



Item: 9

Education, Communities and Housing Committee: 1 April 2026.

Community Learning, Development and Employability – Annual Report.

Report by Director of Education, Communities and Housing.

1. Overview

- 1.1. This report presents the Community Learning, Development and Employability Service Annual Report for members' information.
- 1.2. The Community Learning, Development and Employability (CLDE) Service offers a diverse range of community learning and development provision through youth work, family learning, adult and community-based learning, community capacity building and employability support.
- 1.3. The requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013, make Community Learning and Development a statutory responsibility for local authorities, and as such, the Community Learning, Development and Employability Service is required to report against a number of key performance indicators and outcomes, across a range of local and national bodies and partnerships.
- 1.4. The Community Learning, Development and Employability Service Annual Report 2024-25, attached at Appendix 1, provides a summary of activities, developments and achievements of the Service over the reported period and illustrates the reach and diversity of the Service.
- 1.5. The statistical and performance information detailed in the Annual Report highlights the significant impact and positive outcomes attributed to the Service, including:
 - External funding for CLDE increased to its highest level ever in 2024-25, with £234,606 additional funding secured, a 34% increase from £174,289 in 2023-24. This is in addition to the £436,876 external funding coming from Scottish Government for Employability support and UK Government Multiply funding for adult learning support, which fell by 34% from £512,876 in 2023-24.
 - Overall, an additional £671,482, as detailed above, was drawn down into CLDE through additional grant funding in 2024-25.

- In 2024-25 the number of children and young people engaged in CLD activity rose to 1338 from 1185 in 2023-24, an increase of 13%. This is our highest level since reporting on national key performance indicators began 5 years ago.
- The number of adults receiving nationally recognised awards increased to 82 from 50 in 2023-24, a 64% increase.
- The number of nationally recognised awards achieved by children and young people, through CLD activity, rose to 385 in 2024-25, from 246 in 2023-24, a 56% increase. Again, the highest level since reporting began on achieved KPI's in 2019.
- The number of children and young people reporting improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes, through CLD activity, increased to 590 from 527 last year, an increase of 12%.
- The number of learning hours completed with the Adult and Family Learning Service rose to its highest level, increasing to 2166 from 1838 in 2023-24, an increase of 18%.
- In 2024-25, the number of people engaged in employability support rose to 121 from 105 in 2023-24, an increase of 15% on last year. This is the highest level since the CLDE Service started delivering employability support in 2020-21.
- Of these 121 people, 53 progressed from the service, 39 of which moved into a positive destination, which equates to a 74% positive progression rate.
- 291 Dynamic Youth Awards were completed in 2024-25 compared to 197 completed in 2023-24, an increase of 48%.
- The highest number of hours ever completed in Dynamic Youth Awards was achieved, with young people completing 7222 hours on their Awards.
- The number of young people with free travel entitlement on their Young Scot card increased from to 2189 in 2024-25, from 1796 in 2023-24, an increase of 22%.

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that members of the Committee:

- i. Note the Community Learning, Development and Employability Service Annual Report 2024-25, attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

For Further Information please contact:

Kerry Spence, Service Manager (Community Learning, Development and Employability)
extension 2425, email kerry.spence@orkney.gov.uk.

Implications of Report

1. **Financial** - None arising directly from this report.
2. **Legal** - None arising directly from this report.
3. **Corporate Governance** – Not applicable.
4. **Human Resources** - None arising directly from this report.
5. **Equalities** - An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
6. **Island Communities Impact** – An Island Communities Impact Assessment is not required for performance reporting.
7. **Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.
8. **Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:
 - Cost of Living.
 - Sustainable Development.
 - Local Equality.
 - Improving Population Health.
9. **Environmental and Climate Risk** – Not applicable.
10. **Risk** – Not applicable.
11. **Procurement** – Not applicable.
12. **Health and Safety** – Not applicable.
13. **Property and Assets** – Not applicable.
14. **Information Technology** - The Community Learning, Development and Employability Service Annual Report 2024-25 includes information about how the Service has supported learners to improve their digital skills and to raise awareness of digital resilience in the communities.
15. **Cost of Living** - The Community Learning, Development and Employability Service Annual Report 2024-25 includes information about how the Service has sought to mitigate the impact of the cost of living on individuals and families, through learning and the development of skills.

List of Background Papers

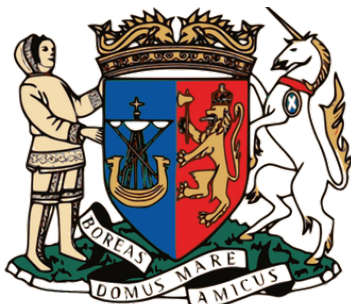
None.

Appendix

Appendix 1 - The Community Learning, Development and Employability Service Annual Report 2024-25.

COMMUNITY LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT & EMPLOYABILITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025



ORKNEY
ISLANDS COUNCIL



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Foreword

I am pleased to present the 2024-25 Annual Report for Orkney Islands Council's Community Learning, Development & Employability Service (CLDE), which outlines just some of the amazing achievements and work that CLDE has been involved in between April 2024 and the end of March 2025.

To avoid the annual report being too long, this is a summary of the main activities and opportunities that CLDE have progressed, to demonstrate our key achievements over the last 12 months.

We have an amazing and dedicated team who work tirelessly to deliver opportunities and provide support to young people, learners and communities. Their continuous hard work, dedication, passion and focus on using person centred approaches to support individuals, groups and communities to overcome challenges, achieve positive outcomes and fulfil their potential, is truly inspiring.

A key role of Community Learning and Development (CLD) is to support people to make positive changes in their own lives or in their community, by using a range of different approaches, including youth work, community-based adult learning, family learning, volunteer development and community development.

Throughout 2024-25, CLDE continued to work in a variety of areas including the provision of vital all-age employability support, delivery of targeted and universal youth work provision, including wider achievement and accreditation opportunities, providing support and guidance to community groups and organisations and the provision of adult and community learning opportunities, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL).

CLDE also work closely with our CLD partners, to ensure the wider CLD sector continues to work collaboratively to deliver statutory CLD support for all ages and stages of life. The Community Learning & Development Partnership worked with learners, young people and the communities to develop a new plan which was approved in September 2024, to ensure partners work together to coordinate, improve and expand CLD delivery across Orkney.

I hope you enjoy reading just some of what the CLDE Service has been up to over the last year. Whilst it clearly demonstrates the positive work that the team is involved in, we do continue to face significant challenges across our service. An increased demand for CLD-led support services, at a time of reduced core investment in CLD, limits our ability to provide sustained and sustainable support to those who need it the most. However, through the passion, goodwill and determination of our staff, CLDE continues to do brilliant work, helping learners and communities achieve incredible things.

If anyone would like further information about anything in this report, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kerry Spence, Service Manager, Community Learning, Development & Employability

Performance Highlights

The Community Learning, Development & Employability (CLDE) team in Orkney Islands Council, covers a broad range of delivery practice including youth work, adult learning, family learning, volunteer development and community development.

During 2024-25, there were many positive outcomes achieved across CLDE. Reviewing the quantitative data gathered for the annual CLDE performance report also highlights many areas of progress and improvement, including:

- External funding increased to our highest level ever in 2024-25, with an additional £671,482 in additional grant funding drawn into CLDE.
- In 2024-25 the number of children and young people engaged in CLD activity rose to 1338, an increase of 13% on last year. This is our highest level since reporting on national key performance indicators began 5 years ago.
- The number of adults receiving nationally recognised awards increased from 50 last year to 82, in 2024-25 (64% increase).
- This year the number of nationally recognised awards achieved by children and young people, through CLD activity, rose from 246 last year to 385 in 2024-25. Again, the highest level since reporting began on achieved KPI's in 2019.
- The number of children and young people reporting improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes through CLD activity increased by 12% from 527 last year to 590.
- The number of learning hours completed with the Adult & Family Learning Service rose to its highest level, increasing by 18% last year to 2166 hours.
- In 2024-25, 121 people were engaged in employability support (an increase of 15% on last year). This is the highest level since the CLDE started delivering employability support in 2020-21. Of these 121 people, 53 progressed from the service. 39 of which moved into a positive destination, which equates to a 74% positive progression rate.
- 291 Dynamic Youth Awards were completed in 2024-25 compared to the 197 completed last year (an increase of 48%). The highest number of hours ever completed in Dynamic Youth Awards was achieved, with young people completing 7222 hours on their Awards.
- The number of young people with free travel entitlement on their Young Scot card increased from 1796 in 2023-24 to 2189 in 2024-25, an increase of almost 22%.

Performance Challenges

Alongside these major successes and achievements, the CLDE team has also faced some significant challenges around capacity, resources, and ability to recruit. Our main challenge, however, is the continuous short-term nature of funding across the CLD sector. The way funding is currently allocated and administered presents significant challenges in the planning and delivery of services. It impacts greatly on the staff we have and reduces our ability to recruit and retain staff, but more damaging than anything else is the effect it has on the people we work with. CLD focuses on working with those most in need of support, and this support is often complex and required over a longer period of time, so security of funding to sustain that support is essential.

CLDE Team Structure

Community Learning, Development & Employability Organisational Chart

James Wylie
Corporate Director
Education, Leisure & Housing

Frances Troup
Head of Service
Community Learning, Leisure & Housing

Kerry Spence
Service Manager
Community Learning, Development & Employability 1.0 FTE

Walter Gorman
Team Manager
Adult and Family Learning 1.0 FTE

Senior Adult Learning Support Worker
Adult and Family Learning 0.8 FTE
0.2 FTE (Multiply)

Adult Learning Support Worker
Adult and Family Learning 0.5 FTE
0.4 FTE (Multiply) Until March 2026

Adult Learning Support Worker (Multiply)
Adult and Family Learning 0.8 FTE
until March 2026

Adult Learning Support Worker (Multiply)
Adult and Family Learning 0.6 FTE
until March 2026

Adult Learning Support Worker
Adult and Family Learning 0.4 FTE
Vacant from December 2024

Adult & Family Learning Clerical Assistant 0.5 FTE

12 x Community Learning Tutors
Sessional

Lindsey Johnson
Team Manager
Employability Services 1.0 FTE

Vacant
Community Learning Officer
Employability Services 1.0 FTE

Vacant
Employability Keyworker
Employability Services 1.0 FTE

Employability Keyworker
Employability Services 0.68 FTE

General Youth Worker
Employability Services 0.7 FTE

Employability Keyworker
Employability Services 1.0 FTE
(From Nov 2024 - Feb 2025)
Vacant from January 2025

Employability Admin Officer
Employability Services 0.89 FTE

Core Funded
Externally Funded

Cheryl Rafferty
Team Manager
Youth Services 1.0 FTE

Community Learning Officer
Youth Services 1.0 FTE

2 x Youth & Family Learning Worker
Youth Services 1.0 FTE

2 x Youth Project Workers
Youth Services 0.15 FTE

Community Learning Officer (Whole Family Wellbeing Fund)
Youth Services 1.0 FTE

2 x Pupil Engagement Worker
Youth Services 1.2 FTE

2 x Family Engagement Workers (WFWF)
Youth Services 2.0 FTE

20 x Senior Youth Workers
Sessional 0.54 FTE (0.26 FTE vacant)

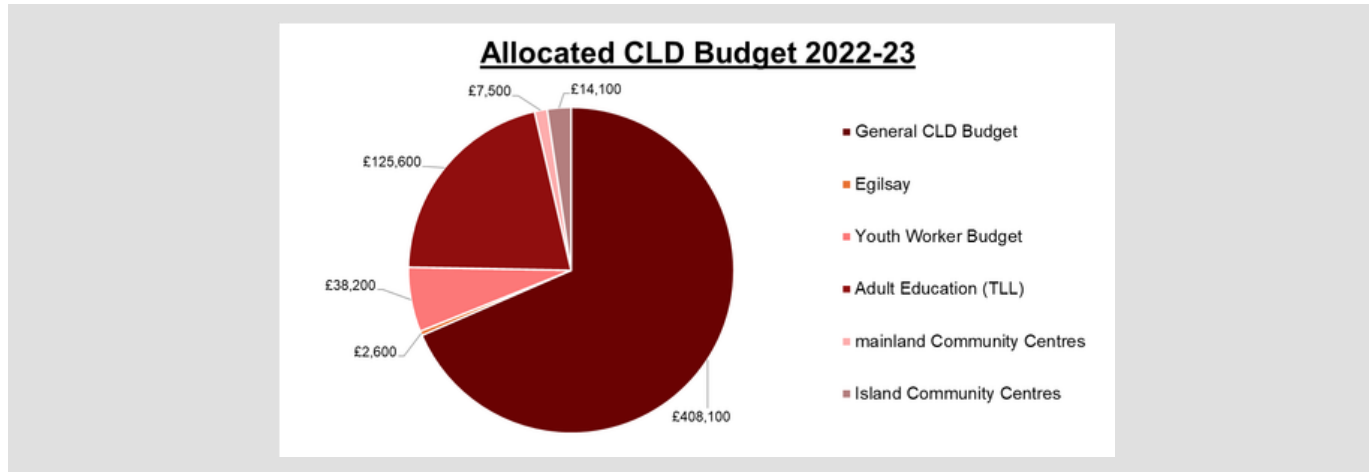
20 x General Youth Workers
Sessional 0.6 FTE (0.33 FTE vacant)

CLDE Administrative Assistant- Employability Services 1.0 FTE

Budget

Core Funding

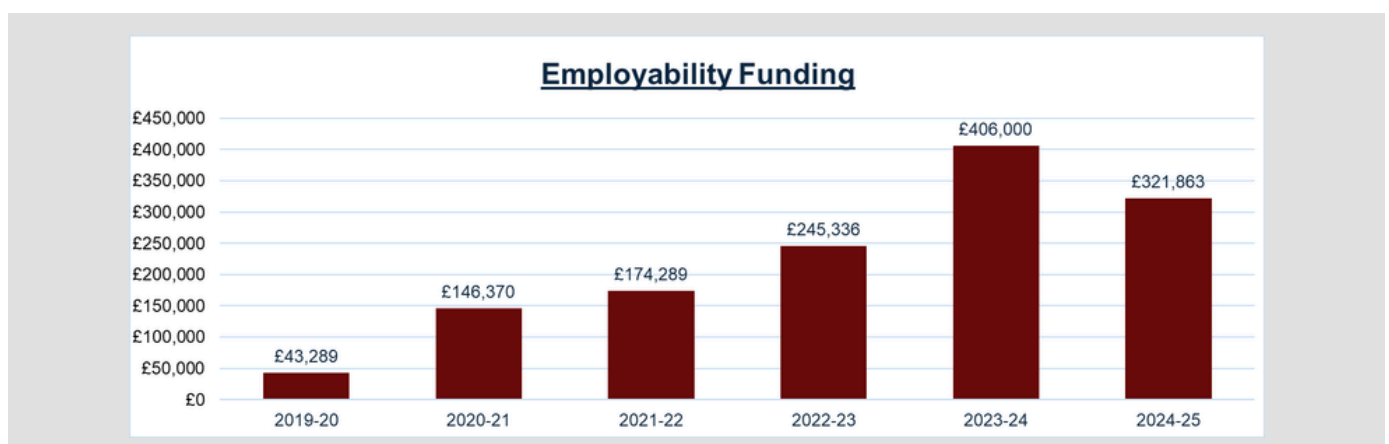
During 2024-2025, CLDE received a total budget allocation of £596,100.



Employability Funding

CLDE took responsibility for 'No One Left Behind' (NOLB) and the employability support agenda in 2019. The CLDE Service receives no Council core funding for our Employability work. The CLDE Employability Service is funded solely through annual Scottish Government fund coming through the 'No One Left Behind' initiative.

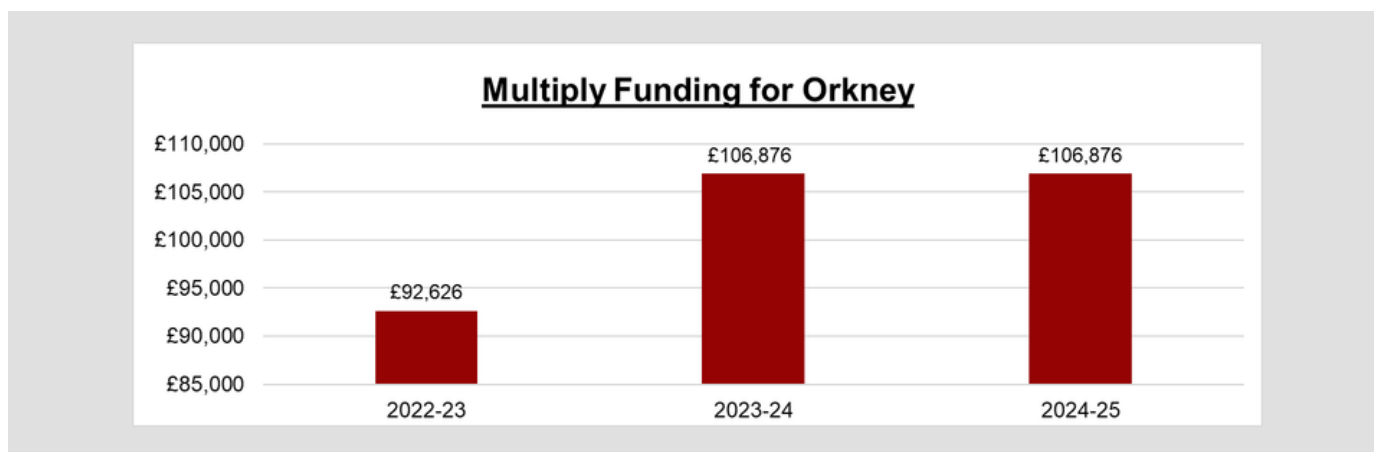
During 2024-25, the Local Employability Partnership received a total budget of £330,000 which was split across 'No One Left Behind' and 'Parent Employability Support' funding pots. This is a reduction of £76,000 on last year's funding award.



The concept of No One Left Behind is that the Local Employability Partnership should be able to focus the funding on key areas of need, rather than be prescribed by varying funding streams. However, since 2019, employability funding has continued to come in through various different targeted funding strands such as Young Person's Guarantee, Parent Employability Support Fund, Disabled Parent Employment Support Fund and Long Term Unemployed. During 2024-25 the funding came in through two funding streams, Child Poverty and No One Left Behind.

Multiply Funding

The UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), part of a suite of 'levelling-up' funding, had two elements, 'Core' and 'Multiply'. The Council's Community Learning, Development & Employability Service (CLDE), led on the ringfenced Multiply element of the scheme. The focus of the Multiply funding was to deliver bespoke adult numeracy programmes over a three year period to help transform the lives of adults, by improving their functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses. The total Multiply funding for Orkney was £306,379 over three financial years. During 2024-25 Orkney received £106,876 through the Multiply initiative.



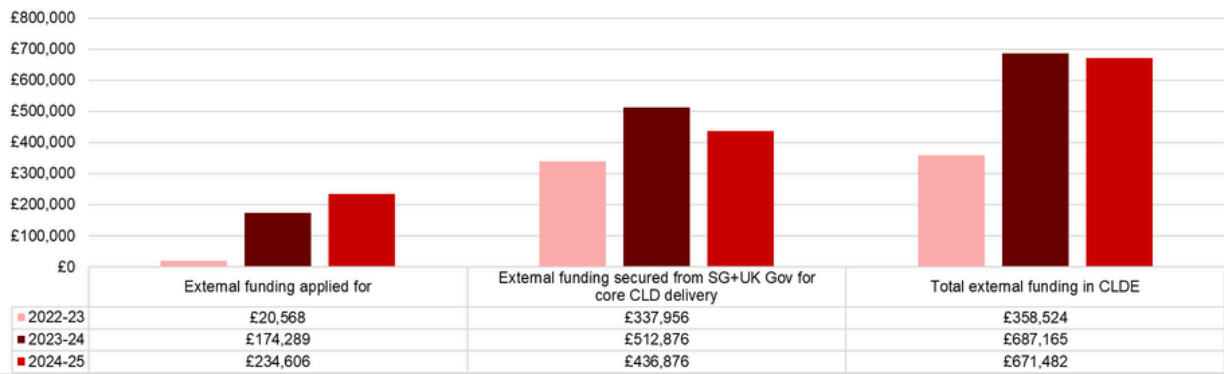
Other External Funding

Every year, the CLDE team applies for additional external funding to help deliver planned priority actions. Including external funding channelled through the Local Authority from No One Left Behind and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Multiply Initiative, the CLDE Service secured overall additional funding of £671,482 for CLD activity to support adults, young people and communities in Orkney during 2024-25.

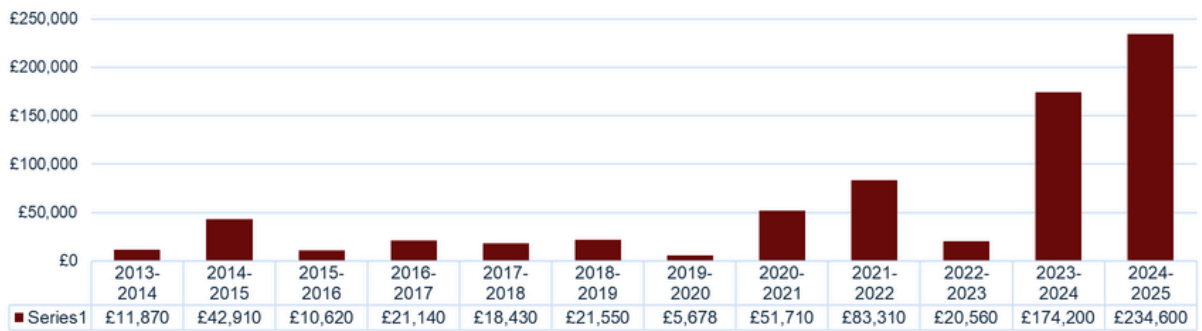
The service secured £330,000 from No One Left Behind funding for employability and £106,876 Multiply funding for adult numeracy provision.

The service also attracted an additional £234,606 in external funding to support various projects, activities and events. The funding came in through 12 different grants, varying from smaller pots of £450 for food for the Youth Achievement Group up to grants of £119,940 from the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund for the Family Engagement Team. This impressive draw on external funds is the highest level of grant funding CLDE have ever secured in one year, (34% increase on last year) which demonstrates the increased recognition and support for using CLD approaches to help people achieve positive outcomes.

Total amount of external funding from all sources



External Funding

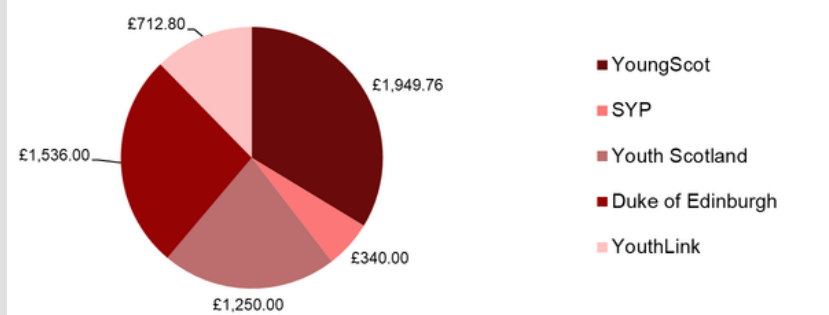


Whilst it is hugely positive that we access additional resources to expand our delivery and meet local needs, it also creates challenges, as all of this funding is short term, which has a detrimental impact on recruitment, staff and most importantly on the people we are working so hard to support. It is imperative, that we find ways to continue the good work that is taking place to provide sustained support and opportunities for those most in need.

Affiliations

The CLDE Youth Services commit almost £6000 every year on affiliations and annual charges to national organisations to allow us to deliver youth work accreditation and opportunities for young people. During 2024-25 affiliation charges totalled £5788.56, which equates to 15% of the allocated youth work budget.

Affiliation Cost 2024-25



Community Learning Development & Employability Team Plan 2023-26

In 2023, the CLDE Service developed a new 3-year plan following review, self evaluation, consideration of other linked partnership plans, and professional discussion with staff, volunteers, and stakeholders. The CLDE Service has done well against the actions set in the CLDE team plan as summarised below.

Out of a massive 55 actions, the Service successfully achieved and completed 25 actions in year 1. During this period, which is year 2 of the plan, 20 of 30 actions have been achieved (marked green). Work has started and continues on 11 actions (marked amber) and just 1 action had not been successfully progressed (marked red) during 2023-24, 4 new actions were added during this period to meet local need. Further details of how actions were achieved are dispersed throughout this report.

Inclusion and Wellbeing		RAG
Promote Equality	Increase outreach work	Green
	Increase free learning opportunities	Green
	Maintain poverty alleviation opportunities in collaboration with partners	Green
	Provide training to increase local childcare provision	Green
Improve Health & Wellbeing	Work with partners to coordinate and develop specific and targeted programmes to improve health & wellbeing outcomes	Green
	Maintain baseline and increase family learning opportunities	Green
	Increase Active Life to all active CLD Classes*	Green
Strengthening Engagement	Develop a relevant and representative youth voice structure	Amber
	Support Education in a review & expansion of parental engagement	Amber
	Creation of effective learner and community voice in CLD planning*	Green

Learning and Achievement		RAG
Positive Progressions	Identify and promote pathways through CLD	
	Establish a progressive understanding and knowledge of pathways and opportunities available	
	Develop key CLD related partnership strategies for Orkney	
Wider achievement	Promote and raise awareness of accreditation and wider achievement opportunities and the associated benefits they bring	
	Maintain training across partnerships to increase capacity to deliver accredited awards	
	Increase numeracy learning opportunities across Orkney	
Learning Environment	Identify and develop an accessible youth community and family centre space with office accommodation for CLDE	
	Promote, develop and pilot a learning hub in the Isles	
	Use data to determine focused community development support and targeted work	
Systems and Processes		RAG
Evaluation and Learning	Develop clear outcome KPIs for whole service collection	
	Expand use of self-evaluation with service users	
	Undertake a review of required areas with CLDE (CL)	
	Implement recommendations from Youth Services Review*	
Workforce sustainability	Raise awareness of CLD as a profession	
	Review recruitment processes across CLDE	
Resource and management systems	Develop systems to effectively comply with GDPR	
	Establish uniformed systems for recording, monitoring and	
	Consider effective Management Information System for CLDE	
	Review of H&S policies, procedures and practices	
	Improve governance structures and processes for youth clubs*	

Key Performance Indicators

Each year CLDE collects key data which is gathered nationally by Community Learning Development Managers Scotland (CLDMS), a body representing Local Authority CLD services across Scotland, to provide a coherent global picture of CLD delivery and impact.

KPI	Definition	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
KPI1	Number of adults engaged in CLD activity	698	163	277	585	636	772
KPI2	Number of adults receiving completed nationally recognised awards through CLD activity	18	19	27	52	50	82
KPI3	Number of adults gaining wider achievement awards, local awards and those not nationally recognised, through CLD activity		8	21	9	40	26
KPI4	Number of adults engaged in family learning through CLD activity	121	432	85	43	121	104
KPI5	Number of children/young people engaged in family learning through CLD activity		600	79	44	112	96
KPI6a	Number of children engaged in CLD activity	691	57	79	98	271	321
KPI6b	Number of young people engaged in CLD activity	as above	169	664	991	914	1017
KPI7a	Number of children receiving completed nationally recognised awards through CLD activity	224	5	10	3	8	19
KPI7b	Number of young people receiving completed nationally recognised awards through CLD activity	as above	24	363	214	238	366
KPI7c	Number of young people receiving sectional certificates towards above Awards		23	2	4	9	0
KPI8	Number of young people gaining wider achievement awards, local awards and those not nationally recognised, through CLD activity	10	1	0	13	0	8
KPI9	Number of adults with improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes through CLD activity	80	131	92	317	377	287
KPI10	Number of children/young people with improved mental health and wellbeing outcomes through CLD activity		206	N/R	586	527	590
KPI11	Number of community groups receiving capacity building support through CLD activity	37	104	69	83	84	85
KPI12	Number of adults & young people taking part in influence and engagement activity through CLD		178	1257	116	393	349
KPI13	Number of adults and young people reached and engaged with through one-off promotional events / drop-ins / community events / engagements / etc.	115	272	1539	1231	3502	2920

Adult & Family Learning Overview

The Adult & Family Learning Service strive to make a positive impact on people's lives, working collectively with local partners to identify and meet local need.

The Learning Link, which is part of the CLDE, Adult & Family Learning Service, is an adult learning centre which is dedicated to adult and family learning opportunities in Orkney. Their collective mission is to help adults improve their skills and confidence in literacy, numeracy, digital skills, ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language), as well as increasing opportunities for families to learn together.

During 2024-25, The Learning Link supported 44 individual learners through 1:1 work, totalling 698 learning hours. 104 learners took part in group learning, with a total of 1358 learning hours. 22 ESOL learners received support and attended classes totaling 356 hours during 2024-25.

This year, groupwork significantly increased with more group learning than 1-1 learning taking place. Staff encourage learners to participate in group learning to increase the reach of the Service. Although initially daunting many find that working in groups is actually more beneficial, as it helps people realise, they often have similar difficulties and they can share experiences and learning techniques.

During 2024-25, the Multiply Programme continued into its third and final year. According to Scottish Government's findings, 56% of adults in the UK have low numeracy skills. This is equivalent to 1.9 million working-age adults. Funding from the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), has helped address this in Orkney by funding additional and diverse numeracy learning opportunities across the community.

It would not have been possible to achieve all that has been achieved in the last 12 months without this additional funding. The additional Multiply funding has allowed the service to provide a range of numeracy related programmes, and increased opportunities and skills for people not confident working with numbers. This year the Adult & Family Learning Service delivered numerous new courses that were not just about learning but also focused on improving health and wellbeing outcomes for those taking part.

Community Learning classes are also delivered through the Adult and Family Learning Service, with 210 learners participating in 26 different community learning classes over the three programmes during 2024-25.

Employability Overview

Over 2024-25 Orkney Islands Council's Community Learning Development and Employability Service (CLDE) received external funding to employ 4.06fte staff through No One Left Behind, to deliver the Council's Employability Service. However, it must be recognised that for most of the year the team have worked with significantly less staffing resource.

- CLDE Team Manager Employability – 1.0fte (April 2024- March 2025)
- Employability Key Worker – 1.0fte (November 2024 – February 2025)
- Employability Keyworker – 0.68fte (April 2024 – October 2024)
- General Youth Worker – 0.7fte (April 2024 – March 2025)
- Administrative Assistant – 0.7fte (April 2024- March 2025)

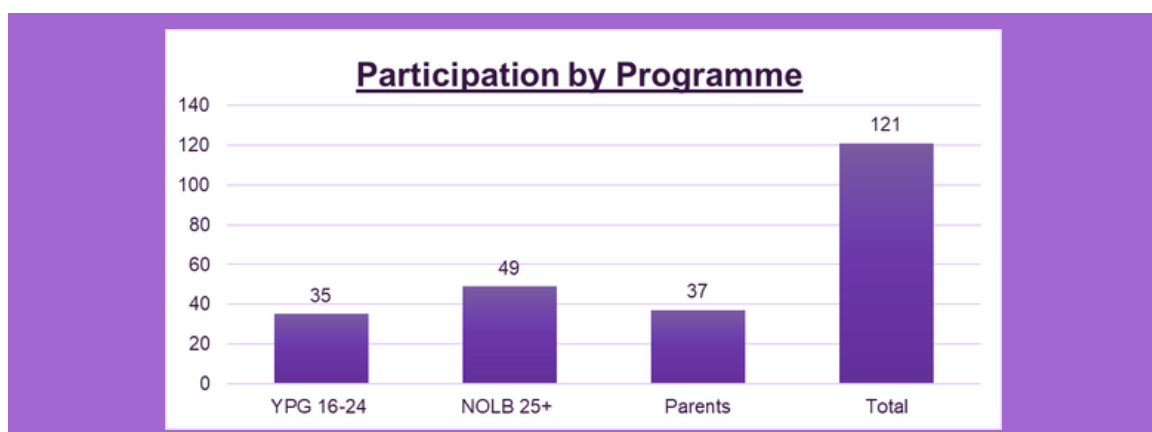
The Employability Service have supported 121 individuals during this reporting period, through a range of one to one and group work support.

Each person was supported to co-produce a holistic individual development plan detailing personal goals, aspirations and targets. Individuals were then supported to achieve these and make positive steps towards training, education and sustainable and fair work.

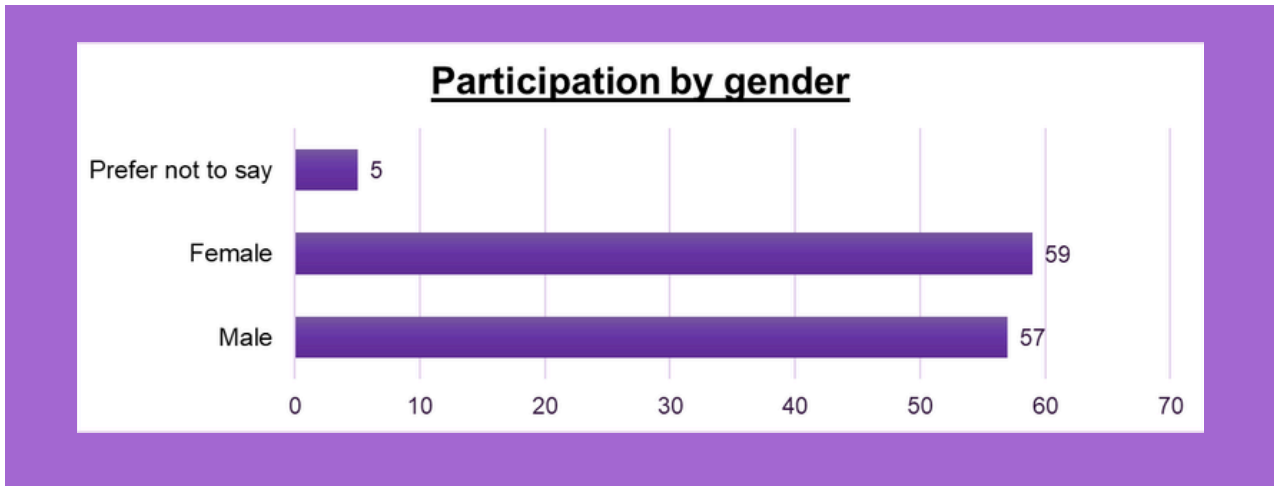
Regular review sessions with a designated Employability Keyworker ensure effective monitoring and reviewing of progress and provides the opportunity to reflect on future support requirements. It also allows Employability Keyworkers to gather feedback, explore good practice and identify areas for improvement for future service delivery.

The Employability Service can work with people 6 months before a young person's 16th birthday, up to those aged 67. There is also a specific fund channelled towards work with parents. Those aged below 25, fit into the Young Person Guarantee Programme (YPG) although there is no longer specific funding dedicated to work with young people. The No One Left Behind funding stream covers all ages.

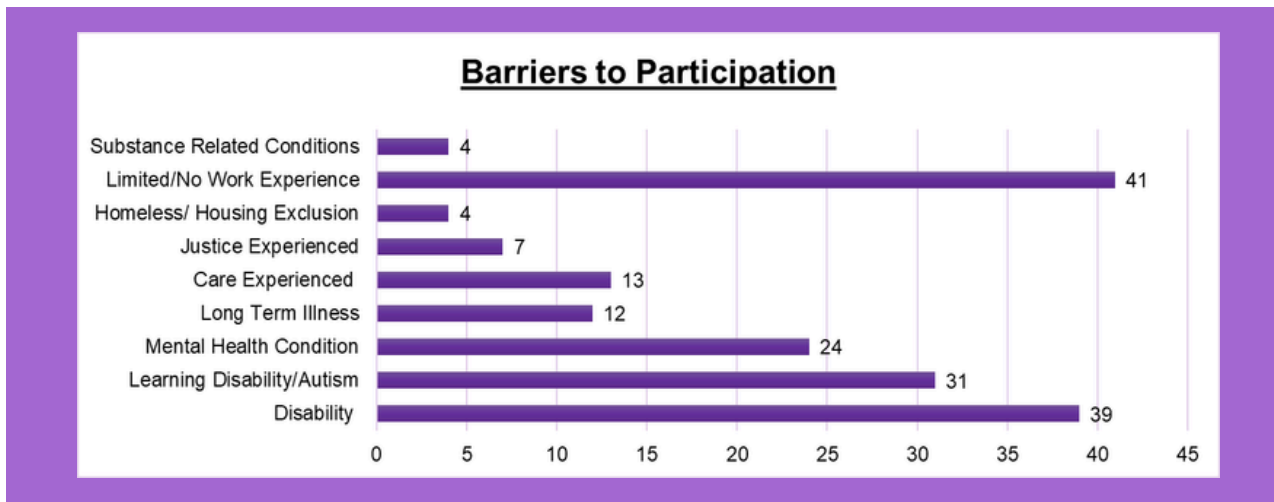
2024-25 Participation by programme can be seen below:



During 2024-25 the gender of participants was slightly more females.



During 2024-25 participants identified the following barriers to engagement:



During 2024-25, 53 individuals progressed from the CLDE Employability service and 68 continue to access support. Of those who progressed:

19 individuals moved on to employment/self-employment.

14 people advanced to Further/Higher Education.

6 individuals progressed to sustained volunteering.

This equates to an 74% positive progression rate.

Youth Services Overview

It has been another busy year for the Youth Services Team in Orkney. Over this year Youth Services have continued to grow, strengthen partnerships and provide meaningful opportunities for children, young people and their families across the community.

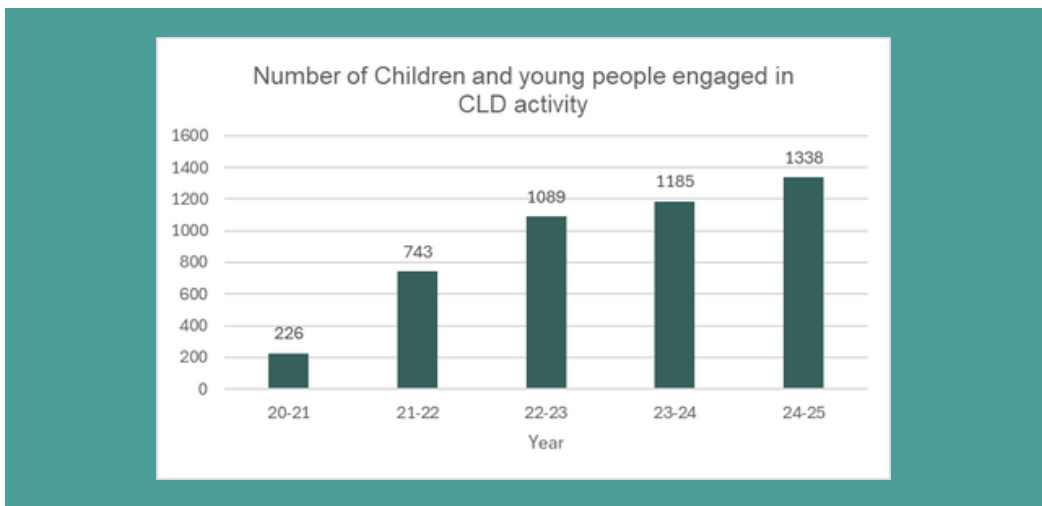
One key achievement over this period has been the securing of the Whole Family Wellbeing Funding, which has enabled CLDE to recruit additional, albeit temporary staff, to deliver holistic early intervention and prevention work with young people and families. This extra capacity has supported family focused work around young people, to ensure the service can respond more appropriately to local need.

Once again, Youth Services have facilitated a huge number of accreditation opportunities equating to 334 Youth Scotland awards from SCQF Level 2 – Level 6, being presented to young people across Orkney. Youth Services have also delivered other awards such as the Fireskills Award, building on our partnerships, to make these opportunities accessible and impactful.

Youth Voice remains at the heart of our work, and the Orkney Youth Forum have been active across the community, alongside representation from our local Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament, ensuring that young people can be involved in influencing decisions affecting services that affect them and their peers.

Youth Services are excited to be proceeding with the Youth Club Hub structure to provide inclusive and equitable provision for young people to allow them to meet in a safe and fun environment.

This year's successes reflect the dedication of the team, volunteers and partners and, most importantly the young people who we have had the pleasure of working with during this year.



Work with Adults & Families

Qualifications and Accredited Awards gained through Employability support



In 2024-25, 52 individuals were supported by the CLDE Employability team to work towards and gain a variety of accredited qualifications, resulting in a total of 60 accredited courses being achieved. Topics included: LANTRA Forklift Truck Licence, First Aid at Work, Level 2 Food Hygiene, National 3 Numeracy, Health and Safety at Work, Level 2 Customer Service, PRINCE Project Management and SCQF Personal Development Awards at level 3,4 and 5

52 individuals were supported to gain 60 accredited courses.

“Doing this course and getting a qualification will help me move forward with what I want to do.”

“ I enjoyed the practical bits of the course and then doing the certificate online was good.”

Sunday Funday

In July 2024, all three CLDE teams, Employability, Adult & Family Learning and Youth Services, worked alongside the Yard Plant Nursery to plan and deliver a Sunday Funday activity day.

The day comprised of a variety of family learning activities including planting flower baskets, rock painting and a numeracy scavenger hunt. Families also received an information and activity pack which included family learning activities and information on local support agencies including CLDE Services, Homestart, Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau and Orkney Money Matters.

Throughout the day 150 individuals attended from 55 families.

“I enjoyed helping others do the treasure hunt. One of the questions was slightly tricky.”

“Thank you for the quieter hour as it suits our family.”



Work with Adults & Families

Accreditation For Adult Learners



This year, The Learning Link offered National 3 and National 4 numeracy courses, as well as a National 3 Literacy course. Many jobs that people apply for require a minimum standard of literacy and numeracy skills at National 3 level. For anyone who left school with no formal qualifications, this is often a barrier for them to apply for work and/or further education, so acquiring the skills and qualification is important.

The learning sessions took place over a range of days, times and venues, to enable access for all participants. Including an evening group, as some learners worked during the day and could not attend daytime courses. The group often found some topics more challenging than others so additional support was given as required to ensure participants had the best opportunity to succeed.

21 of our learners gained nationally recognised qualifications on these courses:

5 gained a National 3 in Numeracy.

4 gained a National 4 Numeracy.

5 gained a National 3 in Literacy.

1 gained a National 4 in Literacy.

3 gained a National 2 in Food, Health & Wellbeing.

3 gained their Health & Hygiene national certificate.

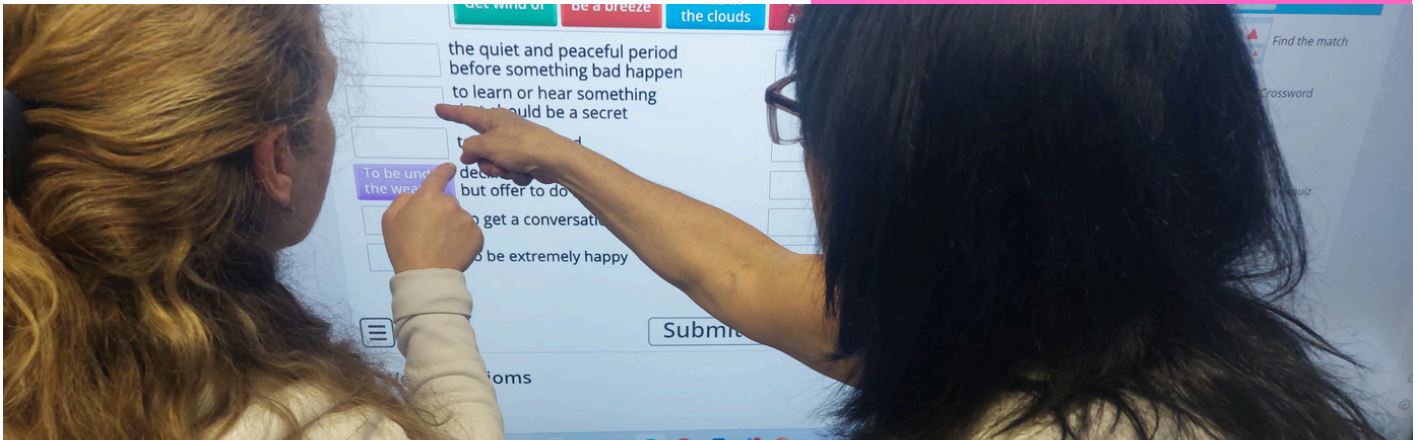
“It was good for my confidence realising that it's not like school.”

“I will use all my skills I have “Working with such a patient tutor made it so much more enjoyable being able to work at our own pace without being judged inspires confidence. So glad I did it, would certainly do it again.”

“I will use all my skills I have learned from The Learning Link for future jobs.”

Work with Adults & Families

ESOL Provision



2024-25 has been challenging but equally rewarding for our ESOL learners. Adult and Family Learning staff negotiated new group learning plans (GLP) with the ESOL learners, and the sessions were delivered on themed topics of importance to them. Informal learning sessions were delivered to a beginner's group, and to an advanced group. Both these groups identified that they wanted informal learning, especially practicing daily conversations.

The Learning Link has now become an approved SQA accreditation centre for formal ESOL learning up to National 4. There were no ESOL learners interested in gaining accredited ESOL qualifications in 2024-2025, but some are now keen to progress to achieve formal qualifications.

Learners came from an array of nationalities including Ukrainian, Polish, Bangladeshi, Bulgarian and Turkish. The number of ESOL learners increased from 18 in the previous year, to 22 in the 2024-2025 period.

22 ESOL Learners attended classes and received 356 learning hours in total (19 in groups and 3 through one-to-one delivery)

"I've started talking to my son-in-law more often."

"I find it easier to understand my daughter-in-law."

"I see improvements every day."

"I find it easier to communicate with customers and co-workers."

"I have improved conversations with my clients."

Work with Adults & Families

Fast Track Programmes

This year the Employability team worked with UHI Orkney and local employers to plan and deliver two Sector Work based Academy Programmes (SWAP's), Fast Track to Hospitality and Fast Track to Construction. Each programme provided a combination of practical and theoretical sessions to support the development of sector specific skills and knowledge and included site and employer visits, accredited qualifications and work experience.



The Fast Track to Hospitality course included training in Barista skills, latte art, bar skills and mixology, front of house service, general kitchen duties and cookery, communication skills, REHIS Food Hygiene certificate, Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Certificate and work experience in the Overblink restaurant.

Six individuals were referred to the programme with five successfully completing the course. The five individuals who complete have all gained work experience in the industry and three have moved into employment.

The Fast Track to Construction course included drystone walling, joinery, furniture making, machine and plant driving, core skills, Construction Skills Certification Scheme card and industry visits to Maes Howe, St Magnus Cathedral and the new care home site in Kirkwall.

Of the 6 individuals who engaged in the programme, 3 have gained employment and 2 completed and passed their LANTRA Forklift Truck Licence.



“Doing this course has made me feel optimistic about my future.”

“I couldn’t recommend the course more for people. It’s been an incredible experience and made me feel proud and confident about myself.”

Work with Adults & Families

Employability Pathway Resource



The Orkney Employability Pathway resource can be found here:

<https://olep.org>

“I enjoyed visiting the different services and finding out what they did. We also made sure that services put in relevant information for people.”

“Sasha from the Strategy Collective was good at helping us design something that was easy to use. What we have now is much better and we learned a lot of new things through doing the project.”



**Orkney
Local
Employability
Partnership**

The Jedi Council is a group of individuals with varied lived experience of local employability support services in Orkney, who provide a valuable and accurate insight into local employability support .

The group are recognised as an official subgroup of the Local Employability Partnership (LEP), with nominated members attending monthly LEP meetings, to report on progress made against delegated tasks.

During 2025, the Jedi Council worked with the Local Employability Partnership to gather relevant and key information about each organisation/service and the support they offer, to help people make positive steps towards learning skills and work. This included contact details, visuals of premises, opening hours, referral criteria and the support provided. Links to further information on each organisation were also gathered.

Working with the Strategy Collective, the group then planned and designed a new accessible web-based platform, detailing all the information, called the Orkney Employability Pathway Resource.

The Jedi Council worked hard on the initial launch of the resource, which included a social media countdown campaign and an official opening event, at which two members presented the ideas behind the resource, the work undertaken to design and build the platform, and how partners and the public can use the resource going forward.

Work with Adults & Families

Scottish Mental Health First Aid Training



The Employability Team worked with UHI Orkney to plan, coordinate and deliver a 2-day Scottish Mental Health First Aid course for local employers and managers. This was in response to feedback from local businesses and organisations and was identified as an area employers would like training in, to help develop skills and confidence in supporting employees and colleagues who may be experiencing mental health challenges.

The course was extremely popular with 14 employers across public, private and third sector engaging and completing the course and others expressing interest in future courses.

“I really enjoyed this course. It provided a good overview of a number of mental health conditions and contributing factors, as well as how to help those in need. We had participants from all sectors (public/private/third) which was really beneficial. Everyone brought different experience and opinions to conversations and contributed throughout. Thanks again for running this course.”

Get Ready to Volunteer

Working with Voluntary Action Orkney, the CLD Employability Team planned, coordinated and delivered two ‘Get Ready to Volunteer’ programmes during 2024-25. These sessions were designed to support individuals who may require a little extra information and support to get involved in volunteering within the local community.

Sessions included an introduction to volunteering and the benefits, roles and responsibilities, The Saltire Awards scheme, talks from organisations and volunteers including CLAN Orkney, Employability Orkney, The Yard, Island Games 2025 and the St Magnus Festival and also where to get support to get involved in volunteering opportunities. In response to feedback a group volunteering activity at Tankerness Gardens was arranged and included in the second programme.

In total, 15 individuals were referred across the 2 programmes with 11 people completing the programme.

8 young people gained a Saltire Award for their contribution and all participants received a completion certificate.

Of those who completed the programme 9 are now actively volunteering in their local communities.



Work with Adults & Families

Local Employability Partnership Promotional Films

Working with Shetland film producer Stephen Mercer, individuals who have accessed support from the CLDE Service and other Local Employability Partnership partners, the CLD Employability Team planned, coordinated and produced three visual case studies. Each case study details an individual's account of their journey and how CLD approaches have supported them to set key goals and targets and make positive steps towards their future.

Please take a moment to watch these impactful video case studies which effectively demonstrate the impact of partnership working and the outcomes that can be achieved through the use of CLD approaches.



Amber - https://youtu.be/_x5EOYpcBrE

Asparuh - <https://youtu.be/co6mAKgOB5Y>

Shaun - <https://youtu.be/YLggv9rsL30>

"I was good to be part of making the films and being able to tell my story."

Solihull Programme for Parents

CLDE Youth Services, in partnership with Early Learning and Childcare, offered the Solihull Parenting Programme to parents of nursery and primary school aged children. Over the ten week programme, thirteen parents learned about the Solihull approach and the three main learning objectives - reciprocity, containment and behaviour. Sessions covered a range of topics including sleep, parenting styles, rupture and repair, interaction and play.

13 parents attended the Solihull training.

"Role play is useful to reflect on scenarios and think how we react as parents."

"I had been nervous about attending these sessions, but you created an environment which makes it easy to share."



Work with Adults & Families

Community Learning Classes



Community learning daytime and evening classes continue to deliver great positive outcomes for participants, including bringing people together, strengthening communities and building people's skills and confidence.

During 2024-25, The Adult and Family Learning Team organised a range of daytime and evening classes. The most popular classes were Tai Chi, Yoga, Meditation, Birdwatching and Finding Wildflowers, Plants and Trees, with some of these classes fully booked within 24 hours of opening.

Yoga and Thai Chi classes offer numerous physical and mental health benefits, including improved flexibility, balance, and strength, stress reduction, anxiety relief, and improved mental clarity. The outdoor learning classes provide numerous benefits and offer participants a deeper appreciation for the natural world through promoting environmental awareness and can help improve an individual's physical, emotional, and social wellbeing.

Feedback from learners indicates that Community Learning classes are popular because they give people the opportunity to relax or to learn in stimulating yet comfortable surroundings, which contributes significantly to their overall health and wellbeing.

The introduction of Multiply funding and the recruitment of two additional Adult Learning Support Workers, with a numeracy remit, has also provided the opportunity to offer free maths and numeracy classes within the Community Learning Programmes. Free classes included National 3 and National 4 Math, and Introduction to Navigation.

Adult & Family Learning recruited two new tutors at the beginning of 2025 and going forward will be able to offer new classes in the Spring including Introduction to Jazz Guitar, Outdoor Photography and Digital Photography.

34 Community Learning courses were arranged during 2024-25.

210 learners participated in community learning classes.

100% of students said their health & wellbeing improved or was positively influenced through participation in the course.

"Well run, good quality and beneficial/interesting."

"I really enjoy the calm atmosphere my tutor creates for this course, its very relaxing yet has helped with flexibility and strength."



Work with Adults & Families

Navigating the Great Outdoors in Orkney



Understanding that numeracy is an integral part of navigation, The Learning Link decided to offer a navigation course as part of the community learning class programme supported through the Multiply fund.

The classes included both inside and outside delivery. Learners were taught how to use maps and compasses in class and then put it all into practice outdoors. Various routes throughout the West Mainland were chosen to consolidate everything learners had been taught in the classroom. A mix of teaching styles proved very successful in providing learners with the skills they would need to navigate safely across the countryside.

The course introduced learners to map reading, helping them to understand the 4 and 6 figure grid references, which form an important part of reading different scales of map. The course also introduced learners to using a compass and understanding how the 360 degrees shown on the compass could be used along with the map to take a navigational bearing and plot a route between two given points.

This course was attended by 8 participants.

“I will continue to use the skills I have learned so that it becomes natural.”

“The course exceeded my expectations and covered exactly what I had hoped it would.”

“I would like more practice taking bearings, but this is something that I can do on my own now.”

Work with Adults & Families

Food Health and Wellbeing



Learners highlighted to staff that they often do not have the essential skillset to thrive and live independently. The Learning Link found the perfect SQA Food, Health & Wellbeing course to support people to live independently and improve their outcomes. As staff had recently completed training in Confidence to Cook, it was a golden opportunity to use the learned skills to develop an inclusive course aimed at supporting people to develop the necessary life skills required to live healthy and self-sufficient lives.



The programme covered an array of topics including shopping on a budget; health & safety; understanding food labels; healthy eating; food preparation; cooking and much more.

3 of the learners in this group passed a National 2 SQA qualification, and their Health and Hygiene certificates.

5 learners participated in this course, each learning new and essential lifeskills.

“Very fun and substantial. Friendly environment and low-stress.”

“Using a Tesco app, I can see what foods are healthy, and what are not.”

Brush up on Maths

Many people struggle with numbers, including those who experience ‘maths anxiety.’ To address this, The Learning Link approached partners to help identify individuals who would be least likely to engage in learning. Following feedback, a course was devised with learners and included budgeting skills, which was a topic many wanted to cover. The group met weekly, and worked through a negotiated group learning plan, to ensure the delivery included topics they wanted to tackle. Each week participants worked on their numeracy skills and increased their confidence in the process.

This course was attended by 5 participants.

“My confidence has increased and I can do so much more.”

“I have become more open and able to talk to people.”

Work with Adults & Families

Family Learning



The Learning Link made family learning a priority this year and attended numerous events to engage with families and to highlight that parental engagement and involvement improves confidence and skills in both parents and children. Staff attended parent's evenings, as well as visiting schools across the county to spread the word that any parent/carer/guardian who would like support to help their children can contact the Adult and Family Learning Service.

One particularly successful family learning event delivered during the summer holidays was on the island of Eday. The Learning Link, created a 2-day family learning event for parents and children on the island. Activities included making a hot air balloon, a Lego challenge, CD maze, making pop-up cards, and building a boat. The activities provided for families were welcomed by all who attended.



This course was attended by 12 participants (Parents & Children).

"It's nice to do things as a family."

Digital Mania in 2024 - 2025

In April 2024, The Learning Link were approached by 3 senior learners, who were worried after hearing about the digital switchover, and were unsure what this meant for them. The learners were concerned that they would lose access to their landline, as none of them had mobile phones.

From an initial conversation, a small group was created with all three receiving the loan of a digital device to help with their learning, and a MIFI device so they could access the internet. The small group met weekly at Kirkwall Library, to develop their digital skills.

A lot of topics were covered, with clearly printed handouts and instructions given out each week. The pace and content was determined by the learners needs, and topics were always related to their interests. After several months, all 3 were doing things they enjoyed on the internet including emails, looking on Orkney Communities, using WhatsApp to stay connected with family abroad, searching the internet safely and much more.

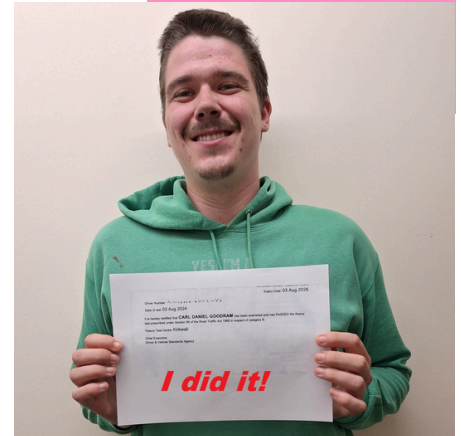
Work with Adults & Families

Barriers to Success is Not Just a Perception

Many people require support to pass their to acquire their driving licences due to the in-depth Hazard Perception & Driving Theory test, which is a requirement prior to sitting the practical driving test.

During 2024-25, Adult and Family Learning identified and worked with a small group of adults who were experiencing barriers to achieving this goal.

A 10-week programme was developed to help these learners pass their theory test. Sessions included: videos; games; activity sheets and the opportunity to discuss some of the complex phrases or questions they may arise.



3 learners successfully passed the driving theory test.

“It’s taken a lot of pressure off me as I was getting stressed at work as I was unable to drive.”

“It’s opened other opportunities as I’ll have more work.”

“Without your help, I didn’t know where to start with the theory test.”

“Having passed the theory test, it has boosted my confidence.”

I understand more about road signs and the highway code.”

Work with Young People

Training and Development



As part of our training programme for youth workers, a number of targeted training sessions were delivered across Orkney, to support youth workers ongoing professional development and increase confidence in their roles. The training took place through various formats including online and in-person workshops, as well as a dedicated residential weekend.

Sessions covered a range of topics including first aid, food hygiene, drugs awareness, child protection, and youth engagement. The training was facilitated by CLDE Youth Services, and a number of trusted partners including Youth Scotland, Youthlink and The Digital College.



Attendance at these training sessions supports a stronger, more informed network of youth workers able to support young people more effectively in the community.

55 participants attended training opportunities.

In addition, 4 members of staff completed a Professional Development Award (PDA) in Youth Work.



“It’s been really valuable to come together with other youth workers and build on our skills.”

“The residential gave me more confidence and it was great to connect with other youth workers.”

Work with Young People



Big Ideas



In August 2024, CLDE Youth Services took a group of 5 young people to Youth Scotland's 'Big Ideas' event in Stirling. This event provides an opportunity for young people, young leaders, volunteers and youth workers to learn new skills, network, share ideas and celebrate the impact of youth work.

The staff and young people in attendance took part in a Young Islanders Network session with the University of the Highlands and Islands, Scottish Government and the National Lottery, to find out more about each other's islands and communities.

During the event participants attended a range of fun and informative workshops.

All the young people who attended said they had a great time, enjoyed all the workshops, and would love to come back again. Participants also gained a Hi-5 award for participating in the event.



"I liked dropping the balloons."

"It was fun."

"It was good."

Young Parents Group

CLDE's Youth Services and the Employability team jointly run a group specifically for parents and their children. Sessions are co-designed with parents and cover a range of sessions focussed on promoting health and wellbeing, getting involved with the local community and developing knowledge, skills and networks to make informed future choices and progress towards employment.

During 2024-25 the group benefited from a range of information sessions with other support organisations including the OIC Early Years Team, Childsmile, NHS Orkney, Bookbug, trips to local facilities such as The Pickaquoy Centre, Soft Play, Outdoor Activities and Orkney Library. Members also took part in sessions on Solihull and messy play.



4 parents and children attend the group regularly.

Work with Young People

Fireskills



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland



CLDE Youth Services worked in collaboration with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to deliver a 10 week 'Fireskills' course. In order to hopefully encourage future recruitment to support a sustainable fire service, spaces were allocated to pupils from both Stromness Academy and Kirkwall Grammar School. Participants gained an understanding of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service through a range of theory and practical skills. The young people developed their communication skills and demonstrated effective teamwork. Over the duration of the course the group grew in knowledge and confidence, social skills and resilience. Since the course, 2 young people have since utilised their skills to progress into further education at UHI Orkney'

8 young people completed the course.

7 young people received a DYA.

1 young person completed a Bronze YAA.

"Throughout the course, students immersed themselves in a transformative journey, not only acquiring firefighting skills but also honing in on respect, discipline, teamwork, leadership, and communication skills. This holistic approach taken in preparing these individuals for the demanding and crucial role of a firefighter and all future employment opportunities."

Phillip Morrison, Crew Commander, SFRS Orkney

"I really enjoyed learning the skills it takes to be a firefighter, I made new friends, and the first aid was good and I really liked showing off what we learned during the presentation night."

Fireskills Participant 2024

Work with Young People

Prom Pop-Up

Following the previous success of Prom Pop-Up, Youth Services were delighted to offer this opportunity again. The event is aimed at providing young people with free outfits for their school leavers prom. An appeal to the community to provide donations of occasion wear they were willing to pass on, meant that we could run the event at no cost to the young people. As in previous years the focus was on sustainability and recycled fashion, while also addressing the challenging cost of living. Events were held in both Stromness Academy and Kirkwall Grammer School. The event was met with great enthusiasm with a high uptake in both schools. In addition, Youth Services also offered the Youth Café the opportunity to share the outfits with young people attending the Pride Prom which was held at the Youth Café.



Nearly one hundred young people benefitted from the project with 200 items finding new homes.

“Lots of choice for everybody, fun and friendly staff, a lovely day.”

Young Scot



The Young Scot card continues to be used well with an estimated 100% of young people in Orkney now issued with a card. Of these cards, 72% have free bus travel entitlement included on them which is used widely across the county.

There have been 2189 free bus journeys taken by young people in Orkney in 2024-25.

The Young Scot local pages have been visited 1021 times.

Work with Young People

First Aid Training for Young People

CLDE were delighted to welcome 'St Andrew's' First Aid' to Orkney in September 2024 to deliver the 2 day accredited Ready for Life programme to 27 young people. The Awards were delivered to senior phase pupils in Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy, and to a group receiving employability support.

The 'Ready for Life' programme incorporates Emergency First Aid at Work (SCQF6) and First Aid for Mental Health Awareness (SCQF4). It is hoped that these qualifications will support the young people in their next steps - whether obtaining employment, an apprenticeship, or entering further education.

As well as delivering this programme St. Andrews First Aid staff also visited a number of other groups and delivered free First Aid demonstrations to Burray Community Association, The Blide Trust and Orkney Youth Local Action Group.



27 young people received an Emergency First Aid at Work (SCQF6) and First Aid for Mental Health Awareness (SCQF4) qualification.

Work with Young People

Youth Club Hubs



In September, Youth Services completed a review of CLDE youth work across Orkney which recommended the establishment of a new 'Youth Hub' structure to ensure youth club provision is as fair, sustainable and equitable as possible.

During 2024–25, seven Youth Clubs were operational across Orkney. Each club is staffed by a Senior Youth Worker and a General Youth Worker, ensuring a consistent and supportive environment for youth activity and engagement. CLDE were delighted to work in partnership with Stronsay Development Trust to be able to provide a Youth Club in Stronsay for the first time.

The Youth Clubs deliver a range of structured and informal activities that align with the national Youth Work Outcomes & Skills Framework, fostering key personal and social development skills. These settings also serve as safe and welcoming spaces where young people can form friendships, learn new skills, and build confidence.

This year, Youth Services secured funding to purchase a soup maker for every youth club, to allow staff to provide a free healthy snack of soup and/or smoothies for all members.

Youth Club Hub	Total attendances
Burray and Hope Youth Club	357
Dounby Junior Youth Club	909
Firth Youth Club	284
Stromness Junior Youth Club	100
Stronsay Youth Club	108
North Walls Youth Club	144
Westray Youth Club	233

"It is the favourite part of his week. He has ADHD and struggles to participate in activities out with school, but youth club has been an absolute lifeline to him as it allows him to see his peers (he does not socialise outside school), and his confidence has grown in the relaxed yet structured expectations of the youth club setting."

Parent

"Youth Club has enabled my child to feel fully included in a busy and fun environment. The mix of activities being provided, whether they joined in or not, has improved their self-confidence and feeling of belonging."

Parent

Work with Young People

Orkney Youth Forum



The Orkney Youth Forum, supported by CLDE Youth Services, is aimed at young people aged 12 to 25, and is dedicated to increasing youth participation in decision making and improving the local community. Meeting regularly, the forum discuss a range of issues affecting young people and plan activities for wider community benefit.

This year the forum focused on awareness raising and recruitment. A Bubble Tea and Boccia roadshow was delivered across Orkney to encourage young people to get involved in youth voice activities. This opportunity was funded by Generation Cashback in partnership with Youth Scotland.

The members visited various community groups across Orkney, engaging with over of 75 young people.

In addition, the Youth Forum had a week in the Blue Door raising £2,000 for the group, which allowed them to provide additional activities, training and workshops for young people across Orkney.



7 new members have engaged further with the Youth Forum, which currently stands at 13 members.

76 young people engaged in the roadshow.

Work with Young People

Scottish Youth Parliament



CLDE Youth Services support the Orkney Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) who play a crucial role in representing the voices of young people, advocating for their needs, and influencing policy decisions that impact their lives. The 2 local MSYPs serve as a bridge between young people in Orkney and the broader political landscape of Scotland, ensuring that the unique perspectives and issues of island communities are heard and addressed.

Last year Nymeria Drayak and Iain Pretswell, were elected to represent their peers at the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) and continued in the role doing 2024-25. MSYPs have taken part in SYP Sittings, where the entire membership come together to debate issues, vote on Motions and participate in committee workshops.

Nymeria also engaged with young people at The Stronsay Youth Summit, letting them know more about SYP and learning about the issues that affect young people on Stronsay.

"Being an MSYP has been a very honoring experience, it has taught me so much about taking initiative, creating positive changes, and the strength of young people's voices. It has meant so much to me being able to work with other like-minded young people. I hope that I can continue to create and help push meaningful, positive changes for Orkneys young people."

MSYP

"Being an MSYP has enabled me to grow my networking skills and grown my passion for reigniting youth voice in Orkney."

MSYP



Work with Young People

Stronsay Youth Summit 2025

CLDE Youth Services supported Stronsay Development Trust to run a Youth Summit - a day of team challenges and meaningful conversation. Alongside an outdoor bootcamp to build confidence, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, participants also took time to discuss key issues affecting their community, from transport and activities to mental health and opportunities for young people. Participants shared their perspectives, identified challenges, and began developing creative solutions to ensure their voices are heard in shaping the future of their island. The Summit empowered young people to lead, connect, and create change together. CLDE Youth Services were delighted to be involved in delivering at this event, as well as supporting members of Orkney Youth Forum to attend and share more information with the participants on what the forum does.



10 Young People participated in the Stronsay Youth Summit.

Youth Achievement Groups



Youth Services currently have 2 youth achievement groups, which run weekly during term time. The Kirkwall group is aimed at young people 14+ who are completing a Youth Achievement Award. In Stromness a weekly group runs for young people aged 10+ who are completing a Dynamic Youth or Youth Achievement Award.



Over the past year, the 13 members of the West Mainland Youth Achievement Group (WMYAG) have been involved in many activities and community events such as participating in the Lifeboat Mass Band Parade, organising a 'Bag the Bruck' event, running a stall at Stromness Shopping week, taking part in Christmas activities including Stromness Christmas Grotto and also organising and running a Community Café, with funding they received from the Youth Local Action Group (YLAG). 'The Cosy Café', ran over 2 different evenings during the winter, offering the community a warm, safe place to come together and enjoy a free meal.



50 people attended the 'Cosy Community Cafe'.

"I like trying new activities."

"I want to do things for the people around here."

Work with Young People

Youth Work Offer



CLDE Youth Services provide a Youth Work Offer to schools and other youth organisations, offering a range of youth work programmes and opportunities.



During 2024-25, programmes from the Youth Work Offer were delivered in Stromness Academy, Kirkwall Grammar School and Westray Community School. Courses included 'Confidence to Cook', 'Imagine a Man' and the 'Feels Good' programme.

21 Westray pupils participated in the Confidence to Cook Course.

"Our young people have really benefitted from the learning and the skills development of this programme."

Teacher, Westray Community School

As part of this year's programme, staff visited Westray to deliver the Confidence to Cook course over a course of 4 weeks. Pupils from S1-S3 learned basic kitchen skills, food hygiene, food safety and healthy eating habits whilst also learning the practical skills to prepare and cook meals on a budget. In collaboration with the school the young people also worked towards completing a Dynamic Youth Award combining it with sessions exploring local businesses.

Friday Afternoon Alternative Activities



This will be the fourth year that Youth Services have collaborated with The Pickaquoy Centre, Action for Children and Stromness Community Centre to support and deliver a range of free activities for secondary school aged pupils on Friday afternoons in both Stromness and Kirkwall.

Sessions in Stromness include free activities and a healthy snack. Whilst in Kirkwall a range of free sport and swimming pool sessions are on offer. This year additional funding was also secured to offer a free drink and snack from the Picky Café for those who attend a session.

On average, 80 young people attend these sessions on a regular weekly basis.

213 different young people attended at least 1 session at the Pickaquoy Centre.

75 different young people attended at least 1 session at the Stromness Community Centre.

"This is very fun."

"Seeing friends and the free food is my favourite thing about the drop in."

"It is a safe space to talk, the people are really nice."

"People get a social area and that's good."

Work with Young People

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award



CLDE Youth Services, as the licensed operating authority for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE), continued to support schools and voluntary groups to deliver the programme over 2024-25. The Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) Award, offers opportunities to develop resilience, leadership, and practical life skills through outdoor expeditions, volunteering, and personal development.

Throughout the year, 62 young people began their DofE journey across Bronze, Silver, and Gold levels, with the majority taking part at Bronze level.

24 DofE awards achieved in total: 23 Bronze, 1 Silver.

Kirkwall Grammar School supported 20 young people to complete their Bronze Award.

Sanday DofE Group supported 3 young people to complete their Bronze Award and 1 young person to complete their Silver Award.

**"We're proud to support DofE in our school, it's a fantastic way to see our pupils grow in confidence and independence."
School DofE Coordinator**

**"Doing my DofE was one of the best things I've ever done. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and showed me I could do way more than I thought, especially on the expedition. I've made new friends, learned loads, and I feel really proud of what I've achieved."
DofE Award Participant**

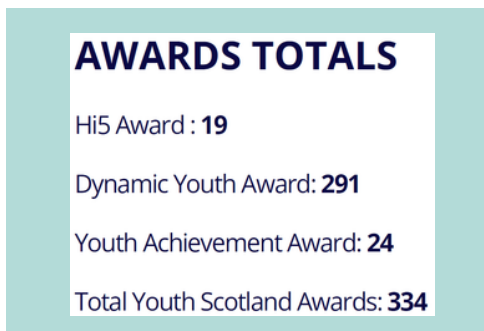
Work with Young People

Youth Scotland Awards

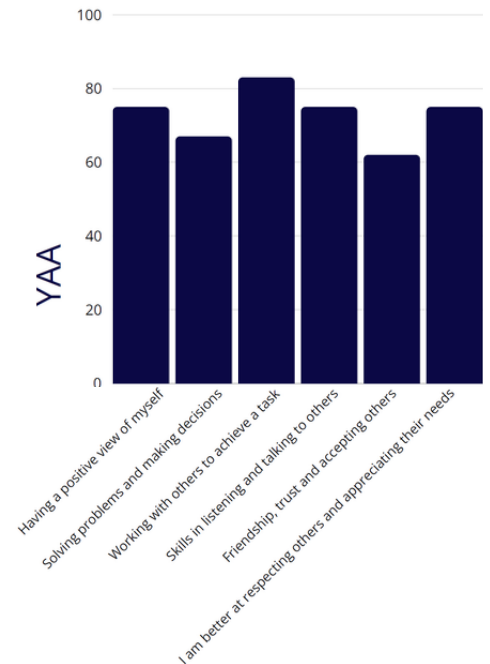
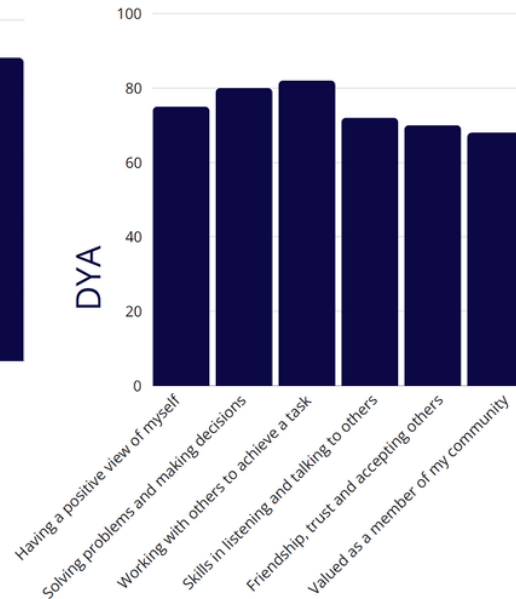
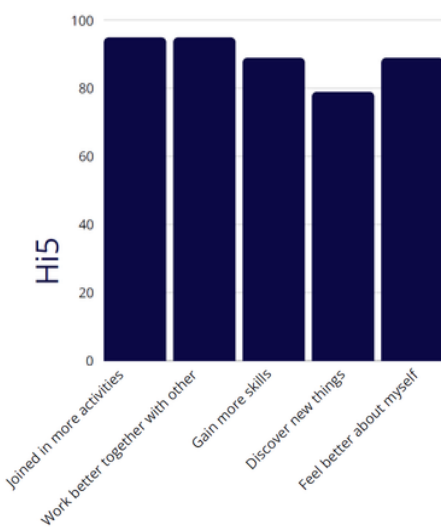


CLDE's Youth Services have had a very successful year, delivering a number of Hi5, Dynamic Youth and Youth Achievement Awards to children and young people across Orkney.

Young people completed these awards by participating in a range of activities including: Fireskills, Confidence to Cook, Pupil Engagement Team Projects, Youth Achievement Group volunteering, Hoy residentials and holiday programmes.



The graphs below show the percentages that young people themselves felt they had achieved.



The number of nationally recognised awards achieved by children and young people through CLD activity rose from 246 last year to 385 in 2024-25. The highest level since reporting began in back in 2019.

7,222 hours completed on Dynamic Youth (SCQF Level 3) Awards.

2 Silver (SCQF Level 5) Youth Achievement Awards.

21 Bronze (SCQF Level 4) Youth Achievement Awards.

1 Gold (SCQF Level 6) Youth Achievement Awards.

Work with Young People

Youth Awards Ceremony



The 2025 Youth Awards Ceremony took place in the Pickaquoy Centre in March. To celebrate the achievements of young people in Orkney. CLDE Youth Services, in partnership with Voluntary Action Orkney's Youth Development Workers, organised the event, with sponsorship from The Pickaquoy Centre, The Orcadian and Robert Gordon University. Hosted by young people from the Scottish Youth Parliament, Stromness Academy and Orkney Youth Café, this year celebrated the achievement of a range different awards including Dynamic Youth, Youth Achievement, Saltire, St Andrews First Aid, Scouts Platinum Award, Food Hygiene Certificates, and this year we also warmly welcomed presentation of the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Awards. 5 young people received the Orcadian Community Award, and 5 young people also received a Summit Award, which is voted for by a panel of peers. The evening also showcased local talent with entertainment from young musicians, an inspirational speech on self-belief, and supper provided by college catering students and a local young patisserie entrepreneur.

90 awards were presented.

224 people attended the Youth Award Ceremony.



“The Orkney Youth Awards gave us all an opportunity to be recognised for all the hard work we have been putting in, and to be surrounded by other people our age, all of which with different stories, that we can draw inspiration from and be proud of. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this and I can’t wait to see what the year holds for all of us!”
Anushka Thombre, Young Person

“What a great night for Orkney! It was so lovely to see so many young people having achieved so much. Our job is such that we rarely feel like we’ve done enough to make a difference but then when you are part of something like last night, you realise we must have done something right!”
Youth Award Recipient’s Parent

Work with Young People

Pupil Engagement Team (PET)

The Pupil Engagement Team (PET) are funded through Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) from Papdale Primary School and Kirkwall Grammar School. The project focuses on embedding a CLDE youth worker within the school, to focus on the wellbeing and engagement levels of pupils, to support a reduction in the poverty related attainment gap.

The project commenced last year and continues to run in Papdale Primary School. In Kirkwall Grammar School this project ended in December 2024.

Through continuous collaboration with Senior Leadership Teams, Guidance and Pastoral staff, the Pupil Engagement Team have:

- Facilitated a free breakfast and snack provision in both schools, offering a nutritious, healthy start to and throughout the day.
- Offered targeted individual and group support through a request for engagement process; developed in collaboration with the Senior Leadership Team and the Guidance Teams.
- Offered universal and targeted clubs and activities to encourage participation and inclusion.
- Provided free holiday activity programmes to support families during school break.
- Facilitated a soft start option in KGS to support young people experiencing barriers to class engagement.
- Supported pupils to successfully return to the school environment and engage in activities to support wellbeing, engagement, inclusion and attainment opportunities.
- Developed and delivered a programme of enhanced support to P7 pupils transitioning to S1.
- Supported Papdale Primary School P7 pupils to attend residential trips, building relationships and supporting wellbeing and confidence.
- Supported a number of pupils to successfully complete an accredited Hi5 or Dynamic Youth Wider Achievement Award.
- Worked in partnership with schools, NHS, third sector organisations and statutory agencies to support children, young people and families to engage with learning.

“I think it’s great for a Primary school to have a youth worker, it provides different learning opportunities to what teachers can do, and my son loves the experiments with Kim after school.”

Parent

“I’m really grateful for the soft start, it helps me get ready for lessons in a calm space, and Gavin is great and easy to talk to.”

Secondary Pupil



Work with Young People

Family Engagement Team (FET)

The Family Engagement Team (FET) is funded through the Scottish Government's Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) and managed by CLDE Youth Services. This project is delivered by a Community Learning Officer and two Family Engagement Workers, who were appointed during the 2024-25 period. The project offers early intervention and prevention support to children, young people and their families, using a community learning and development approach. The team have worked closely with schools and other partners to offer individual, group or family support programmes, built around the interests and needs of each request for engagement. Building confidence, exploring wellbeing techniques, school re-engagement pathways, home routines and whole family engagement opportunities are amongst the requests for engagement received.



The Family Engagement Team received 36 requests for engagement.

“It was the highlight of his week, looking forward to seeing what was happening next week, he was so excited.”
School parent

“I want to be a Youth Worker when I’m old.”
Young person

“This is fun, thanks for coming to an island.”
Pupil



Work with Young People

Papdale Primary School Holiday Clubs



The CLDE Youth Services Pupil Engagement Worker based in Papdale Primary School, supported by the wider Youth Services team, co-ordinated and delivered holiday club provision at Papdale Primary School. The clubs took place during the Spring, Summer and Autumn school breaks, offering free activities and a snack for pupils, with parents welcome to stay and play. The clubs aim to improve the wellbeing and engagement levels for all participants, with activities focussed on developing the skills outlined in the national Youthwork Outcomes and Skills Framework and included, STEM, gardening, crafts, games and sports. The clubs were supported by the school, and Parent Council members. Partner agencies including NHS School Health Team, Orkney Foodbank and Active Schools also attended various sessions, to offer support and information for parents and pupils.



Feedback has evidenced the appreciation for the clubs from parents and pupils, with many saying that this had supported their child's continued engagement in the school and was a welcomed addition to the holiday periods.



Attendance numbers varied between 30 and 60 participants over the provision, with several parents staying and engaging in activities with their children.

**"My Child loves coming to the clubs, they have made so many new friends."
Parent**

**"I really like doing the crafts and taking what I've made home to show my mum."
Young person**

Work with Young People

Holiday Transition Programmes for new S1 pupils

During the summer break Youth Services ran a morning of activities in Stromness Academy aimed at familiarising the new S1 pupils with the surroundings of the school, building confidence and resilience, and facilitating a range of activities aimed at allowing pupils to get to know each other.

9 young people attended the Stromness sessions.

“It was fun.”

“I liked dropping the balloons.”

“It was good.”



The team also delivered a programme in Kirkwall Grammar School designed to help pupils, transitioning from Primary 7 to S1 familiarise themselves more with the school surroundings and to help the young people develop social relationships with their peers.



The KGS programme, organised by the Youth Services, Pupil Engagement Team, took place over 4 weeks at the beginning of the school holidays. Activities included scavenger hunts, STEM challenges, an online safety workshop, a healthy eating presentation, team games and cooking sessions. Participants also completed a Dynamic Youth Award as part of their involvement.

35 young participated in the Kirkwall programme.

These young people came from 5 different primary schools.

“Amazing and good fun.”
Young person

“I loved making homemade pizza and ice cream!”
Young person

“I think that this programme is a very good idea, and can certainly help young folk in feeling more confident in terms of finding their way around KGS and feeling confident.”
Parent



Work with Young People

The Blide Trust Group



In 2024, the CLD Employability team continued to work in partnership with the Blide Trust to coordinate, plan and deliver a weekly informal learning group for care experienced young people and their friends. This group continues to be well attended with 12 young people regularly and actively involved over the year, with an average attendance at each session of 8 individuals.

Staff work with the young people to design and develop session, activities and opportunities to meet the group's needs. These sessions support young people to develop knowledge, skills and networks that will support them in future transitions and actively contribute to their health and wellbeing. The sessions also allow CLDE staff to build positive reciprocal relationships with young people which enable more focused one-to-one support to be offered out with the group setting as required. Sessions during 2024-25 have included visits to local heritage sites, health and wellbeing sessions at Picky, budgeting and cooking sessions, traditional crafts, Japanese culture activities, drug and alcohol awareness sessions, St Andrews First Aid, Species on the Edge sessions and team building challenges.



Of the 12 young people who engaged with the group during 2024, 2 have gained employment, 2 gained places at UHI Orkney and 4 are now actively volunteering in the local community.

“I found the course to be very informative and now feel that whilst I was not necessarily doing anything wrong previously, I feel more confident to offer help and support and point anyone in the right direction if further help is needed. The venue was excellent, and it was great to meet and interact with a new group of people.”

Young person



Work with communities

Annual Halls Event



The 2024 Annual Halls Event, hosted by Deerness Hall Committee saw 14 volunteers representing 10 halls from across Orkney come together for the 23rd Annual Meeting of Community Associations. This popular event, organised jointly by the Council's Community Learning, Development & Employability and Voluntary Action Orkney, gives volunteers running village halls the chance to get together to increase their skills, knowledge, celebrate successes, discuss challenges and share solutions.

Across Orkney, Community Associations put in so much to ensure their community centre or hall provides social activities, classes and services for their local community. Village halls are at the heart of community life, providing a varied and diverse range of activities which encourage the active involvement of residents and groups, celebrating the cultural richness of the community, creating opportunities for the development of individual potential, improved health and wellbeing, and working to combat loneliness and social isolation and fosters a cohesive community.

Hall committees shape the Annual Halls Event programme, each year, ensuring the event is relevant and useful. This year, presentations covered a wide range of topics including Environmental Health, The Islands Games 2025, The Multiply Initiative, Cyber Security, Climate Hubs & Rural Energy Hubs.

It was a great day and those present were appreciative of the opportunity to network with representatives from other hall committees and organisations who offer valuable.

92% of respondents rated the event as excellent.

14 volunteers from 10 halls attended.

"I have ended up with a list of new and good ideas."

"Very relevant and thought provoking."

"It was good to meet the other committee members and hear new information."

Work with communities

Community Association Group Communication

One request that came from the Annual Halls event in 2024, was to create an on-line group chat function for community groups to use, This would allow them to maintain contact with each other, sharing information, advice and support throughout the year. Whilst What's App was the preferred platform, Council staff were not able to access it so, instead a group email was set up, where everyone agreed to their details being shared. This group email has been a great asset with Community Association members sharing possible funding streams, pricing structures, details on insurance providers and promoting up and coming events and activities.



Orkney Matters 2

During 2024, the CLDE Service attended the Orkney Matters 2 Community Consultation events that took place across Orkney, which were designed to pick up where the initial Orkney Matters 1 left off. An array of partners came together in an effort to build on the first Orkney Matters exercise. The aim was to help identify what was needed to move forward, to build community engagement and capacity, and to work with communities to realise or support their community aspirations. In a bid to reduce consultation fatigue and speak to the community collectively, Orkney Matters 2, employed community meetings and a 'Lesser Heard Voices' project.

The Lesser Heard Voices element of the project was focused on an arts outreach programme, to engage local people who were less likely to attend the public events to put their views forward. Co-ordinated by the Pier Arts Centre, this took the conversation into schools and to community interest groups across Orkney, capturing thoughts and feelings about life in Orkney with the help of local artists.



The consultation findings were used to influence the updated Community Learning and Development Partners Plan 2024-2027.

Work with communities

Orkney CLD Partnership



Partnership working is central to the CLD approach; therefore, it is not surprising that CLDE sits on a number of local and national partnerships. A key partnership for coordinating and planning CLD activity across Orkney is the Community Learning Development Partnership. This partnership is responsible for the Orkney CLD Partners Plan, working collectively to identify needs and deliver CLD collaboratively, to improve outcomes for Orkney's learners and communities.

Orkney Islands Council has a statutory duty to produce a Community Learning and Development Plan with partners every 3 years, to ensure adequate and sufficient provision of community learning and development support across the local authority area.

During the last year of the 2021-24 CLD Partners Plan, all 16 of the actions set out for completion in the final year were achieved. Over the three-year period all 34 actions were completed within the set timeframe.

In September 2024, a new CLD Partners Plan 2024-27 was created. A collective understanding of community and learner needs was developed, and stakeholder input into the plan was assured through a range of methods including one-to-one sessions, focus group activities, initial findings taken from Orkney Matters 2, and a specific CLD consultation for Orkney residents, strategic partners, CLD practitioners, community groups, adult learners and young people.

To reflect what people said, the CLD Plan new priority areas were agreed as follows:

- Sustainable Development - Supporting sustainable development and increasing people's skills, confidence and capacity
- Cost of Living - Supporting individuals and families to address immediate need and tackle the underlying causes of poverty
- Local Equality – Ensuring residents in all parts of Orkney have equal opportunities, enhanced individual and community capacity and resilience
- Health & Wellbeing – Contributing to improved mental and emotional health, physical health and improved lifestyles for individuals, families and communities
- Workforce Development – Strengthening learning opportunities for those working and volunteering across the CLD sector in Orkney



The review of the Orkney CLD Partners Plan 2021-2024, the new CLD Partners Plan for 2024-27 and summary leaflets of the plans can be found in the related downloads section here:

[Year one and the annual CLD Partners Plan annual report](#)



Work with communities

Community Development Forum



During 2024-25, a Community Development Forum was established as a subgroup of the CLD Partnership. This group is focused on coordinating the community development support available across Orkney. The Community Development Forum have undertaken an area-based audit of community development support and have streamlined and coordinated the delivery of governance health checks and policy reviews. The group is also collaborating on the provision of support for the creation of development plans and place plans. Sanday, Hoy and Westray

In response to local demand Tri-Community Exchange meetings (TRICE) were offered out to the community. These meetings are focused on having representatives from the three main anchor organisations in a community, namely the Community Council, Development Trust and Community Associations, together with organisations including Highlands & Islands Enterprise, Voluntary Action Orkney and various departments from Orkney Island Council to collaborate and develop more joined up approaches. Sanday, Hoy and Westray took up the offer of TRICE meetings during this time.

4 TRICE meetings took place with 38 attendees in total.

Shapinsay Training Programme



Working with Shapinsay Development Trust and UHI Orkney, the CLDE Team planned and coordinated 2 accredited courses to meet local need. The CLDE team delivered a Level 2 Food Hygiene course through the Digital College and UHI delivered a full day Emergency First Aid at Work course.

The courses were well attended and participants gave positive feedback on both courses.

In total 10 individuals completed their Level 2 Food Hygiene course.

9 individuals completed their Emergency First Aid at Work course.

“The course was relaxed, fun and informative.”



Work with communities

Partnership working is as easy as ABC

In July 2024, BT announced that they were delivering Digital Roadshows in Orkney. This event was an opportunity for local people to find out how the digital switchover would affect them, and to ask questions or raise any concerns. The Learning Link asked to have a presence at the roadshows so that anyone who wanted help with digital skills would know where they could find help and support locally. By attending the roadshows, it became apparent that there were clear gaps in the community in regard to digital skills. The Learning Link arranged to work in partnership with Kirkwall Library & Archive, and started an Absolute Beginners Class - ABC Group.



The ABC Group provided company and as well as a learning opportunity. More importantly, learners felt safe, had fun and progressed at their own pace. At the end of the programme, they each received a certificate and were offered the opportunity to join the 'Digital Friends' group.

The 'Digital Friends' Group runs for 10 weeks each year. This year, the group relocated to Kirkwall Library, as learners were familiar with the building, and the library was more easily accessible.



“Excellent working experience would recommend it. Never felt pressurised to succeed.”

“It’s been a pleasure to work with the tutors and amazing what I have managed to learn.”

“The whole experience has been useful and informative.”

“It gave me confidence to try new things without fear of losing information I can't retrieve.”

“Certainly the most worthwhile thing I have done in the last sixty years.”

“I went from having no hope to being very happy.”



Work with communities

Engagement Sessions



CLDE have worked hard over the last year, to raise awareness of CLD and the variety of support and opportunities that are available. It is important to let the community know about the range of support and opportunities that are available and the benefits associated with participation in CLD activity. CLDE attended a number of events including Parents Evenings; County Show; Digital Events; Fayres and other community activities. As a result, CLDE have engaged with over 2000 people and raised awareness of the work of the CLDE team and of the sector.



The CLDE Service engaged with 2920 adults and young people through one off events.





Contact Details:

Community Learning, Development and Employability
Orkney Islands Council

Posting: Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY

Phoning: 01856 873535

Emailing: cld@orkney.gov.uk

Clicking: www.orkney.gov.uk/Service-Directory/C/cld-services.htm,
www.orkney.gov.uk/service-directory/c/employability.htm

Facebook: www.facebook.com/communitylearningorkney/