



# Communities Service Annual Report

2024  
2025

Dundee  
City Council

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CHANGING  
FOR THE FUTURE





'I am now not scared about trying to learn something new even if seems difficult I have to just go for it give it my all, to make sure I see it through to the end whether I fail or not. I won't know unless I keep trying. I'm very grateful I had literacies with me through all of this too, otherwise I would have gave up ages ago. I have unlocked a new version of me and my learning style.'

**Literacies Learner**



This is so so important to my recovery - that I can do things like this. I am not judged and am included and treated like a proper human being rather than a drug user makes me feel I am worth something in life. You treat us normal - you don't know what I mean but others with drug issues. I don't feel worthless at mens group.

**Lochee Men's Group**



I really enjoyed doing the litter pick today. I felt I was doing something for my community. I would like to get involved with other activities.

**Hilltown Green  
Spaces Initiative**

Everyone is saying the food is good - it makes me feel proud. It's a good feeling cos I cooked it.

**S1+ Drop In Mill o Mains**



# Introduction

I am proud to present the 2024/25 Communities Service Annual Report. The past year has seen staff and volunteers continuing their work of improving life chances and empowering communities through Community Learning & Development practice.

I'm sure you will agree that the work outlined below is making a significant contribution to national and local priorities to reduce inequalities, grow our economy and support our net-zero ambitions, all whilst ensuring individuals and communities across our city are at the heart of designing and delivering that work and tangibly benefitting from it in their every day lives. I would particularly like to highlight the following projects which have been especially innovative or recognised nationally.

## Linlathen Fairness Initiative

The Linlathen Local Fairness Initiative (LFI) is an innovative approach to addressing inequalities and is led by Dundee Partnership. Communities take the lead in community involvement and collaboration. The initiative won the *Best Collaborative Working Initiative* at the 2024 Association for Public Service Excellence Awards. This was in recognition of the innovative approach to partnership working and collaborative practice which saw a range of public, third sector and community partners prioritise resources to an area of the city which experiences the most significant levels of inequality and poverty.

## What Matters 2 You?

Funded by *The Hunter Foundation* and *BBC Children in Need*, *What Matters to You (WM2U)* represents a shift from the provision of services to families and young people, to a model based on empowerment and leadership development, including through Values Based Leadership Experiences delivered through *Columba1400*. This has resulted in those parents and young people across Dundee developing skills as leaders in their schools and communities.



"This group has pushed me more than any other group. I have anxiety but the VBLE has helped me" **Lochee Family Group**



I had such an amazing time, thank you for having us....I notice a difference in myself now I am home and right back to life, its a calming feeling that I haven't felt in a long time.

**WM2U Whitfield/Fintry**



## Continued...

Some of the new work that has been developed and led by WM2U Columba graduates includes a parental peer support group in Fintry, family activity groups in Charleston, a men's group in Kirkton, young leaders developing opportunities for other young people at the DISC target project in Stobswell and young people leading transition support for the new Greenfield Academy. In addition, those local leaders are now in charge of local funding pots through the *Make it Happen Fund* enabling them to support community activity locally and putting the power for change in the hands of local people themselves.

### CLD Film Festival

Our staff worked with the Underground Cinema club to produce four short films highlighting the life changing impact of CLD practice across the city resulting in our inaugural CLD Film Festival. These films were made with young people, adult learners, community members and CLD staff to show impact and promote Dundee City Council's CLD learning offer to members of the public, breaking down stigma, particularly around adult learning and recovery. In March, a screening was held at the Steps Theatre for learners and partners. The films are embedded throughout this annual report. We are grateful to all the young people and adults who shared their stories with us.

I hope you will enjoy reading this report which highlights the achievements of Communities staff in youth work, adult learning, community health and community empowerment in the last year, working with individuals and communities across Dundee.

**Nicky MacCrimmon**

Service Manager, Communities

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The participants thoroughly enjoyed the experience and expressed pride in being part of something which is making positive change in the city. After the session the group felt empowered to host their own local screening of the films to show their work to family and friends and to use this as a means to increase local participation in CLD programmes.

**CLD Worker**



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05

## Impact

428768

Attendances at  
Community Centres

5369

Dundee Citizens engaged  
in CLD activity

6818

Targeted group work  
sessions

38588

Attendances by young people  
engaged in Diversionary  
Learning Programmes

750

Adults received one to one  
support to reduce risk and  
promote positive outcomes

169

Young People received one to  
one support to reduce risk and  
promote positive outcomes





# Impact



The Communities Service supports disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and individuals of all ages. Our staff working in Youth Work, Adult Learning (Literacies and ESOL), Community Empowerment and Community Health focus on bringing about positive change in the lives of individuals and communities, through learning, personal and community development, and active citizenship. Support is provided in community centres and other venues across the city, with a specific focus on reducing the poverty related socio-economic, attainment and health inequalities gaps.

## 5369 Unique Individuals Engaged in CLD Activity

2097 Adults Engaged in CLD Activity

3272 Young People Engaged in CLD Activity

**206** Local  
community groups provided  
with capacity building support

**983** Dundee  
Citizens  
contributed to local  
community plan outcomes

**2,012**  
Capacity Building Sessions

**12,201**  
People consulted on  
community planning issues



# Adult Learning

I feel I am on top of things like my house and dealing with my bills. I don't put things off, I don't let things pile up and overwhelm me. I can't afford to have the stress of that being a trigger for me. I paid my Tv bill and council tax in full to get it out of the way. I am in my new house and living independently. I'm confident now. I am ready for group learning... I am where I am because you have helped me.

**Literacy Learner**



This was a very good session. I understand everything. It's important to know this and to know our rights. I think all (leaners) understand - they were speaking in our language about it

**ESOL Cultural Exchange Cafe**



I feel good about myself that I could apply for a job on my own. Feel less stressed about Universal Credit and I've been able to add to my journal on Government Gateway.

**Literacy Learner**



I am very happy, the health visitor come to my house and said my English is good, no use google translation, I understand.

**ESOL Beginner**



# Adult Learning

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Our adult learning teams provide targeted specialist support for those with low levels of literacy, numeracy, and digital skills or for whom English is an additional language (ESOL).

## ESOL

In the past year, the ESOL team worked with 2,223 adults, offering a wide range of tailored support through targeted group sessions ensuring each individual received appropriate level of instruction and assistance.

To complement classroom-based activities, the ESOL team offered additional programmes such as Conversation Cafés, Talk Dundee Workshops, Cooking Clubs, and Storytelling Groups. These initiatives aimed to enable learners to practice their language skills in diverse and practical contexts. Notably, the weekly English and Cooking Club at Hilltown Community Centre has remained popular and positively impacted learners. This club is supported by dedicated volunteers who play a crucial role in assisting learners within the community, ensuring learners receive the necessary support to integrate into Dundee's communities.

The ESOL team also collaborated with Dundee University's Dental and Medical Schools to raise awareness among students about the communication challenges faced by patients and colleagues for whom English is an additional language. Students in medical and dental programmes participated in short placements with the ESOL team to build their understanding of effective communication with non-native speakers.



## Literacies

The targeted approach of the literacies team has proven effective in reaching learners from Dundee's most disadvantaged communities, increasing participation, and providing valuable support through diverse projects. By concentrating efforts in these communities, the team has been able to engage learners who might otherwise lack the resources or opportunities to participate in educational activities within their local area. Emphasising group sessions and digital literacy has further enhanced the team's capacity to meet learners' needs, fostering a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. The collaborative environment promoted by these sessions encourages learning and builds a sense of community among participants.

A critical component of the individual support provided over the last year has been focused on digital literacy and digital skills, which can positively affect individuals' mental health, wellbeing, and employability opportunities. By addressing these challenges, the literacies team is not only improving learners' digital competencies but also contributing to their overall quality of life.



# Community Health Inequalities

Volunteering has made a huge difference, I don't even know what to say. I am so much more confident, I have friends, I used to just be in the house on my own. The groups and volunteering give me a purpose and have given me friendships. I am out and about all the time, always have something to do. It has definitely helped my mental and physical health. It has also given me experience and helped me to get qualifications that I would have never dreamed of getting before.

**Community Health Team Volunteer**



I have got support, acceptance, friendship and a lot of encouragement to move forward from this group. I really appreciate how the staff have helped me regain myself belief. Thank you and I will keep coming until they have to throw me out

**Lochee Wellbeing Group**

I cant believe the difference that coming to this group on a Monday morning has made to my daughters attendance, last week was her first full week in school for a long time and I think its because of this group, she loves coming

**Craigowl Primary School Family Cooking group**



# Community Health Inequalities

The Community Health Team (CHT) had another successful year with 933 individuals benefiting from involvement in welcoming, inclusive entry level activities such as family cooking, pram-pushing/walking groups, healthy lifestyle courses, recovery activity, men's groups and menopause support. This led many residents to delve deeper into health inequalities evidenced through the participation of 237 individuals in capacity-building programmes such as the accredited Health Issues in the Community (HIIC) course. The Charleston HIIC members presented their powerful group project at the joint Health and Wellbeing network meeting in November, the CLD staff conference in February, and to mental health nursing students at Abertay University in March. Their personal stories of growth in the face of challenging circumstances highlighted the benefits of community involvement, social support, and having local facilities to provide a welcoming space.

The CHT supports the Community Health Advisory Forum (CHAF), which goes from strength to strength. CHAF members delivered a lively and well-attended workshop at the CHEX national conference in March and were also part of a filming project where they spoke about their work in their own communities, their wider local network for engagement, and how their voices are heard, which premiered at the Steps Theatre in February. The CHAF organised and promoted a city-wide Cost of Living event in November attended by over 80 people and service providers in response to the findings from the Engage Dundee survey, which showed that the majority of respondents were struggling financially and that this was impacting substantially on all aspects of their lives. The group was excited to be asked for a representative to attend the Child Poverty and Inequalities Strategic Leadership Group, providing a direct link to the implementation of Dundee's City Plan.



Both the CHAF and Community Health Team undertook development sessions to plan their programme for the coming year. For the CHT this includes delivery of new courses; Decider Skills to assist local people to self-manage and regulate their mental and emotional health, Speakeasy to help parents to talk to their children about sex and relationships, and Together to Thrive to support parents of children with additional support needs. The CHAF is making plans to strengthen relationships with key strategic stakeholders and undertake training to build skills and confidence in public speaking. This year saw the resurgence of Poverty Sensitive Practice training with tailored sessions delivered to colleagues in Leisure and Culture Dundee. The local Health and Wellbeing Networks held reviews with their members, which resulted in a refresh of the format for meetings, which will now adopt a theme-based approach.

The Community Health Team, Community Health Advisory Forum, and participants more broadly continue to influence the development of plans and services. 51 local people were involved directly, ensuring that the voices and experiences of those with barriers to wellbeing and at risk of health inequalities are at the forefront of decision-making processes.



# Community Empowerment

I would never have got as involved in other things in the community without coming here first.

**Menzieshill Family Group**



Last week I felt the best I had felt in ages after attending this group. I had an appointment this morning that I changed because this group was more important for my mental health.

**Wednesday Woman's Group**



It feels good to go to places we would never go on our own - it makes me feel like a normal human doing normal things - you wouldn't understand how it feels and its hard to explain - when you are looked on as the dregs of society because you have had a drug problem that never goes away.

**Lochee Men's Group**



# Community Empowerment

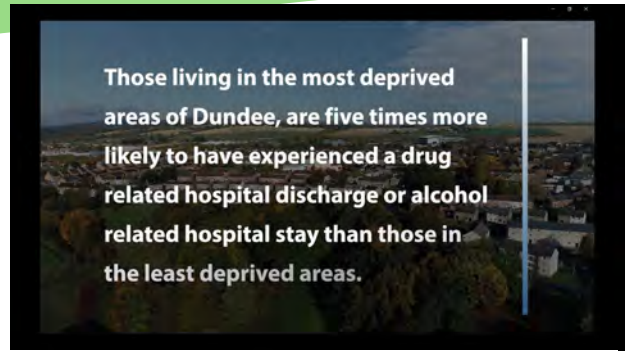
The Community Empowerment Team continue to support people across the city to make a difference in their communities and improve lives for fellow citizens. 708 individuals were supported to contribute towards Local Community Planning across the city. This includes work around food larder and community cafes, but increasingly, family empowerment work such as has been supported through What Matters 2U. This work represents a shift from reactive work to prevention focussed activities.

The team are successfully delivering on the new Neighbourhood Capital Fund. 2668 people were supported to generate ideas for capital investment in communities. Of those, 1724 were young people, demonstrating a commitment to ensuring young people's voice is heard in community planning matters. This compares to approximately 100 citizens who would have been involved under the previous model of capital allocation.

Kirkton Community Centre SCIO were supported to bring in £1.5 million of funding of Levelling Up Monies to support their ambition to build a community enterprise centre on the site of the old Kirkton community centre. In addition to this a further £409,000 of external funding has been brought in by community groups supported by CET to support provision across Dundee's communities.

Community Centre footfall remains high with 428,000 visits to community centres across the year.

The Community Empowerment Team are a key part of corporate priority pieces of work such as the delivery of the Drumgeith Community Campus and Kirkton



Hub model. The CET supported hundreds of individuals to have their say about services in the East End and the design of the new Drumgeith Campus. This has ensured that the campus will meet community need when it opens in August and that there will be an integrated learning offer with the Douglas Community Centre.

The CET managed the £80,000 devolved Alcohol & Drugs Partnership grant funding out to a range of community activities supporting prevention and recovery around substance use. The importance of this to Dundee is evidenced by the continued year year support from Dundee ADP to deliver this work.

After a number of years with low numbers, six groups are now being supported with Community Asset Transfer applications. This will support the city's Community Wealth Building agenda and put power in the hands of communities.

For the first time DCC, co-ordinated through CET, met our Participatory Budgeting targets set by COSLA. Projects such as the Community Regeneration Forum, Dundee Climate Fund and the Annual rent Consultation all supported this work.

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## Youth Work



Being in this kitchen today has sparked something in me - I can't wait to get back to work in a kitchen!

**YWE Angus Housing Pilot**

Just wanted to drop you a message saying a huge thank you! We were struggling with A going to school and had daily battles but as soon as he came home with the permission slip for the new group he has been so much more positive! No morning arguments and he's been talking more positively about school. It's the highlight of his week and it's made a huge difference to him at home too. So again, thank you! X

**Braeview Positive Progressions**



Coming here on a Monday and Thursday has made me go to school more often. I'm going to the Inclusion room more since coming here.

**Grove Community Learning Zone**



The group has helped me handle my emotions and helped me take a break from my crazy class' 'I have got better at leading and making decisions, I have liked talking to others and getting a break from the classroom.

**P7 Targeted Group @ St Andrews**





# Youth Work

Throughout the year, all Youth Work teams have continued to offer a variety of targeted supports to young people, delivering 3315 sessions aimed at engaging young people in pertinent issues affecting their lives.

One excellent initiative has been the delivery of the "Imagine A Man" training. This programme focused on promoting male positivity through targeted sessions using the "Imagine A Man" resource. These sessions have been instrumental in promoting positive male role models and behaviours, encouraging young people to express their views on relevant subjects.

In the past year, the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Youth Work has successfully supported four place-based Young Peoples Leadership Academies in Stobswell (DISC Target Project), Lochee, Baldrigon/Kirkton, and around the new Drumgeith Campus in the East End. A total of 67 young people have engaged in the Columba 1400 process, contributing to the creation of action plans in each of these areas.

One notable example is the initiative around the new Drumgeith Campus. CLD Youth Work, in partnership with Education colleagues, has supported two cohorts of young people. These cohorts have developed and presented their Action Plan to the senior management team and the new head teacher for EECC. The group plans to meet weekly to deliver on this action plan.



Youth Work staff across all teams have collaborated with colleagues from Community Empowerment to ensure that young people's voices are included in community plans. This includes discussions around Green Spaces, Food Poverty, and the use of Community Buildings.

The inclusion of young people's voices in community plans has ensured that their perspectives are considered in decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. The initiatives undertaken by CLD Youth Work have demonstrated significant positive impacts on young people and their communities. By fostering leadership, promoting positive behaviours, and ensuring youth voices are heard, these programmes have contributed to the overall development and empowerment of young people in local communities.

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## Closing Remarks



As we conclude this report, it is essential to acknowledge the remarkable efforts and dedication demonstrated by our teams. Their unwavering commitment and hard work have been instrumental in driving our projects forward and achieving our goals. Each member has contributed significantly, showcasing exceptional skills and a collaborative spirit that has been the cornerstone of our success.

*"Our achievements would not have been possible without the invaluable support and engagement of our communities. Their involvement and feedback have been crucial in shaping our initiatives and ensuring that we remain aligned with the needs and aspirations of those we serve. The synergy between our teams and communities has created a powerful dynamic that propels us towards continuous improvement and innovation."*

In recognition of this outstanding effort, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone involved. Let us continue to build on this momentum, fostering a culture of excellence and inclusivity that will drive us to even greater heights. Together, we can achieve remarkable things and make a lasting impact.

*Thank you.*

**Louise Butchart**

Head of Housing, Construction and Communities



**In Your Neighbourhood**

#becauseofCLD





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