

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST REPORT

THE MARK SCOTT LEADERSHIP FOR LIFE AWARD

2020 – 2021



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE MARK SCOTT LEADERSHIP FOR LIFE AWARD

The Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award brings young people together from different socio-economic, religious and cultural backgrounds for a shared experience during their final year of school. The programme, usually delivered over a six-month period, starts with a challenging five-day Outward Bound residential course designed to develop pupils' personal skills and attributes, such as confidence, determination and the ability to work with others. Upon returning to school, they work in groups to identify, organise and deliver a project that benefits their local community. The programme provides a unique opportunity for young people to prepare for their next step onto higher education, training or employment and to make a positive contribution to society.

Due to the restrictions in place to help curb the spread of Covid-19, the delivery of the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award was significantly altered for 2020-21. The programme focussed on achieving the same outcomes, however the structure and format was re-designed to keep participants and instructors safe, and to abide by government guidelines. In particular, it was not possible to deliver the usual five-day residential course so a series of "Adventure Days" were provided as an alternative.

KEY MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN 2020-21

- **119** young people completed the Award.
- **44%** of the participants were from the **30% most deprived datazones in Scotland**.
- **37** schools were involved in the project from across the central belt of Scotland.
- **23** community projects were delivered.
- A virtual Award ceremony was held on **16th June 2021**.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAMME

Despite the changes to the programme in 2020-21, the Award has continued to develop young people's skills and aspiration, helping to prepare them for their transition into adulthood during a period of significant disruption and uncertainty.

The evaluation data shows that the participants improved their skills across the majority of outcome areas, including time management, emotional control and personal responsibility, although to a lesser degree than is usually seen. Outcomes related to social relationships appear to have been the most affected, which is unsurprising given the restrictions on social contact that were in place during the programme duration. The data also shows that the participants developed their aspiration and data collected from a very small number of participants indicates that the programme has positively impacted their wellbeing.

Evaluation of the lasting impact of the programme, which was carried out prior to the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, has continued to show a positive impact on participants' skills in the months and years following the Award, in particular their interpersonal skills and self-management.

THE MARK SCOTT LEADERSHIP FOR LIFE AWARD

BACKGROUND TO THE AWARD

The Outward Bound Trust and The Mark Scott Foundation have worked in partnership for 22 years to enable young people aged 17-18 to participate in The Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award. The Mark Scott Foundation was formed following the unprovoked sectarian murder of Mark Scott in 1995.

DELIVERY OF THE PROGRAMME IN 2020-21

Changes to the programme structure

Due to the restrictions in place to help curb the spread of Covid-19, the delivery of the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award was significantly altered for 2020-21. The programme focussed on achieving the same outcomes, however the structure and format was re-designed to keep participants and instructors safe, and to abide by government guidelines.

The Award took place over six months, rather than the 15-week period originally planned (due to further disruptions caused by Covid-19) and combined online sessions with in-person experiences where possible. The community project element took place mid-way through the programme following an extended introductory phase. An adventure element took place at the end of the programme through local "Adventure Days", during which participants took part in a number of different outdoor challenges to help build their confidence, determination and teamwork skills. Each programme element was designed with the outcomes in mind, to ensure that the overall programme continued to develop participants in all areas.

Participants worked together in groups of 6 (rather than the usual group of 12) to abide with government guidelines and mixing with pupils from other schools was limited. The diagram below outlines the structure of the programme in 2020-21.



Overview of the Introductory Phase

This phase took place over six weeks, during which participants were introduced to their teammates online and started to get to know each other. They were also introduced to a number of learning theories and models for understanding themselves and others, such as mindset theory, comfort zones, Maslow's hierarchy of needs and leadership and teamwork models. These formed a key part of their personal development throughout the programme. Finally, they worked together to select their community project.

A review carried out with the delivery team at the end of the programme, alongside interviews carried out with three of the participants, gives an indication of the extent to which this adapted

format was successful. The delivery team agreed that the online format of the introductory phase presented both opportunities and challenges, but that overall it provided an effective start to the programme. Bringing groups together online made it easier to run regular meetings and made the programme more accessible for those who struggled with social interaction.

“I feel like everything was organised as well as it could be online, I just feel like everything was planned out and we had enough time to create the projects that we're working on along with schoolwork. We met every Wednesday, so it was nice to balance with schoolwork, it wasn't stressful. It was just like a meeting with friends, and also doing something productive so I found it worked.”

*“I think **the positives [of online sessions] were the fact that it was easier to coordinate.** Of course, at the time it would be harder for people from Edinburgh and Glasgow to meet together often, so I feel like it made that part of the programme much easier and available to everyone.”*

The videos and online learning materials were well received by participants and having them available online meant that participants could access them on an ongoing basis and at their own pace. This helped to strengthen their understanding of the learning theories and models that form a key part of the programme.

*“It was **interesting to learn about people overcoming barriers**, which showed us the positive effects of doing things despite them being scary so I feel like that **helped us to not procrastinate as much as we should.** We got shown quite an interesting video about that, that there is not much benefit and procrastinating and that, like we all do it, and it's just something that should be overcome so it doesn't stop us from doing what we want to do and where we want to be, and who we want to become. So that was really helpful.”*

Overview of the Community Project Phase

The community projects took on a different focus to previous years because of the restrictions that were in place around social contact and accessibility to certain organisations. Despite these restrictions, the young people were particularly responsive to community needs and creative with their project ideas, and this element of the programme was, overall, particularly successful. Many were delivered online using social media to raise awareness of particular topics such as caring for the environment, Fairtrade and mental health.

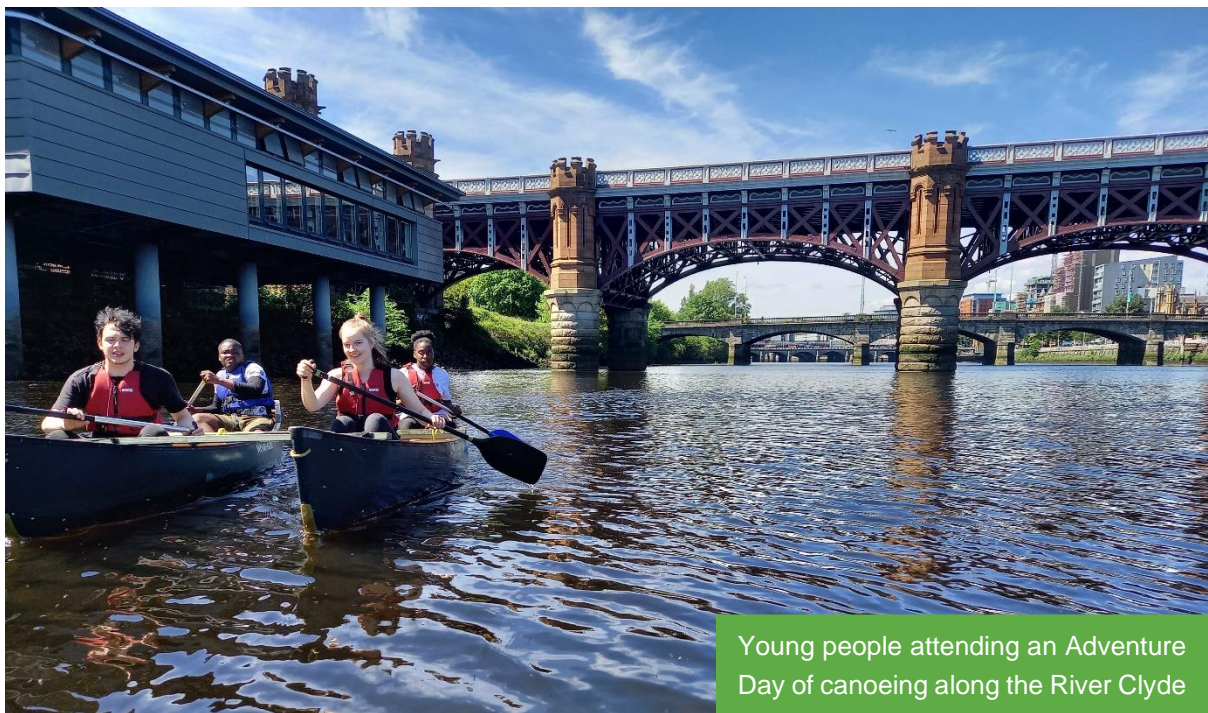


Almost 50% of the projects were focused around providing **health and wellbeing benefits** to community members, which is a significant increase compared with previous years, and indicates the participants' desire to respond to the needs of their local communities during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Example community project focusing on wellbeing

Overview of the Adventure Phase

A number of “Adventure Days” were offered to participants towards the end of the programme, to provide them with the opportunity to further develop their skills through challenging outdoor activities. 98 of the 119 participants who completed the Award attended one or more Adventure Days which were delivered across the Central Belt. The days were planned in line with restrictions on travel out with Local Authority areas and as such were delivered close to where the young people lived, giving them an opportunity to experience the green spaces close to home as well as taking part in activities in the heart of the city.



Young people attending an Adventure Day of canoeing along the River Clyde

Challenges to programme delivery

Recruitment was delayed for a number of reasons. Differing rules across schools regarding permission to take part in extra-curricular programmes meant that there was a lot of confusion amongst young people around whether they were allowed to attend, and some schools were actively encouraging S5 and S6 pupils *not* to go into school, causing further challenges to engaging and recruiting participants. A large number of young people, in particular male participants, dropped out of the programme either before starting or during the introductory phase, meaning that replacement participants had to be quickly found.

There were a number of issues that made delivery of the programme itself and achievement of the outcomes challenging. Firstly, the requirement to carry out the introductory phase online was a barrier for some young people because they didn't have access to the internet or lacked access to a computer (for instance sharing a laptop with siblings). It became apparent that the home lives of some of the young people were very challenging as they lacked the space and privacy to attend and engage effectively with online meetings (for instance sharing study space with other siblings, or coping with lots of distractions at home), which was exacerbated by stay-at-home guidance as a result of Covid-19. Many young people did not want to use their cameras when joining the online meetings, even at the end of the project, and while it's unclear whether

this was caused by a lack of personal confidence or not wanting their home environment to be visible to their team members, it made it difficult for others in their group to build effective relationships with them. Finally, many had also been affected by Covid-19 through illness, bereavement or needing to care for family members, which put additional pressure on them in practical and emotional terms and interfered with their ability to engage with the programme.

EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The programme was evaluated in largely the same way as in previous years, using the same pre/post questionnaires. The timing of the questionnaires was adjusted slightly to fit with the new format of the programme, and some of the statements that related to social mixing were removed, as the programme would have only minimal impact in this area.

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) was used for a second year running with a small sample of participants in order to assess the impact of the programme on their mental well-being.

Three interviews were also carried out with participants after completing the programme. Fewer participants agreed to be interviewed than anticipated, due to the timing of the end of the programme coinciding with final year exams.

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

We continued to monitor the participants' gender, socio-economic background, religious background and ethnicity in order to assess the extent to which the programme is engaging with young people from a cross-section of Scottish society. The data indicates that, overall, the greatest variety continues to be in the participants' socio-economic background. There is less variety in the participants' religious background and ethnicity. All profile data is presented in charts 1 – 7 in the Appendix.

Gender

The Award continues to attract a higher number of female participants than male participants. In 2020-21, 70% were female, 28% were male, and 2% were non-binary.

Socio-economic background

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data was used to assess the socio-economic background of the participants based on their home postcode¹. In 2020-21, application numbers for the programme were far lower than normal, meaning that the delivery team needed to accept applicants from a wider range of backgrounds. **44%** of participants came from the **30% most deprived datazones** in Scotland, which is slightly lower than in the previous year (47%).

Religious background

The programme recruits young people with varying religious backgrounds. In 2020-21, **51%** of participants described themselves as having '**no religion**', which is higher than the previous year (45%). **19%** were **Roman Catholic** and **16%** were of **other Christian** denominations or Christian but of no denomination. The **largest non-Christian group** continues to be **Muslim (10%)**, which is slightly lower than the previous year (12%).

Ethnicity

The majority of participants were white (75%), which is slightly lower than in the previous year (76%). A quarter of participants were from other ethnic groups, the most significant of which was Asian (13%). The percentage of Black and Asian participants has steadily increased since 2012, indicating that the Award is reaching a more diverse cross-section of Scottish society.

Religious profile of participating schools

Just under a third of the schools involved in the programme were Roman Catholic in 2020-21, which is the roughly the same as the previous year.

¹ 2016 SIMD data was used to conduct this analysis.

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM 2020-21 EVALUATION

The Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award aims to achieve the following five outcomes:

1. **Participants become more confident individuals and independent learners**
2. **Participants develop teamwork and project management skills, and an awareness of how to lead others**
3. **Participants develop awareness of, and develop greater respect for, others from different socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds**
4. **Participants develop a sense of social responsibility by delivering projects that benefit their local community**
5. **Community members have a positive experience by taking part in the participants' projects**

The evaluation data collected during the 2020-21 programme indicates that the **majority of outcomes were achieved**, despite the significant changes that were made to the programme. **Improved scores** were recorded across **the majority of measures used**; however the increases were **smaller than usually recorded** and a smaller percentage of participants recorded an increase than usual. This was particularly the case for measures related to **interpersonal skills** and **social trust**, which is unsurprising given the restrictions placed on social contact during the programme and the absence of the residential course.

Overall, the work that the delivery team did to provide alternative opportunities for the participants to learn and develop, and to support them during a very challenging period, was very successful and has helped to ensure this year's cohort of young people are prepared for their transition into adulthood and the next phase of their lives.

PARTICIPANTS BECOME MORE CONFIDENT INDIVIDUALS AND INDEPENDENT LEARNERS

Feedback collected at the end of the programme indicates that the young people increased their **confidence** and **awareness of their abilities** through each element of the programme, in particular the community project. This is supported by the questionnaire data, which shows improvements in **emotional control** and **time management** for the majority of participants, although to a lesser extent than in previous years (see Figure 1). Examples of the young people's feedback are included below and an in-depth case example showing the impact of the Award on one individual is presented on the following page.

"I feel like Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award has improved my confidence and allowed me to do things I wouldn't normally do." **Rebecca, Smithycroft Secondary School (SIMD decile 1)**

"I've become a more confident person which will benefit me with future interviews." **Erin, St Paul's High School (SIMD decile 1)**

"It has made me feel more confident about myself as I have found new qualities in myself." **Natasha, Clydebank High School (SIMD decile 5)**

"It has benefited me by overcoming my shyness. Also, building up my skills like confidence and teamwork." **Rahim, Holyrood Secondary School (SIMD decile 4)**

Figure 1: % of participants who recorded improved skills at the end of the programme against outcome “Participants become more confident individuals and independent learners”

| Participants’ skills in: | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Emotional control | 65% | 61% | 55% |
| Time management | 58% | 64% | 53% |

CASE EXAMPLE: MARYSIA, AGE 17, CASTLEBRAE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

*“At the start of the Award, I felt really stressed. I get really stressed when I meet new people and it was hard for me to share my ideas with the group in the beginning because I didn't really believe in myself. However I feel like **the Award provided me with a safe space to chat to people my age**, and to get to know more people, and I feel like that really helped me to have that socialising side. I feel like my **confidence improved**, and I feel like I've become **much more creative**, even just through the project, and working with people on that online, like we haven't ever had to do that because we always relied on meeting people.*

***I felt like I wasn't very confident [before] and I wouldn't really ask for help**, and I would try to do things independently even if maybe that wasn't the best way to go. So, I saw that change in a positive way. I feel like that will help me in the future because entering higher education may be something that will need much more support because maybe my subjects will be harder and a higher level. So, if I didn't learn how to communicate and network with others then maybe I would struggle for longer, whereas now I've gained much more confidence speaking to others and I can reach out for help. That will probably go into people surrounding me, I will be able to help them much more with confidence.*

*Through the Award I've met another person who is interested in studying psychology so it's kind of motivated me to think there's lots of interesting and lovely people that I will find in university while studying, whereas beforehand, I was really actually quite stressed because as I said, **I struggled with socialising with people my age. The project has kind of opened my eyes to thinking that everybody's stressed at the beginning** so there's no point of overthinking and stressing unnecessarily. Whereas, when everybody's in the same position you just kind of have to be yourself. So I think the Award has helped me consolidate that fact.”*



Young people from Paisley during an Adventure Day on Kenmure Hill, Castle Semple Country Park.

PARTICIPANTS DEVELOP TEAMWORK AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS, AND AN AWARENESS OF HOW TO LEAD OTHERS

Social confidence and getting to know new people has continued to stand out strongly through the qualitative feedback as a key outcome of the Award, despite the restrictions in place on social mixing, with participants describing how they benefited from working with people who are new to them, solving problems as a team, leading others and communicating ideas more confidently.

However the questionnaire data indicates that they were less likely to develop the more specific skills of communication and leadership, which are a strong part of the residential course. Significantly fewer participants recorded an improvement in these skills compared with previous years (see Figure 2) and this highlights the important role that the residential course plays in developing these skills. Examples of the young people's feedback are included below and an in-depth case example showing the impact of the Award on one individual is presented on the following page.

"It has helped me to become more confident when meeting new people, shown me how to effectively work in groups together and has taught me a lot about different situations and things going wrong." **Sonia, St Roch's Secondary School (SIMD decile 1)**

"I have gained more confidence in myself and with sharing my thoughts and opinions. Also with pushing others to get their part of the work done on time in a respectful and kind way."
May, King's Park Secondary School (SIMD decile 3)



Young people from Cumbernauld work together on a problem-solving task during an Adventure Day at Auchinstarry Quarry in Kilsyth.

"I have benefited a lot from the programme in terms of new skills I've gained. I have learnt more leadership skills and I know more information on how to function and work better in a team." **Jo, St Andrew's Secondary School (SIMD decile 2)**

"My communications and teamwork skills greatly improved especially from having to work with people online that I had never met and I was able to confidently put forward my suggestions."
Marcus, St Peter the Apostle High School (SIMD decile 2)

Figure 2: % of participants who recorded improved skills at the end of the programme against outcome “Participants develop teamwork and project management skills, and an awareness of how to lead others”

| Participants’ confidence when: | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Meeting new people | 49% | 55% | 44% |
| Putting ideas forward | 50% | 56% | 35% |
| Working with others in a team | 41% | 56% | 24% |
| Being the leader of a team | 52% | 55% | 38% |

| Participants’ skills in: | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Taking responsibility | 67% | 62% | 49% |
| Problem-solving | 53% | 57% | 46% |

CASE EXAMPLE: JENNIFER, AGE 18, CLYDEBANK HIGH SCHOOL

*“There was a couple of problems at first in terms of communicating but as we got to know each other better, that helped a lot. I’ve had experience of teamwork in school, but **working with people I didn’t particularly know, that was a new skill from [the Award], talking to new people and becoming more confident in terms of speaking more clearly.** I feel as though I’ve learned a lot from working on the Award and now, I’m much better in terms of speaking and talking to people. I think it was working with our group and our instructor, so like when we were discussing on the Zoom calls about [the project], I feel that helped me.*

*I think **growing up, you’re gonna experience new people and new things in terms of either in a job, or university, wherever you go. I find that when you’re working with other people, that will help me and I learn from them, that’s what I had from the Award.***



Young people from Glasgow work together on a communication and problem-solving task

And I learned more about the Award and what it stood for, which made me glad to be a part of it, because it was about a message and bringing a community together, and it made me realise how much an impact a person can have on something, even if it’s just a little something it does really help a lot.”

PARTICIPANTS DEVELOP AWARENESS OF, AND DEVELOP GREATER RESPECT FOR, OTHERS FROM DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUNDS

This outcome was not evaluated using the usual measures because it was felt that there would be far fewer opportunities for participants to meet others from different backgrounds due to the restrictions placed on mixing of pupils between schools. However, the participants' end-of-programme feedback indicates that many of them benefited from this where it was possible, and from the opportunity to learn about those from different backgrounds through their community project. Examples of the young people's feedback are included below.

"I've gained some leadership skills which will help me with my future career and I've become more communicative with people outside my social circle." **Maria, St Paul's High School (SIMD decile 1)**

"I feel more confident than ever before and also fulfilled due to helping out another group of people that I had little past experiences with." **Josh, Knightswood Secondary School (SIMD decile 3)**

"I have grown in my confidence since the start of the Mark Scott Leadership Award by being pushed to interact and work with other pupils from Edinburgh." **Anya, St Mungo's Academy (SIMD decile 1)**

"I have gained teamwork skills and communication skills with members of society from different schools and different areas and met friends who I will keep in contact with in the future." **Clare, St Andrew's Secondary School (SIMD decile 2)**

PARTICIPANTS DEVELOP A SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BY DELIVERING PROJECTS THAT BENEFIT THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY

The evaluation continued to assess participants' enjoyment of their community project, understanding of the needs of their local community, intentions to stay involved with their community organisation in the future and intentions to volunteer in the future. The evaluation also measured their levels of social trust to understand if the programme had an effect in these areas as a result of their community involvement.

The community project element of the programme proved to be particularly successful this year as participants were forced to think more creatively about a project that could both benefit their local community *and* could be carried out whilst following guidelines around social contact. **94% of participants** agreed that they **enjoyed the opportunity to make a difference to the lives of other people in their community** (98% in previous year) and **75% agreed** that they had a **better understanding of their community's needs** (81% in previous year). **51%** said they plan to **stay involved with the organisation they supported during their project** (53% in previous year) and 66% said they were more likely to get involved in volunteering in the future.

However, significantly fewer participants were more likely to agree that they **could have an impact on the world around them** or that **they could make a difference when working with others** (see Figure 3), which is possibly indicative of the ongoing restrictions and disempowerment felt by many young people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Examples of the young people's feedback is included below.

“Not only have I met friends, I have helped society in dealing with their mental health and put ideas and contributions forward to help people get help.” Jane, St Andrew's Secondary School (SIMD decile 2)

“It has made me realise the importance of giving back. I think that the women and families we helped were really grateful, it definitely impacted everyone in a positive way, including me.” Rochelle, St Roch's Secondary School (SIMD decile 2)

“Our project allowed people around our age group to see that over the lockdowns and covid that they were not alone in their struggles and that there were other teens like them facing similar problems. It also allowed insight into how our teachers had to work around restrictions.” Samuel, St Peter the Apostle High School (SIMD decile 2)

“We have hopefully educated more people about Fairtrade and what they can do to help as well as making members of the community realise how important of a subject it is and how much we (as teenagers) care.” Marta, Douglas Academy (SIMD decile 4)

“I think the Award helped me find more awareness about who needs help and what you can do to help them. I remember at the start of the Award, we were all discussing what to do and how we should help people, and the main point of one of our in-person sessions was that we should ask the individual affected what they need, rather than give it to them [without knowing]. So, at first we were planning on like giving little boxes to the homeless, just filled with like clothing items and snacks and so on, but we didn't properly think about what they want, and what would benefit them personally.” Rimi, Cleveden Secondary School (SIMD decile 3)

Figure 3: % of participants who improved at the end of the programme against outcome “Participants develop a sense of social responsibility by delivering projects that benefit their local community”

| Participants' belief that: | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 |
|--|------------|------------|------------|
| Most people can be trusted | 32% | 30% | 32% |
| They are able to have an impact on the world around them | 43% | 54% | 29% |
| They can make a difference when working with others | 39% | 47% | 14% |
| Overall measure for social trust | 59% | 71% | 40% |

COMMUNITY MEMBERS HAVE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE BY TAKING PART IN THE PARTICIPANTS' PROJECTS

Almost 50% of the projects were focused on health and wellbeing, which is significantly higher than in previous years. On the following page is an analysis of the beneficiary groups and type of benefits achieved through the delivery of the project, and on the following pages we provide two examples of projects as described by the young people involved.

Figure 4: Analysis of community beneficiaries against outcome “Community members have a positive experience by taking part in the participants’ projects”

| <i>Target group</i> | <i>Percentage of community projects working with this target group*</i> |
|---|---|
| Wider local community members | 34% (11) |
| Nursery / primary school children | 28% (9) |
| Elderly people | 22% (7) |
| People who are homeless, ill or vulnerable in society | 16% (5) |

* Number totals more than 23 because more than one target group was identified for some projects.

Figure 5: Analysis of benefits against outcome “Community members have a positive experience by taking part in the participants’ projects”

| <i>Intended benefit</i> | <i>Percentage of community projects with a particular intended benefit*</i> |
|--|---|
| Health & well-being (e.g. mental health, healthy eating workshops) | 47% (15) |
| Entertainment (e.g. music and social activities) | 22% (7) |
| Quality of local environment (e.g. clearing & renovating an outdoor play area or garden space) | 13% (4) |
| Education and Awareness (e.g. around social issues such as homelessness or the climate crisis) | 13% (4) |
| Quality of Life (e.g. furniture and equipment or redecorating an indoor space) | 6% (2) |

* Number totals more than 23 because more than one benefit was identified for some projects.

CASE EXAMPLE: SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH ELDERLY PEOPLE IN CARE HOMES

One group of young people from Dumbarton created a letter exchange between vulnerable and isolated people in the community and primary and secondary school pupils. They set it up so that it could run itself after the project ended. Over 90 people were reached. One of the young people described her experience of being involved in the project:

*“We were writing letters to care homes. **We wanted to do something with care homes to try and combat loneliness, especially due to the pandemic** most of these people haven't been outside to see any of their family. So we thought that contacting them would be a good idea. Initially, we were kind of gathering options between video calls and phone calls and letters, but I think with old people they appreciated the letters more.*

*[For me] I think **it was the sense of achievement that I did something that helped.** And the fact that I could write letters to someone that would maybe help ease their loneliness. Especially right now where we can't really see anyone, it really takes a toll on your mental health. And it can make you feel down and when you're out and about, you're able to do more activities, whereas when you're sitting at home you get bored easily and you've got a lot more time to yourself with not much to do, especially in a care home you're not really allowed to go out and interact with others, just due to the higher level of risk."*



CASE EXAMPLE: SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUNG PEOPLE

One group of young people from Glasgow produced videos, podcasts and articles on personal coping strategies to support your mental health. One of the young people described her experience of being involved in the project:

"Our project was about mental health and wellbeing. We chose that because it just seemed to be quite a popular topic amongst our group. I feel like [this year] we've all gone through an extremely difficult situation that we've never been in so I feel like it would be important to talk about mental health and people struggling just to show that everybody manages their mental health in a completely different way. That's why we tried to make it public and so that people can see that actually, I may be the same age or from the same country as someone, however we manage our mental health in a completely differently way and that's perfectly fine.

We decided to create videos of ourselves showing strategies in which we look after our mental health during the pandemic. So, for some people that has been exercise, for some people that would have been reading or going out on walks. We all recorded ourselves doing something that improves our mental health, and we put that into one video and tried to circulate it on the social media of our school."

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE PROJECTS



This group painted welcoming designs onto canvas bags that were given to Refuweege - a community-led charity that provides a warm welcome in Scotland to people who have been forced to flee their homes.



This group produced resources on Instagram and posted regularly with help and advice on how they have been coping during lockdown. They also produced presentations for their school website on health and wellbeing.



This group worked with St. Paul's Academy to renovate a garden in the S1 area of the school to brighten up the area for when pupils transition into the school.

WIDER IMPACT OF THE AWARD – SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE’S TRANSITION INTO ADULTHOOD

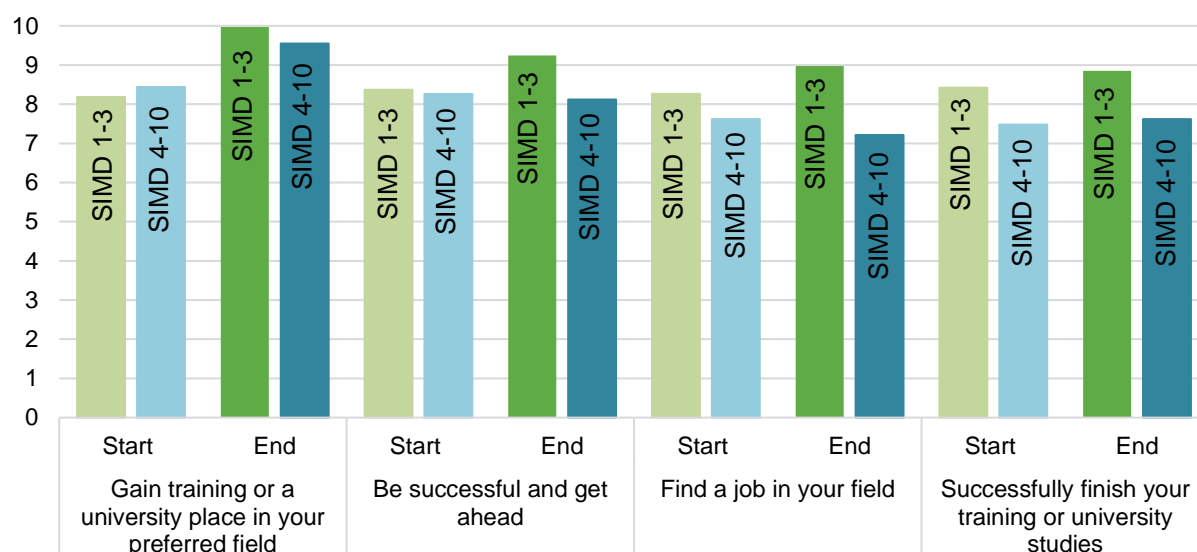
The Award has continued to build the aspiration of the young people who participated, which is a particularly important outcome following the 18 months of disruption that they have experienced and the likely long-term effects of the pandemic on their mental health, wellbeing and future life chances. Overall, 65% of participants recorded an increase in their aspiration at the end of the programme and, as was seen in the previous two years, a greater level of impact was recorded for participants from more deprived socio-economic backgrounds. 76% of participants from SIMD 1-3 increased their score for aspiration by the end of the programme, compared with 57% of participants from SIMD 4-10 (see Figures 6 & 7). This gives a good indication that the Award makes a positive contribution to improving the life chances young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Figure 6: % of participants who improved at the end of the programme against outcome “Wider impact of the Award – supporting young people’s transition into adulthood”

| Participants’ confidence that they will: | All participants | Participants from SIMD 1-3 (n=34) | Participants from SIMD 4-10 (n=42) |
|---|------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Gain training or a university place in your preferred field | 58% | 62% | 55% |
| Successfully finish your training or university studies | 33% | 47% | 24% |
| Find a job in your field | 41% | 47% | 36% |
| Be successful and get ahead | 47% | 50% | 43% |
| Overall measure of aspiration | 65% | 76% | 57% |

*“I think [the biggest impact] was the community project and **finding it in myself to actually work with people, because that’s what happens [when you grow up] you meet new people and work in a team**, and I learned a lot of skills from that. I can actually learn from others which I think is important, so it has made me learn a lot from that. At the start of the project, when everyone had come together, one girl was really organised at being sure everyone was doing what they were supposed to be doing, and everyone was on track. That inspired me to actually speak up more and be that person, to be like her as well. **I think if I’m working in a job or doing volunteering I feel as though I can help and use that energy to be like ‘what are we doing’, and I can go to work instead of procrastinating and dwelling on it, and so we can be on track and reach the deadline.**” Jennifer, Clydebank High School*

Figure 7: Educational and employment aspirations by SIMD decile grouping



THE IMPACT OF THE AWARD ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL WELL-BEING

BACKGROUND

In 2019-20, we carried out a pilot study of the impact of the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award on the mental wellbeing of participants. The findings indicated a positive impact in comparison to a control group of young people who did not participate, particularly for those with low wellbeing at the start of the programme.

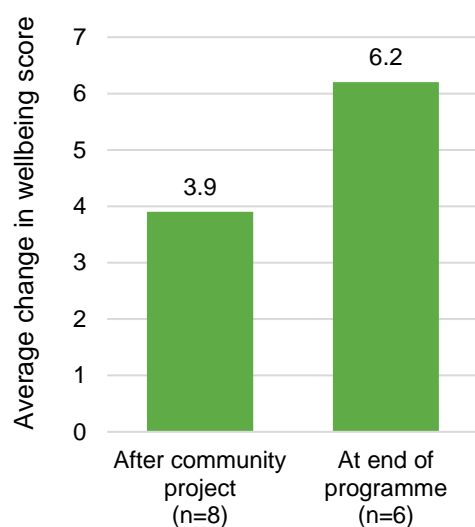
We chose to use the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)² again this year with a small cohort of participants to measure the effect of the programme on their mental wellbeing. They completed the questionnaire at four time points over the duration of the programme. The sample of participants who completed the surveys was smaller than anticipated because some of the young people left the programme early. Eight participants completed a questionnaire both at the start of the programme and after completing their community project, and six of those completed a final questionnaire at the end of the programme. Because of the very small sample sizes, the results should be treated with caution.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The average score for the group increase from 47.2 at the start of the programme to 51.1 immediately after completing their community project, meaning that an increase of 3.9 points in the participants' mental wellbeing was recorded (an increase of 3 points is considered to be a meaningful positive change). At the end of the programme, an increase of 6.2 points was recorded. Overall, these results indicate that the programme had a positive impact on the young people's mental wellbeing.

² <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/sci/med/research/platform/wemwbs>

Figure 8: Average improvement in mental wellbeing of participants



*“I think the pandemic has affected my wellbeing in some negative ways in that I struggle to manage my stress, I’ve always been called a “stress ball” because I always panic in stressful situations. So that was a really big struggle for me with school with everything that had to be done without my support network that I usually find in school, so I struggled with that. However, I feel like **this project has really helped me to look at these stress levels and my problems, and really find coping strategies.** I feel like it’s come from the Award in general, and along with the community project.” Marysia, age 17, Castlebrae Community High School*

THE LASTING IMPACT OF THE AWARD

METHODOLOGY

For the fourth year running, we have evaluated the lasting impact of the programme on participants 6, 18 and 30 months (2.5 years) after completing the Award. This year, 48 participants completed an online questionnaire: 31 six months on; 12 eighteen months on; and 5 30 months on. Participants’ survey responses were compared with those they gave to previous surveys in order to assess the lasting effect of the Award on their skills and behaviours.

In order to understand the importance of the Award in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic, questions were also included in this year’s follow-up surveys asking about the extent to which taking part in the Award had influenced specific behaviours likely to help individuals to cope better with the pandemic. 10 statements were developed by drawing on answers from The Outward Bound Trust’s Covid-19 Survey regarding how young people’s Outward Bound course has helped them with various changes to everyday life caused by the pandemic.

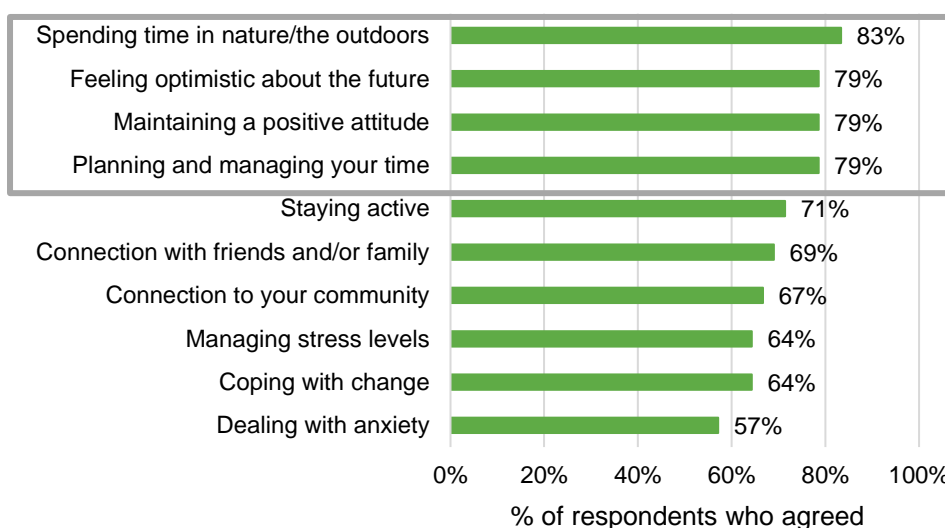
HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE TO THRIVE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The survey findings indicate that the experience of taking part in the Award has helped previous participants to cope more effectively with the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, most notably through **spending time in nature, feeling optimistic about the future, maintaining a positive attitude and planning and managing their time.** Participants were less likely to agree that taking part in the Award had helped them with issues such as dealing with anxiety, coping with change or managing stress, although the majority of respondents still agreed that the programme had helped them with these. Building on the findings from the pilot evaluation we carried out into

the effect of the Award on young people’s mental well-being, these findings indicate that the programme positively influences their well-being well into the future in a number of different ways.

Figure 9: % of respondents who agreed that taking part in the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award helped them with ways to cope with the Covid-19 pandemic (n=42)

"To what extent has your participation in the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award helped you cope with the following aspects of life during the Covid-19 pandemic:"



ONGOING RELEVANCE OF THE AWARD: HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE A POSITIVE TRANSITION INTO ADULT LIFE

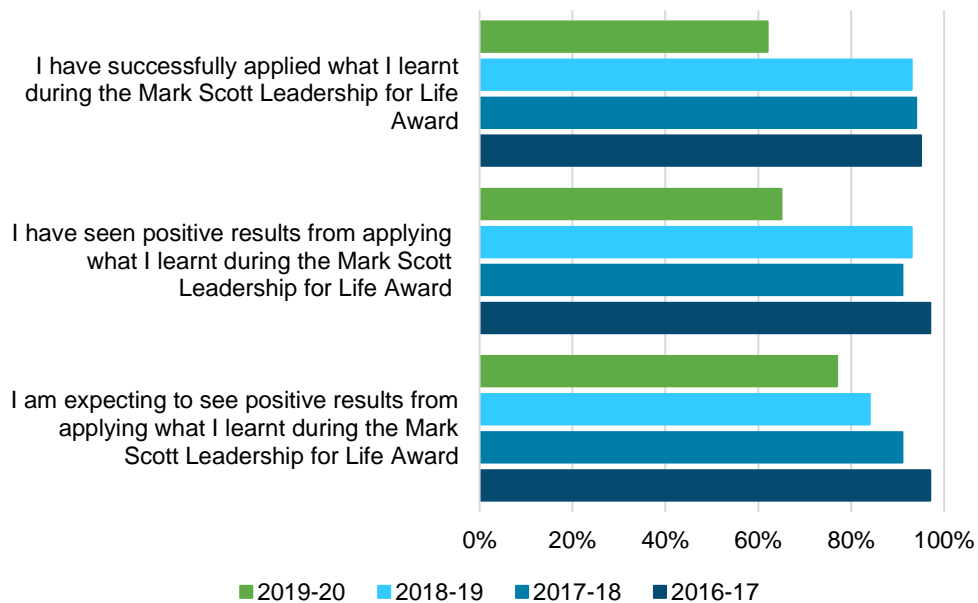
A number of research studies carried out into the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have shown that young people have been disproportionately affected, through disruption to their education, job losses and an alarming increase in mental health concerns. Many young people feel their lives are ‘on hold’ and fear they will never achieve their goals in life. One young person described her situation in her follow-up survey:

“I got offered a job as Resident Assistant at my university, although they wanted me to move into halls. Due to the pandemic situation I had to decline. Honestly, due to the pandemic I feel the confidence I'd gained doing the Mark Scott Award has faded. I hope once the world gets back on its feet I'll find that spark again, but I'm not going to lie - I'm struggling a lot to feel like I have any ground to 'stand my ground' with right now.” Eilidh, 18 months after completing the Award

The follow-up surveys support these findings in a number of ways. The young people who completed the Award in April 2020, right at the start of the pandemic, report being significantly less able to apply what they learnt during the programme since completing the Award compared with previous cohorts of participants. **62% of participants** agreed that they had been **able to apply their skills since completing the Award** and **77% were hoping to see positive results from doing so in the future**, whereas 90% or more of respondents usually report being able to apply their skills (see Figure 10 below). Previous participants regularly describe applying and further building their confidence and skills through social mixing at university, working with others







on projects, leading tasks and making the most of new opportunities, so it is no surprise that the most recent cohort of participants are struggling to apply their skills as they face ongoing disruption to college and university courses, enforced home-working and fewer job opportunities.

Figure 10: Extent to which participants have been able to apply their learning from the Award, compared by programme year



Despite the challenges young people are currently facing, the survey findings and feedback from previous participants indicate that the Award continues to have a lasting positive impact on their skills, in particular on their self-management, as they continue to record higher scores for **taking responsibility, time management, emotional control** and **problem-solving** (see Figure 11 below). However, the results collected from the 2019-20 participants suggest that they are losing confidence, in particular in their interpersonal skills, most likely due to ongoing social distancing restrictions. The percentage of participants continuing to record increased confidence in these skills, specifically in **putting forward ideas, working with others in a team** and **leading a team** is lower than in previous years. The sample size for these results is very small, however, and the findings should be treated with caution. We will continue to monitor the progress of this particular cohort of participants in order to assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on their confidence and aspirations for the future.

Figure 11: % of participants recording improved skills 6 months after completing the programme; 2019-20 results compared with previous programme years

| | 2019-20 programme | Previous programme years |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Self-management skills | | |
|  Time management | 64% (n=22) | 67% (n=256) |
|  Taking responsibility | 61% (n=23) | 69% (n=260) |
|  Emotional control | 64% (n=22) | 68% (n=256) |
|  Problem-solving | 74% (n=23) | 67% (n=259) |
| Interpersonal skills | | |
|  Confidence to meet new people | 58% (n=24) | 64% (n=262) |
|  Confidence to work with others in a team | 42% (n=24) | 55% (n=262) |
| Confidence to be the leader of a team | 54% (n=24) | 65% (n=261) |
| Confidence to put their ideas forward | 58% (n=24) | 64% (n=262) |

FEEDBACK ON IMPROVED SOCIAL CONFIDENCE AND INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

“I see myself more open to approach people and try harder to make a good first impression.”

Nadia, 6 months after completing the Award

“I have found that when working in groups at university, especially during the pandemic over zoom where it can be difficult to form connections, I have found myself taking lead of the discussion [sic] in breakout rooms and putting forward my ideas to start the conversation which is not something I would’ve done before Mark Scott.”

Caitlin, 18 months after completing the Award

FEEDBACK ON IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

“It helped me to do more things outside of my comfort zone, for example I did a 6 month crash course in MMA at a martial arts gym in Glasgow and obtained a great new hobby.” **Karl, 2.5 years after completing the Award**

“One of the main skills I took away for MSLFL was the confidence to meet and work with new people. I also learned a lot about maintaining a positive attitude and regularly tell people about PMA [positive mental attitude].” **Natalie, 2.5 years after completing the Award**

“Thanks to MSLFLA, I was able to reach out to seek help for my mental health. This may seem like a small thing. But as an ethnic minority it is beyond taboo to do so, which left me to deal on my own being suicidal from 11-17. Now, since MSLFLA lead me to trust others and want to instill growth, I was able to seek help. I finally feel able to help myself and have healthy coping mechanisms in place.” **Amira, 18 months after completing the Award**

FEEDBACK ON ABILITY TO ADAPT TO UNIVERSITY & ORGANISE STUDIES

“I have been able to apply these skills when organising and setting up my university life. These skills allowed me to gain the confidence to aid others in my classes and to ask for help when and if necessary.” **Simon, 6 months after completing the Award**

“After taking part in the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award, I have seen a very noticeable increase in my confidence, my ability to undertake large projects and ability to handle stressful situations. Doing the project part has helped me a lot with tackling large projects at university; for example, knowing how to plan things out, how to check my progress and how to learn from feedback. This has greatly helped me manage university, especially during current times.” **Carla, 18 months after completing the Award**

FEEDBACK ON IMPROVED EMPLOYABILITY

“It’s made me more confident in applying for jobs and transitioning into University as I know I can handle and cope with new situations, new people and difficult tasks.” **Rachel, 6 months after completing the Award**

“It has definitely without a doubt helped me both externally in attractiveness to firms/getting a job and also internally in what I know about my skills as a leader and team player. As an undergraduate in accounting, many firms are looking for displays of leadership and team working and doing the MSLFLA has given me the skills and knowledge needed. I can apply what I learnt about managing, planning, motivating and leading a team to the workplace and having this experience is more appealing for my career.” **Andrew, 2.5 years after completing the Award**

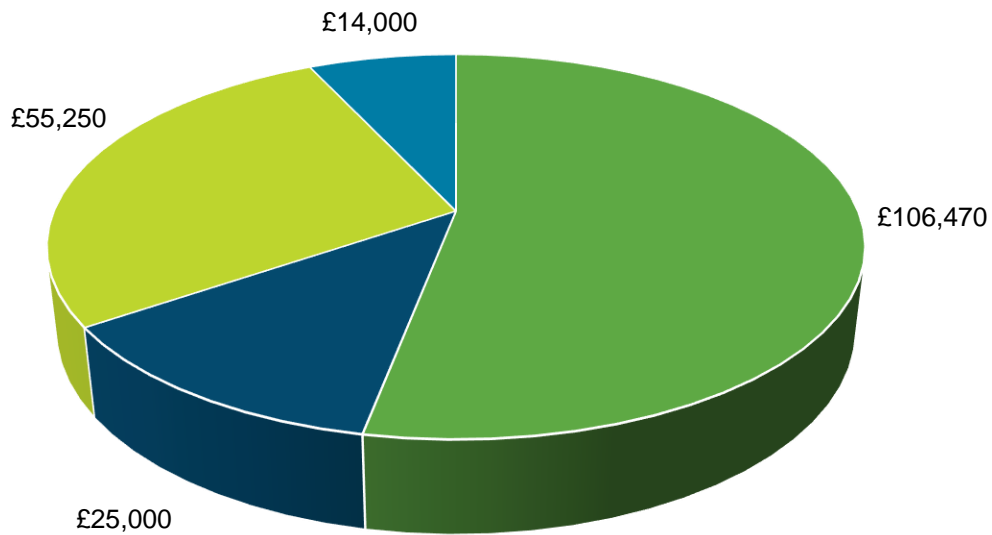
CONCLUSION & ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF THE AWARD

The delivery of the Mark Scott Leadership for Life Award was significantly disrupted in 2020-21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, meaning that much of the programme was delivered online, the usual five-day residential course was not able to take place, and the community projects were carried out in a different way. The delivery team worked hard to ensure that the new format and structure of the Award continued to achieve the programme outcomes and, overall, this programme year has been successful. The evaluation of the programme indicates that the majority of outcomes were met, with participants recording increased scores across all of the outcome measures used. However, the outcome results were not as strong as in previous years, particularly those related to social relationships. This is most likely to have been caused by the restrictions in place on social contact and the absence of the residential course, which plays a key role in developing interpersonal skills in particular.

Looking ahead, the Award will revert to its usual format and structure for 2021-22, unless restrictions on movement outside Local Authority areas or social distancing measures are re-imposed. However, some of the adaptations made to the programme were particularly positive, and the delivery team are considering ways to retain them as a permanent part of the programme. For instance, the online resources that were developed to introduce participants to specific learning theories and models at the start of the programme were well-received and provided instructors with the opportunity to cover the material in more depth than is usually possible during the residential course. Carrying out group meetings online also made the meetings more accessible for some participants, and a blended learning approach is being considered for future years.

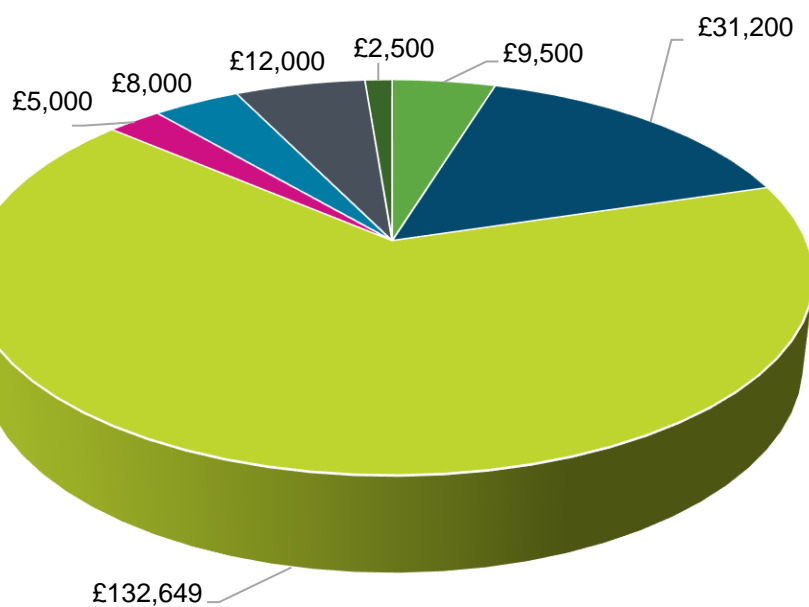
FINANCIAL INFORMATION

PROGRAMME FUNDING



- Scottish Government
- Local Authority
- Charitable Trusts & Foundations
- Events

PROGRAMME COSTS



- Recruitment & Programme Development
- Adventure Days
- Community Project
- Travel/Project Forum/Refresh Days
- Evaluation
- Programme Management
- Awards Ceremony

LIST OF FUNDERS

Annual Mark Scott Foundation Golf Event
Cruden Foundation
First Sentier Investors (Sponsor of Golf event)
Glasgow City Council
Hugh Fraser Foundation
Inchcape Foundation
Mark Scott Foundation
Merchants House of Glasgow
Persimmon Homes
Robert Barr's Charitable Trust
Scottish Government
Souter Charitable Trust
The Cruach Trust
The Hugh Fraser Foundation
The Khushi Foundation
The Liz and Terry Bramall Charitable Trust
W A Cargill Fund
Youthwork Education Recovery Fund (Youthlink)



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