

Agenda Item	9
Report No	BSAC/07/26

The Highland Council

Committee: Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee

Date: 19 January 2026

Report Title: Whole Family Wellbeing Programme – Local Partnership Network Overview

Report By: Assistant Chief Executive - People

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report provides members with an overview of the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme (WFWP) funding framework, current activity and identified needs in Badenoch and Strathspey, and outlines next steps for collaborative project development.

1.2 Background information is contained in the attached update document at **Appendix 1**

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. **Note** the strategic alignment of the WFWP with national and local policy priorities, including The Promise, GIRFEC and the Integrated Children's Services Plan.
- ii. Consider the identified needs in Badenoch and Strathspey and the role of the Local Partnership Network Group in addressing these.
- iii. Agree to support the development of collaborative proposals under Element 2 of the WFWP funding framework.

3. Implications

3.1 **Resource** - Delivery is funded through the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme allocations.

3.2 **Legal** - Supports statutory duties under United Nation Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) and Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC).

3.3 **Risk** - Failure to progress collaborative proposals may impact delivery of The Promise and child poverty targets.

3.4 Health and Safety (risks arising from changes to plant, equipment, process, or people) - No direct implications identified.

3.5 Gaelic - No direct implications identified.

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, Members 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. Background

5.1 The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme seeks to ensure every family receives the right support at the right time, promoting children's rights to be raised safely within their own families. The funding framework includes: Element 1 (Small Grants Fund), Element 2 (Collaborative Partnership Fund) and Element 3 (Transformational Commissioning).

5.2 To date, £74,865.30 has been allocated to eight Element 1 projects in Badenoch and Strathspey, supporting initiatives such as youth adventure groups, art sessions, outdoor therapeutic programmes and targeted transition support.

6. Identified Needs and Next Steps

6.1 Key needs identified include:

- Poverty: third-highest proportion of low-income families in Highland.
- Housing: 21% of households overcrowded (SIMD 2020).
- Additional Support Needs: 780 pupils with ASN across Grantown and Kingussie High catchments.
- Early Years: increased emotional/behavioural and speech, language & communication needs since 2021.
- Mental wellbeing and social isolation.
- Limited youth-friendly, informal spaces.

6.2 A development session is scheduled with The Whole Family Wellbeing Local Partnership Group, for 27 January 2026 to agree Element 2 proposals focusing on: outdoor safe spaces, a family hub model (fixed or mobile), and enhanced family support. Submissions are planned for March 2026 with implementation from May/June 2026, subject to approval.

Designation: Assistant Chief executive

Date: 09 January 2026

Author: Mandy Morrison – Locality Coordinator - WFWP

Appendices: **Appendix 1** – Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee Local Partnership Network Group Overview

Badenoch and Strathspey Area Committee

Local Partnership Network Group Overview

OUR VISION

Every family that needs support gets the right family support, at the right time, to fulfil children's rights to be raised safely in their own families, for as long as it is needed.



Whole Family Wellbeing Programme

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Introduction

This report outlines the funding framework strategy for the distribution of the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme (WFWP) Fund in Highland, supporting holistic, community-led initiatives that improve outcomes for children and families in Highland and provides a thematic overview of the funds released to date.

The funding framework strategy is aligned with the [Highland Whole Family Wellbeing Programme Self-Assessment Toolkit](#), which promotes reflective practice and continuous improvement across the four Pillars and ten Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support, as set out in the [Scottish Government's Route-map](#) and [National Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support](#).

The funding framework strategy ensures that funding is accessible, equitable, and targeted to areas of greatest need, with a strong emphasis on collaboration, inclusion, and sustainability. It supports the development of joined-up services that place families at the centre, promote resilience, and reduce poverty-related inequalities.

Strategic Alignment

The Whole Family Wellbeing Programme supports the rights of children and families in line with GIRFEC, UNCRC, and The Promise and is embedded within the following broader national and local policy landscape:

- [Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023-2026](#)
- [Highland Outcome Improvement Plan](#)
- [Scottish Government's Route-map and National Principles of Holistic Whole Family Support](#)
- [The Promise 24-30](#)
- [Best Start Bright Futures – Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026](#)
- [National Trauma Training Framework](#)
- [Families Affected by Drug and Alcohol Use in Scotland – A Framework for Holistic Whole Family Approaches and Family Inclusive Practice](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [UNCRC Incorporation Act \(Scotland\) 2024](#)
- [Getting It Right for Every Child](#)

Funding Framework Overview

Element 1 – Small Grants Fund (Community-Led, Third Sector Organisations only)

Purpose: To support local, community-based activities that address family wellbeing needs based on locality-specific priorities.

Target Families: Prioritises the six family types identified in the *Best Start, Bright Futures Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2022–2026)*

- Families where the mother is under 25
- Lone parent families
- Families including children or adults with disabilities
- Larger families
- Minority ethnic families
- Families with a child under 1

Funding Details

- Total Budget: £400,000
- Total spent at closing date: £467,432.94.
- Grant Size: Up to £10,000
- Total Grants at closing date: 48
- Pending approval: Badenoch & Strathspey, Lochaber and Easter Ross – 3

Application Process

- Initially opened 2nd September 2024 for one month – closed 30th Sep 2025
- Scope for limited new applications in areas with newly recruited Locality Co-ordinators. Criteria is to support development of collaborative Element 2 proposals.
- Locality Co-ordinators support applicants and connect them to Locality Partnership Network Groups
- Encourages WFWP Self-Assessment Toolkit completion

Key Features

- Open to grassroots, micro level Third Sector Organisations
- Encourages community-based activities accessible to families
- Encourages collaboration and match funding
- Aims to avoid duplication and siloed working

Element 2 – Collaborative Partnership Fund (WFWP Local Partnership Network Group)

Purpose: To support longer-term, collaborative tests of concept that address identified locality needs through Community Partnerships and WFWP Local Partnership Network Groups.

Funding Details

- Total Budget: £900,000
- Fund Size: Up to £50,000 (flexible)
- Allocation: Two funds per Community Partnership locality
- Duration: Up to 24 months
- Total Tests of Concept to date: 1
- Applications pending approval: 2
- Remaining Balance: £810,576.00 (as at date of report)

Application Requirements

- Demonstrate co-production, partnership working, innovative, identified need
- Encourages hybrid models involving Statutory and Third Sector Organisations
- Must include exit strategies to evidence sustainability beyond the WFWP funded period

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Projects will be developed and monitored using Quality Improvement
- Outcomes will be subject to contract and evaluated periodically
- Requires WFWP Self-Assessment Toolkit completion
- Potential for successful initiatives to be considered for strategic alignment of future commissioned services in Highland

Element 2 – Collaborative Partnership Fund (Whole System Applications)

Purpose: To support longer-term, collaborative tests of concept that address identified needs, gaps in service identified through whole system approach in line with *Pillar 3 – Whole System Approach/Joined-Up Support*.

Funding Details

- Total Budget: Not defined
- Duration: Up to 24 months
- Total Tests of Concept to date: 17
- Total Cost to date: £3,379,139.43 (as at date of report)

Application Requirements

- Demonstrate co-production, partnership working, innovative, identified need
- Encourages hybrid models involving Statutory and Third Sector Organisations
- Must include exit strategies to evidence sustainability beyond the WFWP funded period

Monitoring & Evaluation

- Projects will be developed and monitored using Quality Improvement
- Outcomes will be subject to contract and evaluated periodically
- Requires WFWP Self-Assessment Toolkit completion
- Potential for successful initiatives to be considered for strategic integration of future commissioned services in Highland

Element 3 – Transformational Commissioning Fund (Strategic Integration)

The Element 3 Transformational Commissioning Fund is a strategic initiative informed by locality needs and priorities identified by Highland’s strategic leaders as part of the Integrated Children’s Services Planning Board, delivered by the WFWP.

The fund aims to support system-wide changes through targeted commissioning and joint commissioning opportunities from tests of concept under the WFWP Element 2 Collaborative Partnership funds.

Purpose

To integrate learning from Element 2 Collaborative Partnership Fund tests of concepts into long-term strategic planning

Function

Acts as a test bed for innovation, aligned to the Integrated Children’s Services Planning Board Plan 2023-2026, the Families 1st Strategy and The Promise.

Goal

To ensure that successful models of Holistic Whole Family Support, based on evidence of need, are embedded in future service design, delivery and commissioning of services.

Key objectives

- Embed Holistic Whole Family Support principles across Highland’s systems and structures
- Building capacity for transformational change in family support services
- Ensuring alignment with Element 2: Collaborative Partnership Fund, particularly in scaling and hybrid models of practice

Priority Themes

- Innovative family support approaches distinct from current models
- Enhanced community-based access to services
- Increased awareness and uptake of available support at a locality level
- Expansion of proven services to new localities

Desired Outcomes:

- System-wide adoption of holistic support principles
- Removal of access barriers at the locality level
- Active family participation in service design
- Strengthened collaboration across partnerships, including Adult Services
- Integration of Third Sector partners in service delivery
- Evidence of aligned proportionate support matching local need
- Growth in integrated support capacity and holistic workforce development
- Empowerment for innovation

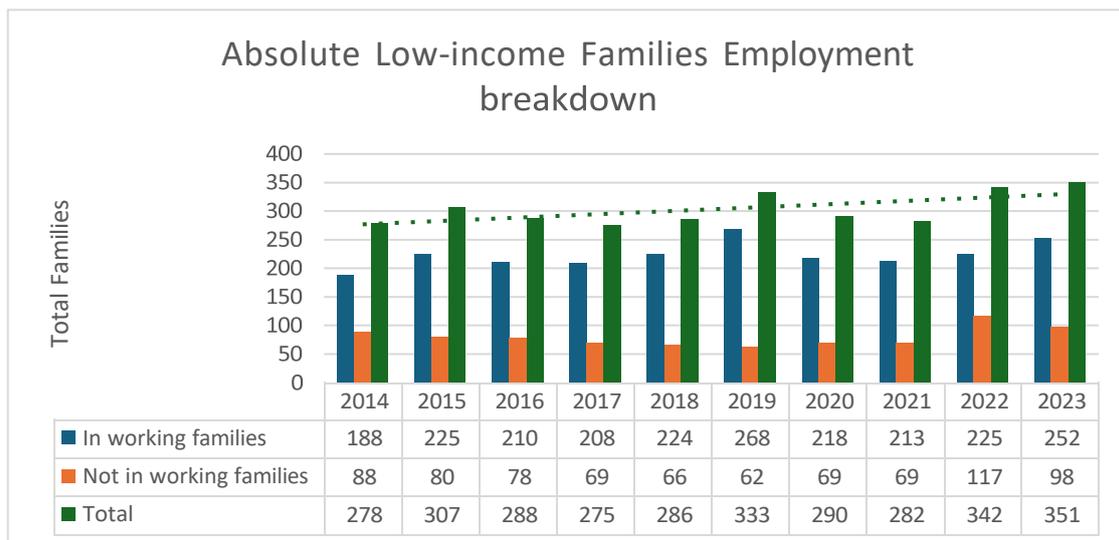
This approach defines Highland's transformational change journey, linking the WFWP to broader partnership improvements. It supports strategic investment in early prevention and fosters collaborative, sometimes non-transactional actions that influence cultural change and shift activity towards early prevention.

Identified need in Badenoch and Strathspey

Families living on a low income

It's challenging to access data for Badenoch and Strathspey as numbers are not statistically significant when looking at data sets, such as Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation. SIMD is less helpful at identifying the smaller pockets of deprivation found in more rural areas, compared to the larger pockets found in urban areas. However, we do know there are pockets of hidden poverty within areas of population in Badenoch and Strathspey.

Highland's 'Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 identified Badenoch and Strathspey has the third-highest proportion of families living on a low income among wards in Highland. The table below highlights the growth trajectory of low-income families living in Badenoch and Strathspey.



<https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk>

Lack of affordable housing

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation statistics from 2020 indicate 21% of people in Badenoch and Strathspey live in households that are overcrowded, the fifth highest ward in Highland.

Families with children who have additional support needs.

Kingussie High reported they have a high proportion of pupils identified as having additional support needs. They say there is a massive need in the area to support those pupils and their families. Education provided data from their information management system, SEEMIS, to support this view.

Count of SEEMIS reference	SIL					Grand Total
	1	2	3	4	(blank)	
Grantown	158	103	35	27	1	324
Kingussie	232	139	43	41	1	456
Grand Total	390	242	78	68	2	780

There are 780 High school pupils in Badenoch & Strathspey identified as having additional support needs.

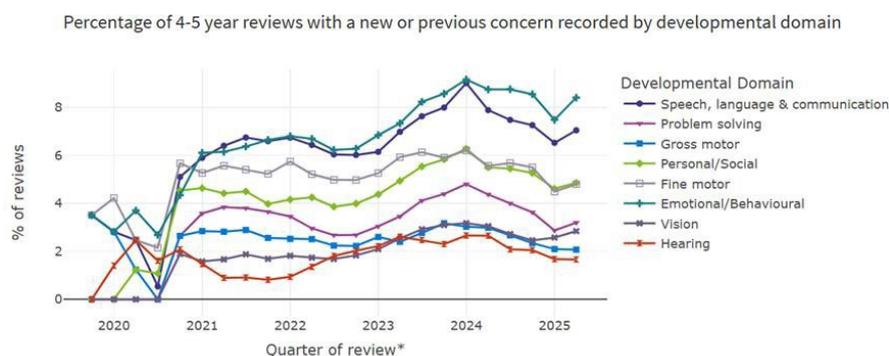
Fifty percent of pupils are identified as lower-level need at Staged intervention Level one.

Families with young children, 0-5 years

Data from Health Early Years Scotland and feedback from local nurseries indicated some families with young children are struggling to cope on a day-to-day basis, this can be around independent living skills, wellbeing or parenting.

Information below is based on developmental checks carried out by health visitors for children age 4-5 years, across Highland. There has been an increase in identified needs following Covid in 2021.

- Emotional and behavioural concerns was the highest developmental need for children.
- Second highest need was speech, language and communication.



What young people and adults tell us

Accessing the voices of young people and families directly has proved to be challenging. Using tools like questionnaires through schools and third sector have been limited in their success. The locality co-ordinator has used relationships with organisations who have existing relationships with families to gather views.

Burrall Legacy Trust [Burall Legacy Fund Engagement | NHS Highland Engagement Hub](#)

The Burrall Legacy trust is a charitable organisation with a focus on health and social care, linked to NHS Highland. In summer of 2025 the Trust carried out a series of engagement sessions in Aviemore and Kingussie. The findings below reflect the focus on a health and wellbeing agenda. The excerpts below are from the summary report highlighting thematic priorities for children and family health and wellbeing. Please use link above to access reports.

- Infant Feeding and Perinatal Support
- Mental Health Services for Children and Young People
- Community-Based Family and Youth Support
- Family Health and Lifestyle Support

Feedback under this theme highlights a clear need for more local, in-person support for young families, particularly around breastfeeding, perinatal mental health, and early years development. It was felt that there was an absence of nearby services, placing pressure on new parents, and there's a strong appetite for dedicated roles and peer-support models locally. For children and young people, mental health and inclusive wellbeing services are seen as essential, with schools and outdoor activities playing a key role. Community-based youth initiatives, especially in under-served areas like Newtonmore were also identified as a priority for future investment.

Burrell Legacy Fund Engagement, Summary Report 2025

Other common areas of need highlighted were identified for all age groups. The strongest theme arising was mental wellbeing, with loneliness and isolation being a common factor.

- Loneliness and social isolation, need to peer support and opportunities to socialise.
- Mental wellbeing
- Poverty Reduction
- Community hubs to facilitate connection and collaboration.
- More health and wellbeing spaces with access to the outdoors
- Support for young families

Community Planning Partnership

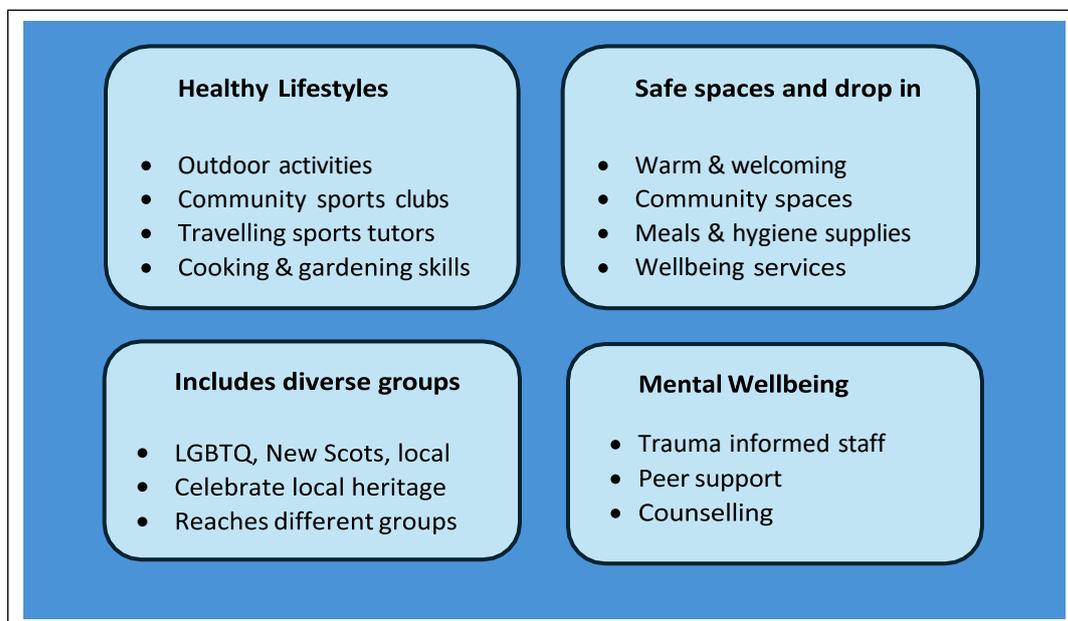
The community planning partnership undertook a survey with residents in 2022. The findings of the People theme broadly reflected themes highlighted in the Burrall trust engagement and through youth engagement.

- Spaces for people
- Support for cost of living
- Wellbeing support
- Staying socially connected
- Activities for young people
- Investment in community organisations

Young People

The Youth Development Officer for Badenoch and Strathspey proactively engaged groups of young people to ensure their voices are at the heart of delivery and design of services.

The feedback below involved sixty young people from Fuze youth groups and Kingussie high school about their health and wellbeing. *Please see Appendix 2.*



Aviemore neurodivergent group and Kingussie High Youth Forum – consultation

[Cairngorms National Park | Local Development Plan](#)

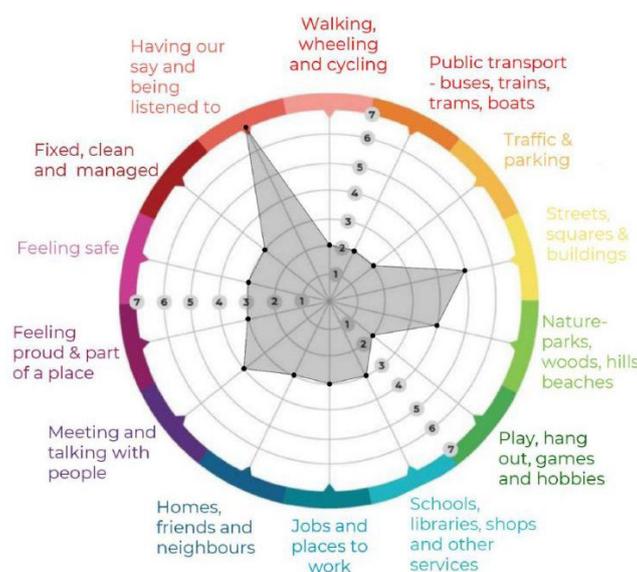
The Aviemore Neurodiversity support group is an empowering and inspiring platform for young people to share and develop ideas that allowed for them to conduct proactive participation in public engagement as well as exchange expand upon ideas between themselves, as well as provide a safe forum for youths to meet and socialise.

The group expressed appreciation for living within the Cairngorms National Park, highlighting the natural beauty, welcoming communities, and outdoor opportunities. Access to nature, walking routes, and recreation were identified as key strengths that enhance wellbeing and community pride. However, recurring challenges affect daily life and participation.

Lack of spaces for young people

The need for more youth-friendly spaces was a consistent theme. While organised activities and clubs are valued, young people identified a shortage of informal, free, and inclusive spaces that encourage social connection and active lifestyles. The lack of free use of sporting facilities was mentioned. A lack of free-swimming facilities, football pitches and youth golfing passes proved to be a barrier for outdoor recreation.

The group scored different themes relating to their lives, higher scores in the diagram below indicate areas of need.



Young people’s scoring of key themes and priorities

Element 1 – Overview of Badenoch and Strathspey projects

Funding Details

- Grant Size: Up to £10,000
- Total Grants at closing date: 8
- Total spent in Badenoch and Strathspey: £74,865.30
- Pending approval: Forest school project with Where the Wild Thing Are.

In this section, a synopsis of each of the projects funded to date under Element 1 is provided. Information pertaining to the Community Partnership Area(s) covered by the project and the amount awarded is also shown.

Able2Adventure – Young People’s Social Adventure Group Project

This project is to expand current delivery of the young people’s adventure group with a second group that is focused on sensory adventure activities. Meeting fortnightly, the group is open to young disabled people aged 14-25 in the Highlands, with the main area of delivery being Strathspey. The purpose of the group is to support young people with the transition from education into independent living focusing on building confidence, problem solving, creating social networks, making friends and having fun. Creating pathways to enable people to return as they move through different phases of life. Also offering a number of sessions to young people aged between 10-14 living in Strathspey, designed with the young person to help them develop confidence and build on their skills to have a positive educational experience.

Progress Update

Able to adventure has fostered strong relationships with schools and between the young people, with some moving on to join their adult peer support groups. Impact has been a growth in confidence in individual young people and social networks.

Cairngorms Pride

Community-led year-round LGBTQ+ advocacy organisation, Cairngorms Pride CIC is working to support queerness in people and in the planet. In partnership with the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, this new Diversity in Nature project seeks to create a two-part youth workshop to be delivered in 2 schools, run 3 whole-family-focused events at Highland Wildlife Park and to co-create a free to access digital resource which will live on the RZSS website linked to Cairngorms Pride for 24+ months at least. Central project themes will focus on queer ecology and queer equality – celebrating diversity in the natural world and in human societies.

Progress Update

Cairngorms Pride has a strong relationship with Highland Wildlife Park. The Element 1 project recently started, there have been challenges in being able to deliver workshops within schools,

mainly due to capacity issues. As a result, they have amended their approach to reaching young people and families, by linking with existing group provision through youth work and local organisations.

Enjoy-able Art

This project aims to provide art sessions to children and their families. It will cater for children and families with all needs to support and build confidence and improved wellbeing through art. These sessions will be participant led and can adapt as the need changes, bringing people together.

Progress Update

Enjoyable art has developed good relationships with four primary schools; they have been able to link with the children and families through their work within schools. Each child has a portfolio diary where they keep images of the work they have done each week, this is then shared with their parents at the end of the sessions. Completion of the portfolio provides a visual reminder of what the child has achieved, building confidence and a sense of worth.

Grantown YMCA Community Centre Youth Programme with Increased Accessibility

Expansion of current youth programme and soft play sessions to improve accessibility. Weekly youth activities and soft play sessions will be developed, serving as a safe space for young mums, lone parents, and diverse families by introducing a free breakfast to address food insecurity for those who also rely on the food bank. The project will support school refusers by increasing outreach efforts to include more community projects. It will also ensure that facilities are more fully accessible and inclusive by acquiring an evacuation chair and defibrillator and providing appropriate training for staff on its use.

Progress Update

The project finished in August; we are awaiting a progress update from YMCA.

In Real Life Education – Transition and Support Programme

Taking a trauma informed approach, offering targeted transition support for disadvantaged young people aged 14 to 20 in B&S and their families, designed to improve outcomes in education employability and community engagement. Core topics include personal development, mental and emotional wellbeing, digital and financial understanding.

Progress Update

IRL has been able to engage with young people who have found it difficult to engage with other services. The philosophy is for young people to try and not see things as a failure if it doesn't work out. IRL is holistic and young person-centred in approach, supporting and enabling young people to pursue a diverse range of interests from going running to volunteering in a bookshop. This has led to a couple of young people moving into employment, with most young people

engaging in volunteering opportunities. This has promoted a sense of self-worth, a sense of belonging to and contributing to their local community.

Scripture Union Scotland – Growing Together Project

This outdoor based intervention is for young people in Badenoch and Strathspey who are struggling to engage in school. The sessions, designed by participants and their families, create a safe space where confidence can grow and develop emotional awareness with the opportunity to re-engage with learning. The programme reduces stigma and builds wraparound support for families with the schools enabling early intervention and improved relationships with educational settings and their peers.

Progress Update

Sessions for young people started at the start of the school year, the resource has been fully utilised by local schools with all sessions for young people booked.

Wild In Mind – Wild Minds Project

Providing a wilderness therapeutic programme for families and children who attend Grantown Grammar. Taking a trauma informed approach improving self-esteem and improved emotional intelligence evidenced by impact report.

Progress Update

Wild in Mind has worked with individual young people, small groups and a family. They use a validated tool, Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire to measure impact.

Outcomes

- Improved emotional, social, and behavioural wellbeing.
- Increased pupil confidence and school engagement.
- Stronger family support networks.
- Clear evidence of progress through structured impact reporting

Case Study *names have been changed for confidentiality.*

Wild in Mind supported Brynn who is in S1 pupil, and his mum, Sandra, through weekly outdoor therapeutic sessions in Anagach Woods.

Initial sessions with Brynn and Sandra focused on building relationships, setting boundaries, and identifying what Brynn needed to help him thrive. He wanted to try new things, be more aware of how he was feeling. how he could recognise when he was engaging in risky behaviour and strategies to deal with this.

Brynn engaged enthusiastically, developing practical skills through making a bushcraft chair while also working on attention, focus, and emotional skills. Sandra has been supportive and actively involved, and the next steps include exploring new activities Brynn would like to try, with wild swimming proposed as a future plan for them.

Badenoch and Strathspey Element 2

Badenoch and Strathspey has a development session scheduled for Tuesday 27th January 2026. The session aims to agree project proposals for Element 2 with identified lead organisations who can plan and prepare for funding submissions to the Whole Family Wellbeing Programme.

Based on what the Local Partnership Network group knows about Badenoch and Strathspey. We will explore how we prioritise and achieve the following outcomes for families.

Outcomes

- Reduce the impact of poverty
- Build More confidence as a parent
- Improve Family wellbeing
- More opportunities for social connection & peer support

Target family groups

- Families who have low income
- Families with children who have Additional Support Needs
- Early years families

Element 2 proposals

Proposals should aim to be supporting community-led and family-centred approaches in homes and local settings. Please see below for some examples of proposed projects, other projects may be discussed as part of the LPNG development session.

- Outdoor safe space for young people and families, with supported sessions
- Develop Family hub model– either in one place or, mobile hub
- Family support service

Role of the Local Partnership Network Group

The role of the Local Partnership Network group is to identify need, share information on existing provision or, work collaboratively to develop provision to meet the needs of the local area.

Whilst Badenoch and Strathspey has a vibrant voluntary sector, many of the organisations are run by volunteers or, small community interest companies led by one person. Consequently, it is challenging for members of such organisations to regularly attend meetings or, have the capacity to contribute to the work of the LPNG.

The role of Locality co-ordinator is to provide support to the work of the group and link with member organisations and practitioners from statutory sector.

One of the challenges of the LPNG has been different members attending each meeting. This may be a reflection of different co-ordinators supporting the work of the group over the past two years and varying locations of meetings. Feedback from the group identified there had been a lot of discussion, but limited evidence of action.

Since September, an action tracker has been introduced as part of meeting notes and the development session aims to produce a clear plan of action with lead organisations identified. Members have been surveyed to assess whether they want to be core members or, be kept informed of developments. In order to keep an online padlet noticeboard has been developed to keep members informed of what's happening in the area.

Next Steps for 2026

- Development session to agree project proposals with lead organisations Jan
- Development of project proposals with submission to Whole Family Wellbeing Fund Mar
- Assessment of partnership proposals Apr
- Start of projects 18-24 months May/Jun
- Locality co-ordinator to provide business support and review progress at 3-6 months Sep-Dec

Appendix 2

Feedback involved 60 young people from Fuze youth groups

FEEDBACK FROM THE YOUTH OF BADENOCH AND STRATHSPEY*

- Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**
 - Peer support groups
 - Mobile or tele-counselling
 - Resilience and self-esteem workshops
 - Trauma informed staff training
- Physical Activity and Healthy Lifestyle Initiatives**
 - Outdoor-based activities
 - Community sports clubs or travelling instructors
 - Cooking and gardening projects using local produce
- Creative Arts & Expressive Therapies**
 - Local art and storytelling projects
 - Remote art therapy via video calls
 - Public art in rural spaces to reflect youth voices
- Safe spaces and drop-in services**
 - Youth-friendly community spaces with wellbeing services
 - On-site meals, hygiene supplies and informal support
 - Warm, welcoming environments during hard weather seasons
- Culturally appropriate and inclusive programs**
 - Support for rural LGBTQ+ youth, indigenous communities, migrant families
 - Celebrations and programs that reflect local heritage
 - Inclusion of rural-specific identities (e.g. farming families, isolated youth carers)

*Feedback gathered from approx. 60 young people via Fusion Youth Groups and Kingussie High School pupils about their health and wellbeing needs.