The survey produces a range of data on sleep, healthy eating and exercise, change and loss, self-image, bullying and worries. Pupils answer a series of questions about their lifestyle, which helps inform some of the support  Highland Lifestyle Survey 2023 - Healthy Eating and Exercise - We asked how much physical activity the respondents participated in per day - Only 4% reported doing none 44% did more than an hour a day 19% did an hour and 33% did 30mins - 1hr 31% of pupils say that they don't eat breakfast before school - How C&YP get to school: 39% walk 29% travel by bus 23% are driven 5% said they cycle - Everyone should have at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables every day 44% of pupils had consumed 3 or more portions of fruit and veg the day before completing the survey - Children and young people need to do 2 types of physical activity each week: - aerobic exercise - exercises to strengthen their muscles and bones 20% reported only having a drink or snack at lunchtime	

“Wellbeing is a state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. This includes both physical and mental wellbeing which are equally important.”

that is put in place in and around schools in response to what the children and young people say in the survey. The infographic above shows that 31% of young people don't eat breakfast before school. NHS provides recommendations to websites such as the local [Active Schools Co-ordinator](#) or early years play ideas at bumps to bairns below.

Bumps to Bairns

[Bumps to Bairns](#) website has been developed in consultation with parents, Health Visitors, Early Years Practitioners and others. It supports parents with ideas for play and learning and is a resource for parents who have concerns about their child's development. The website shows all the things that young children need to learn and develop, such as, playing and talking together, having fun, listening, loving and kindness.



Whole School Approach (WSA) to Wellbeing

The WSA to Wellbeing has its own page on the Wellbeing Highland website aimed at helping practitioners, parents, family members and young people learn about the support available to promote and enhance the wellbeing of the school and youth-based communities and to learn more about the SHANARRI self-evaluation tool developed with children and young people. The tool allows schools to survey all pupils to find out how SHANARRI (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible & Included) the school makes them feel. SHANARRI is also used successfully by CLD practitioners in the My Future My Success project with good results.

3. Prioritise and target CLD resource in CP areas to reduce social isolation & loneliness

HLH Learning for Life

Education Scotland's 2024 CLD progress visit report highlighted that engagement with HLH Learning for Life has increased significantly over the past three years and that adult learners are less isolated as a result of participating in community-based adult learning activities:

- Learning for Life plans are reviewed every 3 months with learners and capture data on the reduction of loneliness and isolation.
- Learning for Life is committed to continuous service improvement through a robust planning and evaluation cycle
- Learning for Life practitioners are enthusiastic, empathetic and dedicated to their work which is vitally important given that many adult learners have had negative experiences of learning previously.
- Learning for Life produced 15 detailed community learning needs analyses this year which inform our targeted community-based learning practice.

- Feedback from learners indicates that our approach is effective, with 90% of learners saying they have achieved their learning goals

Key data from the 2024 HLH Learning for Life report is highlighted below.



15 dynamic
community needs
analyses have been
produced this year



98% of learners have
achieved one or more of
their learning goals this year



78 learners
are working towards
SQA qualifications



86% of learners
report improved
confidence in their
core skills

Thurso Young People's Project – improving school attendance

In Autumn 2023, funding was secured from round 1 of the Community Regeneration Fund to continue the supported wellbeing activities at the youth base in Thurso High School and to expand the youth work offer through partnering with wider HLH services, the RSPB and local artists based in Caithness. The 5-month project has successfully delivered a wide range of activities and support for young people who struggle with school attendance, need support to socialise and/or are at risk of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Between October and December 2023, the project delivered a wide range of activities including cooking, baking and crafting sessions; break and lunch-time chill-out sessions; a 5-week programme of nature activities at RSPB Forsinard; October holiday club; Halloween and Christmas crafting sessions; Youth Achievement Awards programme. Young people have experienced the positive outcomes from the project:

- They feel more included as members of their community
- They experience improved mental health and wellbeing that has improved their confidence and resilience
- They have developed stronger support networks
- They have gained experiences that increase the instances of self-directed access to arts and learning opportunities in the future
- They have been diverted from risk-taking or criminal behaviour and the community feels safer as a result

Thurso Youth Art Project

Thurso youth Art Project began outdoors with a photo challenge in the cold and crisp January weather. Back indoors they had to 'Draw the birds' through a series of mindful exercises that challenged the young people to slow down, watch, wait, meditate and reflect. They found this very difficult to start with but gradually gained more confidence with each session. With support and encouragement, the young people found ways to express elements of their identity, thoughts and feelings through drawing.

Caron the Crafts Maker worked across a range of mediums to give the young people new skills and ideas for upcycling used objects and furniture. Starting with decorating glass bottles, they chose their own designs and experimented with acrylic paints, glitter and LED lights. Next, they moved on to upcycling furniture, learning techniques such as sanding, and using primer and paint to revitalise old tables from a second-hand shop. They created their own designs through choosing themes and colours for their tables, each producing a unique final result. The young people also did regular cooking, baking, crafting and chill out sessions which had the added bonus of making tasty snacks to fuel all the artistic work!



Thurso Young People's Project - Youth Achievement Awards in January 2024

10 young people have completed their Dynamic Youth Awards in January 2024, reflecting the hard work that they have put in to participating in all the youth work activities.

Regular activities:

- **Break time chill out** – on average 25-30 young people attended 27 sessions over the months January-February
- **Lunch time chill out** – 25-30 young people attended 15 sessions over the same period
- **Cooking** – 12 young people participated in total over 5 sessions
- **Baking** – 22 young people participated in total over 10 sessions
- **Relax Session** – 4 young people participated in total over 4 sessions
- **Arts & Crafts session** - 7 young people participated in total over 4 sessions

“Play is not a luxury, it’s a necessity!”
Kay Redfield Jamieson

Reducing social isolation and loneliness in families

Home Start East Highland

People with lived experience of being a mum, dad, gran, grandpa or carer can be the vital support an isolated family needs, making a big difference to their lives. Home Start volunteers have just completed their final session of the Volunteer Preparation course and will be introduced to a local family to begin their journey of supporting them.



CALA Play and Learn Together

CALA provides free Play and Learn Together sessions in community spaces in Alness, Nairn, Merkinch Aviemore, Muir of Ord and Raigmore. The friendly sessions are an opportunity for parents, grandparents and carers to learn, sing and play together with their children



Whole Family Wellbeing programme

A new project in Inverness with Thriving Families in collaboration with [Care and Learning Alliance](#) and [Home-Start East Highland](#), has been welcomed in the third sector to help support families. The post is funded through the Highland Community Planning Partnership's Whole Family Wellbeing programme.



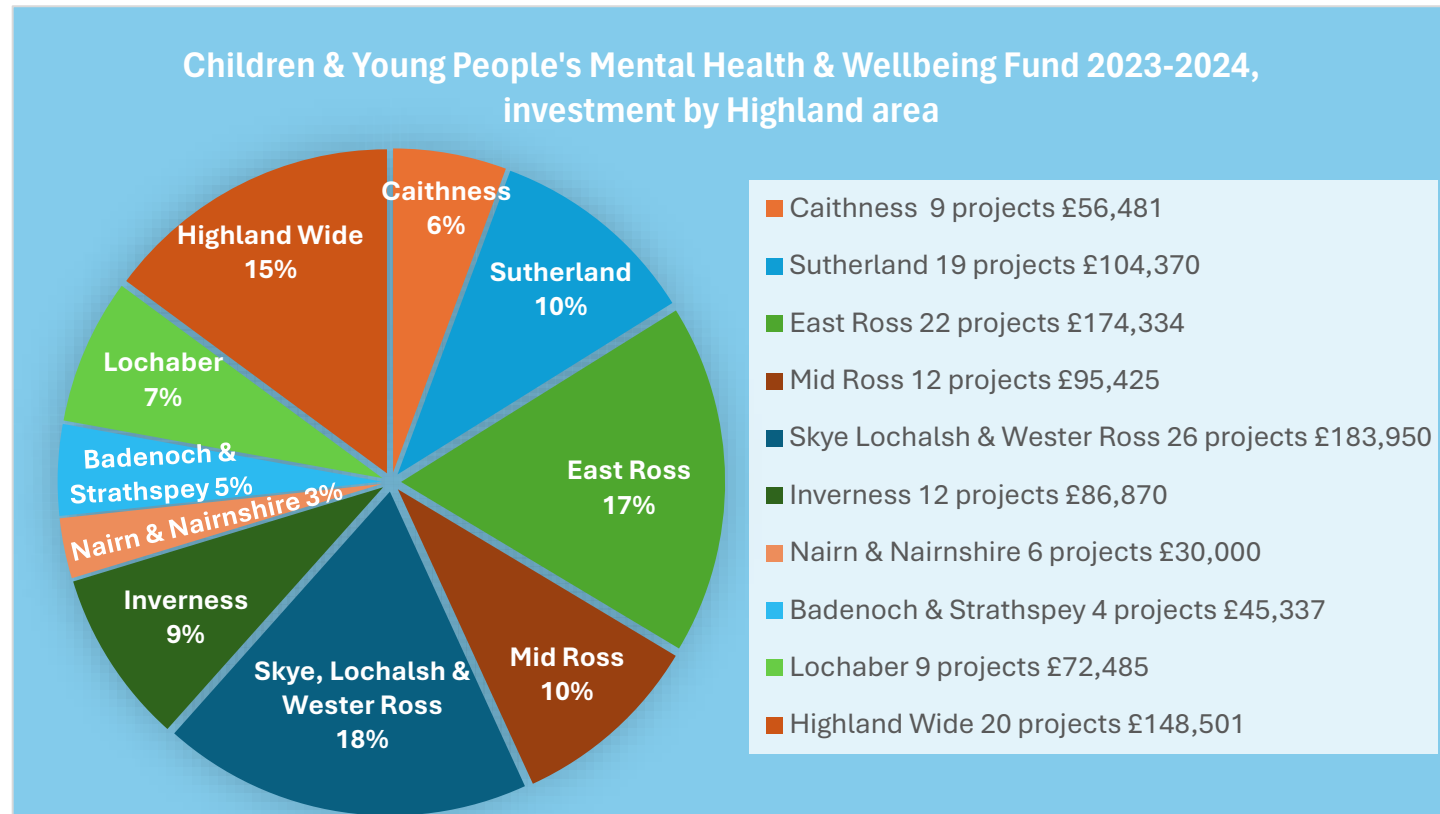
4. Identify and pursue funding opportunities to increase the capacity of CLD to contribute to health and wellbeing outcomes.

Scottish Government's Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund is administered by the Highland Council, for and on behalf of community groups and third sector organisations, to deliver enhanced community-based mental health and wellbeing support and services for children, young people (aged 5 to 24 and up to 26 if care experienced), their families and carers.

Guided by the Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework and underpinned by the values, principles and components of GIRFEC, the programme of funding is responsive to local needs and systems. It supports and improves the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and their families and services are provided by people with the right knowledge, skills and experience to support them.

2023-24 is **Year 3** of the **Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing fund** with a total investment of **£997,753 in 139 projects** across each of the 9 Highland Council areas and regionally through Highland-wide projects as shown in the chart below.



HTSI Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund 2024

Established in 2021, the Scottish Government Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund (CMH&WF) has been a lifeline to communities in Highland over the past 3 years. In **2023-24** a total investment of £700,000 was allocated to Highland third sector organisations to promote good mental health and wellbeing and to mitigate the impact of distress and mental health issues among adults. Out of the 126 applications received totalling £1,208,873, **70 projects were awarded £698,442 with total project costs amounting to £2,283,885.**

The projects targeted a wide range of 'at risk' groups with many organisations focusing on people experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, geographic disadvantage, people living with long-term health conditions, disabilities and/or, people diagnosed with mental illness. Last year in 2023, there were more projects targeting older people (50+), less support for people experiencing trauma and mental illness and a stronger emphasis on socio-economic

circumstances. This year in 2024, there was **an increase in the number of projects focusing on suicide prevention; an increase targeting people diagnosed with mental illness, and an increase targeting refugees, BAME and LGBTI+**

Of the 70 projects, some covered more than one priority activity:

- **National priorities:** Social isolation and loneliness (68), Poverty & inequality (47), Suicide prevention (32)
- **Local priorities:** Rurally distanced (41), Trauma (29), Unpaid carers & long-term conditions (28)

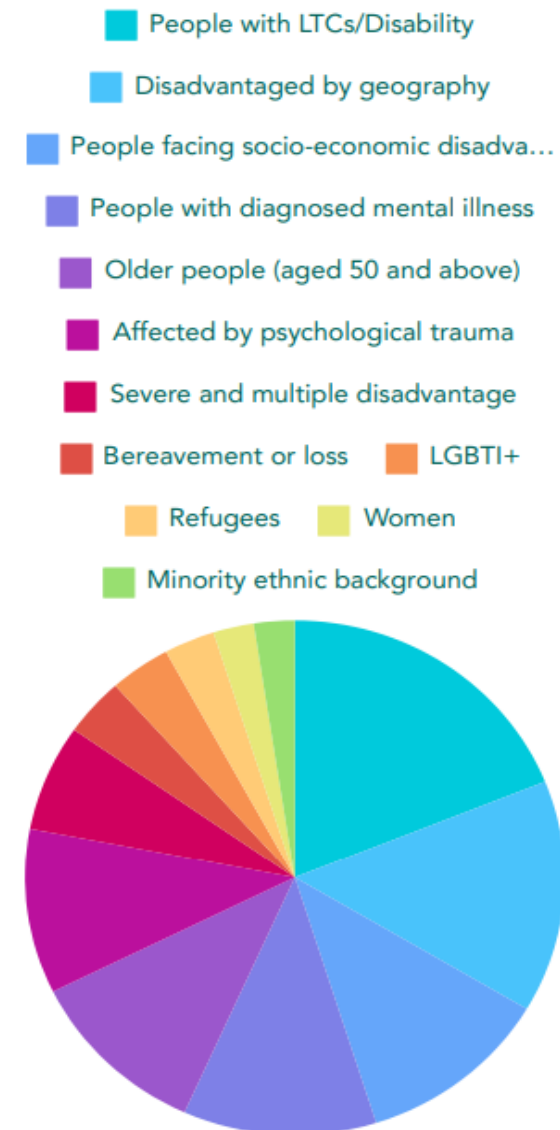
Of the 70 projects, activity was proposed for either restricted, targeted or general activity:

- **Restricted Activity:** 20% of applications (43% of Highland-wide) proposed restricted activities for specific groups in need of support.
- **Targeted Activity:** 70% of all applications (57% of Highland-wide) were targeted activities aimed at specific groups in need of support.
- **General Activity:** 10% of all applications aimed to deliver activities for the general population living in a specific geographic location

Key Lessons

- The existing partnership working in Highland was sufficiently strong to support rapid action and identify the local priority areas without delay.
- The funding distribution appears to balance the needs within communities on the whole, but some communities lack capacity to engage in this process.
- With the majority of projects aiming to support people with long-term health conditions and disadvantaged by geography, it's evident that communities face ongoing health inequalities due to living in remote and rural areas

Year 3 of the HTSI [Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund Year 3 Report](#) shows a total investment of £698,442 across 70 projects in 2024 as detailed in the table below:



Community Group/Organisation	Amount	Community Group/Organisation 2	Amount 2
ACAMHA	£10,000	IRL Education CIC	£10,000
Applecross Community Hall	£10,000	Kilmuir Community Trust	£1,420
Badenoch & Strathspey Community ConnXions	£6,688	Kinlochewe Village Hall	£5,850
Bipolar Scotland	£10,000	Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust	£10,000
Black Isle Cares	£10,000	Kyle of Sutherland Hub	£9,200
Blooming Gardeners CIC	£9,894	LEAP Sports Scotland	£10,000
Cairngorm Confidence Outdoors CIC	£10,000	LGBT Youth Scotland	£19,999
Caithness Mental Health Support Group	£12,638	Maggie's Centre	£7,794
Caithness Voluntary Group (Befriending)	£10,000	MECOPP	£40,000
Calman Trust	£19,780	Mikeysline (Caithness)	£4,567
Care Lochaber	£9,822	Mikeysline (Menopause)	£10,000
Centred (Caithness)	£8,000	Minginish Community Hall Association	£10,000
Centred (Lochaber)	£8,862	Music Broth	£8,995
Change Mental Health	£9,020	Nairn River Enterprise	£4,978
Clarity Walk CIC	£1,002	Nature 4 Health	£10,460
Community Care Assynt Ltd.	£7,140	New Start Highland	£8,900
Creativity In Care CIC	£10,000	Ormlie Community Association Ltd	£10,000
CrossReach	£10,000	Partnerships for Wellbeing (vehicle)	£2,000
Eden Court Highlands	£9,999	Partnerships for Wellbeing (training)	£7,400
Engaging With Activity CIC	£9,677	Rag Tag and Textile Ltd.	£9,660
Families Outside	£9,811	Rape and Sexual Abuse Service	£34,447
Fèis Rois	£7,777	Skye & Lochalsh Mental Health Ass.	£9,769
Finding Your Feet	£6,690	SNAP (Special Needs Action Project)	£10,000
Gairloch Museum	£11,180	SPIRIT Advocacy	£16,615
Gateway	£10,000	The Buzz Project	£6,484
Go Golspie Development Trust	£10,000	The Dornoch Area CIC	£10,000
High Life Highland (Grow)	£8,202	Thurso Community Development Trust	£9,986
High Life Highland (Refugees Outdoors)	£8,030	Timespan	£9,259
High Life Highland (Refugees Indoors)	£9,416	TLC (Tender Loving Care) Inverness	£10,000
Highland Yoga Collective (Refugees)	£2,750	Tuesday Social Club	£4,960
Highland Yoga Collective (Social Prescribing)	£5,400	Tykes Young Carers	£10,000
Home-Start Caithness	£10,000	Velocity Café	£9,850

Inverness Foodstuff	£12,799	Wasps (Refugee OpenArts)	£9,981
Inverness Wheeled Sports Club	£9,798	Waverley Care	£9,798
Inverness Women's Aid	£11,696	Youth Highland	£10,000
	£326,071		£372,372
Total investment in 2023-24			£698,442

MH&WF Case study: Poverty & Inequality

An existing food poverty charity identified increased demand due to the cost-of-living crisis. Their partnership with a local CAB offers a combination of hot meals, a warm welcome, and practical advice on debts, money advice, housing, etc. Anticipating further demand, they described a plan to meet this by offering additional group sessions, in partnership with organisations who can advise on income maximisation, housing, recovery, employability, digital access, cooking, and more, maximising their ability to help people with whom they have built trust.

They demonstrated the inclusive nature of what they do, treating everyone with respect and dignity, in an accessible venue. For participants whose first language is not English, they enable communication using Google Translate and offer people with visual impairments information in an accessible format.

5. Scope and develop new partnership opportunities and synergies with other sectors beyond CP partners

The Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival Highland

[The Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival Highland \(SMHAFH\)](#) is an annual event organised in partnership with local artists, groups and third sector organisations including Creativity In Care, Centred, Mikeysline, Befrienders Highland, HUG (Action for Mental Health), Highland Mindfulness Group, Ewen's Room, N4H, Rag Tag n Textile (Skye), North Coast Connection and High Life Highland Brora Learning Zone.



People can join the relaxing arts session with [Arts in Nature](#) and [Creativity In Care](#) at the SMHAF exhibition space (circle bar area) to share in the fun of making seedpod art with [Evanton Wood Community Company Friday Futures Group](#) and do something creative as part of the SMHAFH collaborative.

Arts in Nature

[Arts in Nature](#) is a Highland Third Sector Interface initiative aimed at developing creative projects to inspire and motivate people to take part in meaningful activities associated with outdoor arts in nature, creating opportunities for adults and children to engage in outdoor learning using creative methods. They work collaboratively with a range of organisations developing arts projects and events that are designed to enhance wellbeing and creative experiences using a varied programme of activities including arts, crafts & design, music, drama and literature.

A group from [Gateway Highland Homeless Trust](#) joined Arts in Nature at the Botanic Gardens for a morning of creativity and a walk along the canal in the warm September sunshine. The group gathered a selection of leaves and flowers in the wildflower garden to create botanical themed mandalas along with foliage to create natural wreaths. They looked at a selection of nature drawing books and discovered more about nature and creating things together, making illustrations in their sketchbooks. Some of the Gateway residents enjoyed welcomed a chance to enjoy the fresh air at Whin Park in the [Spokes For Folks](#) trikes, thanks to the generous sponsorship of F&G Joinery and Orion Group.



Roots.Connections.Belonging (RCB) Creative

[RCB_Creative](#) (Roots.Connections.Belonging) collaborates with partners such as Velocity Café and the Countryside Rangers to deliver workshops which explore the different aspects of the climate crisis in Highland through art, writing and discussion.

A Ranger-led Walk at Dunnet Head educated participants to take the time to notice, and learn about, the things at their feet. This was followed by a creative workshop in the Seadrift Centre at Dunnet Bay.



Flip of the Coin

[Flip of the Coin](#) is a social enterprise that puts community first. Their mission to empower individuals and communities through their focused work with creativity and inner wellbeing. Established by former WEA Manager Lucy Campbell, Flip of the Coin works in collaboration with artists from [Inverness OpenArts](#), University of Edinburgh, [Wasps Creative Academy](#) at the [Field in Alness](#) to run regular therapeutic 'green sessions' in the polytunnel and to introduce new and interesting ways of making art.



UHI Inverness and the Gateway Highland Homeless Trust

[Students from UHI Inverness](#) teamed up with the [Gateway Highland Homeless Trust](#) during the winter of 2023 to provide hundreds of meals for families struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. The Professional Cookery level 4 students and their lecturer Saurav Kumar **cooked 100 meals a week for three weeks**, as part of [Gateway's Food for Families project](#).

This is the seventh year that UHI Inverness has supported the initiative, which began 13 years ago. Food for Families aims to help vulnerable families in need across the Highlands by providing them with food and essentials over the festive season. The meals cooked by the students are collected by the charity, frozen and then distributed through local schools and social work teams in Inverness and Ross-shire. The project expects to **deliver around 3000 meals in total this year**.



Voluntary Youth Network

Partnerships between Area Youth HUBs and specialist organisations has improved through the VYN. Partnerships have led to increased numbers of early intervention referrals by youth work to specialist support with examples of collaborative projects being delivered between Area Youth HUBs and bereavement support (Crocus), employability support (SDS, DYW, My Future My Success), mental health support (MikeysLine, CAMHS) Diversity and Inclusion (LGBT Youth Scotland, schools).

Improvement priority 2: Voice, Inclusion & Participation

CLD will make it a priority to listen to those individuals and groups who want to but have little or no connection with decision makers and service budget holders; and support them to influence the positive changes that are required to improve the lives of under-represented and seldom heard people.

CLD in Practice – spotlight on Voice, Inclusion & Participation

Youth Work Place Planning

A significant and stable level of provision has been maintained across the region with Youth Development Officers continuing to be the backbone of service delivery across the 29 Associated School Groups (ASGs). The statistics provided show significant growth in young people achieving and attaining through HLH youth work approaches. This contributes to the national priority to close the poverty related attainment gap.

The youth service worked with colleagues in the Highland Council Community Development team to develop an approach to Place Planning that involves the voice of young people which helps to understand how they feel about their local communities. Approximately 550 young people took part across Highland and localised action plans have been developed with local priorities. The main priorities identified informed the co-production of the CLD plan 2024-27 focusing on mitigating the impact of Climate Change and young people's mental health.

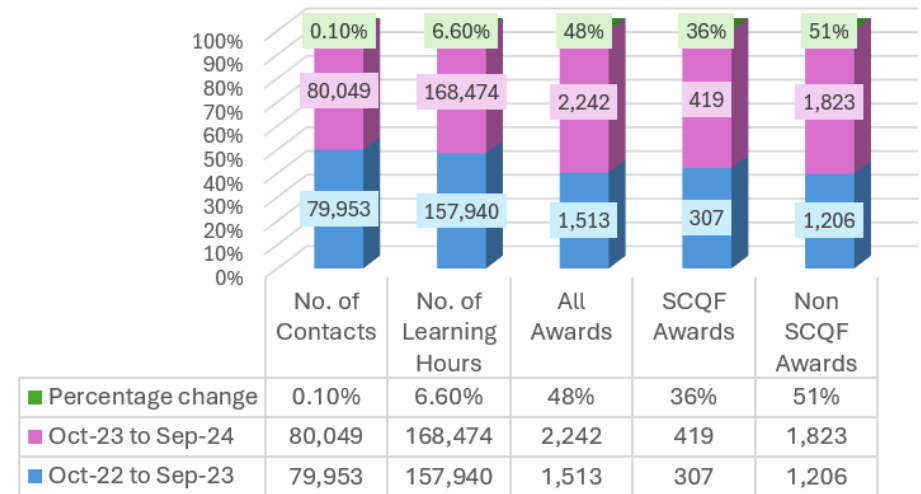
Step Forward Wick Youth

Step Forward Wick Youth is a dynamic youth group who enjoy meeting up at Wick Youth Hub to take part in cooking, art, darts and hang out in the youth café. They are an enthusiastic group of volunteers who are active in the community, raising £1,000 for their club activities through Tesco Stronger Starts.

In 2024, they took part in a project with Wick Development Trust and the Caithness & Sutherland Countryside Rangers where they planted 400 trees - adding mulch to keep the weeds at bay - and created a wildflower meadow with 100 wildflowers sprinkled around the woodland area beside the swing park.

The Step Forward group produced a [great video to the sound of Mauro Picotto's CRW Remix](#) of their day out at Dunnet Beach with their youth workers, the Countryside Rangers and their cool surfing instructor.

HLH Youth Work from October 2023 to September 2024



■ Oct-22 to Sep-23 ■ Oct-23 to Sep-24 ■ Percentage change



Actions	Progress made/Practice examples	BRAG
1. Provide and coordinate learning and support for marginalised individuals and groups to participate in decision making /co-design of services, including CLD provision. “To our LGBTI+ students and staff, know that you are valued. You belong here, just as you are.” Vicki Nairn, UHI’s Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor	Planet Youth Highland In the past few months, all five Planet Youth Local Action Groups in Tain, Dornoch, Golspie, Wick or Thurso have developed good momentum and regularly meet to discuss their actions plans which focus on: • Reducing the number of young people vaping or using other substances at a young age. • Improving positive mental health outcomes and resilience in our young people. • Promoting kindness and healthier relationships to our young people. • Improving communication and awareness on what is on for young people in their communities. • Improving access to activities for all. Four pupils from Dornoch Academy made a video based on Planet Youth data to say what they would like to see change in their community: Planet Youth video Dornoch Academy. At their recent meeting, staff from Safe, Strong and Free spoke about bullying and how adults can best support young people with this. NHS smoking cessation advisers are focusing on education around vaping. Their new resource Vaping Information for Parents and Carers does more than explain what vapes are and what they contain, it goes on to look at why young people might decide to try vaping and how parents and carers can support their young people to say no to vapes, or to give them up if they are already using them.  LGBTQ+ Inclusive Youth Youth workers at Cromarty Youth Cafe have completed the LGBT Youth Scotland Awareness training support their practice of building an LGBTQ+ Inclusive culture, enabling them to be better informed in understanding the LGBTQ+ experiences of young people. LGBT+ Youth Scotland 2022-2023 impact report highlights the work they are doing to help make Scotland the best place for LGBTQ+ young people to flourish and thrive. It highlights that the LGBT+ Awareness Training was rolled out to over 1800 individuals in 2023 with 10 times as many people (54,587) accessing the LGBT+ youth groups and support section on the LGBT+ Youth Scotland website than the previous year.  During LGBT History Month in February 2024, UHI Inverness and 8 partners signed up to the Scottish LGBTI+ Rainbow Mark to support inclusive social spaces across the Highlands and Islands, Moray and Perthshire. The Rainbow Mark was developed with LGBTI+ people and aims to: • Increase positive LGBTI+ visibility • Provide information and tools to enable better LGBTI+ inclusion • Reduce isolation and minority stress for LGBTI+ people • Create more welcoming places in Scotland (Photo by Paul Campbell)	

The [Schools OUT](#) charity has been providing LGBT+ education for 50 years. Their 'Classroom' website provides free educational resources for 5-19 year-olds to enable educators to embed LGBT+ inclusive lessons in education settings, using a whole school approach and the concepts of 'Usualising' and 'Visibilising'.



The Artique Collective

A Highland youth-led cooperative, [The Artique Collective](#), showcased their creative artwork at the Queer Market in Eden Court in July. The Youth Highland social enterprise received funding through Bright Ideas and sell their unique and affordable T-shirts, shoes and pictures on the [Youth Highland website](#). The official launch of the Artique Collective art exhibition will take place at Halloween with a spooky fun theme, best dress prizes, interactive crafts and pumpkin treasure hunt.

Merkinch and South Kessock (Inverness) Participatory Budgeting Project, *Your Point Your Place*

Highland Community Planning Partnership, HTSI, Youth Highland, Scottish Community Development Centre and Police Scotland are working together on a Participatory Budgeting (PB) approach' in Merkinch and South Kessock. The community [partnership approach](#) aims to ensure young people experience their rights to feel safe, to learn and to play.

Project title	Average rating (scale 1-5)	Rank	Funding requested
Youth Club	4.93	1	£4,700.80
Holiday Clubs	4.82	2	£2,000.00
Merkinch Football Academy	4.78	3	£5,000.00
Youth Café	4.73	4	£4,970.96
Pathways to Outdoor Activities	4.71	5	£3,000.00
Community Engagement	4.69	6	£5,000.00
After School Placements	4.59	7	£1,403.56
Team Cuisine Cooking Classes	4.04	8	£4,988.00
Total allocated spend			£31,063.32

Successful PB projects

564 votes (443 online and 121 in person) were cast in total across 11 projects with all projects receiving support from the local community. The initial budget of £31,063.32 was allocated to the 8 successful projects which received the strongest support from residents. An outline of the projects, the average rating, rank and funding allocated is outlined in the table.

Police Scotland: "Your Place, Your Point sets out an opportunity to move into a new space with policing contributing as an 'enabler' in local communities, bringing people together for change alongside our partners. This project seeks to activate local communities, increase opportunities for active citizenship and work with people to solve problems and respond to local needs and concerns."

Cromarty Youth Café

In April, young people from [Cromarty Youth Café](#) took part in a consultation workshop on 'Participatory Social Connections' to gather their views on the opportunities and challenges for young people living on the Black Isle; identifying the people and organisations that are important to young people in the area and understanding the factors influencing young people's decisions to stay or leave their local area. They have been meeting with young carers, supporting them with their fears and anxieties and helping to fill in applications for Social Security.

Anti-Racism in Education in the Highlands - African Caribbean Asian and Mixed Heritage Association

Formed in 2022, [African Caribbean Asian and Mixed Heritage Association](#) (ACAMHA) provides education to connect local communities in Highland with the African Caribbean Asian and Mixed Heritage communities. Their aim is to promote, encourage, embrace and celebrate the uniqueness of Equality, Diversity, Equity, Acceptance and Belonging through cultural events, music, education, seminars and workshops.

Founder and Chairlady, Elizabeth-Mya Chemonges-Murzynowska, known as Mya, is dedicated to challenging stereotypes, breaking down barriers and taboos, while embracing cultural and traditional differences. Mya has worked in 12 Highland schools as an Early Years Practitioner, a support worker and an After School's club practitioner, which gave her an insight into the education system and first-hand experience of dealing with children from diverse communities. Co-founder and secretary of ACAMHA, Remi, agrees that the lack of resources and support within the Highlands led them to form ACAMHA to provide education for children in communities to feel included through representation. They have partnered with the Highland Council and Highland One World to create a subgroup that tackles Anti Racism in Education in the Highlands and Mya sits on the Highland Parent Council Partnership as the Education representative on the Highland Council Education Committee.



ACAMHA invited people to their [Black History Month](#) where celebrations took place in Inverness with dancing, afro beats, and soc & bongo tunes from Ardersier Forte, Mellow Yellow, Tuxedo Penguins, Guarantee Street Band, TFX and more.



“I’m grateful for the opportunity to contribute to this vibrant community and highlight the beauty of Arabic calligraphy, a form of art deeply rooted in my cultural background”
Aman

Arabic Calligraphy: The Art of Handwriting

Highlights from the [Refugee Festival Scotland](#) provide a rich tapestry of cultural traditions and activities taking place across Scotland. In Inverness, the Art of Handwriting workshop introduced participants to Arabic Calligraphy led by a local Syrian calligraphy community expert named Aman. This family friendly and interactive workshop provided an opportunity to learn the basics of the Arabic script, try calligraphy, and explore more about the art form. One event attendee said, “Fantastic session. You have stirred my interest to explore Arabic culture, art and writing further.”



The [HLH Learning for Life Annual Report 2024](#) provides evidence of co-production from marginalised individuals and groups with some highlights below:

Life-Wide Learning Practice Example: Botanic Gardens Tour

During the summer months the ESOL classroom takes learning outside to create informal learning activities with opportunities for social and cultural learning and practising verbal communication skills in a variety of contexts. The ESOL learners from the Ukraine enjoyed a trip to the Botanic Gardens, where the Head Gardener provided a guided tour to showcase everything that the Gardens have to offer. It is also an opportunity to connect learners with what is happening in their community. One learner said: “all of Ukraine is here!” in response to seeing all the plants and flowers familiar in her home country from which she was displaced two years ago. The visit provided a meaningful way for learners to build connections with the place they now call home and instilled many of them with the confidence to return in their own time. Upon learning that there is no cost to visit the gardens, one learner told us: “I am coming every day!”



ESOL Education Goes Wild

Newcomers to Highland are being given the chance with the Countryside Rangers and Learning for Life to [learn English while exploring the local environment](#). During the ascent, the ESOL learners not only honed their hillwalking skills, but also discovered facts about the Scottish landscape, wildlife, and heritage while also improving their physical and mental well-being. This cultural exchange enriched the learning process, with the Afghan participants sharing insights from their homeland, offering a glimpse into their language and culture. Building communication skills in authentic settings is key to language acquisition and meaningful conversations about conservation and sustainability, making this initiative a perfect blend of education and environmental awareness.

Baby & Toddler Buggy Walks in Hilton

Think Nature Health Walks project was run by HTSI to supported mothers and toddlers in Hilton to connect with other parents and enjoy walking in the outdoors. Some of the mothers felt quite isolated before the buggy walks and now they are making friends, and their children are learning to play with other kids as they run about in the park.



- “I have noticed that my son is calmer after Buggy Walk. He runs with other children, feeds ducks, sing songs with Kasia (Walk Leader) and on the way back is tired, ready for his nap. It is also good for me to chat with other mums and just be out in the fresh air.” Walker
- “I made new friends during Buggy Walk.” New Walker
- “It helped me to open up about motherhood with the coordinator and other mums. It is easier to do when you don't have to have eye contact and in smaller group. It is very relaxed group.” Walker

[The HTSI Walks website says](#): “Sadly, due to the unavailability of continuing funding, the Think Nature Health Walks project is ending. We have put tremendous effort into sourcing alternative funding, to no avail.”

South Highland Outdoor Woodland Learning (OWL)

Outdoor educators at [South Highland OWL](#) have delivered sessions on winter tracking, biodiversity and aquatic life with Highlife Highland Countryside Rangers. The courses delivered in the summer included:

- Art Therapy at Ness Islands
- Tree Identification for outdoor educators at Grantown-on-Spey
- Drama in the woods - Midsummer's night's dream at Ness Islands where young people met Titania, Bottom and Puck in the fairy woods. Shakespeare can feel a little daunting for young people and adults, so the workshop looked at Shakespeare's plays in a practical way, making them accessible and fun, providing tips and tricks to help young people fall in love with the Master of storytelling.



North Highland Outdoor Woodland Learning (OWL)

The Scottish Junior Forester Award programmes run by group members in North Highland OWL includes pupils and staff from Tain Royal Academy and Dingwall Academy who learned about managing risk and completing risk assessments, measuring trees, creating bird boxes, taking part in practical woodland management work and why this is needed and investigating wider biodiversity on their sites.

Building intergenerational communities

Intergenerational practice aims to bring people together in purposeful, mutually beneficial activities which promote greater understanding and respect between generations contributing to more cohesive communities. In June, the [Generations Working Together Roadshow at UHI Inverness](#) brought public sector and third sector CLD practitioners together to hear presentations on intergenerational practice by Youth Workers from Fortrose Academy Wanda Mackay and Fraser Thomson, the Youth Convenor Orla Macleod and the Older Persons Champion for Highland Senior Citizens Network Councillor Isabelle Mackenzie.

The Black Isle youth workers spoke about the 'Getting to Know your Techno Club' with breakfast rolls and frothy coffee where young people support older residents to build confidence with their technology devices. They also run Intergenerational Mix & Mingle drop-in sessions Cookwell & Bakewell, board games, arts & crafts and a book club. Wanda and Fraser are pictured holding the recognition of highly effective practice from HMIE Inspectors of Education for intergenerational community partnership working which results in transformative changes for young people.



2. Contribute to the development of a codesigned Youth Participation Framework (CYP Charter) – this action is being led by ICSP Rights and Participation Group – CLD support

The Charter for Children and Young People

HLH and Highland Youth Committee led on the co-production of The Charter for Children and Young People with Inspiring Young Voices, Highland Council, the Youth Convener, Voluntary Youth Network and CALA to enable children and young people to be in dialogue with decision makers. The Charter showed a commitment to provide a collaborative and cohesive system to ensure all CYP have opportunities to be part of a process where feedback is collected, listened to and responded to within an agreed process.

Children and Young People's Participation Strategy and Vision 26



Rachel Hatfield & Jo Chamberlain Vision 26

[Children's Rights Highland](#) is a website dedicated to the rights of children and young people (CYP) in Highland. More than 800 children and young people, including care experienced, contributed to the design of the [Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2024-2026](#) which builds on the foundations of the CYP Charter to create a collaborative and cohesive system that is contained in its vision.

The CYP Participation Strategy was launched at the **Vision 26 event** in Inverness Leisure Centre and prepared by a group of Foundation Apprentices from the Care and Learning Alliance. [The Children's Rights and Participation Improvement Group](#) ensures that actions are being taken to improve children's rights and participation across Highland.



3. Plan and deliver workshops in all CP areas around incorporation of UNCRC into Scots Law and other relevant policy developments including trauma informed and the Promise

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC), children's services' planning, trauma informed practice and The Promise are policy areas providing services directly to children. Taking forward work to Keep the Promise, close the poverty-related attainment gap, and reduce child poverty, are all actions taken by public services which contribute to the [full realisation of children's rights](#) under the UNCRC.

During 2024, NHS Education for Scotland (NES) ran a series of UNCRC awareness raising session leading up to and following the incorporation of the UNCRC in Scots Law on 16th July 2024.

Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)

Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) is fully committed to ensuring Children's Rights underpin all their work for and with children and young people. The CALA website provides some useful information below:

- [Tools and resources](#) to share with children and young people that service providers work with
- Useful resource tools, [guidance](#) and [websites to support practitioners](#) to implement children's rights in practice and raise awareness with parents/carers

The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland, Nicola Killeen, works with teams around Scotland to protect the rights of children and young people under the UNCRC.

UNCRC Symbols

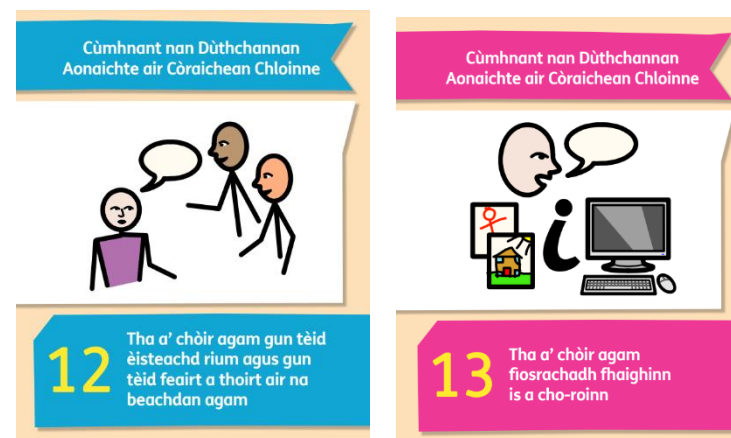
The Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland has produced a simplified version of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It communicates the 42 articles of the UNCRC using [symbols and easy to read language](#).

Gaelic version of UNCRC

The 42 Articles of the UNCRC are also provided easy to read [Gaelic cards](#). Cùmhnant nan Dùthchannan Aonaichte air Còraichean Chloinne. Goireas nan Samhlaidhean mu Chùmhnant nan Dùthchannan Aonaichte air Còraichean Chloinne.

The Highland Council Rights Respecting Schools

The Highland Council has put the correct processes and procedures in place to ensure that the rights of children and young people are considered in Highland Council policy making and within the joint policies made with Community Planning Partners. The Highland Council website for 'Policies and Guidance - support for learners' contains the [UNCRC: Guide to your rights](#). The multi-agency Children's Rights and Participation Group forms one of six strategic oversight groups delivering on the Integrated Children's Services Plan. They have developed a Children's Rights and Participation



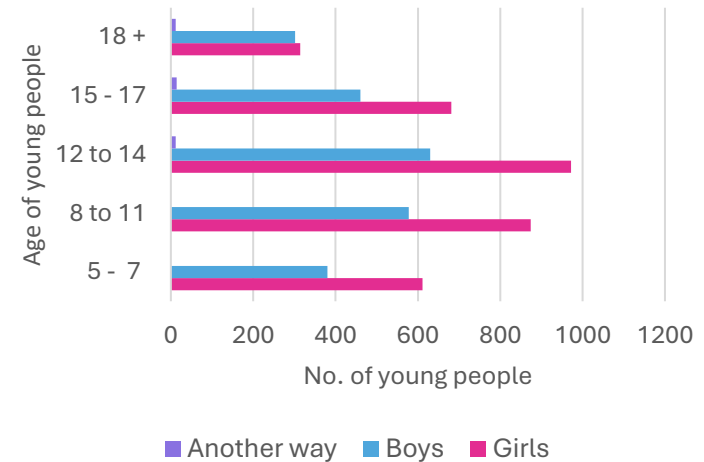
	website www.childrensrightshighland.co.uk which shares the work of the group, as well as signposting to relevant resources and opportunities relating to children's rights and participation. Several Highland schools have been recognised as having made significant progress in implementing the UNCRC principles within their school and beyond, demonstrating a strong commitment to children's rights in wellbeing, participation, relationships and self-esteem. The UK Committee for UNICEF celebrates schools that have successfully embedded children's rights into their daily practice by awarding the Rights Respecting Schools Award which recognises schools that create safe and inspiring learning environments where children are respected, their talents are nurtured and they can thrive. The following Highland schools achieved the highest-level Gold Award as seen in the video UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools - Highland Gold Award Achievers	
4. Deliver CLD awareness raising sessions to CPs increasing the inclusion of marginalised adults' voice and influence in community planning	Highland Community Planning Partnership Team Highland Community Planning Partnership team aims to support the CLD partnership in coordinating CLD activity across Highland and raising awareness of this as a standing agenda item on each of the 9 CP areas. The HCPP website showcases the work of the CLD partnership under the Community Participation and Dialogue Delivery Group and contains the annual progress reports for each year of activity delivered under the 2021-2024 CLD Plan. The priorities in the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan (HOIP) Review 2024-2027 (People, Place and Prosperity) underpin the priorities of the new CLD Plan for 2024 - 2027. CLD Teams in Youth Work, Adult and Family Learning and Community Development regularly attend the area CP meetings to raise awareness of what CLD is achieving in each area and the benefits of engaging in CLD activities to improve the lives of young people and adult learners who feel marginalised in communities. The CLD Support Officer has delivered presentations on the national CLD Review, the 2024 HMIE Inspection process and the inclusion of diverse voices in the co-production of the new CLD Plan 2024 -2027.	
5. Strengthen and consolidate / develop youth participation structures	Children and Young People's Participation Strategy After 18 months of hard work and the involvement of over 800 children and young people (CYP) between the ages of 4 and 26 across Highland, the Highland Community Planning Partnership launched its CYP Participation Strategy at the Vision 2026 event in Inverness on the 30th of August. The strategy will hold decision makers to account to ensure that CYP's views and voices are heard and acted upon and that they are taken seriously when decisions are being made. This is in line with Article 12 of the UNCRC, which became law in Scotland on the 16th of July 2024. An implementation group has been formed to ensure that the CYP Participation Strategy becomes a reality over the next five years in Highland.	

Youth Highland and Voluntary Youth Network

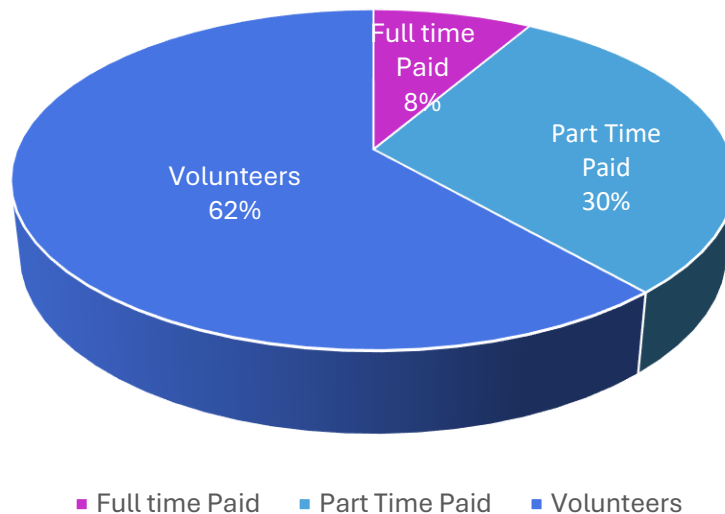
Youth Highland is an Area Association of Youth Scotland – a network of community-based youth clubs & groups in Scotland.

- Voluntary youth work is an important partner in the delivery of youth work in Highland
- Highland is home to 10% of voluntary youth clubs in Scotland, despite the region only having 5% of the national population. Voluntary youth work in Highland receives core grant funding out with of regional statutory grants
- Youth Highland has a long history and established relationships with community-based youth clubs and will celebrate its 40th birthday in 2025
- Youth Highland currently support approximately 60 member youth clubs who run 153 regular youth groups in communities across Highland. There are voluntary youth clubs in every Community Partnership area
- They regularly work with more than 6,000 young people between the ages of 5 – 25

Voluntary Participation



Working Together



- Voluntary youth clubs in Highland are run by a varied workforce. There are approximately 800 staff working in voluntary youth clubs across Highland with 25 FT workers, 220 PT workers and 550 volunteers.
- Youth Highlands work is underpinned by professional youth work and CLD principles and ethics, they gained a CLD Standards Mark in 2015 and are required to submit reviewed evidence to retain this standard every 3 years.
- Youth Highland offers a range of support to member clubs and the wider youth work sector in Highland – including a suite of training (online and in person).
- In partnership with Youth Scotland, Youth Highland deliver the Level 6 PDA in Youth Work. More than 40 learners have been supported by Youth Highland to complete this qualification in Highland.

6. Develop /Support local Adult Learner Forums in CPs	The Highland Adult Learning development group is engaging with partners to discuss the Adult Learner Forums in Highland. Currently HLH Adult Learning Coordinators hold informal gatherings with small groups of learners or on a 1-2-1 basis to hear their views.
7. Provide a youth led voice, inclusion and participation annual summary report to THC Education Cttee and HCPP	The Highland Youth Convenor End of Term report for 2023/24 along with the Highland Youth Parliament (HYP) Conference 2024 Report were presented to the Education Committee and HCPP. Highlights from the 2023-24 Highland Youth Convenor: - In 2023-24, the Youth Convenor Orla Macleod visited six Youth Forums in Wick, Tain, Fortrose, Nairn, Farr, and Inverness High School to hear young people raise issues affecting them on subject choices, transport, mental health, having things to do out with school, and the condition of their local area - She visited Portree, Plockton, Gairloch, and Milburn Secondary Schools to explain how young people can get involved with their youth forums and the HYP. - She was joined by staff from Waverly and NHS Highland to discuss the topic of relationships and sex education in schools. Some young people didn't feel that the teachers were confident or comfortable delivering Relationships, Sexual Health and Parenthood (RSHP) and would like more relevant talks such as vaping. - In Alness Orla supported young carers through Connecting Carers and in Inverness she met young people who do not attend school regularly and are being supported by My Future My Success - In Wick, a workshop on Rights led to delivering a session on young people's working rights at the HYP conference - More than 100 young people from across Highland attended the 2024 HYP Conference on 21st June. In attendance were the Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland Nicola Killean and The Highland Council Chief Executive Derek Brown who has since agreed to progress talks on a Youth Reference Group to strengthen ties between young people and the Highland Council. Mental Health of Young People Mental health is a huge issue for young people in Highland and a priority for the Highland Youth Parliament. Orla undertook research into the resources available for mental health peer support for young people as a realistic and achievable option to tackle the issue. She found out that young people often talk to each other about what they are going through but might not know how to support the other person or how to look after themselves while doing so. A range of mental health support, resources and training for young people was gathered from the Educational Psychology team, Mikeysline, and High Life Highland and can be accessed by clicking here linktr.ee/highlandyouthparliament. The HYP Mental Health poster has been distributed to young people across all 29 ASGs in Highland and the QR code takes you to the resources.



	LGBTQ+ Issues Orla is passionate about tackling Homophobic bullying which is still prevalent in schools. This is partly due to the lack of training for teachers which means they don't have the knowledge or confidence to deal with the issues. In 2014 Highland Educational psychologists, Carrie Yavuz and James McTaggart, undertook research which showed that over a quarter of young people said homophobic bullying took place in the classroom. In 2024, the Equality & Diversity Lead Officer for the Northern Alliance supported Orla to undertake a needs analysis of all schools in Highlands to find out what action was being taken on LGBT issues. Data was gathered from 90% of Secondary schools where some were developing a LGBT club and 28% of Primary Schools where more general equality-based education is provided. This information was fed back to the Highland Equalities Forum and the LGBT subgroup, which is largely made up of CLD staff and teachers whose goal is to provide training on LGBT issues for teachers. The new Highland Youth Convenor Lauren McKittrick was appointed in September 2024. Her priorities contained in the 2024-2025 Action Plan aim to reach out and help young people who are in statistically under-represented groups including refugees, armed forces families, asylum seekers, young people with ASN, home schoolers, care experienced and those who are young carers. Lauren plans to tackle barriers to access for groups who are dedicated to self-development and skillset growth, ensuring that young people have the opportunity to be successful in their future.	
8. Facilitate an annual Big Community Conversation to inform needs analysis / and a review of CLD	The Community Needs Analysis is a strategic process that helps identify a community's needs, strengths, resources, and challenges. CLD practitioners have embedded the Education Scotland Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement (SECI) training in their practice and as a result of this, HLH Learning for Life (LfL) has reviewed and redeveloped their needs analysis process to take forward Community Needs Analysis across Highland. As a team they have produced 15 Community Needs Analyses so far that are dynamically maintained and inform how LfL target and plan their work. As an example, the Alness Community Needs Analysis highlights key findings in the area for health, crime, transport, young people, digital literacy, ESOL, refugees & Asylum seekers and community assets. The team has integrated findings from the Whole Family Wellbeing Needs Analysis and produced a planned response from LfL to the identified needs. All the CP areas have a co-produced needs analysis as supported by the CP Partnership Team. The youth service has worked with colleagues in Community Development to develop an approach to Youth Place Planning that involves the voice of young people to help understand how they feel about their local communities. Approximately 550 young people took part across Highland and localised action plans have been developed with local priorities including the mitigation of impact of Climate Change and young people's mental health. Annual Community Conversation	



Improvement priority 3: Digital Inclusion

CLD partners will support digital inclusion. This priority will focus CLD opportunities on increasing; skills, confidence, and access.

CLD in Practice – spotlight on Digital Inclusion

The Highland Council provides a grant to LEAD Scotland which is managed by HLH and supports the charity mission to help disabled individuals and carers to become empowered through personalised learning opportunities, befriending support, helpline advice and information. Digital inclusion is a social justice issue, unchecked it has been exacerbating social inequalities. LEAD focuses on linking education and disability, providing resources to promote accessibility, allowing users to gain the knowledge needed to navigate the digital world securely. Over the past few years, they have recognised the huge potential of digital technology to enhance their services and reach more people who are at risk of being left behind.

LEAD's journey has been marked by several innovative initiatives in pioneering Digital Inclusion aimed at bridging the digital divide:

- **Cyber Safety Workshops:** Each session focuses on different aspects of online safety including creating strong passwords, recognising phishing attempts, understanding privacy settings on social media and safe online shopping practices. The workshops are designed to be accessible and interactive, ensuring that participants can easily grasp and apply key concepts.
- **Accessible Learning Materials:** Includes [easy-read guides](#), [instructional BSL videos](#) with subtitles & screen reader-compatible documents to meet diverse needs of the LEAD community
- **My Lead:** The My LEAD platform, built by JP Morgan and Chase and Lead Scotland, offers a variety of free online courses focused on enhancing digital literacy and safety. Course topics cover online banking security, social media safety, and managing digital footprints. The platform is designed to support inclusive education, helping individuals to develop essential digital skills.
- **Cyber Awareness Campaigns:** Raising awareness about cyber threats and safe practices requires regular campaigns on social media through the Lead network of partners to disseminate news about the latest cyber risks to help keep the LEAD community informed and vigilant.
- **Collaborations and Partnerships:** Lead collaborates with tech companies to enhance their offerings. The partnerships enable them to provide up-to-date information and leverage the latest tools and technologies to support our mission. Their partnership with cybersecurity firms enables them to offer expert-led sessions and access to cutting-edge security tools.



LEAD won the [Digital Difference Award at the 2024 SCVO Charity Awards](#) for their dedication to digital inclusion and the transformative power it holds for people. CEO, Emma Whitelock said: “Too many disabled people have been exposed to online risks through a lack of accessible information about how to stay safe online with evolving cyber threats. Our Cyber Project works with disabled people and partners including the National Cyber Security Centre and the Cyber Scotland Partnership to create accessible resources to close that gap.”

Impact on the LEAD Community Learners - The impact of digital initiatives has opened doors to new opportunities, fostering independence and improving the quality of life for learners. Education Scotland originally produced the materials for school-aged learners and Lead have adapted them to suit adult learning needs whilst reflecting the changing cyber landscape. The resources have been shared with other SQA Centres and recently, a higher education college ran the course for a cohort of 45 learners. Lead is pleased to share the resources with SQA centres to run the award.

Learner experience: The Level 4 Cyber Security Fundamentals & Internet Safety has transformed the life of one learner who gained their award after a lengthy period of unemployment. The skills and confidence gained through the qualification meant that they were able to successfully get their ‘dream job.’

Actions	Progress made/Practice examples	BRAG
1. Ascertain, through CLD networks, the extent and determinants of digital exclusion by CP area.	Red Chair Highland Red Chair Highland is a micro social enterprise, delivering digital inclusion services across Highland. Commissioned in 2023 by Ofcom, Red Chair joined their Making Sense of Media initiative to provide an in-depth evaluation of a multifaceted digital intervention program aimed at enhancing digital literacy, cyber resilience and promoting digital inclusion among older adults. The project comprised five key digital intervention activities: One-to-One Support, Cyber Resilience Workshops, Community Outreach Sessions, Device and Connectivity Provision, and Remote Support, each playing a pivotal role in empowering older adults to navigate the digital landscape safely and confidently. Red Chair engaged with 290 older adults across urban and rural settings within the Highlands. Older adults from all age bands were engaged, with notable success with supporting individuals aged 70 and over. More women than men engaged with the project across all activity strands. Highlights from the Red Chair Highland - Evaluating the success of digital intervention activities report are noted below: One-to-One Support sessions were critical in supporting older adults to become safe, confident digital users. It offered personalised assistance tailored to the specific needs of participants and fostered individual empowerment and confidence in using digital technologies. Patient, kind, non-judgemental, individualised support was critical when it came to delivering successful, impactful digital support to older adults. • 74% of one-to-one support participants said they felt very confident or fairly confident using the internet after their support, compared to 42% before. • 51% increase in the number of digital tasks they were able to complete • 70% increase in the number of online activities they participated in Cyber Resilience Workshops provided structured learning sessions covering topics such as online safety, scam awareness, and media literacy with results demonstrating the increase in confidence after providing support. • 72% of participants felt very/fairly confident in keeping themselves safe online, compared to 24% before. • 76% of participants felt fairly confident in recognising a scam or online threat, compared to 16% before. Community Outreach Sessions offered drop-in digital support at various locations, addressing immediate needs, and facilitating progression to more intensive support options. The sessions were particularly impactful in rural areas, where access to digital support was often extremely limited. Taking services to where people are instead of asking them to travel to access digital support was effective: • 33% had their issue resolved at a single session. However, this was not as successful as anticipated - most older adults multiple, regular sessions to improve their digital skills and confidence. Device and Connectivity Provision played a crucial role in bridging the digital divide by providing older adults with devices and connectivity. Tailoring devices to individual needs was essential, underscoring the significance of accessibility features in enhancing usability. • 98% of participants used their device daily or more often after our support, compared to 72% before.	

“If I hadn’t had Red Chair supporting me, I would probably have paid the money and compromised my new laptop.”
Mark

Conclusion

- Each digital intervention activity demonstrated advancements in improving digital literacy, confidence, and online safety awareness among older adults.
- One-to-one support and cyber resilience workshops were especially impactful.
- The project successfully engaged participants across diverse settings and underscored the importance of tailored interventions and personalised support in promoting digital empowerment.
- The report emphasises the need for ongoing evaluation and adaptation to meet the evolving needs of older adults in an increasingly digital world.
- Red Chair Highland intend to refine their services by seeking to deliver more cyber resilience more regularly in both urban and rural areas, planning to increase individualised one-to-one support capacity and seeking ways to engage more older people in the digital intervention services, in particular older men.
- By incorporating more interactive digital activities into workshops, ensuring ongoing device and connectivity provision, and expanding device support service, Red Chair Highland can further enhance learning retention and digital empowerment in older people.

Mark is a retired individual residing in Inverness who had been struggling with technology since the passing of his wife, who used to handle most digital tasks. Mark said: “Someone called me claiming to be from Norton to tell me I had a problem with my laptop. I didn’t catch on right away because coincidentally I had been trying to cancel my wife’s Norton subscription a few days before. I actually let them have access to my computer to diagnose the problem. They showed me a screen full of gobbledegook and told me my IP address was compromised. I didn’t know what that meant but when they asked me to pay £200 to fix it, then I realised I was being scammed.”

2. Support individuals and families to benefit from funding streams which provide access to free devices / connections

Thriving Families – Digital Support

[Thriving Families](#) has embraced innovative ways to expand their reach and help overcome the barriers Highland's geography presents. Pines Highland Neurodevelopmental Support sessions are delivered virtually in partnership with the National Autistic Society Scotland (NAS) and the Pines training team. The digital support service for adult carers of children and young people with additional support needs, runs virtual weekly group sessions for Early Positive Approaches to Support (E-PATs).

Thriving Families won the Highland Partnership award for their work with National Autistic Society Scotland (NAS) at the HTSI Awards.

CEO, Sarah Fowler said: “We achieve so much together, and Alison from NAS is very much a part of our Thriving Families' team.”



Next online programme starting Tuesday August 27th
10am-12 noon on Zoom

Early Positive Approaches to Support E-PATs

Supportive programme specifically for families of young children (0-6) who have any additional support need (diagnosed or undiagnosed).

- 6 week programme.
- Delivered by a family carer and a professional.
- 2 spaces per family.
- Topics covered include emotional wellbeing for caregivers, supporting sleep, communication, skills development and understanding challenging behaviour.

Online

10am – 12 noon	27 th August 2024
10am – 12 noon	3 rd September 2024
10am – 12 noon	10 th September 2024
10am – 12 noon	24 th September 2024
10am – 12 noon	1 st October 2024
10am – 12 noon	8 th October 2024

“The course made me feel incredibly comfortable and I felt ‘seen’ as a parent for the first time.”

contact: anna@thrivingfamilies.org.uk or call 07514 120288
www.thrivingfamilies.org.uk
Thriving Families is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), SC024385

Digital Skills Providers in Highland

The infographic below highlights 8 of the main organisations in Highland that provide support for digital skills, access to free devices and connectivity. The Highland Adult Learning Group has created a **Digital Skills Provision Map** with detailed information on the type of provision, an outline and duration of the provision, lead organisation, location and contact details.



RED CHAIR HIGHLAND

- Foundation Digital Skills
- Rural Outreach sessions
- Digital Drop-ins
- Digital Life Tasks
- Digital Champions Training
- Device and connectivity gifting

redchair.scot
info@redchairhighland.scot
01463 417240



DIGITAL SKILLS EDUCATION

- Digital Wellbeing
- Working with A.I. and Data
- Using Social Media Professionally

<https://digitalskillseducation.com/contact/>
info@digitalskillseducation.com



LEAD SCOTLAND

Online learning platform offering a wide range of digital skills and cyber safety short courses.

<https://www.lead.org.uk/>



MHOR COLLECTIVE

- Digital Inclusion for Wellbeing (in partnership with Centred)
- Digital Champions Training

mhorcollective.com
07785 462010



ABILITY NET

- One-to-One Tech Support
- Devices and connectivity gifting

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/>
enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk
0300 180 0028



W.E.A. HIGHLAND

- Digital Skills for Beginners
- SQA Core Skills ICT (SCQF levels 2-4)

<https://www.wea.org.uk/>



HIGH LIFE HIGHLAND

- Foundation Digital Skills
- Essential Digital Skills
- SQA Core Skills ICT (SCQF levels 2-4)

www.highlifehighland.com
info@highlifehighland.com
01436 710013



SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SCOTLAND

- Access to digital devices and the internet.
- On-site support to access and use devices for career planning, job-seeking, C.V. writing and using email.

skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk
08009178000

3. Coordinate learning opportunities supporting people to “get ready to go digital!”

Highland Adult Learning Development Group (HALDG)

The HMle progress report in July 2024 highlighted that the HALDG is a good example to follow for the new Youth Work Providers Network. The Co-Chair model with LEAD Scotland and HLH has proved successful to support Highland Multiply partners in identifying areas of good practice, learning from one another about the challenges of delivering different projects and how to overcome barriers for Multiply learners.

Multiply Highlands - Enable Works Multiply

[Enable Works](#) offers a free 6-week programme designed to equip adult learners with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's job market. They use promotion that appeals to people who are looking for work and need additional support with CV writing, job interview skills, digital skills and money management while providing a numeracy qualification.

Workers Employability Association (WEA) Numeracy and Digital Skills

WEA have been having family fun developing numeracy skills at Kyle of Sutherland Hub with their family cake decorating session. Parents and kids have been making cool cakes, all while sharpening their numeracy skills through fun, hands-on activities.

Their Introduction to the Digital Office course is the perfect starting point for anyone wanting to get more comfortable using Office Online tools like Word, Excel, and OneDrive. Included in the course is a free WEA Office 365 email (active for a year), hands-on experience with OneDrive, Excel and Word while learning to manage emails, store files, and create documents. All the sessions are online via Zoom and Canvas VLE making it easy and flexible to learn new skills and build confidence towards an ICT SQA Level 4 Award.



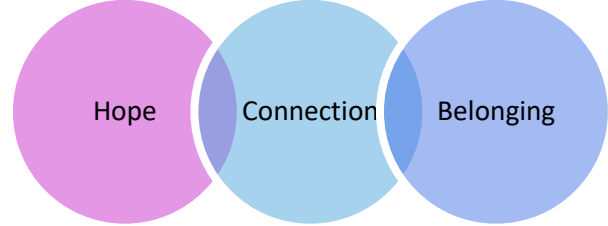
WEA have also partnered with Inverness Open Arts Studio, The Field and The Place in Alness to bring creative green workshops to learners who would like to try arts & crafts or get their hands dirty helping to maintain the veg beds and sensory garden. The outdoor learning sessions provide an opportunity to meet new people and improve mental health and wellbeing through creativity in a green space.

Mathmagicians! and Enterprise Skills Group

New for Autumn 2024, Mathmagicians provides free, accessible and informal family numeracy for everyday life. The weekly group sessions explore everyday numbers through play, crafts and games. The sessions take place on Saturdays throughout school terms and are aimed at families with primary school age children (P1-P7) where they enjoy activities, such as Let's Launch a Rocket! and *Let's Make a Kaleidoscope!* These form the central focus of each session, helping parents and children to work together to explore where numbers and maths exist in the world around us, encouraging curiosity and critical thinking.

This process increases positive associations with everyday numeracy and parents have a greater understanding of the benefits of family learning through increased confidence when supporting their children's use of numbers at home and in their own numeracy skills. Based in libraries and social enterprise Friends of Brora Learning Zone, the core skills venture provides opportunities for learning and



	personal development for adult learners in East Sutherland. They are able to develop their core skills such as communication and numeracy as they learn together as a family along with the wider enterprise, employability, organisational and creative problem-solving skills.	
4. Develop virtual learning environments for ESOL/Core Skills/Digital Inclusion focussing on: Employment, Work, Financial Capability, Family, Health & Wellbeing	Work.Life.Highland Work.Life.Highland is the new brand name for the Highland Employability Partnership. The interactive website aims to support people in Highland to unlock their work potential and assists employers to find people who want to do fair work in their organisations. The employability matching website supports people back into employment through confidence building, volunteering, training and work experience taster sessions, help with CV writing, applying for jobs and mock interviews as well as grants for employers to secure jobs.  The Discovery College run by mental health charity Centred has an interactive website with a course catalogue to showcase the support that is available for people to focus on improving their mental health and wellbeing, personal development and employability. Programmes are co-produced with Peer support workers and people who use the Discovery College who asked for something more therapeutic such as Decider Skills and Living Life to the Full. The range of courses in Inverness include: • Challenge Poverty Week - collective action based on justice and compassion to create solutions • Tech Tea Party - overcome challenges with digital devices with tea and cake • Writing for Recovery – people experiencing distress, emotional difficulty or mental ill-health shape their stories through poetry, fiction and lived experience • Introduction to Peer Support - develop peer support skills for volunteering, employment or build new skills for life. • Crafting Conversations – creative activities to develop new skills • Digital Winter Wellness – exploring how digital devices can be used to reduce stress and improve mental wellbeing • Coping with Christmas - support around tricky issues, money, relationships, expectations and food • Peer to Peer training - mutual support for people with lived experience to learn how to support others in their recovery journey 	

“How do we make what matters, matter?”

NHS Board member
Gary Coutts

Measuring the Magic

Manager at the Discovery College, Sue Lyons says, “It is important to understand what matters to individual people. Self-directed support (SDS) gives a voice to the individual to express what matters to them and how they want funding to be spent. It is about them telling their own story and it is important that are heard at a strategic level to influence policy and commissioning.” Sue continues, “When reporting to funders, we are required to count how many people come through the door. Instead, we should ask, ‘**How many lives are better off with what we do?**’ It matters to me, and it matters to Centred!”

New Pines eBooks

HLH Libraries have purchased new eBooks for their **Pines Neurodivergent Collection**. The new titles available include:

- [Paws](#) - a lovely children’s book about friendship and difference - Podcast with author Kate Foster on Raising a Neurodiverse Child
- [A Day with No Words](#) for families with a non-speaking child
- [A Different Sort of Normal](#) Abigail Balfe reads from her book about people who feel they don’t fit in
- [A Kind of Spark](#) – a BBC documentary with autistic girls
- [Raising a Sensory Smart Child](#) – a definitive handbook for raising your child with sensory processing issues
- There are also new titles to support anxiety, ADHD and education in the Pines Neurodivergent Collection



Cantraybridge College and Police Scotland - Internet security

Police Scotland’s PC Nicola Bain was delighted to speak to students at Cantraybridge College about Internet safety and related matters.

The Keep Safe Scheme was designed with disabled people to create a network of ‘Keep Safe’ places across Scotland where people can go if they feel lost, scared or vulnerable when out in the community.

The initiative works with businesses and community buildings ranging from cafes, shops and libraries to football stadiums, museums or local authority premises.

Improvement priority 4: Employment, volunteering and training

CLD in Highland will provide; visible, easy to access opportunities which support routes into Employment, volunteering and training for those who need it most.

CLD in practice – spotlight on Employability, volunteering and training

My Future My Success

My Future, My Success (MFMS) is a bespoke Highland initiative supporting some of our most vulnerable learners who have barriers to attending school and achieving post-school positive destinations. Using collaboration, young people are empowered through a person-centred approach to think about their future careers and aspirations by connecting them with a network of genuine support, employability and enterprise learning, mentoring, personal skills development and workplace experience ensuring their future is determined by potential not by background or postcode.

MFMS - Targeted young people

Year	Number of referrals	Attendance below 70%	Additional Support for Learning	Free School Meals (poverty)	SIMD lowest 20%	CEYP	Childs Plan
2022-23	135	99	110	34	22	11	29
2023-24	307	231	233	49	37	22	141
2024-25	486* (current)	347	396	107	71	49	224

MFMS Mentoring programme

MFMS Mentoring offer can be maintained and developed to meet the needs of the new offer. The current mentoring model has been fully developed to include training, CPD and supervision with a ready-to-gain accreditation through CMI/Scottish Mentoring Network. The young people being mentored gain the Personal Development: Self Awareness unit SCQF4/5

Year	Number of Young People being Mentored	Number of Mentors	Number of Businesses
2022-2023	52	45	12 + 1 retired
2023-2024	82	79	18 + 6 retired
2024-2025* currently	75	63	14 + 5 retired

MFMS Mentoring Case Study

'X' was referred at the start of the school year due to a lack of achievement and direction. As a Development Officer (DO) in school, I focused on building a trust-based relationship with her using a jointly completed Young Person (YP) profile. I prepared a mentor over the summer, meeting multiple times at her workplace (Tesco) to complete a Mentor Profile and explain the mentoring process. This preparation helped establish a good rapport with both the mentor and the employer.

The YP and Mentor Profiles were shared with both parties before their introduction to ease nerves and provide conversation topics for their first meeting. The three of us met at the school to review the agreement, ensuring everyone understood their roles and expectations. The mentor-mentee relationship flourished, with the young person feeling fully supported and the mentor growing into her role through training and guidance from the DO.

The young person engaged in community activities at Tesco, boosting her confidence and received support in applying for college, which she started in August. The final three-way meeting confirmed that the mentor-mentee relationship would continue. Additionally, the mentor will remain with MFMS to mentor other youths and the connection with Tesco has created a work experience position beneficial for MFMS and future students.

"Feeling that I can possibly inspire a young person and bring out the best in them is rewarding." MFMS Mentor

Actions	Progress made/Practice examples	BRAG
1. Increased access to volunteering in communities	Highland Third Sector Interface The Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) website Aye Volunteer has 100's of opportunities for volunteers posted on the Volunteer Matching site by Third Sector organisations in Highland. The 2 main sections match volunteers who are looking for opportunities with organisations that are promoting volunteering opportunities. Current examples of roles include volunteering with Connecting Carers, Sunday Green Gym (improving the forest environment at the weekend), Partnerships for Wellbeing (Minibus driver, Walk Leader), Reengage (Tea party for older people), Boys Brigade Highland, Reach4Reality (Outdoor activities for disabled people), Clachworks (tool library), Royal AirForce Air Cadets, Intandem (Care experienced peer mentoring), Inverness cathedral (Book club) and New Start Highland (retail). There is also an opportunity to sign up to the Saltire Awards and gain certificates for volunteering for people aged between 12 – 25. This is a great step to celebrating volunteering achievements. The HTSI Annual Summit Awards in September 2024 saw many other volunteer organisations receiving recognition for the great work that they do to support people. Some of the third sector winners are mentioned below: • Community Initiative Award - Golspie Youth Action Project • Third Sector Organisation of the Year - Reach4Reality • Reducing Vulnerability Through Third Sector Activity Award - Caithness KLICS • Social Enterprise of the Year - Wick Development Trust • Highland Partnership Award - National Autistic Society & Thriving Families Volunteering Action Plan In September 2024, Volunteer Scotland launched the National Recruitment Campaign which aims to be a transformative initiative under the Volunteering Action Plan. With stagnating income and the cost-of-living crisis which is not going away any time soon, the challenges facing volunteers and Volunteer-Involving Organisations (VIOs) are evidenced in the key findings from the Cost of Living Task Group Survey below: • 76% of VIOs are experiencing challenges with volunteer recruitment • 66% of VIOs say fewer people are coming forward to volunteer • 61% of VIOs are struggling with volunteer retention • 27% of VIOs report having fewer volunteers than 12 months ago • Overall satisfaction of volunteers has gone down from 97% to 94% • 6% of VIOs have been asked to replace roles or tasks of paid staff with volunteers, a further 17% have not been asked but possibly will in the future • 7% increase of volunteers feel that the expectations are too high on them - a rise from 14% to 21% • 24% of volunteers said their role is too much like paid work. Volunteers do not replace paid staff, and the role of paid staff is vital.  	

- The [Volunteer Charter](#) contains 10 key principles for assuring legitimacy and preventing exploitation of workers and volunteers

GROW Project at Botanic Gardens, Inverness

[Nicky Marr](#) paid the volunteer gardeners at the [GROW Project in Inverness Botanic Gardens](#) a visit to see a shining example of inclusion in horticulture and how green spaces can enrich lives giving people the opportunity to engage in a volunteering activity that improves their skills and enables them to connect with others.

Started over 20 years ago by Jan Ooms, GROW 'gives purpose' to the adults with learning disabilities who attend every week to develop and care for the garden. Rain or shine, the GROW gardeners are at work, helping to nurture a variety of fruits, vegetables, wildflowers, and habitats that benefit both people and wildlife. The project beautifully encapsulates the ways in which nature, community, and wellbeing come together.



Home Start Easter Ross

Home Start Easter Ross "wouldn't know where they would be without our fabulous volunteers." During Volunteers Week they celebrated the incredible contribution their volunteers make at the Easter Ross side with a cuppa, cake and a wee game of Play Your Cards Right. The volunteers give up their spare time to help and support the families who need some extra help.

Home Start has produced three short videos that give an insight into how the volunteers help.

- [Anxiety video](#)
- [Grief video](#)
- [Hunger video](#)

"Volunteers don't necessarily have the time; they have the heart."
Home Start Easter Ross



Thank You



A new project is being funded through the Highland Community Planning Partnership's Whole Family Wellbeing Programme that will see [Thriving Families](#) working in collaboration with [Care and Learning Alliance](#) and [Home-Start East Highland](#).

Two full-time Whole Family Support Workers will provide the much needed that for families that face greater challenges in life.

20 Years of Active Schools

Active schools is a national approach that aims to get more children, more active, more often. This year [Active Schools celebrates 20 years](#) and continues to go from strength to strength with more than 4 million visits by pupils to more than 208,000 Active Schools sessions since current monitoring started in 2011. In 2023-24, more than 14,000 sessions were delivered in Highland to more than 13,000 participants, with the majority (99%) delivered by volunteers. The programme inspires and nurtures the next generation of young volunteers with Active Schools Coordinators working alongside Youth Workers in the community to ensure the successful continuation of the approach across Highland.



Volunteers are the backbone of Active Schools and having lots of willing parent helpers and volunteers means they benefit just as much in the way of new skills and confidence-building as the children, while sometimes also gaining new qualifications. Orlagh MacIver from Black Isle Youth Development (pictured right) has been honoured as one of 100 outstanding individuals to receive recognition by HRH Princess Royal at the [Eric Liddell Awards](#) for making a significant contribution to Scotland's athletics, sports and community. Eric 'The Flying Scotsman' Liddell famously won the Olympic gold medal in Paris 1924, 100 years ago. The awards are based on the Eric Liddell 100 values of Passion, Compassion and Integrity, and categories will also include Science & Technology and Sporting Achievement, both areas close to Eric's heart.



2. Improve partnership working to strengthen the

Multiply Programme funded by UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund

The Multiply programme within Highland runs until December 2024 and delivers support to help over 16's improve their functional numeracy skills through free personal/group tutoring and digital training. This is delivered through 12 providers across the region with 7 different intervention priorities, one of which focuses specifically on supporting parents including

role and contribution of CLD partners in closing the attainment gap.

Apex, Barnardo's, Calman Trust, ENABLE Scotland, High Life Highland, Lead Scotland, Lochaber Hope, New Start Highland, UHI Inverness, UHI North Highland, UHI West and Workers' Educational Association (WEA).

Opportunities are provided for parents to enhance their numeracy skills and also earn a maths qualification, not only benefiting daily life but also providing a stepping stone towards entering the workforce. Providers often adopt a whole-family approach, integrating numeracy into household budgeting, homework support and digital skills. 2024 has seen further delivery of projects across the Highlands and sessions to boost numeracy confidence in everyday life ranging from outdoor family fun days to weekly activities within highlife libraries for families to explore everyday numeracy through games, crafts and play. 2024 will also see the introduction of additional evening classes to achieve maths qualifications and the development of digital tools to support learning.

In May 2024, successful Multiply providers had the opportunity to secure additional funding to extend existing delivery, increase provision in line with lowering of the age threshold to 16+ and to create a legacy for Multiply. Funding was also secured by providers who will work with prisoners, or those recently released, and their families to enhance numeracy skills. This will include budgeting exercises in preparation for release to give participants and their families the best chance for community re-integration. **The final spend for the Multiply Programme in 2023-24 was £598,040.58 as of 31st March 2024.**

“Wendy’s commitment has made KLICS a lifeline for young carers in Caithness, offering not only respite but also friendship, support, and self-esteem building“

Young Carers Service recognised as a ‘lifeline’

Caithness KLICS is a growing service which supports over 100 children and young people aged 5-18 across Caithness and are recognised as having a caring role for family members with disabilities, addictions, or mental health issues.

In September 2024 at the [HTSI Summit Awards](#), Caithness KLICS received the award for [Reducing Vulnerability Through Third Sector Activity](#), while founder Wendy Thain, won the Outstanding Achievement award, for her tireless work, managing a team of 15 and securing funding to keep KLICS running.



Caithness Poverty Action Group (CPAG)

[Caithness Poverty Action Group \(CPAG\)](#) is an affiliation of statutory, voluntary and 3rd-sector organisations and individuals working to identify and deal with all aspects of poverty, including its root causes and consequences, in Caithness. Weekly updates and interviews with key community groups throughout Caithness offers advice and support on the cost of living. A wealth of information is contained in the [Caithness Sway](#)

“Volunteering has made me more confident and resilient as I meet a lot of new people and have fun.”
Kelsey Benjamin HLH Young Leader

Young volunteers at Black Isle Youth Development win multiple awards

The hard work of four remarkable young volunteers from the Black Isle has been [recognised as a precious memory for everyone](#). The volunteers are part of HLH Black Isle Youth Development and supported by Youth Development Officer Wanda Mackay.



Orlagh is a courageous and inspiring young leader and volunteer who has turned her experiences of trauma into a focus on positive action for mental health support. She has won many accolades, most recently recognised with the Eric Liddell Award. As well as being a gold medallist rower, Orlagh is keen to be a pilot, always going above and beyond to help others. Orlagh commented: “Volunteering has helped improve my confidence immensely, I have gained wider skills and knowledge such as young people’s needs and awareness of how to cater for them appropriately and especially in a way that is tailored to suit the individual.”



Alan Munro has been volunteering since the age of 9 with a total of 459 hours. He grits the streets in all sorts of hazardous conditions, getting up at the crack of dawn to make sure that older and vulnerable people in the community can get outdoors safely. Alan can be seen on the coldest, darkest nights with his hi-vis jacket and has even purchased his own gritter. During the summer months Alan cut areas of grass when he notices they are unkempt. More recently, he joined the Cromarty and District Community Council to ensure that the voices of young people are heard with decision makers.



Loreta Vitola moved to Scotland from Latvia at aged three and joined Cromarty Youth Cafe at five. Loreta has 795 volunteer hours in her Saltire Award and gained over 500 hours in High Life Highland Leadership. She has also supported all the holiday programmes, completed many courses and enjoys the intergenerational work with the Golden Oldies. As well as being a gold medalist with Cromarty Community Rowing Club, Loreta is on the committee to ensure that the voices of young people are heard among decision makers.



Iona Browne is a keen Highland dancer with over 440 hours volunteering. She can be seen at every big community gathering entertain the crowd and always holding her head high gazing around the audience with the biggest smiles. Iona is an amazing volunteer who increases morale and is a huge peer support to other young people. She is a truly inspiring young volunteer and a wonderful dancer.

Choose to Lead Awards

The Choose to Lead SCQF Level 4 & 5 Rated Programme, delivered in partnership with UHI Inverness, is an Award-winning Leadership Programme for young people aged 12-25 years is underpinned by leadership in sport and youth work, although the awards can be utilised by young people who volunteer in clubs, facilities, and schools. All members of the programme are encouraged to sign up for national Saltire Awards to formally recognise the commitment and contribution of youth volunteering

Ross Kinnaird, former Nairn Young Leader said: "Without Highlife Highland Leadership Programme, I wouldn't be the confident young man that I am today, being able to give something back to my community as well as doing something I love was so important to me. I managed to gain my leadership hours through volunteering in libraries with families and Nurseries which has supported me with my future career. The experience and support from Highlife Highland has been nothing short of amazing and I truly am grateful to Elizabeth and the team."

Archie Webster, Inverness Royal Academy Young Leader said: "Volunteering has taught me many new life skills along with some great new friendships with people who share similar interests to me. Volunteering has also given me some amazing opportunities to be involved with and being part of the Highlife Highland Leadership Programme, the hoodie milestones that the programme has set's great targets to do more volunteering and gain more hours."

HLH Leadership Programme Awards			
Category of Award	2022-2023	2023-2024	Percentage Increase/ (Decrease)
No. of Young People registered in the year	768	1,367	78%
Total No. of Young Leaders through programme since 2017	5,583	7,017	26%
Total No. of Volunteer hours of leadership	19,500	23,150	19%
Total No. of Hoodies awarded in the year	628	926	47%
Diamond Hoodies (1,000 hours) 2024-25	N/A	N/A	0%
Platinum Hoodies (750 hours)	N/A	4	400%
Gold Hoodies (500 hours)	8	26	225%
Silver Hoodies (250 hours)	42	57	36%
Red Hoodies (100 hours) Choose to Lead Level 5 Award	14	19	36%
Green Hoodies (75 hours) Choose to Lead Level 4 Award	61	91	49%
Purple Hoodies (50 hours)	113	213	88%
Navy Hoodies (25 hours)	390	516	32%
Navy T-Shirts	61	336	451%
Upcoming Awards for the year ahead	Platinum Hoodies Gaelic Leadership	Diamond Hoodies Play Leader Training	

Platinum Hoodie Awards 2024

This year, [4 young leaders were the first to receive their Platinum hoodies for 750 hours leadership volunteering](#). The hoodies were presented by Children and Young People's Commissioner for Scotland, Nicola Killean, at the HYP Annual Conference on 21st June at Inverness leisure centre.



Archie Webster (15) from Inverness Royal Academy was first to be awarded his platinum hoodie, for his many volunteering efforts with Active Schools and at Inverness Park Run. For his charity event he cycled 83 miles from Inverness to Aviemore and back, with a goal to raise £300 for Mikeysline. He cycled through wind, rain and snow and was rewarded with an amazing fundraising total of £1372.



Orlagh McIver from Fortrose Academy organised a Health Walk and Talk and sold lucky squares to raise money for Mikeysline and the James Support Group (£400). Her 750 leadership hours were achieved with the support of Black Isle Youth Development staff at Fortrose Academy and included helping at Cromarty Youth Café and intergenerational work in her local community.



Rachael Hatfield (25) from Ardersier is one of those people. She runs a local Guides Group and having achieved gold hoodie status in 2019 she has now upgraded to platinum having organised a fundraising, end of term awards night for Guides and Rangers, raising £113. Rachel is a great ambassador for youth democracy with the HYP and her work with the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy.



Scott Mackay (16) from Culloden Academy raised over £180 for the Highland Hospice at an event at Smithton Primary School, where he spent his younger years. He carried out a variety of volunteering leadership activities with Active Schools and the Highland Hospice to reach his 750 hours.

3. Coordinate targeted (Adult) Learning opportunities, across Partners, which enable people to develop their core skills and increase employability

The benefits of developing core skills as an adult and having the confidence to use them can be far reaching and life changing.

High Life Highland Learning for Life

In 2024, HLH Adult Learning rebranded to *Learning for Life*. The service has been providing a range of learning activities in Highland communities which include help with everyday skills such as reading, writing, using numbers, digital literacy and English as a Second Language (ESOL). The benefits of developing core skills as an adult and having the confidence to use them can be far reaching and life changing. In addition to developing core skills, our learners also say that their confidence and health and wellbeing has improved, helping them to live fuller lives. This [short film](#) showcases what Learning for Life can do for adult learners.

Highlights from the [HLH Learning for Life Annual Report 2024](#) demonstrate the level of increased skills and confidence relating to employment, volunteering and training learning opportunities.

The headline data from the report includes:

- **78** learners are working towards SQA qualifications
- **86%** of learners report improved confidence since they started working with us
- **90%** of learners have achieved one or more of their learning goals so far since they started working with us



Enable Highlands - The Power of Supported Employment

[Enable Highlands](#) believes that everyone deserves the chance to thrive in the workplace. Their supported employment program helps individuals with additional needs find meaningful jobs that align with their skills and aspirations, while providing guidance every step of the way. Through Enable Works Highlands, they partner with employers to create inclusive environments where everyone can contribute and build a more diverse and dynamic workforce across the Highland.

Rachel's Inspiring Journey with Enable Works

Rachel is one of the many incredible individuals who has been supported by Enable Works to set up her manicure business, **Get Cute**. In an [inspiring interview](#), Rachel opens up about her journey and the positive impact Enable Works has had in helping her achieve her goals. Her story is a testament to the power of support, determination, and the difference that Enable Works can make in someone's life. Grateful thanks go to **The Highland Council** for providing the essential funding that allows Enable Works to continue delivering these life-changing services across the Highlands and help empower individuals like Rachel to succeed!



Third Sector employability colleagues welcomed the announcement from **The Highland Council** to invest in a **Capacity Building Senior Development Employability post** as part of the joint commitment to bridging relationships through partnership working, including consortiums, between the Council and Third Sector, in a three-year funded opportunity.

A future workshop in Fairways House, Inverness on the 12th of November will follow the same format of the interactive workshop in Oban.



“Being able to offer a new opportunity for young people to experience the world of work is fantastic and provides a great stepping stone towards employment and independent living.” Jo at Café Artysans	Calman Trust HasAnswers is a new app developed by Calman Trust and dedicated to supporting young people in the Highlands with life and work. Whether its transitioning into their first home, searching for housing options, managing a tenancy, trying to find a job or generally require support with mental health or money management, HasAnswers helps young people access all the support they need for living independently in the Highlands. The main features on the app include: • Simple Solutions for daily living challenges • Answers based on your age, postcode and care experience status • Local job and volunteering opportunities suited to young people • Direct support from a youth worker if you feel stuck Club Artysans has been made possible through the generous support of the Inverness Common Good Fund and the Life Changes Trust Legacy Fund to nurture the potential of young people in Highland. Every Thursday evening, young people can explore various art forms while enjoying an Artysans’ meal, thanks to partnerships with Moniack Mhor Creative Writing Centre and Abriachan Forest Trust. Additionally, the café introduced their new takeaway outlet, Artysans To Go. Kier, in collaboration with its sub-contractors ScotBuild, Calder Electrical, and Gavin MacDonald Flooring, generously supported the project as part their corporate social responsibility commitment.	
4. Develop and promote a learning pathway initiative to improve adult learning progression	Lifelong Learning Lifelong learning is rooted in the integration of learning and living. It refers to learning activities for people of all ages, in all life-wide contexts and through a variety of approaches (formal, non-formal and informal), which together meet a wide range of learning needs. Realising the potential of lifelong learning requires the recognition, validation and accreditation of skills acquired in non-formal or informal environments such as community-based settings, libraries, colleges and the outdoors. Continued learning throughout our lives is essential for our personal development and for the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental development of society and is aimed at supporting the national CLD outcomes as shown below: Work is targeted •15% of people in our communities may be disadvantaged by low skills & qualifications •Individuals may have the power to change their own circumstances if they have access to learning and personal development A commitment to social justice and improves life chances for people of all ages •Access to learning helps people in our communities with the lowest level of education to access the services they need. •Everyone in our communities should have access to learning that will help them improve their quality of life, especially those with the least education. A commitment to building stronger, more resilient and influential communities •CLD is committed to ensuring everyone has the skills and confidence to make their own choices, influence things that affect them, and that they are not excluded by or from the community they live in.	

HLH Adult and Youth services will develop and publish clear learner pathways (including between services) to retain learners and encourage lifelong learning. Staff development pathways will also be communicated clearly, as will the potential for learners to become volunteers and contracted staff.

Lifelong Learning Week

As part of Lifelong Learning Week in May 2024, a range of staff were asked which lifelong learning activities they took part in to encourage lifelong learning and improve their wellbeing.

- **Alison Bell, Inverness Castle & Events.** My lifelong learning activity is **Birdsong**: “Walking in nature is something I try to do every day to keep me happy and healthy. By learning the song of each different bird species, I am able to identify birds without having to see them. This has become more important lately as my eyesight isn't what it used to be. I find it interesting to know which birds are around the trees and bushes on my daily walk.”
- **John Riach, Learning for Life.** My lifelong learning activity is **Languages**: “I can now say something (even if it's just a greeting) in over 50 languages. I work with our local Bulgarian community and can now speak some Bulgarian and read the entire Cyrillic alphabet in which my name is Йохн Риацх. My favourite words are 2 words in Zulu because they contain different ‘clicks’ which I am happy to demonstrate at any opportunity!”



Career Pathways with Care and Learning Alliance (CALA)

There are many different pathways which can lead to a career in childcare for someone who is leaving school, an adult returner or looking for a career change. [Career pathways with CALA](#) can include volunteering, apprenticeships and opportunities for paid work in Family & Toddler Services and Early Learning & Childcare.

- #Openingdoors - mentoring and guidance to young people aged 16-24 years
- Work Experience & Volunteering
- CALA Staff Bank
- Apprenticeships
- E-learning introductory level learning modules in:-
Child Protection, Building the Ambition, Top Tips for Interacting with Children, Smart Start, Risk Assessment and Children Affected by Parental Substance Misuse.



Commenting on the CALA Play and Learning into Practice (PLiP) course, one student said it was “amazing, with lots of active learning. I enjoyed and learned a lot and took things back to work. It was an excellent journey with lots of learning opportunities. I will use the theoretical knowledge and practical skills to improve my practice on a daily basis. It has made me a more confident key worker. I feel I know what I am talking about with child’s development. Have really enjoyed the course, the variety of activity & the interaction with people from lots of different settings.”

Discovery College Peer Progression Pathway

A peer-led approach is a mutually empowering relationship that builds connections and hope. Some people work their way through their peer journey without realising it - recovery is not a linear process. It starts when the person walks through the door (Peer Walk-In) and builds from there.



5. Increase and formalise partnership working between Education and CLD to support learning and development which contributes to closing the attainment gap

Your Future, Your Success

Your Future, Your Success is a partnership between My Future, My Success and UHI North, West and Hebrides based at campuses in Thurso, Alness and Dornoch. Access courses are offered to young people who experience multiple challenges in life and engaging with education. The courses include:

- **Life and Work Skills (Level 1 & 2)**
- **My Future, My Success (Level 3)**
- **Pathway to College and Employment (Level 4)**



Below are some highlights from the [UHI Your Future, Your Success Newsletter](#).

Life and Work Skills (Level 1 & 2)

The Life and Work Skills students have embraced their learning activities and are becoming more independent, enjoying everything they are doing. The students are caring towards one another and always willing to help. Currently they are working on Halloween activities and crafts for the Christmas market. Students who use wheelchairs are especially delighted to access the library facilities on a regular basis. One student tells said he “enjoys being with his friends” and another said she “enjoys doing maths and likes using the computers.”



My Future, My Success (Level 3)

The My Future, My Success students at Dornoch campus worked on their college laptops in the morning, then went to Dornoch beach to do a cleanup. They have been undertaking a project about plastic pollution on local beaches, and recently had a visit from Dorcas Sinclair from the Caithness Beach Cleans group. Students stopped on the way to read the information boards about Dornoch’s history and look at the Witch’s Stone. At the beach they filled two large binbags with plastic, bits of rope and other items, before disposing of them at the recycling facilities.



Upon returning to the campus, the students reflected on the skills they used and developed during the activity as part of the *Developing Essential Skills* unit. This is one of thirteen units covered and includes enterprise skills, employability, customer care, and several core skills units.

Pathway to College and Employment (Level 4) (ALNESS)

The Pathway to College and Employment (PCE) class in Alness has demonstrated multiple creative skills, teamwork, problem solving and peer learning in order to plan and create their chosen idea and bring it to life. In numeracy, they are now confident in looking at data to put into a graph, as well as developing skills in working with percentages and fractions. For ICT they have completed a tourism project, and a personal project of their choice presented as a PowerPoint to showcase their skills. They have completed communication tasks such as analysing newspaper articles as well as looking at job applications and using job searches to match their skills to jobs of interest as well as creating their own CVs.



Pathway to College and Employment (Level 4) (THURSO)

Students on the PCE course at the Thurso campus have been participating in a wide range of tasks and activities including weekly 'Wellbeing Wednesday' sessions to help promote positive mental health and introduce tools and techniques for wellbeing. The group also had a taster session with the computing department, where they were introduced to ethical hacking. Students have more tasters coming up in the hospitality, hair and beauty, and care departments. The students have also enjoyed participating in tasks on renewable energy in the Newton Room, problem solving and working as a team. The PCE course is ideal for students who are unsure of their future direction, as well as for those seeking a broad introduction to college and employability skills.



Lost in Translation: working towards a shared language between schools and youth work

Teams from Education and Youth Work are being guided by the Attainment Advisor at Education Scotland to explore the [Lost in Translation Professional Learning Resource](#) which is being refreshed by YouthLink Scotland and Education Scotland. The resource aims to support structured professional dialogue between youth work/community learning and development (CLD) and school practitioners who are looking to build a greater shared understanding of roles, responsibilities and approaches. Pilot workshops using the resource will take place in Wick, Lochaber and Inverness High Schools in early 2025 with Depute Head Teachers, Youth Workers and Education Quality Improvement staff involved.

Improvement priority 5: Community Development & Resilience

CLD in Highland will prioritise targeted support to the development of capacity in key areas and of groups to increase their resilience for the future. This priority will build on the experiences and outcomes of Highland communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

CLD in practice – spotlight on Community Development & Resilience

At the [Seaboard Centre](#), loneliness and isolation is considered a major public health concern which impacts adversely on the health and wellbeing of people in the community. CLD plays a major role in building individual and community resilience, by filling the gaps and providing centralised services for people of all ages, in and around the Seaboard Villages, Fearn and Nigg. Whether that be music sessions with North Highland College tutor Liam Ross, arts & crafts, line dancing, bowling or the Northern Lights Choir for older people where, “it means the world to them to sing their hearts out to pop, folk or even rap songs”, with some wanting to learn Gaelic so they can sing traditional Gaelic songs. There are many other activities organised by community groups, some of whom have WhatsApp group chats to keep up to date with the latest stories. Residents feel an increased sense of purpose and meaning from having something enjoyable to do in the local community. Being able to access funding from the Highland Council or the Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund brings tremendous value in bringing people together – after all, they are our greatest asset.



The Scout Hut run by the [Balintore & District Residents Group](#) has a strong youth club presence and provides a wide range of activities all year round for young people, often filling the school holidays with playscheme activities. The Youth Leaders are to be commended for the work they do with youngsters who can be challenging at times, so the aim is to bring out the creative side in them. A great amount of work has been done in the community by Youth Highland and HLH Youth Workers in Balintore where the results speak for themselves. An example of a youth achievement is local rock band, Devil's Wrath, who were met with rapturous applause at the 10th Anniversary of the [Fisherfolk Festival](#) as they took to the stage and owned it with their enthusiastic rock performance. The youth band regularly practices in the Scout hut and this year played at Belladrum for the first time - what an achievement!

Whilst all these activities are important, the Seaboard Centre recognises the need for community wealth building and regeneration. The community has been active in this area for many years with some examples of local projects below:

- Acquiring the lands along the Seafront (Scottish Land Fund)
- Building an annex with visitor facilities and campervan waste disposal
- Creating the [Seaboard Sculpture Trail](#)
- Acquiring Balintore Harbour Toilets through a Community Asset Transfer
- Purchase of a new Visitor Centre (Scottish Land Fund)
- Inward investment for the new Visitor Centre from Korean partners
- Creating a [Seaboard History](#) video with North Highland College
- Worked with [Seaboard Polytunnel CIC](#) to acquire land for expansion
- Assisted with funding applications for community groups
- Embraced a holistic vision for an Area Place Plan, engaging with community consultations and reports to form the next steps of the journey
- Collaboration with Fearn and Nigg communities to regenerate historical assets i.e. [Friends of Fearn Abbey](#) on the doorstep of the Green Freeport
- Improvements to the waterfront with walking paths, seating, interpretation boards and a children's playpark



Actions	Progress made/Practice examples	BRAG									
1. Share learning - CPs which have adopted a resilience approach to planning to share learning and experiences with other CPs	Badenoch & Strathspey Community Partnership Badenoch & Strathspey Community Partnership (BSCP) is unique compared to other Community Partnerships across Highland. The area covered by BSCP sits almost entirely within the Cairngorms National Park. Recognising this is paramount to the success of the BSCP and provides an additional dimension to the planning and development of the area. The planning system in the Cairngorms National Park is managed by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CPNA). BSCP and CPNA work together to progress priorities and actions in partnership with each other.  The BSCP partners who deliver on the local priority actions are NHS Highland (Chair), Voluntary Action Badenoch & Strathspey, Highland Council, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Highlands and Island Enterprise, NatureScot, High Life Highland, Forestry Land Scotland and Police Scotland BSCP has identified their local priorities under each of the 5 HOIP Delivery Groups as noted below: Poverty Reduction: More people in Highland will live a life free from poverty Community Participation & Dialogue: People in Highland will be more involved in decisions that affect their lives Infrastructure: Fewer people in Highland experience transport or digital connectivity as a barrier to accessing opportunities Community Safety & Resilience: People in Highland will benefit from living in stronger, safer, and more resilient communities Mental Health & Wellbeing: People in Highland will benefit from good mental health and wellbeing The Priorities agreed by the BSCP are listed in the Action Tracker under the Priority column and aligned to the 3Ps of the HOIP Priorities: People, Place and Prosperity. Actions to address the Local Priorities are listed in the Actions column. BSCP Priorities are listed under the HOIP 3 priorities <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>People</th><th>Place</th><th>Prosperity</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Welfare Support & Advice: People know where and how to access information on support services and welfare advice</td><td>Food Provision: Improve access to Food provision within the B&S Area</td><td>Employability: Work with individuals and employers to raise as many people in the area as possible out of poverty through sustainable and fair work</td></tr> <tr> <td>Promote a Circular Economy: Reuse and recycle opportunities such as repair café/swap shops</td><td>Community and Public Transport: Improve our Local and Community transport service to work for the public in and around the B&S Area and to and from Inverness.</td><td>Employability: Increase skills development opportunities for adults and young people in and out of work</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	People	Place	Prosperity	Welfare Support & Advice: People know where and how to access information on support services and welfare advice	Food Provision: Improve access to Food provision within the B&S Area	Employability: Work with individuals and employers to raise as many people in the area as possible out of poverty through sustainable and fair work	Promote a Circular Economy: Reuse and recycle opportunities such as repair café/swap shops	Community and Public Transport: Improve our Local and Community transport service to work for the public in and around the B&S Area and to and from Inverness.	Employability: Increase skills development opportunities for adults and young people in and out of work	
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Information and Awareness Raising: Raise awareness of what the CP Role is and how key community organisations can engage	Active Travel: Improve the Active travel Infrastructure & Opportunities	Digital Connectivity: Promote and enhance digital support schemes
Increase Participation: Support for Communities to help increase/improve their capacity and capability to participate	Greenspaces and Biodiversity Support & Coordination: Increased support and coordination for more Community volunteering	
Green Health: People are facilitated to benefit from contact with nature as an alternative to medicine in order to enhance mental health and wellbeing.	Childcare: Sustainable childcare provision in the B&S Area	
Mental Health: Increased Mental Health provision within the B&S Area	Affordable Housing: Increase in affordable housing in the B&S Area	
Community Peer Support: Support Universal groups so people can meet/ learn from each other on various topics		

The Highland Council CP Partnership Officer supports the BSCP to monitor progress against actions and record them in the Action Tracker as per the How to Guide below:

Legend	
	Insert Community Partnership Logo or insert Community Partnership area
	Priorities agreed by Partnership are listed in the Priority column
	Actions to address Priorities are listed in the Actions column
	Name of the Partner(s) who is/are coordinating the Action are noted in the Lead Column
	RAG Status - Red – Not Progressing - Amber – Underway - Green – Complete Click to reveal a drop-down menu to select – Lead Partner(s) to update as Actions progress
	Lead Partner(s) to populate Partnership Area – Progress Report column with updates or progress on actions – Latest information to go at the top of each section
	Lead Partner(s) or Community Action/Thematic Group Chairs to populate Progress Update column with updates or progress on actions

CP Partnership Officers engage with each of the CP areas to use a similar process to align local priorities to the HOIP.

2. Support programme of community development and skills training

Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) provides excellent training for third sector organisations, community groups and community activists in a wide range of topics including the [Good Governance Toolkit](#) and [training and events](#) which are detailed on Very Connect in a list and calendar format on the website. Highland TSI is supported by its 5 regional partners / voluntary action groups who provide a programme of community development and skills training at an area level:

- Caithness: [Caithness Voluntary Group \(CVG\)](#)
- Sutherland: [Voluntary Groups Sutherland \(VGS\)](#)
- Skye, Lochalsh, and Wester Ross: [Skye Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations \(SLCVO\)](#)
- Lochaber: [Voluntary Action Lochaber \(VAL\)](#)
- Badenoch and Strathspey: [Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey \(VABS\)](#)

Youth Highland and the Voluntary Youth Network (VYN)



1. All Youth Highland member clubs have a constitution and a Board of Directors or Management Committee, ensuring good governance
2. Members undergo annual health checks which covers safeguarding (PVG disclosure checks, safeguarding policy and procedures, designated child protection officer), insurance and key policies
3. Youth Highland offers a range of support to member clubs and the wider youth work sector in Highland, including a suite of training (online and in person)



1. The Voluntary Youth Network (VYN) has 9 Area Youth HUBs in 6 community partnership areas across Highland, based in (Caithness) Thurso and Wick, (Sutherland) Golspie, (Easter Ross) Tain, Balintore and Alness, (Inverness) Merkinch, (Badenoch & Strathspey) Grantown, (Lochaber) Fort William
2. The VYN model has proven to be effective in making an important contribution to meeting many strategic aims in Highland - tackling poverty and inequality, closing the attainment gap, creating employment opportunities, community wealth building, reducing harm, increasing engagement in local decision making and democracy, retaining a young population in Highland

Social Enterprise Academy / My Future, My Success Highland

Social Enterprise Academy is delivered and funded through the Highland Council's My Future My Success initiative in a partnership developed to provide timely support to the region's most vulnerable young people during their transition into the world beyond school. The project delivers a transformational learning experience and inspires those who have disengaged with education to realise their potential to create change by enabling them to set up and run a social enterprise. An opportunity is provided for young people to learn in a college or youth space environment, develop employability skills, grow in confidence, increase their self-esteem and make positive choices for their future. Through gaining agency over their communities, the young people gain agency over their own lives.

My Social Enterprise aims to support young people who are part of Youth Groups, Hubs and Clubs across Highland to develop an understanding of social enterprise and explore their ideas in an approach that helps them to create a sustainable social business with the young person at the centre. Start-up funding is also provided to youth groups after completing the workshop programme. The My Social enterprise model is demonstrated below:



My Social Enterprise - The impact

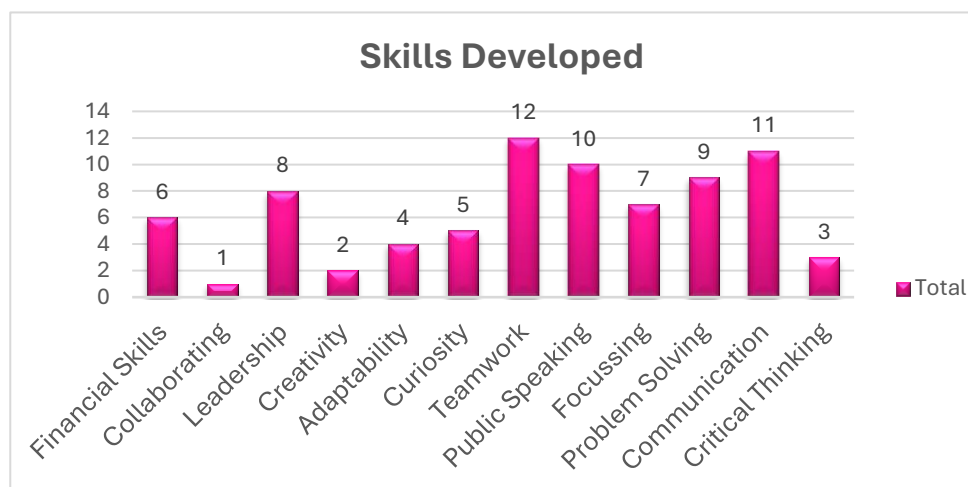
- **100%** of young people referred to the project arrived disengaged from school with their attendance below average.
- **97%** of participants in the project have now made positive choices for their future and have either returned to school, enrolled in college, taken an apprenticeship or found employment.

No. of schools who referred senior pupils	No. of young people who participated	No. of young people moving to positive destinations or returning to school
12	53	51

12 participants were asked how they will use the skills they have developed:

I will use the teamwork and leadership skills to help me in my future jobs	I think this will be great for working in a team with others and should help me in the future
Give me more confidence and have more opportunities	I want to go into more charity work than before to help others in need than
It's given me more confidence to go to college and do the job i want to	It has made me think about my future more
I will be working with people for my work	It has made me look into what I want to do more and I'm now 100% sure that joinery is what I want to do now
It will help me get better knowledge/ get into College	I will feel better communicating with new people
I have the confidence to get qualifications and apply to College	I'm looking forward to going to college and know I bring skills to a team

As part of their reflection, the participants were asked in a questionnaire which skills the project had helped them to develop.



The young social entrepreneurs created a YouTube video to help capture their journey <https://youtu.be/ru9ofQo7V90>



My Social Enterprise Dragon's Den

Eleven Development Officers from My Future My Success were trained to help the young people gather evidence for their social enterprise towards a **National Progression Award in Enterprise and Employability level 4 qualification**. A total of 15 social enterprises received some seed funding and were invited to pitch their enterprise idea at a Dragons' Den event held at Ross County Football Ground in February 2024.

The day was facilitated by Lee McGrath, Social Enterprise Academy facilitator and Director of the computer recycling social enterprise ReBoot in Moray. A panel of 3 Dragons from local organisations all provided positive feedback and guidance to the groups before announcing the winners.

The [Inverness Courier](#) interviewed Nairn pupils who created four businesses: Notelets of Nairn, Fudgelicious, Paws Bags and Marvellous Munchies. The groups were inspired by Kate Benson, who runs Handmade by Kate B and who visited the school to talk to the young people about her business. Lee from the Paw Bags business said: “We knew we wanted to do something for animals and we thought about a cat café or selling cat pillows or biscuits, but once we met Kate, we thought making tote bags would be better. We came up with our own design and Kate then showed us how to print the bags.”



Marley Mackie and Alice Armit created Fudgelicious, a confectionary social enterprise

Alice said: “Our social enterprise is to make money to get friendship bench at one of the primary schools in Nairn. We both know what it is like to feel lonely. I like the fact that we have been given the freedom to do this and that we have been trusted.”

HLH Introduction to Community-Based Adult Learning (CBAL)

HLH is building community capacity through volunteer training with their [Introduction to Community Based Adult Learning \(CBAL\)](#) training for volunteers with the first cohort of over 20 people taking place in February and March 2024:

- Part 1: The Context of Adult Learning in Scotland
- Part 2: Effective Adult Learning methodology
- Part 3: Community-based Adult Learning Practice

3. Support more communities to develop assets and co-design services

Area Place Plan: - Opportunity Black Isle - A Vision for the Future

The overarching outcomes in the Black Isle place plan, [Opportunity Black Isle](#), are that they **become a net zero carbon, sustainable and resilient community with opportunity, health and wellbeing for all.**

To achieve these outcomes, four Calls For Action were identified for the community, the public and private sectors to work on:

- **Community infrastructure:** facilities and services that are fit for purpose & minimise travel
- **Think global, act local:** climate-focussed action to achieve a net zero, biodiversity rich and sustainable community
- **Affordable homes for all:** so young people, workers and families can afford to live in environmentally friendly homes
- **Getting about:** making it safe, convenient & affordable to move around without a car



Making it Happen

To make this happen, the community, public sector and private sector all need to work together.

Partner Support

This means resetting the relationships between sectors and having the support from the individual organisations to deliver specific elements of [the Plan](#) as represented in the Partner Support table.

Communities Housing Trust			see pp25-27	
Highland Third Sector Interface	see pp18-21	see pp22-24		
Highlands & Islands Enterprise	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
Highlife Highland	see pp18-21	see pp22-24		
Highland Council	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
HITRANS				see pp28-30
Housing Associations				see pp28-30
Inverness & Cromarty Firth Green Freeport	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
NFU Scotland		see pp22-24		
NHS Highland	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
Nature Scot	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
Paths for All	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
Police Scotland	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
Rural Housing Scotland			see pp25-27	
Scottish Futures Trust	see pp18-21		see pp25-27	
Scottish Government	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
Scottish Water	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	
SEPA	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	
Skills Development Scotland	see pp18-21			
Sustrans				see pp28-30
Transport Scotland				see pp28-30
UK Government	see pp18-21	see pp22-24	see pp25-27	see pp28-30
UHI	see pp18-21	see pp22-24		
VisitScotland	see pp18-21			

Black Isle facts & figures

The boards were themed on issues of local concern identified in previous consultations. They also contain the questions that were asked at those events and people's responses which were summarised on boards for: Population and housing; Community facilities and services; Getting about; Jobs and business; Nature and environment; and Tourism. The full versions of these boards can be viewed online at bit.ly/4009bEc

Community Engagement

A high number (22,800) of comments were received at the nine public drop-ins, two high school events, & online responses. Comments from the 9 Community Councils are in short reports contained in the table along with comments from schools on [Page 41 of the plan](#).

Stage 2 comments by event & topic download links are underlined	1. Housing & population	2. Facilities & services	3. Getting about	4. Jobs & business	5. Nature & environment	6. Tourism	7. Anything else?
Avoch & Killen event	bit.ly/3Mt2d5	bit.ly/3MrjXxG	bit.ly/3sqPxVv	bit.ly/3MtODGV	bit.ly/462XcJ	bit.ly/40kKcf8	bit.ly/3MswCQ5
Cromarty event	bit.ly/3Sn10R	bit.ly/49hgSDz	bit.ly/3QEIOk6	bit.ly/3QGpMj	bit.ly/3QHwVdn	bit.ly/3tVxMOx	bit.ly/4777yae
Ferintosh event	bit.ly/47dlor	bit.ly/47g6m4h	bit.ly/3QlwH5N	bit.ly/3smlvgg	bit.ly/3QK0xa5	bit.ly/49jLzV	bit.ly/3FJKHpE
Fortrose & Rosemarkie event	bit.ly/3tQzct	bit.ly/3QkL7aF	bit.ly/3u2bs0	bit.ly/3QmLmCZ	bit.ly/3MsJiHx	bit.ly/3MsJw1l	bit.ly/3u7m2sc
Killernan event	bit.ly/45WuyHS	bit.ly/3FEICQx	bit.ly/3Mtnxr4	bit.ly/49lAgGo	bit.ly/47htTSi	bit.ly/3QJHmIX	bit.ly/3Mswb9c
Knockbain (Munlochy) event	bit.ly/47hx9N	bit.ly/45RSXhX	bit.ly/40o4LXR	bit.ly/3sgDNVx	bit.ly/47e5DRk	bit.ly/3FGBWML	bit.ly/3QqeiNw
Knockbain (N. Kessock) event	bit.ly/3Mtsq3	bit.ly/3MgPIXI	bit.ly/3QI3tDW	bit.ly/3MgGYRB	bit.ly/46WPv2x	bit.ly/46Qunz8	bit.ly/3SiHgxA
Muir of Ord event	bit.ly/3Qlvuy	bit.ly/3QlvQSE	bit.ly/3SrXm82	bit.ly/45W9Zvo	bit.ly/40kPdnQ	bit.ly/3tYvFtl	bit.ly/47dOpn5
Resolis event	bit.ly/3simBy	bit.ly/49gtOOJ	bit.ly/3sr7Ib8	bit.ly/3tXL90N	bit.ly/46UbGL6	bit.ly/3tZAv9X	bit.ly/40nXR4R
Online responses	bit.ly/3QI2ha	bit.ly/40MEGsk	bit.ly/3SrXBzY	bit.ly/3SkZ4bp	bit.ly/49hul50	bit.ly/40pctBm	bit.ly/40oucZw

“I hope the Community Housing Trust will continue with this project as we urgently need housing for local people, employment & more life in the community!”

Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust

Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust aims to achieve the sustainable regeneration of the community which, despite its magnificent geographic setting, has been identified as one of the most economically fragile in the Highlands. They work to generate income through enterprise and the ownership of assets, with all of the trading surpluses reinvested in the community.

Lochalsh Housing Needs Assessment

Lochalsh consists of seven community councils with a population of approximately 2,600, made up of settlements scattered across a remote coastal and mountainous area in the Northwest Highlands. The largest of these is the town, Kyle of Lochalsh, which is around 80 miles west of Inverness. In a recent community survey conducted in 2022 by Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust (KLCT), an exercise to inform the Community Action Plan, it was established that the lack of available housing and increasing housing costs is having a significant impact on people living and working in the Lochalsh area. The Communities Housing Trust (CHT) and KLCT ran a well-attended community consultation in the area and invited people from all over Lochalsh to provide opinion on the potential purchase of the two sites to deliver housing solutions for local people. The CHT initiated the [Lochalsh's Housing Needs Assessment](#) with an online survey for the seven community council areas.

Based on the tenure type comparison:

- **40 respondents** are living in a home that is too small for them
- **12** would benefit from moving to a smaller home
- **79 (60%)** of respondents spend more than **10% of their income on energy bills**

Out of the **40 respondents** that stated that they are currently living in a home that is too small for them, 29 are considering moving home. When asked how living in a home that is too small is affecting them, over half (26) said that it was causing stress and tensions. The survey findings showed a strong demand for a range of 10 – 12 affordable homes for low-cost home ownership, sites for self-build and low-cost rent and in a range of sizes, but mostly 2- and 3-bed properties. CHT supported the proposals by KLCT to purchase land identified for community ownership from Forestry Land Scotland. One resident added: “The field at Ratagan should be available for locals to put allotments/poly tunnels on to grow fruit & veg, even a small community shop.”

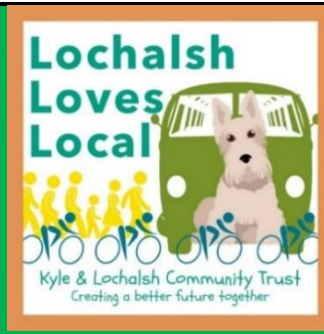
Sustainable Lochalsh

[Active travel](#) refers to replacing a motor vehicle to get from A to B with walking or cycling. Travelling in an active way helps to improve health and wellbeing, as well as reducing carbon footprint and saving money. Usually, active travel happens for short journeys, such as walking to the shops or school, cycling to work or to see friends and family. In 2024, KLCT commissioned a paper on [Proposals and Recommendations for Active Travel Routes](#). The identified priorities include:

- Existing routes can easily be brought back into use with minimal expenditure
- Routes contribute to Active Travel, especially if they do so to some extent already
- A spread of routes is identified throughout Lochalsh



Climate Fèis was a week of events in Lochalsh during May that included preloved markets, e-bike taster sessions, sustainability & eco markets and cycle repair workshops. The aim is for the community to do their bit for the environment and learn how to play a small part in reaching Net Zero goals, while having some fun along the way.



Named at the Lochalsh Collaborates Community Action Plan Launch Day, the community minibus '**Hamish Macbus**' has been available for hire to local groups and charities in need of transport assistance. Only with the help of the group of volunteers, Hamish is put to good use by running community shopping trips from outlying Lochalsh villages into Kyle.



The **community fridge** is inside the hub allowing surplus food to be shared to reduce the amount going to landfill. Any food items in the fridge, freezer and shelves are completely free to take. The new **Tree Trail** incorporates interesting paths across the Plock, giving locals and visitors a chance to slow down and discover the spectacular trees in the woodland or relax on the benches.



The **Lochalsh Reuse & Recycle Hub** in Kyle is a wee place with a social purpose. Every purchase of pre-loved clothing goes towards running the community trust. Buying second-hand also reduces the carbon footprint associated with new production, which saves valuable resources, minimising environmental impact, plus saving on the cost of new items.

Wick Development Trust – Riverside Caravan Park

Wick Development Trust aims to help with urban generation and economic growth in the town. In 2022 the Trust took over Wick Riverside Campsite with the aim of transforming it into a five-star facility. The team was awarded Social Enterprise of the Year at the HTSI Awards 2024 for the [£450,000 state-of-the-art facilities block](#) with modern amenities. It includes a new road layout, increased electric hook-up points, a large solar array, new play, barbecue and picnic areas. Profits from the campsite will be used to support other projects in the town. Sarah Lamb, Project Manager, Wick Development Trust said: "We've seen visitor numbers increase year-on-year during this time, and the feedback on the improvements that have taken place has been overwhelmingly positive. Our new toilet and facilities building in particular now places us among the best in the Highlands, if not beyond."



Improvement priority 6: Workforce Development

CLD in Highland will prioritise workforce development by actively promoting diversity; responding to the strengths and challenges of an aging workforce; attracting and supporting the next generation of volunteers; attracting and retaining qualified, experienced and knowledgeable CLD practitioners; creating pathways for professional development including the provision of CLD courses provided by academic institutions; ensuring that placements and apprenticeships are offered for people to develop the craft of CLD; and empower CLD practitioners and community planning partners to be effective leaders, mentors and champions.

CLD in practice – spotlight on Workforce Development

NPA Theory and Practice in Youth Work Award

HLH has developed three new staff awards which were approved by the SQA for delivery in 2024. The staff training programmes have brought many benefits for the learners, volunteers, staff and the organisation as a whole. The first cohort of the NPA Theory & Practice in Youth Work Award ran for 12 weeks from March to May 2024. A celebratory photoshoot and get-together with some of the successful candidates and tutors was organised at Dingwall Library to share feedback and a celebration cake. One student said: “It was a great bonding experience, and we were all very enthusiastic. We learned as much from the great example of our peers as we did from the course.” It is hoped to recruit a second cohort early in 2025, allowing other staff to gain the invaluable training. Grateful thanks went to co-producers and tutors, Wilma Kelt and Fraser Morrison, for their tireless effort in co-designing the materials with Vicky-Ann McNab for their support of the candidates throughout delivery. The idea to develop the course was first suggested by Alness YDO, Rhys Campbell.

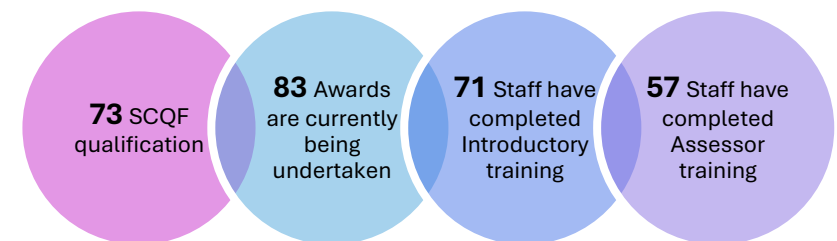


The ITESOL Staff Award has just seen completion of the first module. The Staff and volunteers undertaking this award are a good mix of ages, first languages and cultures, which has proved to be a wonderful opportunity for all to get to know each other better. The course is blended delivery of face-to-face and virtual learning which worked well for the Youth Work Award. The results are much anticipated and grateful thanks go to the three Tutors, Kirsty D’Ambrosio, Kirsty McIver and John Riach for their time and hard work in delivering the sessions.

Increase in SQA Centre accredited awards

HLH has seen a marked increase in accredited awards being undertaken by learners since the staff training programme was rolled out at the start of 2023. During the 2023-24 academic year, the HLH SQA Approved Centre has achieved the following awards in the infographic.

A key step to capacity building and Workforce Development involves the **Assessor training** which has been completed by staff in Adult Learning, Youth Work and MFMS teams who are now delivering accredited learning as part of their work with adult learners and young people. The **Internal Verification** programme will be rolled out to key staff in the winter of 2024.



HMle Progress Visit The staff training programme and new processes for assessing and internally verifying learner work were positively mentioned in the [Highland Council CLD Progress Visit Report](#) from HMle which has led to improvements in staff resilience and capacity building. **Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)** also scheduled a **Systems Verification** visit in August designed to review the SQA Centre’s procedures and processes. This required substantial evidence to demonstrate that HLH is complying with all of the SQA recommended guidelines, with an excellent report rating all areas as green.

Actions	Measures / evaluation	BRAG
1. Establish cross sector working group	The CLD Operational Group has seen an increase in members with greater representation from third sector organisations and other partners taking part in the face-to-face meetings in Strathpeffer Pavilion or online. The Operational Group has been supported by the Highland Council Community Planning Partnership Team and the Corporate Performance Business Partner to encourage the sharing of data and reporting of CLD core activities, programmes, projects and case studies that contain learners' stories, so they are heard at area CP meetings, inform the CLD planning process and annual progress reports. The Community Partnership Coordinating Group was established in 2023 by the Community Partnership team and includes service Leads sharing information and best practice that contribute to CLD practice. The CLDSO is a member of this group.	
2. Carry out needs assessment of the workforce	A Training Needs Assessment was undertaken by a consultant for Learn North members in 2024 to inform the new 2024-27 CLD plans for local authorities in Highland, Moray, Aberdeen, Shetland, Orkney and Western Isles. The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme established the Workforce Learning & Development Sub-Group which focuses on planning and mapping workforce needs analysis for family practitioners. The CLD Support Officer is part of the Sub-group and is providing a description of the adult learning coordinator and youth development officer roles. HLH SQA Centre During the 2023 – 2024 financial year, HLH formulated an integrated approach to achievement and accreditation with both Adult and Youth services working together to achieve progress based on an analysis of workforce development needs. Key features of this progress were: • The formulation of an accreditations team who meet monthly to process awards, I.V portfolios, review standardisation and who also undertook to develop resource materials for the new Staff NPA award. • SQA approvals for two new learner awards (Mental Health & Wellbeing, Personal Finance) as well as two new Staff awards (PDA Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, NPA Youth work in Scotland). • Successful External Verification visits by SQA for two awards (ICT and SALL) plus three successful Development Approval visits (Mental Health & Wellbeing, TESOL and Youth Work awards). • Delivery of the new Youth Work Staff Award to the first contingent of internal candidates in March 2024. • Development of a new Share Point structure for submission, Assessment and Internal Verification of Youth Awards. • Out of 55 recorded Adult and Youth Staff members, 51 have completed initial SQA training (93%) and 34 staff have gone on to complete their Assessor training (61%). • 20 different training sessions were held in 8 different physical locations (Fort William, Fort Augustus, Inverness central, Culloden, Fortrose, Dingwall, Alness and Brora) plus multiple online sessions, to facilitate accessible training to staff located throughout the Highlands. These were open to both Adult and Youth services staff as joint training, and online sessions were also available. • Online and in person support became available for all staff, this was especially helpful to those new to the delivery of qualifications and portfolio building. This has taken the form of both group and one-to-one sessions.	

	- An updated version of the previous Adult Learning Assessor/IV excel spreadsheet was created, with an additional page for Youth staff and Youth Award qualified I.V staff. This is now available to all staff with access to the relevant Share Point sections and provides a current record of contacts for Assessors and IVs across both services. - Representation at the annual Youth Conference showcasing Youth and SQA Awards and information gathering via survey/feedback form regarding the needs of young learners. This resulted in additional raised interest in awards and learner contacts which were communicated to Area Youth Officers for them to follow-up.	
3. Deliver self-evaluation and outcome training for CLD workforce and partners	The Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement (SECI) training was delivered in April 2023 and again in October 2023 along with HGIOCLD? 4th edition framework by Education Scotland CLD Officer, Laura Starkey. Alona Murray, HMle delivered 2 sessions with Learn North CLD practitioners on HGIOCLD? 4th edition QIs and challenge questions. CLD practitioners have embedded the SECI pilot training in their practice with Learning for Life taking forward 15 Community Needs Analysis across Highland and Youth Work undertaking the Youth Place Planning in 28 out of 29 ASGs.	
4. Ensure all CLD partners have CLD Competences and Ethics in their entry level training	Youth Highland uses CLD competencies to support community empowerment and Youth Work outcomes to ensure that Young People are working in equal partnership with adults in to enable the best outcomes for themselves and their peers where they live. The YH practitioners underpin all their work with CLD competencies and Ethics. Youth Highland ran modular training courses on Introduction to CLD in 2024 HLH delivered the Introduction to Community Based Adult Learning (CBAL) training for volunteers in February and March 2024 with part 1 focusing on CLD competences and ethics - Part 1: The Context of Adult Learning in Scotland - Part 2: Effective Adult Learning methodology - Part 3: Community-based Adult Learning Practice HLH National Progression Awards (NPA) Theory & Approaches to Youth Work HLH Youth Work team has focussed on the growth of outcomes this year especially in terms of supporting young people to be heard and influence decision making in their communities and to achieve recognised qualifications through youth work, in community and school settings. Cross service work to develop a National Progression Award in Theory and Approaches to Youth Work (SCQF Level 6) that was piloted in service with 5 members of staff, of which all 5 completed. This course creates a foundation pathway for those looking for foundation and entry level qualification into the CLD workforce. The Pilot course run from March to June 2024 is aimed at staff and volunteers with no formal Youth Work qualifications and is underpinned by the Youth Work National Outcome Standards (NOS) and CLD competencies embedded in the learning. CLD standards Council approval has been applied for and received for three Staff awards: NPA Youth Work, PDA ITESOL and PDA Adult Learning. CLD Standards Council - Professional Induction Programme is attracting experienced practitioners from the third sector who do not have a CLD qualification. The HLH CLD Support Officer received a certificate of completion for the 3-month	

	course in the spring of 2024. A range of materials and online resources are provided on i-develop and an academic mentor offers support to participants who work their way through units.	
5. Promote the CLD Standards Council	- CLD practitioners in Highland have been fully engaged in the national CLD review 2024, inputting to recommendations submitted to the CLD Standards Council - There has been an increase in Highland membership to the CLD Standards Council due to greater involvement of CLD practitioners in HTSI and HLH to invite the CLD Standards Council to deliver presentations on the core values, ethics, competencies, and benefits of CLDSC membership at events in 2024. - The CLD Support Officer regularly attends the CLDSC events including the CLD Annual Lecture with Kate Still, Member Meet-ups for ED&I, Gender Imbalance and Equality and CLDSC AGM, regularly sharing invitations to join virtual/F2F events with the CLD Operational Group members. - The CLD Standards Council has helped the CLDSO with information on building partnerships and data sharing. Vikki Carpenter attends the Learn North meetings with Highland 3rd sector CLD reps and the CLDSO. She is hosting a CLDSC Members Meet-up in October 2024 at Strathpeffer Pavilion following the CLD Operational Group meeting. - CLDSO promotes CLDSC as a professional body at the HCPP Coordinating group in a CLD presentation. CLD Standards Mark in Highland Youth Highland's work is underpinned by professional youth work and CLD principles and ethics, they gained a CLD Standards Mark in 2015 and are required to submit reviewed evidence to retain this standard every 3 years. Members of the CLD Strategic and Operational Group have expressed an interest for the Highland CLD partnership to aim for the professional standard as a whole group to recognise the value of the CLD work they are doing collectively. HLH SQA Learning Centre along with HLH AL Manager and YW Manager and the CLDSO are having discussions about how the CLD Standards Mark can be developed with the CLD Operational Group	
6. Provide mental health and wellbeing related training for the CLD workforce	In 2024, the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme team formed the Workforce Learning and Development Working Group to look at mapping and planning resources that ensure a skilled and supported workforce is delivering holistic support for Highland families. The CLD Support Officer is a member of the group and aims to create links with the Highland CLD priority under workforce development. A broad variety of training was identified as being available to a multi-agency workforce, which puts the group in a strong position to pool resources and expertise, linking across the HCPP to ensure equity, efficiency and quality of learning and development opportunities to strengthen and develop a holistic family support workforce. Some examples are listed below and these will be added to over time: CALA E-Learning Zone Highland Mental Wellbeing Website Highland Child Protection Committee – Learning and development Prospectus August to December 2024 Highland Child Protection Committee – Child Protection Training Highland Child Protection Committee – Quick guide- Core Training - Multiagency	

	• NHS Highland Learning and Development for Health Improvement Prospectus • HLH Approved SQA Centre • Safeguarding Learning & Development Toolkit – Highland - a prospectus of workforce training on trauma informed practice, drug & alcohol, child protection and sexual exploitation.	
7. Embed YouthLink Skills Framework into Youth Work practice	The seven youth work outcomes in the National YouthLink Outcomes and Skills Framework describe the key overarching impacts of youth work in young people’s lives. HLH National Progression Awards (NPA) Theory & Approaches to Youth Work High Life Highland’s workforce development programme and contribution to Continuous Professional Development has been included in the NPA Theory & Approaches to Youth Work, SCQF Level 6 staff award with the first cohort taking part in March 2024. The Pilot course is aimed at staff and volunteers with no formal Youth Work qualifications with Youth Work National Outcome Standards (NOS) and CLD competencies embedded in the learning. The NPA introduces learners to theory and practice techniques which focus on engaging with young people and working with communities. Assessment will be through a mix of practical and knowledge-based assessments. The course was delivered using a hybrid of online and in person sessions over 12 weeks with candidates attending all sessions, as well as self-directed learning to complete a portfolio of work. The HLH audit and QS standing with SQA is held at high levels and maintained over the years. A similar approach is being taken for the PDA ITESOL and the PDA in Adult Learning later in 2024. Youth Highland and the VYN Youth Highland is using the National YouthLink Outcomes and Skills Framework to help develop and measure the impact of their youth work. They use the outcomes statements to help in consultations with young people and when working in partnership with young people to develop and plan youth projects and initiatives. This ensures that everything they do aligns with the national framework. They have recently developed an evaluation tool based on the skills framework which will help us to work in partnership with young people to plan, deliver and review the impact of youth work on their own skills development. The Voluntary Youth Network has priority areas for improvement and identifies key delivery partners in delivering actions to meet the strategic aims. Strategic aims are aligned with national and regional priorities including GIRFEC, CLD, UNCRC and under national youth work outcomes headings. The Improvement Plan recognises the need to respond to ‘Place’ as well as ‘Interest or Experience’ through: • The development of Area Youth HUBs as local delivery centres with youth work staff offering consistent support and trusting relationships • Building strong partnerships with specialist groups and organisations to support early intervention and referrals to targeted support for individuals In partnership with Youth Scotland, Youth Highland deliver the Level 6 PDA in Youth Work. More than 40 learners have been supported by Youth Highland to complete this qualification in Highland.	

UHI PDA Youth Work

The PDA Youth Work at Shetland College UHI is available to register at <https://www.shetland.uhi.ac.uk/courses/pda-youth-work-pda/> for those who may be interested in studying PDA Youth Work. It is a fully online course designed for flexible study times.

UHI BA (Hons) Child and Youth Studies

[Dr. Mei-Li Roberts, Programme Leader](#) at UHI Perth College for the [BA \(Hons\) Child and Youth Studies](#) with Community Learning and Development has become well-known for actively promoting the undergraduate programme across CLD networks in Scotland. The programme is taught fully online making it accessible for students who are undertaking work-based learning or live in remote and rural parts of the Highlands and Islands. The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) has weekly learning resources, videos, discussion boards, live chat rooms and Webex sessions to enable access to asynchronous study. The placement module is optional and provides opportunities during term time for students to develop their practice in one of the CLD domains of practice: Adult Learning, Community Development and Youth Work.

With close to 400 students on the 2024-25 academic programme in UHI Perth, UHI Moray, UHI Inverness, UHI Shetland, UHI Argyll and UHI North, West, and Hebrides, the BA Child and Youth Studies is well recognised as a pathway for career progression in social work, community work and youth work, and for young people to progress academically from school to the HNC, the BA and then the Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) to become a primary school teacher, a social worker or any discipline focused on children and young people.

The student's professional understanding of the CLD standards as set out by the CLD Standards Council will develop through their connections and practice placements as described in the [CLD Professional Practice Placement Standards](#). This short video introduces the CLD Standards Council with an overview of who they are and what they do: [Introducing the CLD Standards Council](#).

The role of the placement will ensure that the CLD Student:

- Applies the CLD Standards Council [Code of Ethics](#) to their practice
- Works towards developing [CLD Competences](#)
- Takes responsibility to support and improve the quality and appropriateness of the learning experience
- Develops their critical reflection skills

HLH is proud to support the workforce development and mentoring of staff in the following academic areas:

- BA Youth and Child Studies with CLD at UHI - Louise Rose, North Area Youth Services Officer
- BA Youth and Child Studies with CLD at UHI - Rhys Campbell, Youth Development Officer in Alness
- [BSc Hons in Psychology](#) at UHI - Niamh Sutherland, Youth Development Officer in Alness
- [MSc in Community Education](#) with CLD at University of Dundee - Helena Macleod, CLD Support Officer
- PG Certificate Community Education at University of Dundee – Kirsty D'Ambrosio, Senior Adult Learning Coordinator
- [MA Art and Social Practice](#) at UHI - Trish Matthews, Community Learning Centre Coordinator in Brora

	Youth Highland Youth Highland champions CLD by underpinning the professional practice in all their work. They have received funding from the Community Regeneration Fund to run 2 x a full day's training in February 2024 on <i>CLD – An Introduction</i> in Dingwall which underpins the CLD values, ethics and competencies, the importance of CLD and the difference it can make in people's lives as well as reflection and evaluation for CLD practitioners.	
8. Contribute to the development of CLD community of practice across the north – Learn North and Northern Alliance	HTSI and HLH are represented across Learn North and Northern Alliance. The Depute CEO of HTSI and the CLD Support Officer at HLH both attend the Learn North meetings, ensuring that the information flows through the governance and feedback is provided on what Highland is doing. HLH Youth Work Manager attends YouthLink and the Adult Learning Manager attends Adult Learning Managers. The Head of Adult & Youth Services attends the Northern Alliance RIC. This will be mapped out in 2024. A Highland partnership of 6 reps from THC, HLH, HTSI and Youth Highland contributed to the national CLD Review 2024. Recommendations from the 2024 HMle progress report has highted the need to develop a Highland Youth Work Service Providers Network as the Highland youth Work Development Group (HYWDG) is currently in abeyance.	
9. Organise CLD in STEM professional learning sessions for Highland workforce	Youth Highland Youth Highland offers the Digital Youth Work Induction to increase knowledge of the history and theory of youth work in preparation for the Introduction to Youth Work course. It supports UNCRC article 17 Access to Information and Article 28 Access to Education. Lairg & District Learning Centre Lairg & District Learning Centre started their first #CyberSavvyKids workshop in September, teaching children the importance of staying safe online while developing essential digital skills. The sessions have been made possible by funding from @GoodThingsFdn which is helping young people to navigate the internet safely.   George 2's journey from 14 May 2024 to 17 September 2024 View routes starting: Spring 2024 17 Sep 2024 Map Satellite To Start -1 Week -1 Day Play +1 Day +1 Week To End Status: Active Tagged: Tuesday, May 14, 2024 - 04:50 Tagging Location: Dundowrie Estate, Ross and Cromarty, Scotland Sex: Male Age when found: Adult Show route Show marker As part of their Flight Path project, Lairg & District Learning Centre decided to sponsor one of the cuckoos ringed by British Trust for Ornithology (BTO). Local residents have been introduced to George the Cuckoo and encouraged to keep an eye on his page for updates as to his whereabouts. George was tagged in Ross & Cromarty and by September he was making his way South to Spain, only to retreat back to a favoured spot in the French countryside. According to his GPS updates, he's now on track and flying towards Africa. Digital skills among the Highland CLD workforce The CLD Workforce uses a wide array of technical skills to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of learners and their organisations. There is an increased use of SWAY by CP areas and third sector organisations. Additional digital promotional	

tools are used for newsletters and reports, such as Substack by HLH Countryside Rangers and Learning for Life. Learning for Life rebranded in 2024 and created their 1st Learner video created on YouTube.

Learning for Sustainability

[Learning for Sustainability \(Lfs\)](#) professional learning sketchnote shows the themes and learning through Lfs for children and young people to lead positive change in their communities, schools and the wider world. It contains 6 sections which are explained in this [video](#). Target 2030 aims to help every school and setting become sustainable by 2030. Lfs is not only about climate justice and biodiversity, but also about social justice issues, how we tackle racism, gender balance and rights.



Caithness Astronomy Group

The 'Our Place in the Solar System' family event was held in partnership with [HLH Countryside Rangers](#) and [Caithness Astronomy Group](#) (CAG) at the Seadrift Centre in Dunnet Beach. It took attendees on a tour of the solar system, offering an opportunity to reconnect with the cosmos. The 29 participants of all ages gathered to explore the intricate beauty and enormity of the solar system where they learned about the vastness of space, the variety of planets, moons and other objects and the uniqueness of planet Earth in being suitable for complex life to live and thrive here.

The 'Goldilocks Zone,' was explained to highlight Earth's unique position in the solar system - not too close to the Sun or it would be scorched, and not too far away to be frozen, it's just the right distance to support complex life. The Rangers provided a variety of indoor learning activities focused on food chains and food webs which illustrated the interconnectedness of the ecosystem of life on Earth. The young people experienced a scale model of the solar system, helping them to get a sense of the immense distances between celestial bodies. If the Sun was scaled down to the size of a beach ball, Earth would be a tiny pea 26 meters away, while Neptune would be a mere speck situated over 780 meters from the Sun.



10. Complete Professional Learning self-evaluation for continuous improvement Highland pilot

HLH Learning for Life Community Needs Analysis

In 2023, the HLH CLD team took part in the Self-Evaluation and Continuous Improvement (SECI) professional learning pilot delivered by Education Scotland. This year, the Learning for Life team reviewed and redeveloped their needs analysis process with guidance from Education Scotland and led the sector nationally in the professional learning pilot. The strategic Needs Analysis helped to identify the community's needs, strengths, resources, and challenges. The Learning for Life team has produced 15 Community Needs Analyses that are dynamically maintained and inform how they target and plan their work.



Needs analysis is also a mechanism for enabling learner voice and influence, placing community involvement at the centre of the process. It is a form of community-based participatory research that can help guide decision-making and resource allocation that starts with community involvement.

"I never thought I would be able to make this much progress from needing help myself, I'm now assisting others."
Adult Learner, Caithness.